MORAL LESSONS IN SELECTED DRAMAS OF JUAN RUIZ DE ALARCÓN

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Golden Age of Spanish literature saw theatrical production at its peak in Spain. This period might arbitrarily be delimited between the years 1592, the approximate date of Lope de Vega's advent as a dramatic author, and 1661, the date of Calderón's death. Love for drama was so intense at that time that Spain produced four great dramatists, Lope de Vega, Ruiz de Alarcón, Tirso de Molina, and Calderón de la Barca.

Ruiz de Alarcón is considered the greatest dramatic moralist of the Golden Age. When commenting on the playwright's literary importance, George Tyler Northup stated, "Alarcón is the greatest dramatic moralist Spain has ever produced."¹ The playwright, Alarcón, is distinguished among the Spanish dramatists of the seventeenth century for his interest in creation of character rather than in the development of a complicated plot, for his concern with human values, and for his purity and sobriety of diction.² James Fitzmaurice-Kelly wrote concerning Ruiz de Alarcón,

"His chief titles to fame are his power of creating character and his high ethical aim." 3

The plays of Alarcón show a very different temper from those of any other Spanish dramatist. While his contemporaries were content to improvise at ease, he carefully planned and polished everything that he wrote. In his drama of ideas, Alarcón portrayed courtesy, sincerity, chivalry, loyalty, discretion, and truthfulness as virtues to be admired and cultivated. He was a keen observer of social abuses, and attacked such vices as lying, slander, and inconstancy. Usually he depicted a vice through a character portrayal and thus developed a technique of characterization which was one of his greatest assets. 4 His formula was to introduce into a play a character type and through this type to develop a moral thesis. 5

During his lifetime Alarcón wrote only twenty-three plays. 6 Of these, La verdad sospechosa is considered his best. "La verdad sospechosa, the greatest Spanish work of dramatic moralization and the basis for the first important French comedy, Corneille's

5 Northup, op. cit., p. 283.
Le Menteur," gives us the character of a young man who comes from the University of Salamanca to begin life at Madrid with an invincible habit of lying. The plot springs entirely out of the young man's lies which produce all the complications necessary. It attacks the vice of lying, showing how the character personifying that vice, although successful temporarily, is finally found out and punished.

While reading the drama, La verdad sospechosa, the writer was greatly impressed by its originality, spirited dialogue, adept characterization, and high ethical aim. Since it seems that Alarcón was concerned more with the development of character and moral truths than with intrigue, these elements were sought for in selected works.

The next step was to narrow the research to a particular detail concerning his dramas. There are several features of Alarcón's dramas that are worthy of investigation; however, the writer resolved that a special feature which clearly distinguishes Alarcón's works from those of other dramatists of his time is the moral lesson developed through the introduction of a character type into the play.

Of the twenty-three plays produced by Alarcón, there are nine that are considered as outstanding moral dramas. Emilio

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González López, in discussing the works of Ruiz de Alarcón, lists nine plays under the title, La comedia moralizadora de costumbres. This group of moralizing comedies of manners is composed of dramas in which the playwright, Alarcón, portrays the customs or manners of the time and also exalts on one side the triumph of virtue with its final reward and, on the other, censures the moral defects, presenting the punishment of the personage that symbolizes them. Within this group of moralizing comedies of manners seven dramas are classified as Comedias de carácter and two dramas are classified as Comedias heroicas. Comedias de carácter are those dramas in which Alarcón places emphasis on the moral defects which produce social failure for the personages. Comedias heroicas are the plays in which the dramatist presents the character as seen through the positive virtues of self-denial, friendship, kindness, and loyalty, which require great sacrifice for the interest of others.

The Comedias de carácter include the following: La verdad sospechosa, Las paredes oyen, No hay mal que por bien no venga, El examen de maridos, La prueba de las promesas, Los favores del mundo, and Nadarse por mejorarse. The Comedias heroicas include Los pechos privilegiados and Ganar amigos.

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9 Ibid.
These outstanding moral dramas of Alarcón were read and analyzed to determine the moral lesson and to determine the character types used by the author to portray a virtue or a defect in the social life of the time.

Summaries of the plays are included in Chapters III and IV so that one might more readily visualize the characterization, action, and plot.
CHAPTER II

LIFE AND WORKS OF JUAN RUIZ DE ALARCÓN

Juan Ruiz de Alarcón was born in Mexico City in the year 1580 or 1581. His father was Pedro Ruiz de Alarcón, administrator of the mines at Tasco, Mexico; his mother was doña Leonor de Mendoza. His parents were persons of some importance as the names of Luis de Villanueva, magistrate of the Royal Audience of Mexico; Francisco de Velasco, brother of the second Viceroy of Mexico; and the latter’s son, Luis de Velasco, Viceroy of Mexico and Peru, appear as witnesses on their marriage certificate.¹ Both Alarcón’s parents were of distinguished origin. His father was descended from the great soldier García Ruiz de Alarcón, and his mother belonged to the family of the Mendozas, one of the greatest names in Spain.² According to Castro, the dramatist had four brothers named Pedro, Gaspar, Hernando, and García. All of the brothers entered the University of Mexico between the years of 1592 and 1598.³

¹Antonio Castro Leal, Juan Ruiz de Alarcón su vida y su obra (México: Ediciones Cuadernos Americanos, 1913), pp. 20-22.
³Castro, op. cit., p. 22.
Ruiz de Alarcón was proud of his heritage because his ancestry included names of illustrious nobles, conquistadors, and administrators: Luna, Mendoza, Ruiz, and Guzmán. He often used these names in his plays. Alarcón's contemporaries were not so convinced of his noble birth; they questioned his right to the name of Mendoza and laughed when he placed a don in front of his name.

Alarcón's physical traits are not definitely known since an authentic picture of him does not exist. In the parochial church of Taxco, Mexico, there is a portrait of Alarcón, but it is probably not authentic as the body was painted several years later than the head; also, there is a possibility that the portrait was painted in the eighteenth century rather than in Alarcón's time. Information obtained from various sources, including the portrait, códice, and biographical notes concerning the author, describe him as a hunchback, short in stature, and deformed of both chest and back. He is also described as having a flaming red beard, bowed legs, and a scar on his right hand. When describing his physical appearance, Romero-Navarro commented, "Alarcón

}\hfill\textsuperscript{1}\hfill\textsuperscript{5}\hfill\textsuperscript{5}\hfill\textsuperscript{5}\hfill\textsuperscript{1}}


\textsuperscript{5}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. xi-xci.
Of Alarcón's career prior to 1596, no details are known. In that year he was enrolled as a student at the University of Mexico and continued his studies there until 1600. Upon completing his preparation for the degree of Bachelor of Canon Law, he preferred to receive the degree from Salamanca, because of the greater prestige of that university; therefore, in 1600 he left for Spain and in that same year presented his credentials at Salamanca where he received the degree, Bachelor of Canon Law.

Two years later another degree was awarded him, that of Bachelor of Civil Law. Alarcón seems to have remained at Salamanca two or three years longer as there is a record of his being enrolled in the faculty of law in 1604, but he did not present himself for the degree of licentiate perhaps because of the expense, which was considerable. 7

During his years as a student at Salamanca, Alarcón was poor. His expenses were met in part by financial aid derived from a fund for students established by one of his relatives, Gaspar Ruiz de Montoya, veinticuatro of Seville. 8

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7Ibid., op. cit., pp. vi-vii.

