DUELING, HONOR AND SENSIBILITY IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY SPANISH SENTIMENTAL COMEDIES

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DUELING, HONOR AND SENSIBILITY IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY
SPANISH SENTIMENTAL COMEDIES

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
Graduate School of the University of Kentucky

By
Kristie Bulleit Niemeier
Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Ana Rueda, Professor of Spanish Literature
Lexington, Kentucky

2010

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

DEUELING, HONOR AND SENSIBILITY IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY SPANISH SENTIMENTAL COMEDIES

This dissertation explores the representation of dueling and honor in five theatrical works in order to answer one central question: How does the Golden Age concept of honor transform in the age of Enlightenment? This question may be broken down into specific inquiries, such as: 1) How is honor filtered through sentiment? 2) How did eighteenth-century ilustrados use theater to attempt to resolve the conflict between using violence to defend one’s honor and the Enlightenment ideal of avoiding excess? and 3) How did honor affect the private citizen and his relationship to the state in plays?

During the eighteenth century, the age of sensibility rewrote the duel, transforming it from a ritual connected with the aristocracy into an act tied to individual, often middle-class lives. This project begins with an early play by José de Cañizares, *Por acrisolar su honor* (1711) and then examines sentimental comedies published and performed toward the end of the century: Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos’ *El delincuente honrado* (1773), Luciano Francisco Comella’s *La Jacoba* (1789), Antonio Valladares de Sotomayor’s *El vinatero de Madrid* (1784) and Gaspar Zavala y Zamora’s *El amante generoso* (1791). Sentimental comedies use sensibility to focus on individuals’ honor conflicts. An analysis of the representation of dueling offers a glimpse of the complex intermingling of multiple definitions of Spanish culture, where neither a lone enlightened model nor an identity based primarily on Spain’s Baroque past prevails. While sentimental comedies present conclusions that ostensibly exalt honor as virtue and rely on a belief in humanity’s goodness to resolve their conflicts, their representations of dueling point to a tense coexistence of multiple definitions of Spanish identity in the eighteenth century. Virtue is never enough to override the accusation that someone is a coward for not accepting a dueling challenge. The inclusion of extra elements that cater to social prejudices of the time also undermines the notion of honor-as-virtue. The contradictions revealed by sympathetic representations of dueling may point to the failure of sensibility as a cohesive model for resolving dramatic conflicts in a society with such diverse definitions of honor and citizenship.
KEYWORDS: Dueling, Eighteenth Century, Honor, Sentimental Comedies, Spain

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DISSERTATION

Kristie Bulleit Niemeier

The Graduate School
University of Kentucky
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For Anastasia
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Introduction

In the midst of a debate over dueling legislation in Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos’ 1773 sentimental comedy, *El delincuente honrado*, Don Torcuato declares that it is a terrible thing to punish by death an action that is otherwise considered honorable. Considering his personal situation, his statement reads more like a legal defense than a philosophical treatise, because Don Torcuato himself was recently responsible for the death of another in a duel that he himself did not initiate but rather sought to avoid. Despite the fact that he never instigated the duel and several times attempted to dissuade his opponent from continuing with his challenge, Don Torcuato nonetheless faces the death penalty for his participation in an illegal, yet widely accepted crime. This agonizing situation points to a complex and unsettling societal notion of honor that drives the central conflicts of many literary works.

Dueling in literature occurs as an expression of conflicts over honor, even though what constitutes honor changes from one period to the next. Honor, the professed motivation for many characters’ actions and attitudes, is a deeply entrenched societal force that drives individuals, but one that must be framed within a specific cultural context. Claude Chauchadis observes an intimate connection between the *código del honor* and the *ley del duelo*, or, the “honor code” and “law of the duel” (24). Many times the two are synonymous, suggesting that honor cannot be comprehended without the duel. Contained within the dueling code are the rules of decorum, terms for the gravity of offenses against one’s character, and the conditions of satisfaction (Chauchadis 468); all these elements are central to interpreting the state of an individual’s honor before society.
This study will focus on representations of the duel in the theater, specifically sentimental comedies. Because of theater’s popularity and its accessibility to a variety of people, including the illiterate, this genre crosses class lines and offers access to the public mentality concerning the duel and honor as well as the discourse that the Bourbons and many enlightened Spaniards desired to propagate.

The continued respect for the duel posed several contradictions within the eighteenth century. The duel, an act of violence, contrasted with the notion of tempering the passions with reason. The emerging influence of empirical philosophers such as John Locke and David Hume contributed to the increased value of individual experience and interpretation, yet the duel’s continued support suggests that public opinion persisted in compelling individuals to act against their wishes. In *El delincuente honrado*, Don Torcuato admits that he tried to avoid a duel, but honor, a force which dwells not in the hands of the individual but rather in the will of public opinion (8), eventually compels him to participate. Finally, dueling’s origins within the aristocracy makes its persisting presence in the eighteenth century surprising, especially in light of the criticism that many *ilustrados* directed at *hidalgos* and members of the Spanish nobility for their frequent refusal to exercise any profession and become useful members of society.

Despite the prevalence of dueling in Spanish society and the numerous essays and dueling manuals written during the nineteenth century, few twentieth and twenty-first century investigations have considered it. Rafael Abella’s social history of dueling, *Lances de honor* (*Duels of Honor*) (1995), provides a panoramic view of the duel in Spain from the Middle Ages into the beginning of the twentieth century. Abella borrows heavily from Julio Urbina y Cevallos-Escalera Cabriñana’s 1900 history of dueling and
honor code, *Lances de honor: código del honor en España* (*Duels of Honor: The Honor Code In Spain*), offering a concise overview of several historical Spanish documents that addressed dueling codes and legislation.

To the best of my knowledge, only one significant study has directly addressed dueling in Spanish literature: \(^1\) Chauchadis’ *La loi du duel : le code du point d’honneur dans l’Espagne des XVIe-XVIIe siècles* (*The Law of the Duel: The Code of the Point of Honor in Spain in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*) (1997). It examines the *ley del duelo* in Golden Age Spain, exploring the law of honor’s role in several plays and nonfictional works. Because of the overall scarcity of scholarly work on the duel in Spain, Chauchadis proposes an interdisciplinary, Foucaultian study of the law of the duel and the law of honor (23). In addition to tracing the evolution of the *ley del duelo*, Chauchadis studies debates about the code of honor among different societal institutions as well as specific dueling cases to consider what social forces shaped this code (24). He notes that enough textual evidence exists to conclude that the duel is a significant phenomenon in the history of the mentality of Spain (21).

Fernando Díaz-Plaja devotes a portion of a chapter in his *La vida cotidiana en la España romántica* (*Daily Life in Romantic Spain*)\(^2\) (1993) to the duel’s prevalence in Romantic literature, but almost dismisses the importance of dueling altogether during the Enlightenment in *La vida cotidiana en la España ilustrada* (*Daily Life in Enlightened Spain*) (1997) with the scant attention he lends to it. He recognizes that a conflict existed

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\(^1\) Though Walter Harold Campbell wrote a master’s thesis in 1934 entitled *Changing Attitude Toward the Duel in Spanish Drama*, which considers the role of the duel in Spanish theatre beginning in the Early Modern era and proceeding through Romanticism, the scope of his work remains broad, intending only to provide a very general overview of the topic.

\(^2\) Unless otherwise stated, the translations of titles and quotes in this project are my own. All titles and quotes are translated in order to provide literal renderings in English of the original texts and in the case of the quotes from plays, do no attempt to conform to any metrical scheme.
within the society between the efforts of the Bourbons and many *ilustrados* to eradicate dueling via harsh punitive laws and exaggerated satirical portrayals in literature and society. Díaz-Plaja briefly notes an interesting contradiction within the criticism of dueling in expressed by the *abbé* (225-30) in Ramón de la Cruz’s *El petimetre (The Fashion-Conscious Man)*: “no se olvide que el que habla es un personaje ridículo y artificial, con lo que la impresión del lector es que el autor de la obra, como la mayoría de los espectadores, estaría más de acuerdo con los violentos tradicionales que con los comprensivos recientes” (29). The implication is that deep down even many enlightened Spaniards identified with an honor that if offended required its defense with violence.

My study explores this contradiction in depth in order to consider one central question: How does the Golden Age concept of honor transform in the age of Enlightenment? This key question is broken down into other inquiries: 1) How is honor filtered through sentiment? Many times the decision to participate in a duel is associated with sensibility; how does this association affect perceptions of sensibility? 2) How did eighteenth-century *ilustrados* use theater to attempt to resolve the conflict between using violence to defend one’s honor and the Enlightenment ideal of avoiding excess? 3) How did honor affect the relationship between the individual and the state in these plays? What sort of relationship exists between characters who duel and their nation? The state often turned to the theater as a political tool for influencing the public at large, as seen in the legislation directed toward the stage as well as in many philosophical essays. By addressing these questions I hope to illuminate how literature of the eighteenth-century

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3 “Do not forget that the one who speaks is a ridiculous and artificial character, with whom the impression of the reader is that the work’s author, like the majority of spectators, would be more in agreement with traditional, violent men than with the more recent, comprehensive men” (29).
articulated social conflicts between the general public’s views and the desires of
*ilustrados* who wanted to educate the public, as well as what attempts were made to
resolve these problems. In this way the Spanish concept of honor, so central in history
and literature, may begin to be viewed not as a fixed concept but as a fluid discourse that
changed over time.

This project will explore these inquiries into Spain’s eighteenth-century concept
of honor by considering four interrelated topics which frequently emerge in theatrical
presentations of the duel: the debate over dueling legislation, the relationship between the
individual and the nation, the link between one’s profession and sense of honor, and the
conflict over how to define masculinity. Each chapter will deal in depth with the
collective questions on honor filtered through its individual eighteenth-century topic in
order to present a new perspective and open up the discussion.

Spain’s eighteenth-century notions of honor grant us access to the ways in which
conflicts between “traditional” codes and “modern” Enlightenment values were
articulated during the age of sensibility. These conflicts emerged in several arenas and
often manifested themselves in the internal dilemmas of individual protagonists
struggling with their place in society. For example, at the core of the debate over dueling
legislation was the question of the extent to which the circumstances of the individual
should influence the interpretation of the state’s laws. And within the context of dueling,
one observes individuals grappling with their role in the community as they struggle to
satisfy their personal sense of honor before the eyes of the world.

Though dueling appears in both novels and plays, I have chosen to focus each
chapter on one primary theatrical work, specifically a sentimental comedy, or *comedia*
lacrimosa. It is important to note that the neo-classical comedy, or comedia alta, from the school of Moratín generally did not present internal conflicts concerning honor and the duel, whose portrayal would not fit within the limits of decorum (Palacios Fernández 202). Sentimental comedies depict a unique internal conflict within their characters as they grapple with contradictory concepts of honor: the honor of Enlightenment connected with individual virtue, and the traditional Golden Age concept of honor associated with social reputation.

In The “Comedia Lacrimosa” and Spanish Romantic Drama Joan Lynne Pataky Kosove notes that Ignacio de Luzán as well as many other Spanish neo-classicists supported comedias lacrimosas for their didactic nature and sense of moral purpose (44). These traits as well as the approval of members of the enlightened intellectual community suggest that a study using sentimental comedies will provide the opportunity to explore the efforts of ilustrados to resolve societal conflicts surrounding the Spanish sense of honor. Plays served as a tool “to reform, to set the human heart in harmony with principles of virtue” (Kosove 47) that the ilustrados wished to propagate among the public. Sentimental comedies generally tried to reproduce many of the realistic and difficult situations that form a part of human existence. In addition, this genre “Valora el sentimiento como un elemento constitutivo del hombre de bien” (Palacios-Fernández 209). This combination of social realism and sentimentality serves to explore Enlightened Spain’s interpretation of honor and its troubled relationship with the duel.