8Ibid.
The only reliable evidence concerning his student life at Salamanca is the testimony of a comrade of his own age, Brígido Díaz Cruzato, given a few years later in Mexico, to the effect that Alarcón was a careful, diligent, and intelligent student, as well as a man of good reputation and virtuous life.  

In 1606, Alarcón was practicing law in Seville. In that year he participated in an out-of-doors entertainment at the village of San Juan de Alfarache near Seville on the banks of the Guadalquivir. Alarcón was selected as judge of the event which included a poetic contest, a play, and a tournament. He presented to the festivities a poem of four décimas. This composition is his earliest literary effort that has reached us.  

Alarcón began practicing law in the Royal Court at Seville in 1607. During that year he made preparations to return to Mexico, having received a legacy large enough to help cover the expenses of the journey; however, he did not leave Spain until a year later as the departure of the fleet in which he was to sail was delayed.

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11Ibid.
From 1609 until 1613 Ruiz de Alarcón resided in Mexico. The University of Mexico granted him the degree of Licentiate of Laws in 1609. Some time later he requested and was allowed exemption from the regular expenses included in obtaining the degree of Doctor of Laws, but for some reason he did not take the degree. 12

During the years of his residence in Mexico (1609-1613), Alarcón presented himself several times unsuccessfully as a candidate for various chairs in the University of Mexico. His lack of success may have been due to his deformity and to the fact that he lacked both money and influence to compete on even terms in the field of academic intrigue by which professorial chairs were won. 13

It has long been supposed that Alarcón was for some part of this period Lieutenant Corregidor of the City of Mexico. Valuable biographical material, contributed by Miss Dorothy Schons, who discovered fourteen documents in the Archivo de Indias at Seville, is particularly illuminating in regard to the activities of Alarcón during the obscure years of 1611 and 1612. In these documents, Alarcón does not actually call himself Lieutenant Corregidor, but he does say that the Corregidor of Mexico, García López del Espinar, appointed him in his place. It has been impossible to determine whether or not Alarcón ever

13 Owen, op. cit., p. viii.
enjoyed this title, but he certainly performed a Lieutenant Corregidor's duties and aided Garcia López in his judicial tasks.\(^{14}\)

Before the discovery of the documents by Miss Schons, Alarconian biographers supposed that it was the work of draining the Mexican lagoon that occupied Alarcón during these years.\(^{15}\)

According to the information contributed by Miss Schons, Alarcón was occupied with judicial tasks in the attempt to prohibit the sale of pulque, the fermented juice of the maguey, or century plant. For some time, but with little progress, efforts had been made to curb the drunkenness of the Indians. In commenting on the activities of Alarcón as revealed in the documents of Miss Schons, C. E. Aníbal wrote:

Document viii shows that not only did Alarcón perform the duties of a genuine prohibition agent (thus stimulating, perhaps, the instinct of reform which later was to be translated into great exemplary comedias) but that in addition to investigating cases of legal violation, bringing suit against pulque-selling houses, and confiscating the goods of the guilty, he also joined the corregidor in sentencing offenders, and saw that the sentence imposed was duly carried out.\(^{16}\)

In the year 1613, Alarcón left Mexico for Spain, where he spent the remaining years of his life. Shortly after his establishment in Madrid, he began his short but brilliant career as a dramatist. It has been conjectured that Alarcón wrote a


\(^{15}\)Luis Fernández-Guerra y Orbe, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

\(^{16}\)Aníbal, *loc. cit.*
number of his plays before his return to Mexico in 1608, or during his stay there.\textsuperscript{17} When discussing Alarcón's arrival at Madrid, Castro stated, "Al llegar a Madrid, en 1613, llevaba en sus baúles algunas comedias, cinco o seis: las que había escrito en Salamanca, Sevilla y Mexico."\textsuperscript{18} We understand from this that when Alarcón arrived at Madrid in 1613, he was carrying in his trunks five or six comedias that he had written in Salamanca, Sevilla, and Mexico. Hartzenbusch stressed that five of Alarcón's comedies were written before 1613. His conclusions were based on certain references made in the comedies from which the approximate date of composition may be inferred, and on their lack of technical perfection.\textsuperscript{19}

Ruiz de Alarcón produced twenty-three dramas. There is, however, but little information concerning the dates of composition or first presentation of some of them. They were published in two volumes, the first contained eight plays and the second twelve; three plays were published separately.\textsuperscript{20} The first volume, published in 1628, contained the following plays: \textit{La cueva de Salamanca}, \textit{La industria y la suerte}, \textit{Todo es ventura}, \textit{Al asemejante a sí mismo},

\textsuperscript{17}Bourland, \textit{op. cit.}, p. viii.

\textsuperscript{18}Castro, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 37.

\textsuperscript{19}Don Juan Hartzenbusch, editor, \textit{Comedias de Don Juan Ruiz de Alarcón y Mendoza} (Madrid: H. Rivadeneyra-Editor, 1886), pp. ix-xii.

El desdichado en fingir, Los favores del mundo, Las paredes oyen, and Hadas por mejorarse (sometimes entitled Dejar dicha por más dicha and Por mejoria). The second volume, published in 1638, contained the following plays: Los empeños de un engaño, El dueno de las estrellas, La ardidast castigada, La manganilla de Melilla, Ganar amigos (also called Quien priva, aconseja bien; Lo que mucho vale mucho cuesta; and Amor, pleito y desafío), La verdad sospechosa (sometimes called El mentiroso), El anticristo, El tejedor de Segovia (II parte), Los pechos privilegiados (also called Nunca mucho costó poco), La prueba de las promesas, La crueldad por el honor, and El examen de maridos (sometimes called Antes de que te cases, mira lo que haces). The three plays, published separately, were: Quien mal anda en mal acaba (also called Los dos locos amantes), No hay mal que por bien no venga (with the subtitle Don Domingo de Don Blas), and La culpa busca la pena y el agrado la venganza.

The authenticity of the twenty-three plays mentioned above in unquestioned. In addition to those, Hartzenbusch gives among Alarcón’s plays two dramas printed in the second part of the comedias of Tirso de Molina. They are known not to be the work of Tirso alone and have been attributed to Alarcón. These dramas are: Siempre ayuda la verdad and Cautela contra cautela. The edition also includes a play called Hazañas del marquès de Cacete in which Alarcón is known to have collaborated; it is the joint work of nine poets of whom Alarcón was one. Another play given
by Hartzenbusch, Quien engaña más a quien (sometimes called Dar
con la misma flor), is a reworking of El desdichado en fingir.
The volume contains twenty-seven comedias which Hartzenbusch attributes
to Ruiz de Alarcón. Although El tejedor de Segovia, primera parte,
is not by Alarcón, it is included, as its author is unknown and
it deals with the same personage and traditions as El tejedor de
Segovia, segunda parte. 21

Ruiz de Alarcón was over thirty years of age when he began
to be known as a dramatist. He not only endured poverty and
deformity, but he also had a hard struggle to gain recognition
as a writer of comedias. In time he won recognition in his art
and enjoyed a measure of popular success. In 1621 Comer vengas
was played before the queen; and, in 1623, Siempre ayuda la verdad
was performed before the king. Alarcón and Tirso de Molina were
accused of littering the walls with their play-bills; an indication
that the plays of these authors were oftentimes presented in spite
of the popularity of Lope de Vega. 22 Alarcón collaborated from
time to time with some of his contemporaries, especially Tirso de
Molina, and this collaboration resulted in a few additional dramas.

With his success Alarcón incurred the bitter jealousy and
dislike of many of his most celebrated contemporaries. He was
made a target of ridicule by leading Spanish writers of the day

21Hartzenbusch, loc. cit.
22Bourland, op. cit., pp. x-xi.
such as Lope de Vega, Góngora, Lope de Vega, Lope de Vega, and Casares de Figueroa. They ridiculed his person, his pretensions to office, his pretenclhas and the title of don which he prefixed to his name. Non-epigrammatic remarks, such as the following by Góngora, were made: "la que, adelanta y atrás—génina concha te visites",23 which says that Alarcón, face and art is dressed with twin shells (alluding to his name).

On the whole, Alarcón endured these attacks with forbearance; however, he did sometimes avenge himself upon his tormentors by drawing characters in his plays which represented them in terms of their characteristic weaknesses or vices. An example is the personage of don mano in Las parados en, who is said to be drawn from Góngora, Figueroa, and the Count of Villamediana.24

In 1623, Alarcón brought upon himself the most cruel of the attacks to which he was subjected. He had been commissioned by the Duke of Cea to write a descriptive eulogy of the festivities celebrated in honor of the visit of Prince Charles of England. Alarcón, never a ready writer, nor able to express himself in the language used at that time in eulogistic verse, unmisely enlisted the services of twelve fellow poets who between them composed seventy-three octaves in a high-flown, Gongoristic style. His only part in the composition was putting together the different

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23Bayes, op. cit., p. xiii.
24Bourland, loc. cit.
contributed verses. The composition, which turned out to be as bad as possible, appeared under Alarcón's name. The publication of the composition brought upon him a flood of abusive décimas from the pens of the best poets of the day.  

The vanity of men so influential in the literary world of that day made more difficult Alarcón's career as a dramatic author. Too, it must be remembered that he was a creole, and that in Spain the New World was judged to be quite devoid of all intellectual culture and literary life.

Few other facts are known of Alarcón's life between 1621 and 1625. It has been stated that Alarcón lived for several years in the household of the nobleman, the Marqués de Salinas. With the death of the Marqués de Salinas in 1617, Alarcón lost a friend and protector. As his father died in 1617, it is possible that Alarcón received a legacy from the paternal estate.

It seems probable that he possessed some resources other than the income from his plays. There are indications that at some period Alarcón added to his income by engaging in some sort of trade. In his will, mention is made of several persons who owe him for barley.

25 Owen, op. cit., p. xii.  
26 Aníbal, op. cit., p. 283.  
27 Castro, op. cit., p. 43.  
28 Fernández-Guerra, op. cit., p. 227.  
29 Reyes, op. cit., pp. x and 257.
There is little information about his personal life. Alarcón had a daughter, Lorenza de Alarcón, by Doña Angela Cervantes. The daughter, then married to Fernando Ximén who lived in La Rancha, is mentioned in his will.30

From the time of his return to Spain Ruiz de Alarcón had been trying to obtain some post worthy of his achievements. In 1626, his petition was at last granted when the king appointed him Proctor in the Royal Council for the Indies. The responsibilites in his position were tremendous, leaving little leisure time. After he took office, he wrote, so far as is known, only four insignificant poems.31 To the fact that Alarcón was forced to wait over twelve years for the attainment of his hope for favorable attention from the king's government we owe, perhaps, the significant part of his dramatic production.

The Proctors of the Council of the Indies were persons of some importance. After Alarcón received his appointment, his life was one of comparative material comfort. He had his own coach and coachman, kept a manservant and a maidservant, and had money to lend to his friends. These facts are mentioned in his last will and testament.32

30 Ibid., pp. 259-260.
31 Bourland, op. cit., p. x.
Aldon de Alarcón's duties in the Council of the Indies were arduous. They required much reading aloud and much confinement in a stuffy court room which may have impaired his lungs. He was absent from some sessions of the Council in 1637; and, after 1638, he was unable to attend any sessions. His last illness began in January, 1639; on August 1, he made his will before the notary; and, three days later on the fourth of the month, he died.

Aldon de Alarcón was the least productive of the great Spanish dramatists. He wrote only twenty-three comedias, while Lope de Vega is said to have produced more than fifteen hundred, Tirso de Molina four hundred and Calderón de la Barca at least one hundred and twenty. Alarcón's method did not lend itself to rapid production. Perhaps because he realized that he could not cope with the enormous productivity of Lope de Vega and Tirso de Molina, Alarcón, after writing a few dramas in the prevailing manner, abandoned, for the most part, the play of romantic intrigue in favor of the comedy of manners, of morals, of accurate and often satirical observation.

In the seventeenth century the Spanish dramatist, following the form of comedias established by Lope de Vega, considered his duty to be to amuse rather than to instruct. Any moral lesson,

33Dourland, op. cit., p. xxii.

except in the religious plays, is usually incidental. The first dramas produced by Alarcón were comedias of intrigue which followed the form introduced by Lope de Vega. The only original note in these works was that they were more carefully written and the graciosos was now more of a friend and adviser and no longer only a source of merriment. In a discussion of the characterization and moral intent in these early dramas Valbuena Prat wrote, "Las primeras comedias que compuso Alarcón, apenas insistieron en la nota moral, pero también fueron duidas en caracteItaciones." From the above words, we understand that the first comedies that Alarcón composed scarcely imitated a moral note, but also were weak in characterizations. The following plays are representative of this period: La industria y la muerte, El segundete a sí mismo, Todas venturas, and El desdichado en su indio.37

In the life of Alarcón there had been many opportunities to observe the effects of lying, greed, slander, and other vices. It is natural that he should transplant these comedias to establish a moral code under which men might live with decency and dignity. Embittered by his physical deformities and by the attacks of his contemporaries, Alarcón began writing comedias of manners.


37—...
and he created an evil trend; partly as a defense of
his own poetry to arrange his will on his enemies.\footnote{Richard
Chamberlain and Iswell Coburn, \textit{A New History of
Spanish Literature} (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University

The plays
of this category include the group of nine moralizing comedies of
tragedy entitled in chapter one, which are considered as the
outstanding moral dramas.