Nonetheless, the comedia lacrimosa is not the only genre which deals with dueling. For example, novels such as Pablo Olavide’s El evangelio en triunfo (The

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4 “…positively values sentiment as a constituent element of the enlightened man” (Palacios-Fernández 209).
articulate the internal struggles of protagonists who participate in or contemplate participating in a duel.\(^5\) While these novels might provide some insight into the authors’ views on dueling and honor, they were often inaccessible to Spain’s largely illiterate public (Soubeyroux 165).

These novels and other works which include a duel can serve as ancillary texts to lend insight into the themes I consider in each chapter. I will employ an archival method where I explore the relationships between the plays studied in each chapter and other texts from the eighteenth-century in order to observe cultural attitudes toward the duel and honor. To explore eighteenth-century Spain’s new concept of honor I will use a historical method and apply several theories of Michel Foucault, which deal with the historical dimensions of discursive change. Foucault’s works on crime, deviation and the penal system of the eighteenth century fit well with a study of the duel, an illegal act that served as a source of social tension. In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* Foucault explores changes made in the eighteenth-century’s penal system where punishment became a hidden force in society. He notes that “jurists and philosophers were seeking…a primal model for the construction or reconstruction of the social body…the technicians of discipline were elaborating procedures for the individual and collective coercion of bodies” (169). Whether the target was the collective or individual body, leaders from the arts and the sciences sought to mold society using hidden methods

\(^5\) The protagonist’s crisis of faith in *El evangelio en triunfo* is precipitated by both the sudden death of his friend Manuel (21) and a duel in which he severely wounds the other man (27). As a result of these two events the protagonist rejects foreign philosophy and embraces the teachings of Catholicism. The front illustration of the novel, “Alegoría de toda la obra del *Evangelio en triunfo*” (“Allegory of the entire work of *The Triumphant Gospel*”), depicts two copies of the Bible on a table, and cast on the floor the works of Rousseau, Voltaire and Diderot. Mor de Fuentes’ protagonist in *La Serafina* also grapples with a desire to defend his honor, but rather than connecting this desire with modern philosophy, he describes it as a longstanding aspect of Spanish society that will not disappear in the near future (142).
that included the influence of language. Foucault’s *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* chronicles a fundamental change in language during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, where because of the “functioning of representation; all language had value only as discourse. The art of language was a way of ‘making a sign’-- of simultaneously signifying something and arranging signs around that thing” (43). Considering this representational role of language, I will analyze interpretations of dueling in sentimental comedies and compare these with other representations of the duel in various types of texts in order to view changes in eighteenth-century Spain’s concept of honor.

Most likely, multiple ideas about honor will emerge because of shifts occurring in society and because, as Chauchadis has observed, honor was already a source of conflict among different institutions during Spain’s Golden Age era. He notes that the law of the duel often usurped the authority of both civil and religious law (468). In the eighteenth century many authors of literary works also wrote on philosophy, law, science, and social customs, often within their novels and plays. The fluid relationship among different subject areas in literature renders a consideration of other historical, philosophical, and journalistic texts necessary. I propose that within sentimental comedies, authors used the duel to attempt to both resolve and articulate dilemmas over honor in order to influence the public-at-large. To fully understand these conflicts, however, it is necessary to widen the general scope of texts to include more than sentimental comedies alone.

Each chapter will use one primary sentimental comedy as a focal text to explore a theme related to dueling, honor, and sentimentality. Ancillary texts— such as other plays, novels, newspapers, and essays from the time—will aid in the exploration of these
themes in order to re-construct the period’s prominent discourse on honor and the duel. Before examining how the Spanish concept of honor had changed in the late eighteenth century, it is important to consider the honor of Golden Age Spain. Chapter One will provide an overview of the history of dueling in Spain and theatrical representations of honor in the Golden Age \textit{comedia}. José de Cañizares’ \textit{Por acrisozar su honor, competidor hijo, y padre: el duelo contra su padre} (\textit{To Purify Their Honor: Competing Son and Father, Dueling Against His Father}) (1754), which belongs to the Calderonian school and thus has a lot in common with Early Modern plays, will serve as a jumping-off point for this study as the focal text for Chapter Two. Cañizares (1676-1750), who along with Antonio de Zamora is one of the most frequently mentioned dramatists of the early eighteenth-century in Spain, was heavily influenced by Lope de Vega and Pedro Calderón de la Barca (Johns 32). The presentation of a detailed dueling ceremony in Act III of \textit{Por acrisozar su honor} makes this play an ideal text to begin the discussion of the changes that dueling and honor were already undergoing during the first half of the eighteenth century. For example, dueling was no longer only an opportunity for a nobleman to display his courage or perform a service for the monarchy (Chauchadis 468). Pieter Spierenberg has observed a change in ideas about honor beginning in the late seventeenth century and extending into the eighteenth. He notes that:

\begin{quote}
In western Europe over the last three hundred years or so, concepts of honor have moved in the direction of spiritualization…in its spiritualized form, honor is linked primarily to inner virtues. It depends on an evaluation of a person’s moral stature or psychological condition, in which outer appearance plays a much less significant part. (5-6)
\end{quote}
This spiritualization manifests itself in Cañizares’s *Por acrisolar su honor* in the conflict over dueling between a father and son whose lives mirror one another so much that they appear to be reflections of the same person. Though war occurs in this play, the personal dilemma over whether father and son should participate in a duel mandated by the honor code serves as the focal conflict and also calls into question what should constitute honor.

The focal texts for chapters three through six are authored by key figures in late eighteenth-century popular theater in Spain. Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos has been credited with writing Spain’s first original sentimental comedy (García Garrosa *La retórica de las lágrimas* 57). Luciano Francisco Comella, Antonio Valladares de Sotomayor and Gaspar Zavala y Zamora, some of the most popular playwrights of the late eighteenth century, are also among “los verdaderos creadores del teatro sentimental español, autores de docenas de comedias originales, malas traducciones y adaptaciones de todas clases y dentro de todos los géneros” (García Garrosa *La retórica de las lágrimas* 59). All four of these authors, influenced by Enlightenment precepts found in works on empiricism, and sensibility, and in French and British theater, took these ideals and converted them into theatrical pieces which appealed to the Spanish public.

In Chapter Three I study *El delincuente honrado* (*The Honorable Culprit*) (1787) by Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos, which is the only comedia among the focal texts that was written in prose. *El delincuente honrado* specifically examines the problematic legislation surrounding dueling. The protagonist Don Torcuato, an enlightened man, has

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6 “the true creators of Spanish sentimental theater, authors of dozens of original comedies, poor translations and adaptations of all kinds, and within all genres” (García Garrosa *La retórica de las lágrimas* 59). José López de Sedano and Vicente Rodríguez de Arellano are also included in García Garrosa’s list of foundational authors of sentimental comedies.

7 Kosove notes that “The more prevalent use of verse in the *comedia lacrimosa* in Spain is a concession to Spanish taste” (33).
participated in a duel which resulted in the death of his opponent. This play grapples with the problematic law against dueling, which called for the death penalty of all participants without examining their individual circumstances.

Dueling legislation, the central theme under consideration in Chapter Two, highlights two ongoing subjects of debate of the era: dueling itself, which had elicited many philosophical arguments throughout Europe, and legislation, a heated topic in Spain. According to Ivy McClelland’s *Spanish Drama of Pathos*, upon focusing his play on dueling legislation, Jovellanos was transferring the topic of the duel “to a Spanish context…a Spanish angle at a time when any theme concerning legal procedure in his country where the working of the law was expensive, unequal, and slow, would be sure to arouse strong feeling” (*Spanish Drama of Pathos* 409). This chapter will offer an explanation of how dueling legislation articulates a conflict between the individual and the Spanish state.

Jovellanos wrote *El delincuente honrado* shortly after revisions to the dueling laws by the state (McClelland 406), which sought to eradicate what it viewed as a barbaric practice. Though the reasons for the failure to eliminate dueling are complex, one factor is surely the fact that arguments against it were linked to the French, or *la moda francesa* (Díaz-Plaja 28), and at times the “growing nationalism of enlightened Spaniards” (Herr 341) as well as conservative opposition to foreign influence contributed to an ambivalent attitude toward the duel.

Chapter Four will consider the complex theme of Spain’s struggle to determine its place in Enlightened Europe and the connection between this conflict and the duel. The focal text, Luciano Francisco Comella’s *La Jacoba* (1789), in addition to containing a
detailed debate about the duel, honor and the law, sets this debate within an extended dueling scene between two characters, Milord Tolmin and the Conde de Esteren. This sentimental comedy, set in London, shows the influence that France and England exercised in Spain. McClelland, states that the primary themes of sentimental comedies were derived from England and France, and they “crossed and recrossed the Channel and influenced each other constantly” (430). In addition, dueling had become a theme of heated debate throughout enlightened Europe, since, according to honor theorist Ute Frevert, during the Enlightenment a need arose to articulate opinions on the duel (19).

Chapter Four seeks to establish the nature of the relationship between Spain’s growing nationalism, foreign influence and the institution of the duel. These factors all influenced the interaction between the individual citizen, his sense of honor and his sense of good citizenship, but how? How were these relationships articulated in sentimental comedy?

Chapter Five will consider Antonio Valladares de Sotomayor’s El vinatero de Madrid (The Wine Vendor of Madrid) (1784), which illustrates the recurrent theme of the problematic relationship between exercising a profession and possessing honor. The late eighteenth century in Spain saw an increase in the number of working-class participants in dueling (Abella 32). In Valladares’ sentimental comedy we see an example of this case when a poor wine vendor marches out to challenge a Marquis to a duel. The young man had visited the wine vendor’s daughter and promised to marry her, but after the fact he retracted his offer. The virtuous working-class man is a recurring character in Valladares’ plays. In The “Comedia Lacrimosa” and Spanish Romantic Drama Kosove mentions finance, commerce and trade as typical themes in the sentimental comedies of this author (56). According to Kosove, El vinatero de Madrid presents the interaction
between the working class and the nobility in order to highlight the former’s virtue and dignity (60).

The notion of Juan the wine vendor’s lost honor is central to this sentimental comedy, and it is one among several plays of the 1780s and 1790s which sought to convince Spaniards “that it was more honourable for a man of means to work or even passively to retain business interests than to be idle” (McClelland 474). It is thus interesting that the virtuous wine vendor—who is truly a noble in disguise—resorts to dueling to defend his honor. McClelland views the inclusion of the duel as a misinterpretation or another example of when “a Spaniard mistook foreign sensibility for his own captious sentiment of honour” (477). However, maybe what is taking place is not a mere misinterpretation of sensibility but rather a case of a Spanish author adapting a theme to social practices. Valladares’ adaptation reveals inherent contradictory attitudes toward work and reputation that call into question the effectiveness of sensibility in resolving dramatic conflicts of honor.

Finally, a study on dueling and honor should take into consideration perceptions of masculinity. In the late eighteenth century arguments for honor-as-virtue coincided with the figure of the hombre de bien, an enlightened man who, according to Rebecca Haidt in Embodying Enlightenment, did not succumb to the influence of the passions, but instead practiced self-restraint (12). These enlightened, virtuous figures often appeared as superior suitors in sentimental literature, including lachrymose comedies.

Chapter Six examines competing models of masculinity in Gaspar de Zavala y Zamora’s El amante generoso (The Generous Suitor) (1791). This sentimental comedy features a mock duel between During and Kerson, two suitors vying for Christina’s hand.
During represents enlightenment ideals in his generous behavior and appeals to reason, but Daerts, Christina’s father, has selected Kerson for his daughter in order to further the family’s financial and social standing. Whereas the duels in the previously-mentioned comedias transmit an air of gravity, During manipulates the honor code in order to ridicule Kerson and expose him as an inferior choice for Christina. This mock duel is staged to confirm the superiority of the hombre de bien, who is honorable because he practices virtue and reason.