Because of the strong dramatic sense in some of the plays
of Marcón, Julio González López designated several plays as
The Dramatic Comedies of Religion and History. The dramas representa-
tive of this group are: \textit{El morisco}, \textit{La cruciñada por el honor},
\textit{El tejedor de tréboles}, \textit{Adon y entra en acabe}, and \textit{La culpa
más en vena y el agravio la venganza}.\footnote{Julio González López,
\textit{Historia de la literatura española} (New York: Los Americanos

The drama, \textit{La cruz de sal ammonis}, is distinguished, according

\footnote{Ibid., p. 131.}
literary beauty of Calderón. However, Alarcón surpassed them all
in purity, neatness and polish of phrase, in sustained mood
tone, and perfection of dialogue. Alarcón's greatest con-
tribution to dramatic literature of his period was his development
of the moral beauty of manners and his creation of character parts.
These forms contain more or less explicitly a moral truth, a
concrete lesson of practical philosophy: they portray the problems
in the social life of the time. In his dramas, Alarcón exhibits
a reflective, reasoned attitude toward life and a longing for the
triumph of virtue. It did not cater to the tastes and demands
of the public. He wrote as he, not the public, wanted. He wrote
for his own soul, but also because he had a purpose for the
world.12

12Hurley and Schumitz, loc. cit.
CHAPTER III

Of the nine moral comedies of manners, there are seven plays which are classified as Comedias de carácter. In these plays, Alarcón stresses the moral defects which result in social failure for the personajes symbolizing them.

The names of these plays are: La verdad sospechosa, Las paredes oyen, No hay mal que por bien no venga, El comienzo de maridos, La prueba de las promesas, Los favores del mundo, and Madarse por mejorarose. A summary with its moral lesson will be given for each play.¹

La verdad sospechosa is considered Alarcón's best drama.

"La verdad sospechosa," wrote Caroline Bourland, "is without question Alarcón's most famous play."² The drama centers around don García, a young Spaniard, who comes from the University of Salamanca to begin life at Madrid. He has every agreeable quality except one; he cannot tell the truth. The father, don Beltrán, a Spanish noble, has requested don García to return to Madrid

¹The footnote at the end of each summary pertains to the edition of the play used in this study.

o the excellent man in that, and in the second son, as the
first. He was the only one that was not. He continued,
and saw a particular horror of truth, is greatly disturbed
when he learns that his son has considered one of the worst vices,
that of lying. He gives the servant, an indio, to don García to
serve as a friend and confident. Naturally has don García arrived
in Madrid, where he falls in love with a pretty young lady named
Jacinta. He lies to her saying that he is a wealthy man from
Mexico.

In the meantime, his father, attempting to get his son
married before his vice brings shame on the family honor, has,
without his son's knowledge, arranged to marry him to the lady
of his affection. Ignorant of the fact that the lady whom his
father has selected for him is really his beloved Jacinta, don
García encongtr the matter by pretending to his father that he is
already married to a young lady in Seville. The conclusion that
follows were made worse by the mistake that don García has made,
contributing to Jacinta the name of Jacinta, one of her friends.
Jacinta becomes more and more involved in the confusion of
mistaken identity and lies, which prevent him from coming to
an understanding with his father and entangle him in an engagement
with Jacinta, who receives and answers his letters, imagining
them to be addressed to herself. When don García finally realizes
his error, it is too late to escape the punishment of being
obliged to marry Inés, whom he does not love, while Inés becomes the wife of his rival.3

The drama, La verdad sospechosa, presents a moral lesson showing the harm that comes from the vice of lying. Don García, the character personifying the vice of lying, is finally found out and punished. As a punishment for all his lies, Don García has to renounce the woman he loves and marry the woman that he does not love. In reality, the true punishment consists in that, having been caught several times lying, when he finally tells the truth, nobody believes him. That is to say, on the lips of the liar the truth is told as a falsehood. In the last speech of the drama, the SOBERANO, Yelita, argues on the harm that comes from the vice of lying:

Y aquí véis cómo dañosa
es la mentira; y véis
el serio daño, en la cosa
del que mentir se acostumbra,
es la verdad sospechosa.

LAS PAREDES CAYEN

Las paredes cayen and La verdad sospechosa are outstanding comedies of character. But now, with all the importance of these dramas, Arthur Owen stated, "La verdad sospechosa and Las paredes cayen".


4Ibid., p. 117.
... and the particular episode which the classic period...

... and especially Gran, in the Palacio Real in Madrid and
Barcelona. The drama centers around doña Ana, a charming,
eloquent woman, whose affection is sought by don Juan and
Llánza. Don Juan, a rich and handsome gentleman, is poor; however,
the important case of Llánza, as does Ruiz de Alarcón,
and is without ill intention, it is an excess to slander.
This lady is in love with doña Ana and shows his affection, although
she claims to love her. His friend, in spite of his servant,
his troubadour, who assures him that love is blind.

The lady prefers the attentions of doña Ana, a rich and handsome
woman, whom she plans to marry after a short time of worship.
She tells him secretly, then explicitly, advances to him, or explicitly, to the cousin of doña Ana.
In effect, a friend of Alarcón, relates to his friend don Llánza
the qualities of a gentleman.

The night of Saint John, doña Ana returns secretly from
Madrid. He is given to her beauty, to her virtue, and a noble
idea is visiting the court, conversing with don Juan and don Llánza.
Don Juan speaks in a famous praise of the virtues of the widow
He says, in effect, that he has employed him from the
deck, instead of the other. She was an expert in shams because...
The love of dona Ana has been the central theme in the play, with the character of don Juan and the duke, disguised as a old man, striving to win the affections of the young and innocent dona Ana. The love of dona Ana is not only for her physical beauty, but for her intellect and her kindness. 

The play, "Don Juan," by Miguel de Cervantes, explores the theme of the seductiveness of women and the consequences of their actions. In the play, don Juan is depicted as a character who uses his charm and wit to seduce women, but ultimately faces the consequences of his actions. The play, "Don Juan," is a classic example of the timeless struggle between love and duty, and the consequences of one's actions. 

Juan de Toro tells Don Mendo that his anger is towards him,
who was the master of Dona Micaela.

Juan de Toro tells Don Mendo that the anger is towards
him who was the master of Dona Micaela.

The action in the drama, no fue mal que por bien no venga,
takes place in Seville during the reign of Alfonso III in the
thirteenth century. The plot centers around the activities of don
Juan, a young man of noble blood who is a loyal subject of

Juan de Toro, p. 253.

Juan de Toro, p. 253.
Alfonso III, and don Domingo, a former soldier of great courage

The loss of life and property is not the only loss for the physical comfort. Don

and don Domingo are two men who have no connections with
doing so. They are well known to be constant with
don Julio, son of the viscount, who has not so recently been

and don Domingo are two men who have no connections with
doing so. They are well known to be constant with
don Julio, son of the viscount, who has not so recently been
Domingo has been imprisoned in don Ramiro's house by the prince and Ramiro because he refused to help them overthrow King Alfonso.

Having made keys to fit the door of Ramiro's house, don Juan and his servant, Beltrán, open his door at night intending to steal his money. Upon entering the house of Ramiro, they discover don Domingo held prisoner and learn of the plot of Ramiro and the prince against the king. Acting upon the advice of don Domingo, don Juan avails himself of this opportunity to regain his reputation by warning the king of the plot and bringing about the defeat of the young prince.

The king punishes the prince, arranges the marriage of don Domingo to Constanza and don Juan to Leonor; he pardons don Ramiro and awards don Juan property from his kingdom.  

In the drama, *No hay mal que por bien no venga*, the concept of loyalty to the king is rewarded and the concept of disloyalty is brought to retribution. The two characters, don Domingo and don Juan, are examples showing that neither time nor vice can conquer the virtue of the heart. At the beginning of the comedy, the nobility of the two main characters is subjugated to vice. In the case of don Juan the vice is active, evidenced by his obtaining money by fraud. In the case of don Domingo, the vice is more internal, evidenced by his egotism, self-indulgence,

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and idleness. One act, however, redeems the two. They resist the treason of the prince and, through courage and loyalty, save the kingdom for the legitimate sovereign. Don Domingo and don Juan regain their honor and are rewarded by the king. The prince, don García, is punished for his disloyalty. 11 Beltrán, the precioso and servant of don Juan, in the following lines stresses that providence has permitted the past errors of don Juan in order to accomplish certain ends:

¡Contempla, señor, agora
la providencia de Dios!
Quién pensara que las llaves
Que hicimos para robar,
Nos vinieran a importar
Para negocios tan graves!
¡Y que hubieran remediado
Peligrar a tanto peso
Un hombre, que es tan travieso,
Y otro tan acomodado! 12

When discussing the moral lessons in the comedies of Alarcón, Manuel De Montolín stated, "En No hay mal que por bien no venga se enseña que no hay que desesperar en medio de la desgracia, porque esa misma variabilidad de la suerte siempre deja abierto el paso a la esperanza." 13 That is to say, the play teaches that one must


12 Bill and Harlan, op. cit., p. 270.

not be discouraged in spite of misfortune, because that same variability of fortune always leaves open the passage to hope.

**EL EXAMEN DE MARIDOS**

In *El examen de maridos*, a comedy of contemporary customs, the action occurs in Madrid. The drama develops around doña Inés, a noble, beautiful, and rich young lady, who has received from her dying father the advice, "antes que te cases, mira lo que haces." In order to comply with her father's wish, doña Inés decides to examine her suitors, investigating their fortune, qualities, and virtues. She requires that the candidates agree to accept the results of the competition. As the examination for selecting a husband stirs the court, the best young nobles come to compete for the hand of doña Inés. Among the suitors are Count Carlos and his loyal friend, the marqués, don Fadrique. The marqués, don Fadrique, had previously solicited the affections of a rich young lady, doña Blanca, but at the request of her father he agreed to cease courting her because the conditions of his title would not allow him to marry her. Doña Blanca is offended when the marqués stops seeing her. Concealing her identity, she visits doña Inés and informs her, although the information is false, that the marqués has intolerable hidden defects.

Doña Inés, with the help of her steward, Beltrán, reviews the information submitted by the suitors and rejects them one
by one until only two names remain, those of Count Carlos, whom
she does not love, and the marqués, whom she loves but whose
hidden defects prevent him from being chosen.

In a tournament between the marqués and Count Carlos,
the score is even. The marqués confesses to his loyal friend,
Count Carlos, that he loves doña Inés. Realizing that his friend
loves doña Inés, Count Carlos decides to ask for the hand of
dona Blanca; however, he does not retire from the competition.

As a new test for the competitors, doña Inés proposes
that they develop the theme that preoccupies her, "debe triunfar
el caballero perfecto y no amado, o el imperfecto y amado?"
Her question is: Which gentleman should triumph, the perfect
one whom she does not love or the imperfect one whom she loves?
Contrary to that which she hopes, the marqués defends the first
point and Count Carlos, the second. Count Carlos wins the contest
with a brilliant speech, and when doña Inés reluctantly decides
to give him her hand, Count Carlos explains that, having won the
contest, he wishes to give the prize that he has earned to his
friend, the marqués. As Count Carlos has learned of the untruths
told doña Inés by doña Blanca, he declares to doña Inés that the
information is false and that the marqués has no hidden defects.
Happy with the solution of her problem, doña Inés offers her
hand to the marqués and is accepted. Count Carlos then marrys doña Blanca.

The comedy, El examen de maridos, portrays the virtues of the noble friendship of Count Carlos and the marqués, don Fabrique. They distinguish what ought and what ought not to be in the perfect friendship of gentlemen. Count Carlos and the marqués maintain justice, honor, and friendship throughout the play. After winning the contest for the hand of doña Inés, Count Carlos, realizing that the marqués and doña Inés love each other, refuses to accept her offer and requests that she give her hand to his friend, the marqués. In the last part of the drama, the marqués speaks of the value of friendship. "No hay más tesoro en el mundo/Que un amigo verdadero." 15

LA PRUEBA DE LAS PROMESAS

The action in the comedy, La prueba de las promesas, takes place in Toledo. Don Juan de Ribera and don Enrique de Vargas, young and noble, are in love with Blanca, daughter of don Ilíán of Toledo. Blanca loves don Juan, but her father wishes her to marry don Enrique. In an attempt to discourage Blanca's love for don Juan, don Ilíán has Lucia, servant of Blanca, tells his


15 Ibid., p. 219.
daughter that she has learned that don Juan has important secret
defects. Although this information surprises Blanca, she continues
to declare her love for don Juan. In order to be able to see
Blanca, don Juan asks don Illán, who is known for his knowledge
of black magic, to give him lessons in magic. Don Illán refuses
but don Juan insists, promising him his property and the power
that he might acquire. In order to prove the sincerity of don
Juan's promises and to see if he is worthy of his daughter's hand,
don Illán puts into practice his hidden magic arts. The magic
acts start occurring the moment that don Illán's servant begins
to saddle an Andalusian colt. A messenger appears with letters
for don Juan advising him that the marqués of Tarifa has died,
leaving him his title and estate. Don Illán asks that his son
be made administrator for don Juan's estate. Don Juan refuses
stating that he and his servant, Tristán, are leaving for the
court at Madrid and requests that Blanca and her father follow
them.

Don Enrique, having also gone to the court, feels that
he is losing Blanca, but don Illán promises to help him. Don
Juan continues making love to Blanca but does not marry her.
Don Juan is made a favorite of the king. Of the two robes that
the king has conceded to don Juan, don Illán requests one for
his son, Mauricio. Don Juan refuses, saying that the son is
only a lawyer.
Don Juan becomes *presidente de Castilla* and, although continuing to court Blanca, he is looking for a more advantageous marriage. Desiring a new favor, don Illán goes to don Juan's house. Tristán talks to him, but don Juan will not see him.

One night don Enrique comes to the home of Blanca and she, thinking that he is don Juan, agrees to marry him. When Blanca explains her error to don Juan, he declares that he wishes to court her but will not marry her. When don Illán and Blanca request permission to return to Toledo, don Juan threatens to prosecute don Illán as a sorcerer. At this moment the enchantment is broken, returning the action to Toledo, where don Illán's servant announces that the Andalusian colt is now saddled. Don Illán tells don Juan that the events in which he became marqués, favorite of the king, and *presidente de Castilla* were all fantastic illusions and that all the events took place within an hour while he was seated in don Illán's house. Also, don Illán states that the purpose of the enchantment was to reveal don Juan's real character, and the results prove that he is ungrateful, vain, and arrogant. After seeing don Juan's true character, Blanca gives her hand to don Enrique. Because of his ingratitude, don Juan loses the one he loves.\(^{16}\)

The drama, *La prueba de las promesas*, points out the type of man who is lavish in promises when he needs favors and then...