For my conclusion I will offer some commentaries on how the four focal themes present a picture of an eighteenth-century Spanish honor that is distinct from its Golden Age antecedent in the comedia. As the duel in sentimental comedies filters honor through sentiment, it appears to render the latter problematic. Within the honor code of Enlightened Spain numerous conflicts seethed. Differing opinions on legislation clashed, the nobility was pitted against the working class, and all these found their expression through the ritual of the duel, which instead of resolving problems invoked sympathy over conflicts. The dramatic failure of sensibility, rather than reflecting the Enlightenment balance between reason and the passions, brings to the surface the uneasiness of an unstable society. Dueling historian V.G. Kiernan observes that the Enlightenment, in spite of its exaltation of an equal balance between reason and the passions, was in many ways “an era of divided soul” (165). This division manifests itself in the question of the duel and honor and continues to grow and fester in other texts until it assumes its destructive form in Romanticism. By examining the duel this project places the eighteenth-century sentimental comedy as a link between Calderonian honor and Romantic theater.
Chapter One: Historical and Literary Background

The connection between dueling and literature in Spain extends back to the *cartas de batalla* ("letters of challenge") of the Middle Ages. These letters were the official documents that nobleman wrote to issue a dueling challenge (Orejudo 24). Antonio Orejudo states that often these letters were posted on church doors or in plazas, and the public faithfully attended duels in large numbers. Orejudo also notes the influence of these letters on Spain’s *romances caballerescos* ("ballads of chivalry") and chronicles, which abounded in terms taken from dueling ceremonies (21). Chauchadis observes that several readings¹ of the duel have appeared in a variety of genres, such as *comedias de capa y espada* ("cloak and dagger plays") (467). This tradition continues into the long eighteenth century in Spain both in the continued popularity of the plays of Lope de Vega and Calderón and also in the use of dueling and honor as central elements in many dramatic conflicts.

This chapter will provide a brief overview of the history of dueling in Europe and its development in Spain through the eighteenth century. Next, it will turn to literary representations of dueling and honor in Golden Age Spanish theater. I argue that theatrical portrayals of dueling and honor conflicts articulated a more vertical concept of honor based on hierarchy. Honor conflicts tended to fall under the authority of a king or some other royal figure.

¹ Chauchadis specifically applies these “readings”, or interpretations, to the law of the duel, stating that this law does not have one definite textual localization (467).
I. History of Dueling

The duel’s precise origins are difficult to pinpoint. Rafael Abella mentions that Vikings and other Celtic groups were known to engage in one-on-one combat where the individuals, tethered to one another, fought to the death using knives (19), and Cabriñana notes that at the time of the fall of the Roman Empire Germanic tribes made use of a personal duel as a means of resolving conflicts (17). Robert Baldick pinpoints the judicial duel to the establishment of a law in 501 A.D. by Gundebald, King of the Burgundians which legalized the practice (12). The individuals may have represented themselves or their families, and the outcome of a judicial duel was supposed to have been determined by heaven. William Oliver Stevens mentions that initially the Catholic Church approved of the judicial duel, believing that God would create a favorable outcome for the participant whose cause was just (2). With this belief we see a vertical concept of honor. Its descendant, the *duelo de honor*, or “duel of honor”, prearranged combat on foot between two individuals, which constitutes the focus of this study, emerged later, during the historical period following the Renaissance (Abella 20).

According to Kiernan, the practice of dueling was elaborated in Italy, spread to France, and the French then helped spread it quickly through Europe (6). Eventually a dueling code was established during the fifteenth century. Kiernan mentions Girolamo Muzio’s *Il duello (The Duel)*, published in 1550 at Venice, as one of the more prominent examples of these codes (48). Such treatises contained the conditions for settling honor disputes through the use of dueling. They described the types of offenses that justified dueling as well as various regulations for dueling ceremonies, such as the selection of weapons and substitutes if a participant was unable to fight (Niemeier 3).
In theory, the outcome of the judicial duel was to be decided by divine authority. In practice, the king facilitated the ritual during the Middle Ages, determining when and where the battle would occur as well as overseeing the selection of arms (Martínez de Pinillos 7). As the judicial duel gave way to the duel of honor, both religious and civil authorities began to view it as a threat, issuing laws against its practice. Historian Claude Gauvard states that during the late medieval period the French monarchy saw a need to increase its influence in the punishment of crime and maintenance of social order (1), an attitude which was also held by the Catholic monarchs. According to Chauchadis the law of the duel was described as diabolical by the Catholic Church, which stated that it went against the law of the Gospel, due to its tendency to value vengeance over forgiveness and honor over life. The Church also condemned the law of the duel for taking away free will and constraining men to react to the provocations of their adversaries (467). Moreover the law of the duel was sometimes viewed as trampling upon the official law, because dueling participants could disturb public order yet still escape punishment due to their positions of privilege (Chauchadis 468).

As a result of this perceived threat, the Catholic monarchs crafted a rigorous law against duels in 1480. The consequences of issuing or accepting a challenge were severe. Even if the duel never took place, anyone who issued a challenge would have all their possessions confiscated. If the challenger wounded or killed his rival during the duel, he would be condemned to death. The penalty for the one who accepted the challenge and emerged victorious was exile (Martínez de Pinillos 9). Later the monarchs from the House of Austria reinforced the desires of the Catholic monarchs; Charles I, Phillip II and Phillip IV all imposed stringent penalties against dueling (Martínez de Pinillos 10).
Despite the inconsistency of enforcement of dueling laws, their existence displays an emerging conflict among Early Modern Spain’s notions of honor that would crystallize into outright opposition between individuals and their nation in the eighteenth century.

II. Dueling and Honor in Golden Age Spain and Its Comedias

Golden Age Spain’s notion of honor is complex because various ideas of honor coexisted at that time. In his groundbreaking study on dueling in Spain, La loi du duel, Chauchadis outlines several different readings of what he terms la loi du duel, or “law of the duel,” a term intimately connected with the código del honor or “honor code” (24) that describe several societal notions about honor, such as the idea of chivalry, which authorizes a gentleman to carry out his own justice and commemorate his ancestors’ exploits, and decorum, or a code of good manners that indicates the conditions of satisfaction in the Christian duel (Chauchadis 467-8). However, despite the large number of variations on the law of the duel, I would suggest that a sense of hierarchy connects them, and its influence is seen in Golden Age comedias. This notion of hierarchy has been described as the “vertical” aspect of honor by scholars such as Gustavo Correa. Honra vertical (“vertical honor”) reflects a stratified society whose basic structure emerged during the Medieval period and points to an individual’s place within the social scale (Correa 99-100).

Correa lays out a framework for examining dramatic honor in his article, “El doble aspecto de la honra en el teatro del siglo XVII,” describing it in the vertical sense, mentioned above, and also in a horizontal sense, where he defines it as fama or reputación. He draws on the cultural influences of the seventeenth century, noting, “Es
evidente, sin embargo, que como móvil de acción dramática más importante en la
comedia, la honra sólo puede explicarse cabalmente si examinamos su vinculación con
realidades auténticas y valores e ideales profundos de la cultura española de entonces”
(101).² Like Correa, this project recognizes the strong ties between historical ideals
about honor and its dramatic representation, and it uses Correa’s notions of *honra vertical*
and *honra horizontal* to examine *comedias*. However, while dueling is not considered in
Correa’s article, it does fit neatly into his framework. Furthermore, though Correa’s
work places vertical and horizontal honor on an equal plane in terms of their influence on
*comedias*, eighteenth-century Spanish theater shifted away from vertical honor toward a
greater emphasis on horizontal honor.

Before exploring this shift, however, the history of the law of the duel must be
examined in order to fully understand its theatrical representation. Originally, dueling
validated both divine and civic authority. It is a phenomenon intimately linked with
social classes, particularly the aristocracy. Thus dueling consists of far more than a mere
fight:

By the ritual of the duel, private resentments were lifted above the merely
personal level of revenge; the combatant’s honour merged into that of the class to
which both he and his antagonist belonged, and to which they were making a joint
obeisance. It was the corporate honour that all its members were bound to
uphold. Refusing to seek safety by retreating from the sanctions of his code, the

² “It is evident, however, that as the most important motive for dramatic action in the *comedia*, honor can only be completely explained if we examine its connection with the authentic realities and values and profound ideals of Spanish culture at that time” (101).
duelist epitomized the determination of his class not, under any threat, to abdicate its leading position. (Kiernan 15)

In this context dueling constituted a form of communication through which the aristocracy expressed its superiority to other classes. Dueling reaffirmed nobility at the same time that it confirmed the high place of its members in the social hierarchy.

Chauchadis observes that over time, both civil and religious authorities viewed the duel as a threat that usurped their respective domains (467). Nonetheless, Golden Age comedias continued to affirm the authority of royal figures in dueling ceremonies and honor conflicts, reinforcing a vertical concept of honor. This discrepancy reflects a society that did not lend itself to an open questioning of its hierarchy on stage. In her study of the representation of kings in Madrid in Golden Age comedias, Jodi Campbell observes that even plays which portray abuses by royal figures never advocate outright rebellion against the social system (140). Playwrights might question the established order, but Campbell notes that complicated plot twists often maintain the status quo. Perhaps the monarchy’s frequent attendance at comedias in Madrid helps explain the playwrights’ “tenuous position between wanting to please their public and not wanting to endanger themselves by criticizing the government”. Playwrights faced dangers in overtly condemning the monarchy (15). In addition to the potential consequences of punishment, Campbell also concludes that among audiences, the theme of a virtuous king was popular (141), which suggests that the notion of a hierarchical social structure prevailed. It makes sense that the law of the duel reflects a vertical notion of honor in seventeenth-century plays, because, as Campbell states, “Reputation was a cultural touchstone in early modern Spain, vital to the maintenance of the social order: everyone
had a position and was expected to conduct him or herself according to the expectations and obligations of that position” (65).

Among Chauchadis’ readings of the duel is the law of the duel as a literary, especially theatrical, convention which encompasses many aspects of the previously presented readings. The noble character in the *comedia* cannot escape the demands of the law of the duel, even though he may protest against its barbarity. The law of the duel provokes confrontation with religious or civil law. However, obedience to the law of the duel also provides a protagonist an opportunity to display his courage and justify his honor as he follows the principles inscribed in the laws of chivalry and decorum. In Baroque theatrical fiction, the law of the duel rarely has a problematic function. When it emerges harmony is quickly restored, and many times the courage shown by the gentleman is put to the service of the monarchy (Chauchadis 468). Thus, though contradictions existed among the multiple readings of honor and dueling in Golden Age Spain, the monarchy still emerged as a key authority in theatrical texts.

Américo Castro offers a thorough elaboration of the place of honor in Golden Age Spanish theater in his extensive article, “Algunas observaciones acerca del concepto del honor en los siglos XVI y XVII,” which not only examines honor in several plays but also contains critical summaries of many previous studies of the concept. In his exploration of the theme of honor, Castro links it to the nobility or social hierarchy and equates it with reputation: “el honor y la fama son idénticos; la pérdida de la honra es análoga a la pérdida de la vida” (19). He uses Juan de la Cueva’s *El Infamador*, or *The Slanderer*, represented in 1579 and printed in 1588, to illustrate the fundamental place of public opinion in matters of honor. Castro quotes Ircano, the father of a daughter accused

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3 “honor and fame are identical; the loss of honor is analogous to loss of life” (Castro 19).
of libertine behavior: “Que no me ofende menos, ni deshonra, / la maldad que mi hija a (sic) cometido, / si la nobleza de quien soy me honra’’’ (19).⁴ This quote emphasizes the opinion of the nobility, which suggests that not only does reputation form a key component of honor, but even more important, reputation cements a person’s place in the social scale. Thus, honor maintains a more vertical structure. Other studies corroborate this understanding of honor.