\(^{16}\text{Ibid., pp. }\text{i-iii.}\)
forgetful and ungrateful when he thinks that he does not need them. Don Juan, who promises to give don Illán his property and the power that he might acquire in return for the lessons of magic, soon forgets his promise. Upon acquiring power and wealth, don Juan refuses to grant any of the favors requested by don Illán. Don Juan, the character representing the vice of ingratitude, is discovered and punished. After having obtained proof of the ungratefulness of don Juan, don Illán breaks the enchantment with these words, "Bastante prueba de tu ingratitud ha hecho/les caracteres deshase." 17

LOS FAVORES DEL MUNDO

In Los favores del mundo the action occurs in Madrid in the fifteenth century during the reign of Juan II. García-Euís de Alarcón, a brave, generous young noble, accompanied by his servant, Hernando, returns to the court after having conquered the Moors in Jerez de la Frontera. García-Euís, who has an old offense against don Juan de Luna, meets him on the street accompanied by two young ladies, Anarda and her cousin, Julia. When García-Euís attacks don Juan and is going to kill him, he calls on the Virgin and García-Euís spares his life. Don Juan and García-Euís are called before Prince Enrique, son of King Juan II, who praises García-Euís for his bravery and for sparing the life of don Juan;

17Ibid., p. 110.
he also appoints him to a royal position. Although her uncle, don Diego, wishes her to marry Count Mauricio, Anarda, beautiful and charming, falls in love with Garci-Ruiz. Prince Enrique also is seeking the favor of Anarda. Garci-Ruiz and Count Mauricio appear at the balcony of Anarda, who gives hope to Garci-Ruiz and diminishes the zeal of Count Mauricio.

When Prince Enrique asks him to clear the street so he can speak to Anarda, Garci-Ruiz carries out the order, but in doing so wounds Count Mauricio which makes Prince Enrique angry. As Anarda loves Garci-Ruiz and fears that her uncle, don Diego, will attempt to impose Count Mauricio as her husband, she requests him to inform Prince Enrique that she is willing to marry him. In the meantime Julia, who is hostile to Anarda, deceives Garci-Ruiz by telling him that in reality Anarda loves Prince Enrique.

Before leaving for Toledo, Prince Enrique pardons Garci-Ruiz, makes him a high noble, and leaves Anarda in his care.

Julia, jealous of her cousin, sends the Prince a message saying that Garci-Ruiz is in love with Anarda and that she will never belong to the prince if he allows her to marry Garci-Ruiz. Upon receiving the message, Prince Enrique becomes angry and exiles Garci-Ruiz. Don Juan intercedes for him, and the prince revokes the order. Julia then draws Anarda away from the house by telling her that the prince is going to force her to marry Count Mauricio; and, if she refuses, he will intern her in a convent. After Anarda leaves, Julia informs Garci-Ruiz that Anarda has gone to
To win the prince; and, in order to save him from a dishonorable
situation, offers him her hand. Upon returning, Anarda discovers
the beauty of Julia. When the prince returns, he recognizes the
beauty of Carci- Ruiz and awards rewards to him. Don Juan, who is
held in Julia's defects, receives her for a wife.18

The play, Los favores del alma, presents the inconstancy
of fortune and pays tribute to the nobility of the character,
Canci-Ruiz. Caroline Bourland wrote concerning this drama, "It
sets forth the insecurity and transitoriness of worldly success
and human honors, and is intended as a tribute to the nobility
of character of one, Carci-Ruiz de Alarcón, presumably one of
the forebears of the poet."19 Carci-Ruiz, if he portrays the virtues
of honor, courage, loyalty, and generosity, is subjected to the
favors and reverses of fortune from the beginning to the end of
the comedy. In one day, fortune gives him love and power as a
favorite of the king; but in that same day he discovers that the
lady of his love is also loved by the prince. Carci-Ruiz describes
his feelings, "De dichos y desdichado/Soy ejemplo en sólo un
día."20 As the final reward of fortune, he receives the hand of
Anarda and regains his position as favorite of the king.

19Bourland, op. cit., p. xvii.
The author, Alarcón, was not one who believed that all
questions of honor had to be resolved by killing the offender.
He believed in conquering, but after conquering the offender,
there is more greatness in pardoning him than in killing him. 21

In Los favores del mundo, the thought of the author is expressed
in the speech that prince Enrique gives after Carlos-Huiz has
snared the life of don Juan de Luna:

En vender está la gloria,
No en matar, que es vil acción
Jugar la almeja pacína
Y deslustra la victoria
La villana ejecución. 22

MUDARSE POR MAJORARSE

The scene of Mudarase por majorarase, is Madrid. Doña Clara,
an honest and rich widow, takes her beautiful orphan niece, Leonor,
to live with her. Don García has been a suitor of doña Clara for
the years, and she plans to marry him. Upon the arrival of Leonor,
don García secretly, without breaking his relations with doña
Clara, makes love to Leonor and arranges for his friend, don Felix,
to pretend to court the widow, doña Clara. Leonor believes that
she is in love with don García and in order to communicate with
him in front of doña Clara, she uses a system that don García


proposes. If don García removes his hat when he speaks, the remark will be directed to Leonor. When she responds without covering her lips with her fingers, the reply will be directed to don García. A relative, the marqués, with his friend Octavo, visits doña Clara. The marqués, an upright and noble man, falls in love with Leonor. With the arrival of the marqués, Leonor becomes more dignified and discreet. Don García tries to communicate with her, but she is occupied with the attentions of the marqués. Although doña Clara urges don García to speak of marriage, he finds excuses to delay the matrimony. When the marqués suggests to don García that they help each other in winning the hand of the aunt and the niece, don García gives the excuse that he has promised to help a friend win the hand of Leonor. Upon receiving this excuse, the marqués orders don García not to return to doña Clara's house.

Doña Clara, desperate from the excuses of don García, advises Leonor to accept the marqués for a husband. In order to avenge himself upon the marqués, don García sends a message by his servant to doña Clara asking her to meet him in the church of San Sebastián. His scheme is to draw doña Clara away from the house so that he can go there and gain Leonor's hand for marriage. Before don García arrives at the house of doña Clara, the marqués appears, offers his hand to Leonor, and is accepted. Having lost Leonor,
don García quickly avails himself of the opportunity to marry doña Clara.23

\[ \text{Madarse por mejorarse attacks inconsistency in love, a moral defect which was the product of the social environment of Spain in the time of Alarcón. In the drama, don García is guilty of disloyalty and ingratitude; he had courted doña Clara for two years and planned to marry her. Without breaking his relations with doña Clara or saying anything, he secretly takes love to the niece in doña Clara's house. He is chastised for his disloyalty and ingratitude by losing the lady he wanted to marry. In the following lines from the play, Leonor speaks of don García changing his affections in order to better himself:} \]

\[ \text{"Por siendo así,} \]
\[ \text{Y que os tengo, don García} \]
\[ \text{Por cuerdos, y dejáis mi tía} \]
\[ \text{Por mejoráros en mí} \]
\[ \text{Perdómemos vuestro amor} \]
\[ \text{Que a resistir me prevengo.} \]
\[ \text{Hasta que sepa si tengo} \]
\[ \text{Otra sobrina mejor."} \]

23\textit{Tud.}, II, pp. 5-165.
24\textit{Tud.}, II, p. 20.
CHAPTER IV

MORAL LESSONS IN ALARCÓN'S COMEDIAS HEROICAS

There are two plays of the nine moral comedies of manners that are classified as Comedias heroicas. In these works, Alarcón emphasizes the moral character of the personages and shows the character as seen through such positive virtues of the man as loyalty, friendship, and self-denial.