Besides Kiernan, who places the origins of dueling within the context of a feudal, and thus hierarchical society, Robert Nye concludes that the honor code in France arose in part “to distribute prestige (and therefore status)” among members of society (9). According to Nye the “concept of honor originated in an ideology of noble military service, and became associated, on account of strategies of inheritance, reproduction, and power with the idea of noble race” (15). The practice of dueling confirmed societal notions of the honor code. Jennifer A. Low considers the context of Early Modern England, including both actual duels and theatrical representations. She links the practice of dueling to nostalgia for its chivalric origins, noting the mutual influence between historical duels and their representation in dramatic texts. Low states that “The cultural connotations of the duel were structured by the aristocratic perception of the heroic ideal, deriving from jousts, from the late medieval romances, and from classical antecedents” (5). The “heroic ideal” that so influenced dueling in Early Modern England possesses a vertical structure because of its basis on a hierarchical social scale that closely resembles the social structure operating in Early Modern Spain.

⁴ ‘The evil that my daughter has committed does not offend me as much, nor does it dishonor, if the nobility of which I am a part honors me’ (19).
CASTRO turns to LOPE DE VEGA’S Los comendadores de Córdoba (The Knight Commanders of Córdoba), published in 1610, for an “exposición sintética del concepto del honor” (20),\(^5\) which is described as follows:

> Honra es aquella que consiste en otro.
> Ningún hombre es honrado por sí mismo, que del otro recibe la honra un hombre.
> Ser virtuoso un hombre y tener méritos,
> no es ser honrado; pero dar las causas para que los que tratan les den honra. (cited in Castro 20)\(^6\)

This quote reveals that notions of honor were deeply embedded in one’s reputation, to the point that an individual’s virtue and good deeds only gained value when recognized by others. Nye affirms this idea in his study when he examines the ideals of chivalry in sixteenth-century France and concludes that the new emphasis on ideals of internal moral worth, of learning,\(^7\) and of courtly worldliness did not mean that it was open season on who could be honorable, but rather it highlighted that noble birth alone did not guarantee noble rank (22).

As I consider representations of dueling and honor in Spain’s Golden Age theater, I conclude that an individual’s virtues hold a subordinate place in matters of honor. In particular, the king holds the most influence in issues of honor as revealed in the role the

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\(^5\) “synthetic exposition of the concept of honor” (Castro 20). Castro does not state a specific year for this play, which he cites from the Edic. Acad., XI, 290.

\(^6\) “Honor is dependent on another. No man is honorable by himself, but rather a man receives his honor from another. For a man to be virtuous and have merit, is not to be honorable; but rather it gives the cause for which those who deal with him to honor him” (Castro 20).

\(^7\) Desiderius Erasmus, who emphasized the “inner religion” of the individual without making reference to the rites and institution of the Church, no doubt influenced the discussion on internal moral worth (McGrath 47).
monarchy has often played in determining an individual character’s honor in many literary texts, even as far back as the Middle Ages. The king possesses the ability to interpret the law or even circumvent it, an authority which corresponds with the vertical aspect of honor. In his description of vertical honor, Correa relates it to an individual’s place within the social hierarchy, and notes that the king serves as the ultimate paradigm for true honor. According to Correa vertical honor implied a stratification of society that had existed since the Middle Ages, the king comprising the pinnacle of this social pyramid (99-100).

María Eugenia Lacarra, in *El Poema de mío Cid: Realidad histórica e ideología*, emphasizes the central role of the royal court and the judicial duel as arbiters of justice in honor disputes. For her, the *Poema de mío Cid* confirms the king’s role as the one who determines who has honor and who does not (99). Edmund de Chasca describes the king as “the master of his subjects’ fate, never a sharer of honor on equal terms, rather the arbiter who confers it or takes it away” (187). The role of the king as arbiter of justice in judicial duels continues in many texts in Early Modern Spain, where kings preside over dueling ceremonies. Their role in these ceremonies stems from their identity as the embodiment of honor and law and therefore as arbiters of justice. In *comedias* by Lope de Vega, Calderón de la Barca, Guillén de Castro y Bellvis and Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla, kings, while not always represented in completely positive terms, do maintain dominion in honor conflicts.

For example, in Lope de Vega’s *comedia, El mejor alcalde, el rey* (1620-1623) (*The Best Magistrate, the King*), the king of León creates a scenario where the leading characters, Sancho and Elvira, may marry without shame, despite the fact that don Tello
had Elvira kidnapped and presumably has raped her. Though don Tello, a nobleman acting as mayor, has abused his position of authority, the king ultimately steps in and arranges for the restoration of Elvira’s honor by ordering Tello to marry her. Once this marriage has occurred he will order that Tello be decapitated. Thus, Sancho, Elvira’s true love, may marry her and retain his honor. Here the king exercises authority by creating mandates and interpreting the law in such a way that restores honor to the protagonists.

King Felipe II confronts a similar situation in Calderón de la Barca’s *El alcalde de Zalamea* (1640-1642),8 (*The Mayor of Zalamea*), in which a captain kidnaps and rapes a young woman and then refuses to marry her. In the introduction to his edition of this *comedia*, José María Ruano de la Haza describes the king’s role as that of God’s representative on earth (22), emphasizing his absolute authority and the vertical aspect of honor. During his brief appearance in the third act, Felipe II validates the Mayor Pedro Crespo’s decision to punish the captain despite the fact that technically the captain’s crimes did not fall within his jurisdiction.9 However, the king, as the embodiment of the law, chooses to ignore this rule and declares that Crespo will be the perpetual magistrate of his town. His decision provides Crespo with the authority he needs to resolve the *comedia*’s honor conflict.10

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8 Ruano de La Haza states that the exact date of composition of this *comedia* remains unknown, and that many literary critics believe Calderón adapted it from Lope de Vega’s version between 1640 and 1642 (10-11).

9 The captain’s crimes should have fallen within the military’s jurisdiction, and one of the main themes of the play is the abuse of authority as a result of this technicality.

10 Crespo resolves the conflict by sending his daughter Isabel to a convent and punishing his son Juan, who wounds the captain during the second act. He states that though Juan’s actions were taken to restore honor, “de otra manera pudiera” (177), or “He could have used another way”. Thus, with this decision, we see Crespo choosing to ignore the law of the duel, or honor, and his authority to make these decisions has recently been conferred upon him by the king, who exercises ultimate authority over the law.
These two previous examples are a few of many more which display the monarch’s ultimate authority over matters of honor, despite the existence of a regulating code. Additional examples of the king exercising dominion over the laws of honor include Calderón de la Barca’s *La vida es sueño* (1635), (*Life is a Dream*), when as king Segismundo compels Astolfo to marry Rosaura in the final scene; he declares that it is his responsibility to see that her honor is restored (148). In Tirso de Molina’s *El burlador de Sevilla* (1615) (*The Trickster of Seville*), all the women seduced by Don Juan appear before the king to present their cases. The king ultimately resolves their honor conflicts by arranging for them to marry their original suitors (318).11

Guillén de Castro y Bellvis’s *Las mocedades del Cid* (1599), (*The Exploits of the Cid*), presents an example of a weak king who is unable to prevent an insult to Diego Lainez’s honor when Count Loçano hits Diego in the king’s presence (334). While this particular king finds himself in a power struggle with his nobles (336) the discourse surrounding this honor conflict maintains the king’s dominion over this area. For example, after striking Diego, Count Loçano addresses the king: “Y perdónale esta vez / a esta espada y a esta mano / el perderte aquí el respeto, / pues tantas y en tantos años / fué apoyo de tu corona” (335).12 While his actions and words reflect a lack of respect for the king, this speech nonetheless reveals that the same instruments used to dishonor Diego have served as the property of the king. Whether or not a king is represented

11 The king declares that Don Juan’s death is a “Just punishment of heaven!”, or “¡Justo castigo del cielo!” (318). It should be noted that Don Juan dies in a violent confrontation with Don Gonzalo’s ghost (314), and while technically not a duel, this prearranged meeting over a matter of honor—Don Juan’s seduction of Don Gonzalo’s daughter, Doña Ana—contains traces of the dueling ceremony. The fact that Don Juan perishes echoes the Middle Age notion of duels serving as vehicles for divine justice, which is a very vertical understanding of the honor code.

12 “Pardon just this once this sword and this hand for failing to respect you here, for in so many ways and for so many years / it was the support of your crown” (335)
favorably, Golden Age Spanish plays consistently place matters of honor beneath the umbrella of royal authority.

*Del rey abajo, ninguno* (1650), *(None but the King, No One)* by Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla reveals the immunity of the king to personal engagement in honor disputes when the protagonist, García, initially takes no action against Mendo’s attempt to seduce his wife Blanca because he mistakenly believes that Mendo is the king. To safeguard his honor, which is of utmost importance to him, he vows to kill Blanca and then himself; the king’s prominent position makes any retaliatory violence or even a duel impossible. In his soliloquy García laments the decision he believes he must make:

A muerte te ha condenado
mi honor, cuando no mis celos, porque a costa de tu vida,
de una infamia me prevengo.

Perdóname, Blanca mía, que, aunque de culpa te absuelvo,
sólo por razón de Estado,
a la muerte te condeno. *(Rojas Zorrilla 749)*

Although García himself is a nobleman, as he himself states before the quoted speech (748), the king’s position at the pinnacle of the social pyramid precludes him from

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13 *Del rey abajo, ninguno* is one of the examples of conjugal honor plays described in a paper delivered at the MLA convention by Alix Ingber in 1992: “What is an Honor Play?”. In her definition of conjugal honor plays, Ingber states that a male carácter finds himself “threatened with dishonor by the real or apparent behavior of his wife”. The solution dictated by the honor code is for the husband to kill his wife and her lover. Another, more prominent subgenre which frequently features both matters of honor and dueling is the *comedia de capa y espada*, or “cloak and dagger play” which, according to Jonathan Thacker, typically features a young man who has arrived in a town or city—usually Madrid—from another area of Spain. This man begins a courtship with a woman that is complicated by misunderstandings, rivals, problems of family honor, changes in fortune and the antics of the *gracioso* (150). As Ingber states, “All comedias are honor plays to one extent or another”, though in the case of this chapter, the representation of dueling and honor in comedias de capa y espada such as *El postrer duelo de España* are more relevant.

14 “To death my honor has condemned you [Blanca], not my jealousy, because at the cost of your life I spare myself from infamy. Forgive me, Blanca, for, although I absolve you of blame, it is only for reason of the State that I condemn you to death” *(Rojas Zorrilla 749).*
challenging the monarch to a duel to resolve the insult to his honor. Clearly this *comedia* represents honor as a vertical phenomenon. Again, while the monarch in a theatrical piece may or may not be favorably represented, the speeches of characters still point to him as a figure that holds the honor of his subjects in his hands.

Because matters of honor are often filtered through the monarchy, it is the king who facilitates a dueling ceremony, as in Calderón de la Barca’s *El postrer duelo de España* (n.d.), *The Last Duel of Spain*, which, ironically, did not in the least represent the end of the practice. This custom, passed down from the days of the judicial duel in the Middle Ages, also appears in literary texts such as the *comedias*. The king may affirm the duel as a legitimate way to resolve an honor conflict. According to the king Alfonso in Lope de Vega’s *Amor, pleito y desafío* (1635), *Love, Litigation and Challenge*, the test of a true nobleman, or essentially a man of honor, emerges in how he reacts in the situations which form this work’s title: love, legal disputes and dueling challenges (10). With this statement the king affirms the practice of dueling as a legitimate part of the social structure. He gives the protagonist Don Juan de Padilla his blessing to respond to the challenge issued by Don Juan de Aragón, making an implicit reference to the days of judicial duels and the belief that divine justice would render a favorable outcome for the morally superior man when he states, “y de vuestro gran valor, don Juan, la victoria fío” (28).15

A dueling code emerges in Golden Age representations, both explicitly, such as in the reference to *fueros*,16 or local and regional law codes, first appearing in the Middle

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15 “Because of your great bravery, Don Juan, I trust you will be victorious” (28).