The names of the plays are Ganar amigos and Los pechos privilegiados. A summary with its moral lesson will be given of each play.\(^1\)

GANAR AMIGOS

The action of the heroic comedy, Ganar amigos, takes place in Seville in the fourteenth century during the reign of the king, don Pedro el Justiciero. Don Fernando de Godoy, a brave nobleman and admirer of the charming young lady, doña Flor, kills a young nobleman in a duel when the latter tries to draw him away from the window of doña Flor. When fleeing from the scene of the duel, don Fernando meets the marqués, don Fadrique, favorite of the king and suitor of doña Flor, and asks him for protection. After learning from don Fernando that the duel has been fought

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\(^1\)The footnote at the end of each summary refers to the edition of the play used in this study.
fairly with swords, the marqués gives his word, promising to protect don Fernando. A short while later, the marqués is informed that the one killed in the duel is his younger brother. In spite of this fact, the marqués keeps his word and gives refuge to don Fernando. Unknown to the marqués, doña Flor, who is in love with the marqués, has made don Fernando promise that he will never reveal that it was he who was speaking with her at the window. When don Fernando refuses to explain what he was doing near the window of doña Flor, the marqués challenges him to a duel with swords and conquers him. Although conquered and threatened with death, don Fernando is silent. The marqués, moved by the courage of don Fernando, spares his life and gives him his hand in friendship.

Upon learning that don Pedro de Luna, a favorite of the court, has violated the honor of a lady of the royal palace, the king tells the marqués to put him to death secretly. In order to save the life of don Pedro de Luna, the marqués convinces the king that he should send don Pedro de Luna to command the troops in Granada. Doña Ana, friend of doña Flor, goes to the marqués to intercede for doña Flor. Don Diego, brother of doña Flor, who is in love with doña Ana hears part of their conversation and thinks that they are in love. In order to avenge himself upon the marqués, don Diego disguises himself as the marqués and that night goes to doña Ana's room and offends her honor.
When doña Ana complains to the king of the offense that she has received, the marqués is taken prisoner. His enemies accuse him of ordering the death of his younger brother. Triumphant, don Pedro de Luna returns from Granada and, knowing that he owes his life to the marqués, offers to take his place in prison. Don Diego and don Fernando confess their transgressions and the marqués is released. The king, proud of the valor and nobility of the marqués, returns him to his grace and pardons all the transgressors. He concedes to don Pedro de Luna the hand of the lady whom he had visited in secret. Don Diego marries doña Ana and the marqués marries doña Flor.  

The comedy, Senor amigos sets forth a moral lesson by exalting the positive virtues of self-denial, friendship, and loyalty. The marqués, don Facrique, the principal character portraying these noble virtues, is rewarded with success as a favorita of the king and wins the hand of the lady that he desires. The marqués shows his noble character by honoring his word and fulfilling his promise to set free don Fernando who is his rival in love and who has killed his brother in a duel. The marqués speaks to don Fernando about fulfilling his word that he has given, "Papa para que yo cumpla hi palabra, habérala dado."  

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3Ibid., I, p. 328.
Later when don Fernando shows great courage, the marqués offers
him his hand in friendship. Don Fernando accepts and they become
loyal friends. In accepting the friendship of the marqués, don
Fernando says, "De eterna y firme amistad/La palabra y mano os
juro."

LOS FECHOS PRIVILEGIADOS

In the heroic comedy, Los fechos privilegiados, the action
is developed in León and Valmadrigal in the tenth and eleventh
centuries during the reign of Alfonso V of León. The title of
the drama alludes to the privilege of nobility conceded by the
king to the podrías that nursed the descendants of the illustrious
Villagómez family.

Rodrigo de Villagómez, advisor to Alfonso V, king of León,
is in love with Leonor, charming daughter of his loyal friend,
Count Melendo. Elvira, the other daughter of Count Melendo, loves
the king. Rodrigo is asked by the king, who is planning a marriage
with the princess of Castile, to help him arrange an improper
love affair with Elvira. As Rodrigo believes that his honor
will not allow him to deceive his friend, Count Melendo, he refuses
to comply with the king's wish and loses his favored position.

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Antonio Castro Leal, Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, su vida y su
obra (México: Ediciones Cuadernos Americanos, 1943), pp. 159-
160.
After Rodrigo refuses the request, the king warns him that he must keep the matter secret. Without explaining to anyone, Rodrigo retires to his estate in Valmadrigal. Although she loves the king, the beautiful and discreet Elvira is opposed to seeing him in secret. With the aid of Ramiro, the new royal advisor, the king gains access to the room of Elvira, but Count Malendo, informed in time discovers the king, who has not been able to conquer the resistance of Elvira. Recognising the nobility of Count Malendo and the righteousness of Elvira, the king promises to forget his pretensions.

Count Malendo asks the king for his approval of the marriage of Leonor and Rodrigo, but the king refuses to give his consent because Ramiro has caused him to believe that Rodrigo is really in love with Elvira, and that it was he who warned Count Malendo of the secret visit to Elvira's room. In the meantime, Rodrigo remains at his estate in Valmadrigal where the villana, Jimena, who cared for him as a child, consoles and helps him with consecrated affection. At his estate Rodrigo receives a visit from King Sancho of Navarra who wants to marry Elvira. Fearing King Alfonso, Count Malendo and his daughters come to Valmadrigal.

King Alfonso and Ramiro who have followed them to Valmadrigal, hear part of a conversation which causes King Alfonso to think that Rodrigo plans to seize the throne of León. King Alfonso and Ramiro attack Rodrigo who draws his sword to defend himself. While Rodrigo battles Ramiro, Jimena, the villana, intervenes,
seizes King Alfonso by the arms, and takes him a distance from
the fight. The villanos intend to kill Randro, but Rodrigo saves
his life. Dinana does not release King Alfonso until he promises
to pardon her, and she informs him that King Sancho is seeking
the hand of Alvira.

Count Belando renounces his allegiance to Leon and plans
to move to Navarra under the rule of King Sancho. When Alvira
learns of her father's plans, she arranges a meeting in the woods
with King Alfonso to give him an opportunity to marry her. Count
Belando and King Sancho are hidden near the meeting place. In
the interview, Alvira says good-bye to King Alfonso announcing
that she is going to marry King Sancho. When King Alfonso and
his aides want to detain her, King Sancho and Count Belando rush
to her defense. Dinana, who is with Alvira, seizes a sword and
defends King Alfonso. Rodrigo, who arrives, draws his sword and
shields King Alfonso with his body. Alvira intercedes and asks
King Alfonso if he intends to marry her. King Alfonso agrees
to marry Alvira, approves the marriage of Rodrigo and Leonor,
and restores Rodrigo to his royal position. In memory of that
great exploit, the privilege of nobility from then on was granted
to the Rodrigo that nursed the descendants of the Villagómez
family.6

6 Luis de Alarcón, op. cit., I, pp. 1-51.
Los pecados privilegiados exalts the virtues of self-denial, loyalty, and honor. Rodrigo, who exemplifies these noble virtues, is rewarded with success at the outcome of the play. Another noble character is the villana, Jimena, who shows loyalty and self-sacrifice in her defense of Rodrigo and King Alfonso.