16 Azucena Palacios Alcaine offers a general definition of *fueros* as well as a detailed history of these local and regional law codes in her edition of *Alfonso X El Sabio: Fuero Real* (1991). She notes that initially the
Ages, which contained written guidelines for dueling, and implicitly, through the repeated use of terms like ofensa (‘offense’), agravio (‘offense’), afrenta (‘affront’), injuria (‘injury’) and satisfacción (‘satisfaction’). Chauchadis offers a detailed lexical study of such terms as duelo, (‘duel’), desafío (‘challenge’) and riepto/reto (also ‘challenge’) in chapter one of La loi du duel as he asserts the importance of the dueling code in understanding both dueling and honor. The other terms listed earlier in this paragraph appear in Chauchadis’s index with numerous references, suggesting that they also form part of the vocabulary of the honor code, along with honra and honor, both of which denote ‘honor.’

Lope de Vega’s Amor, pleito y desafío contains both types of references. For example, when talking about the king, a nobleman states:

Nadie sabe como su Alteza
lo que es honor de un caballero;
fiad de su grandeza
que no os impida el castellano fuero
si viere que hay agravio. (38)

In addition, several terms typically associated with dueling appear, such as when Don Juan de Aragón resolves to challenge Padilla to a duel: “he de vengarme / como honrado

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17 According to José Borrás in his historical examination of dueling, El duelo: Estudio histórico crítico (1888), the first fuero to mention dueling was the Fuero de Sahagún in 1082, when it described a form of equal combat as a means of determining the true culprit of a crime. This description corresponds more to a judicial duel than a duel of honor.

18 “No one knows about gentlemen’s honor like His Highness. Trust him that the Castilian law code will not impede you if it is evident that there is an offense” (38).
caballero” (5). His use of the terms vengarme (“avenge myself”) and honrado (“honorable”) implicitly points to a codified understanding of honor that supports a stratified society. The ley del duelo or “law of the duel” affirms the hierarchy in which it operates; it does not supersede major authority figures. Upon receiving the dueling challenge from Don Juan de Aragón in Amor, pleito y desafío, Padilla decides to present the situation to the king to request his advice, vowing, “Pues vamos a cumplir con lo que es justo; / que no hay más honra, vida, ni más leyes / que el gusto y la obediencia de los reyes” (25). This king finally prevents the duel from occurring between these two characters when he steps in and has Don Juan de Aragón arrested, reminding him that he had ordered the men not to take up arms under penalty of treason (41). When Aragón sidesteps this order Alfonso reaffirms his authority. Though Don Juan references the dueling code in the fuero in his defense (41), Alfonso never permits the duel and instead mediates their conflict:

Basta, don Juan de Padilla,
que yo tomo en mi palabra
real el honor de entrambos;
y a vos, porque entienda España
que salís del desafío
como es justo y en mi gracia,

19 “I must avenge myself as an honorable gentleman” (5).

20 “Then we will comply with whatever is just, for there is no better honor, life, nor laws than the pleasure and obedience of kings” (25).
The king’s word subordinates any dueling code; he possesses the authority to facilitate the dueling ceremony, interpret its laws or cancel any challenge. Calderón de la Barca’s *Lances de amor y fortuna* (n.d.), (*Duels of love and fortune*) represents a similar authority over dueling in honor, though in this work it emerges in the hands of a woman in love with one of the would-be duelists. Aurora, a Countess, steps in and prevents a duel which is about to begin between two of her suitors, Lotario and Rugero. She employs some dueling terms in the process, declaring to Rugero: “Y como me has *ofendido*, / quedar *satisfecha* espero / con tu muerte” (29) (emphasis mine). As a Countess, Aurora’s dispute with Rugero assumes precedence over the conflict with Lotario, and she is able to halt the duel.

Golden Age comedias frequently associate dueling with service to the monarchy and nobility, and *Lances de amor y fortuna* is no exception. Lotario’s declaration of romantic love for Aurora cannot be separated from his loyalty to her as Countess. His dueling challenge to Rugero for insulting Aurora emerges as much out of a desire to defend a noble leader as to avenge an offense to the woman he loves. In Act I, before declaring his love to Aurora, Rugero first vows to serve her as a soldier (14). Many duelists, in addition to possessing noble lineage, also owe their honored state to previous service in war as soldiers. This is the case with don Juan de Padilla, who, during Act I of

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21 “Enough, Don Juan de Padilla, I take upon my royal word the honor of you both; and on you, so that Spain may understand that you emerge from this challenge justly and in my grace, I confer the title of Count” (43).

22 “And since you have *offended* me, I hope to remain *satisfied* through your death” (29).
Amor, pleito y desafío, in addition to describing himself as a “caballero honrado” (4), also mentions that the king “no ha tenido soldado / que le sirva como yo” (5).

The connection between dueling and service to the monarchy reiterates the role of the king as the ultimate authority figure over honor. It may derive from the Middle Ages, when a king would bestow rewards such as land or titles to men who had served him. The most famous example of these favors are the mercedes enriqueñas, named for Enrique II, who lavished court favors, titles and estates on those who aided him in his quest for the throne (Mérimée 163). Lands and titles, connected with status, meant that the recipients of these favors gained honor in terms of a loftier place in the social hierarchy, and that men had incentive to serve the king.

Sometimes the service to the monarchy appears in a more subtle manner. In Guillén de Castro y Bellvis’s 1599 comedia, Las mocedades del Cid, (The Exploits of the Cid), Rodrigo’s dueling challenge to the Count contains an implicit service to the king Alfonso, because the original offense—the Count striking Rodrigo’s father—occurs in the king’s presence. Diego, the father, reminds the king of this: “Mal parece un afrentado / en presencia de su Rey” (336). Service to the monarchy often serves as a reason for dueling and forms a part of characters’ honored identity.

Lineage forms another fundamental aspect of duelists’ reputation in Spain’s Golden Age comedias. Characters engage in duels in order to defend their family members and thus their own identity via their family’s name. This is the primary reason for Rodrigo’s challenge to the Count in Las mocedades del Cid. Diego notes that

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23 “honored gentleman” (4).

24 “has not had a soldier who serves him as I have” (5).

25 “An offense in the presence of the king seems wrong” (336).
Rodrigo’s own honor remains damaged until his honor is avenged: “¡Hijo . . . / y esta mancha de mi honor / que al tuyo se estiende, lava / con sangre; que sangre sola/ quita semejantes manchas!” (342).26 This reference to blood extends to Diego and Rodrigo’s noble lineage and an honorable history, as implied in speeches by both Diego and Rodrigo concerning the sword that father passes to son. Diego addresses this weapon: “¡En ti, en ti, espada valiente, / ha de fundarse mi honor! / De Mudarra el vengador / eres; tu acero afamólo / desde el uno al otro polo: pues vengaron tus heridas / la muerte de siete vidas”.27 As Rodrigo refers to the offense as “la sangre de Laín Calvo” (344),28 or the whole family’s bloodline, he states that he will carry the same sword with him (344). Rodrigo’s dueling challenge is issued in the context of familial honor and the history of honor, both emerging from a society with a hierarchical structure and feudal origins. His individual reputation is fused with his lineage and thus with a vertical concept of honor.

References to lineage and nobility within the context of dueling abound in seventeenth-century theatrical works. In Lope de Vega’s Amor, pleito y desafío (10), the king Alfonso notes in the third act that dueling is one of three methods of proving who is a brave, valuable “noble.” The term sangre or “blood” may refer to one’s ancestors, as used by Rodrigo and Diego when talking of their offended family as the “sangre de Laín Calvo” (344) or the requirement for satisfying an injury to one’s honor, as when Diego appeals to his son to cleanse the stain to his honor with blood and blood alone (342). In a

26 “Son . . . and this stain to my honor, which to your own honor is extended, wash with blood; for blood alone takes away such stains!” (342).

27 “On you, valiant sword, must my honor be founded! Your are from Mudarra the Avenger, your steel made itself famous from one end of the earth to the other; your wounds avenged the deaths of seven lives” (339). According to a note in Diez Comedias del Siglo de Oro, this refers to Mudarra González, who avenged the death of the seven Infantes de Lara (339).

28 “the blood of Lain Calvo” (344).
brief description of the connection between blood and dueling, François Billacois emphasizes the importance of the spilling of blood, describing it as a “symbolic bathing” that aids in “cleansing the stain from the insulted party” (197) and suggesting the existence of a “tacit tradition” in the bloodshed of dueling linked to blood covenants referenced in the Bible, ancient Roman customs, a literary fascination with blood and a common identity as gentlemen participating in a codified, exclusive custom (198).

Billacois views both Early Modern French tragedy and Elizabethan drama as a ‘theatre of blood, sensuality and death’ (199), a description which is not difficult to extend to dueling in Spain’s seventeenth-century comedias. Their frequent references to blood remark upon the connection between dueling and lineage as they simultaneously reference this codified combat’s historical connections.

Duels exist to defend not only the honor of the individual but also his family line, as shown by relatives standing in for the offended and the use of the term sangre, or “blood” to denote an offended family as well as the method for repairing that family’s injured honor. This discourse affirms honor’s origins within the aristocracy. Those of non-noble origins may suffer insults to their honor, such as in Lope de Vega’s Fuenteovejuna (1612-1614), but these people do not usually engage in duels. The honor problems in Fuenteovejuna, both for the entire town as well as the individual case of Laurencia, are resolved through the revenge killing of the Comendador, or “Knight Commander”. This duel, however, maintains its ties to the aristocracy both in the references to lineage and in its Medieval origins.
III. Concluding Remarks

In short, honor in Golden Age Spanish comedies tends to emerge entrenched in a vertical structure. Duels fall under the domain of kings and other leaders within the nobility, who serve as representatives of the divine law associated with the judicial duel, predecessor of the duel of honor. Kings possess the ability to interpret dueling laws according to their discretion. Duels also tend to be associated with service for the monarchy, further demonstrating the authority of the king over the law of the duel. Finally, dueling in these comedias usually affirms a family lineage, which is not only connected to the nobility but is also reminiscent of the duel’s historical connection to a feudal society and its judicial origins. Eighteenth-century Spanish theater would soon reveal a shift in this notion of honor as it ushered in a new emphasis on individual experience.

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Chapter Two: From Calderonian Drama to the Beginnings of Sentimental Theater:

Challenging the Hierarchies in Cañizares’ *Por acrisolar su honor*

The third act of José de Cañizares’ 1755 comedia: *Por acrisolar su honor: competidor hijo, y padre* (*To Purify Their Honor: Competing Son and Father*),¹ features a scene that on the surface echoes numerous scenes in Golden Age theatrical works: two men participate in an elaborate dueling ceremony presided over by the king. Nonetheless, several characteristics set *Por acrisolar su honor* apart from its predecessors, as evidenced in the play’s representation of dueling. A closer examination of this scene reveals tensions that would not have prevailed in Golden Age comedias. First, the king makes a statement about his inability to halt this fight—“no he podido hallar comino” (34)²—calling into question his authority over the duel. Second, this conflict occurs between a father and son, though the honor of one would normally have been linked to the honor of the other. Finally, as both father and son declare their abhorrence of this imminent combat, the father’s words are punctuated with tears. The father’s frustration with an inflexible honor code that compels him to duel against his wishes finds expression in a more sentimental outlet. The king’s impotent role before dueling, as well as the fact that this combat is to take place between a father and son, form the basis of this chapter’s examination of dueling. This scene serves as an indicator of the shift away from hierarchical sense of honor that was already taking place in the first half of the eighteenth century and which would later become more prevalent in sentimental comedies.

¹ While 1754 is the earliest known date of publication of the play, it was represented in the theater as early as 1711 (Andioc and Coulon 827).