The drama emphasizes the conflict between the respect that the king owes to the honor of the vassal and the loyalty that the vassal owes to the king. Rodrigo believes that his honor and dignity will not permit him to take part in the deceitful role of the king. He sacrifices his royal position and the king's approval of his marriage in order to maintain his dignity, honor, and loyal friendship of Count Valenza. When the king asks Rodrigo to arrange the improper love affair of Rodrigo, he replies:

¿Y en tan peco estimación
Confieso yo, que debía
Presurar me en vuestra
Injusta imaginación?
¿Y en tan poca estima
Como estimo yo, que crea
Que para una cosa fea
Valeros de mi queréis?

Although Rodrigo refuses to serve the king in the illicit love enterprise, he proves his loyalty when danger threatens the king by drawing his sword and shielding him with his body. Rodrigo exclaims:

No hay ofensas,
No hay contradec, ni ofensas;
Que en tocaría a la lealtad
No olviden los pechos nobles.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In the nine moral dramas of customs studied, Ruiz de Alarcón portrays the customs of the time, extolling the triumph of virtue and condemning moral defects.

The plays classified as comedias de carácter are the most numerous. Each of these dramas sets forth a moral defect. In some of these comedias the moral defect is solely a product of the character of the individual. Thus the author exposes the evils of lying in La verdad sospechosa, condemns slander in Las paredes oyen, praises loyalty in Le he jurado que por tiem no vengo, and criticizes ingratitude in La ruina de los promesas. In other comedias of this group, the moral defect is more a product of the social environment of Spain in the time of Alarcón than of the character of the individual. Thus the author presents the inconsistency in love in andar por mejoras, selection of a husband in All axolotl de maridos, and inconsistency of fortune in Los favores del mundo.

In the two plays classified as comedias heroicas, the author is preoccupied with making the noble moral character of his heroes evident. Therefore, in these comedias, Alarcón portrays the positive virtues that require the greatest sacrifice for virtue. In Jano odiosos and Los juegos privilegiados he
gives us the characters exemplifying self-denial, loyalty, honor, and friendship.

The moral dramas of Alarcón considered together form a sort of treatise on practical moral philosophy. In commenting on Alarcón's plays and their moral lessons, Arthur Owen wrote, "They carry their burden of moral teaching exceptionally well, the lessons being so woven into the development of plot and character that practically nothing could be removed without maruing the artistic unity of the play."¹

Ruis de Alarcón was observant, thoughtful, and reflective. One is amazed at the number of his contacts with human experience, in greater or lesser detail he handles the subjects of loyalty, love, friendship, jealousy, falsehood, ingratitude, slander, sexual morality, modesty, greed, vanity, self-control, sacrifice, the power of money, bravery, kindness, and honor.

Alarcón's theater as a whole appears more modern, so far as ideas go, than that of any of his contemporaries. His characters, such as the liar and slanderer, are universal types which belong to the twentieth century as well as to the seventeenth. "His moral code," asserted Arthur Owen, "is essentially as sound today as when it was written."² Ruis de Alarcón is the most modern in

²Ibid., p. xx.
spirit of any dramatist of his time.\(^3\) The moral lessons in Alarcón's
dramas are universal and permanent. In the words of César Tarja,
"Entiendes tan sólo el dramaturgo más practico en la forma y el
de pensamiento más moral. Entiendes el escritor que no es de ayer
ni de hoy, sino que es de siempre."\(^4\)

Juan Ruiz de Alarcón ranks with the best dramatists of
the Golden Age of Spanish literature. His comedies of estors
and varones contain moral lessons of practical philosophy for
the world.

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\(^3\) George Tyler Mortamy, \textit{An Introduction to Spanish Literature}

\(^4\) César Tarja, \textit{Libros y autores clásicos}, third edition,
revised (Burlington, Vermont: The Vermont Publishing Company,
BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS


A bibliography concerning Alarcón including a short biography.


A useful Spanish civilization text with a small section devoted to Alarcón.


An omnibus volume comprising ten of the best-known plays of the most representative Spanish dramatists of the Golden Age.


A study of important classical works and their authors.


An excellent introduction in English concerning Alarcón's biography, the character of his works, bibliographical data, and his verisimilitude.


A history of Spanish literature giving a critical examination of the principal dramatists, poets, and prose writers.


A collection of the works of the most important Mexican authors including brief biographical sketches and a bibliography.

A book which includes Alarcón's biography, an evaluation of his works, documents, and bibliographical data.


A history of Spanish literature with a brief discussion of individual writers.


A Spanish literature text, showing the position occupied by the great writers in the literature of Spain.


A description of Spanish literature from the beginning to 1700, dealing with the leading authors and their works.


A collection of the works of the most important Spanish authors, including brief biographical sketches.


A book which describes the life and literary accomplishments of Ruiz de Alarcón.


A competent description of the field of Spanish literature.

An excellent description of Spanish literature of the Middle Ages and Golden Age.


Twenty-seven *comedias* attributed by Hartzenbusch to Alarcón.


Alarcón's play, *No hay mal que por bien no venga*, with its introduction, was used for this study.


A text presenting the literary history of Mexico, including a description of the leading authors and their works.

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*Juana de Alarcón y su tiempo*. México: José Porras e Hijo, 1939. 327 pp.

A book including Alarcón's biography, and an evaluation of his dramas.


Contains a prologue in which several plays of Alarcón are discussed.


Includes a series of three lectures given by E. Monner Sans in the National College of Buenos Aires in 1914; giving quotations from the plays of Alarcón illustrating virtues, vices, and social customs.

A worthy Spanish literature text covering the life and works of the important Spanish writers.


An authoritative text of Spanish literature with a brief discussion of Spanish writers and their works.


An excellent introduction in English dealing with Alarcón's biography, the chronology of his works, notes, and bibliography.


A brief history of the Spanish theater from its beginning to modern times presenting an evaluation of the plays of the great dramatists.


A book describing the personages in the dramas of Alarcón.


Contains two plays, *La mudá y sus sospechas* and *Las paredes oyen*, and an excellent preface by Alfonso Rayes which presents Alarcón's life, works, and difficulties.


A detailed and competent description of the entire field of Spanish literature.


A detailed history of Spanish literature from the beginning of the sixteenth century to the end of the seventeenth.


A good text covering the field of Spanish literature.

B. PERIODICALS


A review in English of the contribution of Miss Dorothy Schons to the Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia (Madrid) for December, 1929. The material of Miss Schons for the biography of Juan Ruiz de Alarcón was drawn principally from fourteen documents discovered by her in the Archivo de Indias at Sevilla.


A review showing by quotations from Alarcón's dramas, his great knowledge concerning the theater, actors, customs and manners of the contemporary life of Madrid.

Owen, Arthur L. "La verdad sospechosa in the editions of 1630 and 1631," Hispania, 8:95-97, March, 1925.

Concerns the first plays written by Alarcón and the plays written later in his life, also a comparison of the 1630 and 1631 editions of La verdad sospechosa.