² “I have not been able to find a way” (34).
The comedias of José de Cañizares (1676-1750), a popular Spanish playwright from the early eighteenth century, have been dismissed as an inferior extension of Baroque theater by critics such as McClelland and John A. Cook. Kim Johns attributes the lack of attention to Cañizares and his contemporary Antonio de Zamora to the heavy influence of Lope de Vega and Calderón de la Barca in their works: “Because they and their contemporaries were deeply influenced by Lope, Calderón and their respective schools, their work has not received close study” (32). Nonetheless, there are some studies which survey his work, authored by scholars such as Johns (1980) and Alva Ebersole (1974).³ However, a close analysis of dueling and honor discourse in Por acrisolar su honor reveals that a shift toward individual experience was already occurring in both perceptions of aristocratic honor codes and Spanish theater itself. The dueling code, as represented in Por acrisolar su honor, appears to have lost much of its emphasis on the vertical elements of hierarchy, such as the authority of kings and the prominence of noble lineage. Instead, an emphasis on the horizontal—the articulation of an individual’s struggle to maintain his sense of dignity before society—emerges through the use of dueling discourse. In addition, dueling in Por acrisolar su honor points to the more sentimental portrayals in comedias lacrimosas (“lachrymose comedies”) during the second half of the eighteenth century.

³ In addition, some articles about specific theatrical works by Cañizares have also been written, including “José de Cañizares y una fiesta real de 1724” by Ebersole in 1973, “Sobre la comedia El guapo Julián Romero de José de Cañizares” by Juan Fernández Gómez in 1976, “El niño inocente de la Guardia, de Lope, y La viva imagen de Cristo, de Hoz y Cañizares: Semejanzas y diferencias” by Eliza Domínguez de Paz and Pablo Carracosa Miguel in 1989, “¿Imitación o debilitación? La Viva imagen de Cristo de José de Cañizares y Juan de la Hoz y Mota” (1989) and “Las comedias sueltas de José de Cañizares en la Biblioteca de Menéndez Pelayo” (1993) by Anthony J. Farrell. Emilio Palacios Fernández dedicates a chapter to Cañizares and the zarzuela in El teatro popular español del siglo XVIII (1998). Like Ebersole’s work, these articles offer more descriptive information rather than a close study.
My analysis of the role of the king surrounding the central duel in *Por acriantar su honor* as well as the problematic nature of an honor conflict between a father and son allows me to argue that Cañizares diverges from Calderonian drama, transitioning toward a drama that is more grounded in sentiment. Ultimately this chapter sets the stage for this project’s consideration of dueling and honor in sentimental comedies because it begins the work of recognizing a connection between seventeenth-century readings of honor and the latter eighteenth-century’s association of dueling with the ‘passions’ or emotions.

José de Cañizares’ *Por acriantar su honor* contains several elements of these dueling traits, as will be discussed later, because the public continued to prefer Baroque plays and their imitations during the first half of the eighteenth century. However, an examination of dueling in this particular *comedia* indicates a shift toward a more horizontal understanding of honor, which I will consider both in this chapter and in greater depth in future chapters.

I. Drama in the Eighteenth Century and the Case of José de Cañizares

In general, literary historians agree that 1680, the year of Calderón’s death, concludes Spain’s Golden Age. Nonetheless various elements of Spanish Baroque culture maintained their popularity throughout much of the eighteenth century, especially in the realm of theater. In his essay “Teatro” Emilio Palacios Fernández describes Antonio de Zamora and José de Cañizares as a “puente entre dos siglos”4 that combines popular Baroque elements with unique innovations. Johns enumerates characteristics of the author and his works which have led literary critics such as McClelland and Cook to classify him as an essentially Baroque playwright in her study, *José de Cañizares:

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4 “bridge between two centuries” (136).
Traditionalist and Innovator. Cañizares’ comedias employ several typical Baroque devices and structures: they tend to contain three acts full of complicated plot twists surrounding and enhancing one central crisis that is eventually resolved. Specifically, subplots increase dramatic intrigue, offer more information about characters and develop additional thematic dimensions. Action and movement are preeminent, and the dramatic unities are often disregarded. In addition, Cañizares’ works freely intermingle the serious and the comic; this appears in the use of traditional cast types such as the leading man and lady, the villain and the fool, and the complicated interrelationships among these types (Johns 121). For Johns, Cañizares’ comedias show unique innovations where he portrays “in sympathetic and believable human dimensions a number of historical figures who . . . might have become characters of unwieldy proportions” (123). These “sympathetic and believable human dimensions” prevail in the representation of dueling in Por acrisolar su honor.

Ebersole, who wrote José de Cañizares: dramaturgo olvidado del siglo XVIII (José de Cañizares: Forgotten Playwright of the Eighteenth Century), comments on his prominence as a playwright, noting that his works remained popular throughout the eighteenth century, even after the push toward neo-classic elements. Ebersole observes that, “Con pocas excepciones, los únicos dramaturgos de esa escuela antineoclásica que reciben alguna mención . . . son Zamora y Cañizares” (7). Francisco Ruiz Ramón states that during the first part of the eighteenth century the only theatrical works found entertaining by the public contained the duels, complicated plot twists, brilliant images and varied meters that had characterized many Baroque comedias, particularly those of

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5 “With few exceptions, the only playwrights of that anti-neo-classical school that receive any mention . . . are Zamora and Cañizares” (7).
the Calderonian school (284). Zamora and Cañizares continued to use many of these popular elements in their own comedias. In addition, Cañizares often portrays characters modeled after historical figures who represent moments of triumph in Spanish history (Johns 123). This is seen in *Por acricular su honor* in Hernan Ruiz⁶ and Fernando’s tales of victory against the Moors during Act II.

The beginning of the eighteenth century and Bourbon rule initiated many governmental, administrative and cultural reforms because of the difficulties in Spain toward the end of the previous century, and several of these changes affected theater and drama in a distinct way. The final decades of the seventeenth century were marked by high taxes, financial, economic and political crises, poverty, plagues and natural disasters (Johns 9). Spain lost its power and prestige as a result of the excessive foreign wars and misgovernment by the last of the Hapsburgs (Herr 11). Thus the Bourbons initiated numerous reforms, including those directed toward theater. Palacios Fernández describes a polemic that eventually emerged between the neo-classic reformers who proposed an erudite theater and those who continued to support the more popular theater inspired largely by Lope de Vega’s *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias en nuestro tiempo* (1609) and Calderón (139). While this ongoing rivalry will be described in greater detail in chapter three, I will note here that, according to Palacios Fernández, proponents of the erudite theater voiced their support of neo-classic elements in numerous essays while fewer textual defenses of Baroque theater appear during the eighteenth century (139). This is easily observable in the periodical publications of the time.

One essay by Erauso y Zabaleta, quoted by Palacios Fernández, which does offer a defense of popular theater, states:

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⁶ The original text of the play does not include an accent mark over the “a” in “Hernan”.
Son las comedias de España, y en especial las de los venerados Lope de Vega, Calderón, y sus imitadores, el más dulce agregado de la sabiduría, de la discreción, de la enseñanza, del ejemplo, el chiste, y de la gracia: en ellas se retrata con propios apacibles coloridos, el genio grave, pundonoroso, ardiente, agudo, sutil, constant, fuerte y caballero, de toda la Nación. (cited on 139) 

The specific mention of the words “honorable” (*pundonoroso*) and “chivalrous” (*caballero*), both of which are terms frequently associated with dueling and honor, highlights the association between popular theater and the practice of duels. This connection, present in Golden Age theater, continues in the eighteenth century since Calderonian theater maintains its popularity despite the efforts of enlightened intellectuals to discredit it. As sentimental comedies emerge during the latter half of the eighteenth century, representations of dueling persist in popular theater.

II. *Por acrisolar su honor*

In light of the extended popularity of Baroque comedias, José de Cañizares’ positive reception among the early eighteenth-century Spanish public should not be a surprise. The success of *Por acrisolar su honor* becomes evident in its number of representations. According to René Andioc and Mireille Coulon, this work by Cañizares was represented twenty-two times between 1711 and 1805 in Madrid theaters along (827). Despite the large number of representations, no critical studies of this work have

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7 “The comedias of Spain, and especially those of the venerated Lope de Vega, Calderón and their imitators, are the sweetest aggregate of wisdom, discretion, teaching, example, humor and grace: in them are represented with unique, pleasant colors the serious spirit, the honorable, ardent, sharp, subtle, constant, strong and chivalrous aspects of the Nation” (139).

8 These showings occurred in the Cruz and Príncipe theaters, and the dates shown by Andioc and Coulon often represent a series of shows.
emerged. The intricate plot of Por acrisolar su honor reflects Golden Age drama in its web of tangled relationships, cases of mistaken identity and the central honor conflict. Cañizares authored the play in verse, and as Spanish dramatists of the Golden Age had done, he employed multiple metrical schemes, thought octosyllabic forms such as the redondilla and the romance are more prevalent. In order to familiarize the reader with this work, I will outline the plot in some detail before turning to an analysis of its representation of dueling.

The key problem which emerges in this comedia revolves around an honor conflict between a father and son. The father, Hernan Ruiz, had long ago killed his wife after seeing her with another man. Though the wife was actually innocent, her reputation remains damaged because no male family member has been available to defend her honor. The son, raised by Don Ramón and unaware of this past learns that his reputation is in jeopardy because of the circumstances surrounding his mother’s death. Ultimately this situation will lead father and son to duel each other when Fernando, the son, defends his mother’s honor.

Act I establishes the central honor conflict between a father and son whose lives mirror one another. As this Act opens, Fernando finds himself in a situation that mirrors his father’s conflict years before: he observes another man near the window of his love interest, Constanza, professing his love for her, so he attacks this mysterious stranger. A little later Fernando and his servant see Hernan Ruiz outside a castle believed to be haunted. Hernan Ruiz appears in chains, bemoaning his fortune. After this, Don Ramón, who Fernando believes to be his father, enters the scene and reveals that Hernan Ruiz is Fernando’s true father.
The king, Don Sancho, soon appears, and after having received a letter from Hernan Ruiz, decides to pardon him in order to make him a general to fight against the Moors. Next, Don Sancho calls for both Hernan Ruiz and Fernando to approach him, and as they do they compete with one another for their king’s attention, leading to an argument between them. Hernan Ruiz and Fernando then learn from the king that they are father and son. Don Sancho explains that his motive for freeing Hernan Ruiz is that he would lead an expedition against the Moors. Hernan Ruiz agrees to this and names his son as a general in the army, making Don Álvaro, Fernando’s rival, jealous of this new position.

A secondary conflict emerges when Constanza hears Fernando attempting to woo Elvira, a new love interest, and intrudes on the conversation, insulting Fernando. An argument ensues during which Fernando rebukes Constanza for permitting another man to woo her outside her window. Don Álvaro overhears his conversation, leading to a dispute between the two men, who then decide to settle the dispute on the field of honor. Act I concludes with the king attempting to stop this duel by ordering that Fernando, his nephew, be brought to him, and that Don Álvaro be detained.

Act II reveals more about the unresolved mystery of Fernando’s mother’s death and culminates in a dueling challenge issued when Fernando attempts to restore both his mother’s honor and his own reputation as her son. As this Act opens Fernando approaches Elvira’s quarters during the night, and in the course of their conversation she reveals more details to Fernando about the night Hernan Ruiz killed his wife. Elvira states that one evening while in the garden Hernan Ruiz saw a man embracing a woman dressed in the same clothing his wife had been wearing that afternoon. Hernan Ruiz kills
the man and then Fernando’s mother. However, he has never been proven guilty of murder due to a technicality. Since no man has stepped forward to defend Fernando’s mother’s purity, the case remains unresolved and thus Fernando remains without honor in the court.

The servant Elvira interrupts this conversation with the announcement that the king and another man have arrived. Elvira attempts to hide Fernando, who instead kills the light and draws his sword. The king, realizing that someone has entered Elvira’s quarters, declares that this traitor will not escape. Álvaro then accuses Constanza of using Elena to let Fernando into the garden the night before, and he vows to kill Fernando at any cost.

Later the king receives both Hernan Ruiz and Fernando who have returned triumphantly with their troops after successful expeditions against the Moors. In this scene we see father and son competing for the king’s attention as they each share about their conquests. Fernando then throws down a glove to issue a challenge to a duel so that he might restore both his honor and that of his deceased mother. The one who picks up the glove will have to participate in a duel against Fernando. Don Álvaro, Fernando’s rival, declares his intention to pick up the glove, but Hernan Ruiz grabs it first, intending to put an end to this duel before it begins. However, by his action, he has unwittingly agreed to duel with his own son.

Act III presents the dueling ceremony in great detail and the resolution to the father-and-son honor conflict. This Act opens with Fernando, who had left immediately after throwing down the glove, learning that his father is the one who has picked up the glove. The king states that one of the two must withdraw from the duel, but neither one
will. Meanwhile Constanza has decided to accept Álvaro’s attention because Fernando has shown his preference for Elvira. Elena reveals to the king that she was the one who let Fernando in, prompting Elvira to confess that she wanted to see Fernando to attempt to restore harmony with Constanza.

The dueling ceremony begins despite the king’s attempts to persuade one of the participants to cede. Suddenly Elena resolves the mystery of Fernando’s mother’s death when she confesses that she was one who let Fortún Jiménez enter the garden many years before. Elena had dressed herself in the wife’s clothing in order to seduce Jiménez that night. Thus, Fernando’s mother was innocent, Fernando’s honor is restored, and the duel does not occur. The play concludes with the promise of two marriages: that of Fernando and Elvira and that of Álvaro and Constanza.

A. The King’s Conflicted Role

In many ways Por acrisolar su honor conforms to Golden Age tradition of dueling and honor since it shows Don Sancho presiding over the duel between Hernan Ruiz and his son Fernando. In Act III he facilitates the dueling ceremony, inviting father and son to swear that neither rancor, envy nor any other motive drives them to duel except the desire to defend their honor, and then observing the ritual of the selection of arms (35). The king’s initial declaration of Hernan Ruiz’s pardon in Act I as well as his central role in the dueling ceremony in Act II conform to most notions of honor in Golden Age Spain which declare the monarch’s sovereignty over honor.

Nonetheless a shift away from vertical honor toward an increased emphasis on honra horizontal emerges with a close examination of the duel and Don Sancho’s subordination before the dueling code. The king in Por acrisolar su honor no longer
exercises absolute sovereignty over honor, as show by his inability to halt the duel
between Hernan Ruiz and Fernando. In the second act Fernando throws down his glove
as he issues a challenge meant for his rival, Don Álvaro, it is his father Hernan Ruiz who
picks up the glove and soon learns that as a result he must duel with his own son. While
the king still acts as an interpreter of the law when he informs Hernand Ruiz that the one
who holds the glove is the one who, according to the honor code, is compelled to fight in
a duel against Fernando (25), he does not attempt to alter the situation.

In fact Don Álvaro forces the king toward his initial interpretation of the law
when he reminds him of the regulation concerning challenges: “Permitid / Señor, que
extrañe, / que vos, que en Castilla sois / de las Leyes el Atlante, assi revoqueis sus fueros,
/ permitiendo que embarace del hijo, / la tenacidad del padre” (25). This quote
references the king’s earlier agreement with Hernan Ruiz’s efforts to prevent Fernando
from continuing with his challenge. While referring to the king in mythological terms
displays respect on the surface, the image of him as an Atlas also represents the law as a
heavy burden weighing down upon him. Álvaro’s statement questions the king’s
authority by raising doubt about his relationship with the law. The regional law codes, or
fueros, appear here on a higher plan unlike in Lope’s Amor, pleito y desafío, for example
and when Álvaro reminds the king about the fueros, he further denigrates Don Sancho’s
authority by implicitly placing himself in a position to question the king.

With this exchange the king promptly alters the nature of his statements,
proclaiming: “El duelo está ya admitido”. Don Sancho next states that in the legal

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9 “Pardone me, Sir, but I am surprised that you, who in Castille is the laws’ Atlas, is revoking the legal and
regional law codes, permitting the tenacity of the father to hinder the son’s challenge” (25).

10 “The dueling challenge has already been accepted” (25).
statutes there is no room for interpretation and for that reason this duel must proceed (25),
despite the fact that neither father nor son nor king desire it. The king expresses his wish
for a resolution when he asks them in Act III: “No acabais de resolver?” (28).\textsuperscript{11}
However, despite the desire for reconciliation on the part of everyone involved, the king
does not force a truce, instead declaring that he has done his job in asking them once to
reconsider resolving this conflict. After this Don Sancho demonstrates an inability to
compel the participants to cease proceeding with the duel when he continues to serve as
arbiter of the dueling ceremony (29).

This passivity contrasts with king Carlos the Fifth in Calderón de la Barca’s El postrer duel de España who exercises dominion over the field of honor when he forces
the protagonists Don Pedro and Don Geronimo to cease fighting, even though they are in
the middle of a duel that he has officiated. While Carlos, like Don Sancho in Por acrisolar su honor, operates according to an official dueling and honor ritual detailed in
the comedia, he possesses authority over this codified ceremony when he asks, “Qué es esto? Pues como quando / yo depongo la vengala / de oro, en señal de que tomo / sobre
mi de ambos la causa, / dandoos á los dos por buenos / caballero, la ira es tanta, / que no os deteneis? prendedlos” (Calderón 20).\textsuperscript{12} Carlos questions the notions of honor that
have driven these two men to a duel and then orders them to shake hands as friends. He
attempts to rewrite the honor code when he calls for a letter to be written to the Pope: “en
que humilde le suplique, / que esta barbara tirana / ley del duelo, que quedó / de gentiles

\textsuperscript{11} “Have you not come to a resolution?” (28).

\textsuperscript{12} “What is this? Well, as I lay down this golden scepter as a sign that I take upon myself both your causes, I declare you both to be good gentlemen. Your anger is such that you do not desist? Stop them!” (Calderón 20).
heredada / en mi Reynado, prohiba / . . . / si en este duel se acaban los duelos de España, este / Postre duel de España” (Calderón 21).13

Despite the conflict that exists between the monarchy and the honor code in Calderón’s *El postrer duelo de España* the king still steps in because he possesses authority over the notion of honor that compels Don Pedro and Don Geronimo to defend themselves by dueling. This authority reveals itself both in the fact that the duel ceases and in the statements of the participants. Don Pedro declares that it is an honor to serve the king: “Si vos / me haceis, señor, honra tanta . . . Que de mi os sirvais en altas / empresas”,14 and Don Gerónimo makes a similar statement: “Si vos me haceis tanto honor . . . Que me empleéis / en las facciones mas arduas” (Calderón 20).15 Their use of the terms *honra* and *honor* suggest that the king does not possess the power to bestow or remove honor from an individual. Carlos’ condemnation of the *ley del duelo* or “law of the duel” at the end of the play and his prohibition of dueling demonstrate the authority he proposes to exercise over the realm of honor. Raquel Chang-Rodríguez and Eleanor Martin state that the king takes upon himself the role of restoring both men’s honor at the same time that he condemns the type of honor that has compelled them to duel. He designates their concept of honor as a false value, an illusion (450). Despite tensions among the different readings of honor, the monarchy continues to assert dominion over them all in this Calderonian Golden Age *comedia.*

13 “in humility I implore that this barbaric, tyrannical law of the duel, inherited from the heathen, be prohibited in my kingdom . . . so that with this duel all others duels in Spain shall cease, this, the last duel in Spain” (Calderón 21).

14 “If you will honor me, Sir, I will serve you with noble deeds” (Calderón 20).

15 “If you will so honor me to employ me in the most arduous endeavors” (Calderón 20).
This examination of the role of José de Cañizares’ king in *Por acrisolar su honor* does not imply that Early Modern theater always presented perfect, strong or even good kings. Guillén de Castro’s *Las mocedades del Cid* portrays a king who is vulnerable to the threat of nobles vying for power and who opposes the duel between Rodrigo and the Count. Lope de Vega’s king in *Amor, pleito y desafío* is deceived by Don Juan de Aragón when requesting permission to marry Beatriz. Don Juan de Aragón even attempts to question the king by appealing to the *fueros* (“local and regional law codes”) when he defends his decision to issue a dueling challenge. The contrast between Cañizares’ king and other Golden Age kings in their relationship to dueling discourse does not emerge in the level of their strength before society but instead in the way in which the honor code permits king to manipulate it. Carlos mandates a change to the honor code when he steps in and halts a duel that was proceeding in accordance with the *ley del duelo* in *El postrer duelo de España*. In contrast Sancho pleads with Fernando and Hernan Ruiz to abstain from their combat, but ultimately cedes authority to the dueling code.

Cañizares’ portrayal of the duel suggests that a shift is in progress during the first half of the eighteenth century. Dueling discourse in both the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries presents an honor code that binds individuals to their reputation in such a way that a loss of honor denotes a loss of life. The connection between loss of honor and loss of life certainly prevails in Golden Age theater in Spain, but the vertical structure of honor presents opportunities for kings and other authority figures to step in and resolve conflicts, many times without the need to duel. In contrast with Golden Age
comedias, however, eighteenth-century Spanish theater tends to portray conflicts centered more on horizontal notions of honor.

**B. The Paradox of Blood in a Father-Son Duel**

The honor conflict in *Por acrisolver su honor* does not resolve itself so easily, since the same king who pardons Hernan Ruiz and thus restores him to a state of honor later finds his hands tied before the prospect of a duel between Hernan Ruiz and Fernando. This occurs despite the fact that such as duel is rendered extremely problematic because it is to take place between a father and a son. This duel should never occur; it presents an added conflict in terms of honor. Fernando states that his father’s blood courses through his veins and from it comes his own honor (28), so to fight against his own father generates a sort of paradox, since their sense of honor is linked to one another. In fact, dueling codes allowed a son to represent his father in a duel if the father was physically unable to fight (Murciano 39). Cabriñana’s honor code, inspired by several older texts, such as the *Doctrinal de Caballeros*, printed in 1483 by Fadrique Alemán (10), forbids blood relatives from engaging in duels against one another. It does permit duels between relatives in certain extreme cases, like adultery or rape, but even then the closest family relations who are allowed to fight one another are cousins or uncles and nephews (288).

The duel between Hernan Ruiz and Fernando represents the culmination of a highly problematic relationship characterized by ambiguity and conflict. The play opens with Fernando unaware of the identity of his real father. After Fernando learns that Hernan Ruiz is his father, he competes with him for the king’s attention during the first act, unaware that the man beside him is in fact Hernan Ruiz himself. Both men kneel
before Don Sancho, interrupting one another with rapid-fire dialogue in an attempt to speak with the king. Their words escalate into a conflict where Fernando threatens Hernan Ruiz, promising to send him to hell with his sword (9). The king interrupts to identify the relationship between the two as one of father and son.

Hernan Ruiz and Fernando immediately end this particular conflict, and the father even appoints the son as a general within his army. However the competition does not cease between them. Upon returning from battle during the second act, both again find themselves before the king attempting to interrupt one another in order to recount their bravery, as is revealed by the rapid nature of the dialogue:

Hernan. Cinco mil Moros cautivè al contrario.

Fernan. Treinta vasos te traigo por memoria.

Hernan. Abenut queda por tu tributario.

Fernan. Al Africa ha humillado tu victoria.

Hernan. Tu Cetro haga inmobil el tiempo vàrio.

Fernan. La fama cante tu elevada Gloria.

Los dos. Porque buele (sic) tu nombre, sin segundo, mas allà del mundo. (24)\(^{16}\)

The competition between father and son as well as the potential of a duel between them suggest an internal conflict within the individual concerning matters of honor. As father and son they are members of the same family, and the honor of one affects the honor of the other.

Several parallels between the two also suggest that Hernan Ruiz and Fernando are mirror images of one another. These parallels include the situation of perceived infidelity that both encounter: Hernan Ruiz believed he had seen his wife with another man and Fernando observes another man near Constanza’s window during the first act, and both respond to these situations with violence. Both men engage in battle, Hernan Ruiz by land and Fernando by sea. Also, the maid Elena’s actions create conflicts for both men. For Hernan Ruiz Elena’s disguising herself in his wife’s clothes and letting in another man for a tryst causes him to believe his wife is unfaithful to him and thus murder her in a fit of jealousy. Later on in Act II, Elena lets Fernando into the court, and the king, upon finding out that a man has entered the ladies’ quarters, issues a threat against this unknown traitor.

Although the text represents these men as mirror images, it also points to impending trouble between them. Before the king announces to them both that they are father and son, Fernando and Hernan Ruiz’s speeches, flowing over one another, are filled with contrasts in parallel constructions:

Hernan. De vuestros heroicos pies
Fernan. De vuestras invictas plantas
Hernan. Llega un infeliz al sòlio
Fernan. Llega un dichoso a las aras
Hernan. Pues no hay muerte mas civil
Fernan. Pues no hay vida mas hidalga
Hernan. Que experimentar piedades
quien muere de sus desgracias.
Fernan. Que triunfar de sus desprecios

quien aspira às otras hazañas. (8)¹⁷

The use of contrasts such as infeliz/dichoso (wretch/fortunate one) and

muerte/vida (death/life), a trait found in many Baroque works, also places Hernan Ruiz
and Fernando in opposition to one another. Indeed, immediately after the preceding
dialogue, a conflict erupts between the two when Hernan challenges Fernando: “Quién
eres, mozo atrevido, / que, sin atender mis canas, / quando llego à hablar al Rey, / 
interrumpes mis palabras” (8).¹⁸

Ultimately both men’s honor hinges on the truth behind the night of Fernando’s
mother’s death. Her infidelity would have placed both Hernan Ruiz as her husband and
Fernando as her son in a situation of dishonor. This unresolved situation leaves the men
in a nebulous state. Fernando vows to restore his honor in Act II once he learns of his
troubled origins: “Ya que lo he sabido, Elvira, / juro ante ti al alto Cielo, / de vengar mi
honor” (19).¹⁹ His dueling challenge, given later in the second act to revive his “difunto
honor”,²⁰ is the only acceptable method to restore his reputation, because it is the only
way to validate his mother’s innocence:

según fueros

de Castilla, hacer probanzas;

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¹⁷ “Hernan. A wretch arrives before the throne. Fernan. A fortunate one arrives before the altar Hernan.
Of your heroic feet. Fernan. Of your victorious soles. Hernan. Well there is no death more civil Fernan.
Well there is no life more noble Hernan. Than for the one who is dying from disgrace, to experience
mercy. Fernan. Than for the one who aspires toward other feats, to triumph over his disgrace” (8).

¹⁸ “Who are you, insolent lad, that, without paying attention to my white hair, when I arrive to speak to the
King, you interrupt my words?” (8).

¹⁹ “Because of what I have found out, Elvira, / I swear to high Heaven before you, to avenge my honor”
(19).

²⁰ “deceased honor” (25).

39
Fernando, in accordance with these rules, states the terms of combat:

contra quantos lo contrario imaginaren probarme,
defiendo, que Estefanìa . . .
murió inocente; y que quien
otra cosa imaginare . . .
miente, como ruin, infame;
y para que lo mantenga,
lo que protesto delante
de vuestra Real Magestad,
Plebeyos, Nobles, y Grandes . . .
el que aceptàre este duelo,
alce del suelo este guante. (25) 22

Hernan Ruiz’s professed intention in picking up Fernando’s glove is to prevent his son from dueling: “cabe / que el impetivo arrojo / de un rapaz empeñe a nadie?” (25). 23 However, it is interesting to note that he also declares: “mio es el guante . . .

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21 “According to the law codes of Castille, in order to give proof, it is our way not to execute with the pen, but rather to write it with the sword” (18).

22 “against anyone who deigns to prove the opposite to me, I declare that Estefanìa . . . died innocent, and that anyone who imagines anything else . . . lies and is a contemptible scoundrel, and in order to defend this, I protest before Your Majesty, commoners, nobles and great ones . . . that whoever accepts this duel will lift this glove from the floor” (25).

23 “Is it fitting that the impetuous daring of a lad compel someone to fight?” (25).
“The glove is mine . . . have him talk with me” (25). Although Hernan Ruiz ostensibly has no intention of dueling with his son when he picks up the glove, as revealed by his surprise when the king informs him that he must, the words which accompany his action hint at an honor conflict between the two. If Fernando really is addressing him, and the glove really belongs to Hernan Ruiz, then so does the dueling challenge. Yet this situation is paradoxical, because for either father or son to win harms the honor of the other. Neither one can really win or lose, but neither one will surrender, leaving both in a liminal state of conflict and dishonor.

In order to resolve this impasse, let’s turn briefly to another play by Cañizares. A similar impossible situation emerges in Cañizares’ La vanda de Castilla (1747), or The Band of Castille, which, like Por acrisolar su honor, represents a conflict over a duel. Garcilaso, who participated in the betrayal that led to the death of Leonor’s father, falls in love with her, and as a result swears to avenge her father’s death by challenging his betrayer to a duel. This situation renders Garcilaso both challenger and challenged, and, like Fernando and Hernan Ruiz in Por acrisolar su honor, he finds himself trapped by a dueling oath. In Act III Garcilaso sees no other resolution except suicide. His complex speech prior to his suicide attempt reveals an individual so divided by the honor code that it nearly destroys him. Garcilaso’s vacillation between confessing to his betrayal of Leonor’s father and denying that this action was wrong, as present in such contrasting statements as “Y pues yo he de confessarlo, / y negarlo a un mismo tiempo” (n.p.) on the one hand reflects the Baroque trait of antithesis and on the other hand appears in Por

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24 “The glove is mine . . . have him talk with me” (25).


26 “And so I must confess it, and deny it at the same time” (n.p.).
acrisolar su honor with the prospect of a duel between father and son, since both represent the same sangre, or “blood”. Furthermore, in the play’s title, acrisolar refers to a crisol, a “crucible” which is used for the melting of substances at extremely high temperatures, invoking the notion of “trial by fire” (prueba de fuego) and establishing a strong image for the struggle which defines this work.

Fernando has declared his intention to acrisolar su honor, or “purify his honor” by proving his mother’s innocence. His own father, whose accusation and murder of his mother has lead to Fernando’s state of dishonor, further confounds Fernando’s honor conflict by unwittingly accepting his dueling challenge. Now the honor code demands that Fernando defend his reputation by fighting against his own father, even though neither one can really win, and both express their reluctance before this obligation. Such a conflict adds a more human dimension to the honor code, which as the eighteenth century continues, is increasingly tied to sensibility.

The shift toward the more human dimension via increasingly sympathetic portrayals of dueling and honor alters the structure of honor discourse. Golden Age representations of dueling conflicts highlight a vertical honor code, connecting duels with their antecedent, the judicial duel, as well as kings and noble lineage. Por acrisolar su honor ostensibly echoes these representations, as do other works by Cañizares. In his article on El valor como ha de ser y el guapo Julián Romero (1768), or, Bravery as it Must Be and the Handsom Julián Romero,27 Juan Fernández Gómez proposes that though the work contains elements of Calderonian cloak and dagger honor, it also paints a world moved by material interests (413). Fernández Gómez sees an “ataque a la nobleza

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27 Printed in 1768, Cañizares’ El valor como ha de ser y el guapo Juan Romero, is based on a similar play by Lope de Vega (Fernández Gómez 408).
española de nueva creación, aquella que ‘fabrican’ los Borbones en el XVIII, carente de sangre noble, de energía y de hechos notables” (409) and attributes the difference in the portrayal of honor to this critique. However, I also note a thread in Cañizares’ representations that focuses on individuals’ experiences with honor conflicts. The despair expressed by Hernan Ruiz and Fernando, as well as the king’s confession of his frustration with their duel, provide two examples of this tendency. Rather than emphasizing a hierarchical sense of honor, Hernan Ruiz and Fernando’s situation creates more of a focus on the pathos of their conflict. When the king expresses frustration that the conflict has not yet been resolved (28) and later, upon learning of the secret visits and cases of mistaken identity occurring within his own palace, struggles to control his emotions, calling them his “loca passion mia” (33) he is rendered more as an individual man instead of a representative authority of the state.

While in many ways Cañizares’ plays tended to favor action over philosophical monologues and introspective soliloquies as a means of characterization (Johns 124), Johns notes his ability to portray characters in “sympathetic and believable human dimensions” (123). This evidence of a greater humanity demonstrates a potential link to the sentimental comedies which would grow in popularity toward the end of the eighteenth century. José de Cañizares’ representation of dueling, rather than revealing him to be a mere imitator of Baroque theater, demonstrates his participation in shifting notions of honor and theater in eighteenth-century Spain. His portrayal of dueling describes an honor code that is becoming a rigid mechanism when not subject to the

28 “an attack against the Spanish nobility of new creation, that which the Bourgons ‘fabricate’ in the eighteenth century, lacking noble blood, energy and notable deeds” (409).

29 The king chooses to suppress these emotions, stating, “A Dios, loca passion mia” (33), or “Good-bye, my crazed passions” (33).
king’s arbitrary but benign authority. Yet at the same time, this honor code, now more removed from its hierarchical origins, is also more human. The emerging problem, though, is that as the honor code supersedes the king’s authority, it threatens to transform into an inflexible law that is not subject to interpretation. Characters in eighteenth-century theater, especially in sentimental comedies, find themselves trapped in honor conflicts, but the understanding of the honor code has altered to a more horizontal structure emphasizing the experience of the individual pitted against society.

III. Concluding Remarks

While *Por acrisolar su honor* is far from a sentimental comedy, neither does it conform to all the traits of Calderonian drama. Its failure to conform has led literary critics to ignore it in the past, but its variation from Golden Age works, particularly in renderings of dueling, makes it a work of interest to this project. The decades that separate *Por acrisolar su honor* from the sentimental comedies that appeared later in the 1700s brought an important shift. The law of the duel as seen in Cañizares now falls outside the arbitrary word of the king, but it has also converted into an inflexible law. Chapter two will consider the problem of law in Jovellanos’ 1773 sentimental comedy, *El delincuente honrado*, or, *The Honorable Culprit*, but it is interesting to note that Hernan Ruiz, Fernando and the king all grapple with the honor code in very individual, human ways in *Por acrisolar su honor*. Hernan Ruiz even expresses his despair with tears. More sentimental treatments of the honor code, emerging in lachrymose comedies, form part of a long inquiry made by Spanish playwrights that continues for more than a century and a half. As he describes Spanish Restoration theater toward the end of the nineteenth century, Francisco Ruiz Ramón observes the sharp criticism of playwrights,
such as Valle Inclán, who viewed society as one obsessed with appearance, or honor, but not competence (353).

The frustration over the duel expressed by the king places both Hernan Ruiz and Fernando in direct conflict with him and thus with the authority of their state. Let’s recall that dueling in Spain was illegal throughout the eighteenth century, as reiterated by the monarchy in published edicts in 1716 and 1757. Once the law of the duel loses much of its connection with the hierarchy, particularly royal authority, it becomes a threat, in both the societal realm and the theatrical realm, since what remains is the individual who assumes that his honor is more important than the law of the state.

The age of sensibility rewrote the duel in the eighteenth century, converting it from a ritual tied to the aristocracy, often presided over by the monarchy, into an act connected with individual, often middle-class lives. Though lineage is still sometimes a factor in dramatic questions of honor, the duel is now associated with individual characters, from both the upper and middle class, more than authority figures such as kings. The use of sentiment as well as the portrayal of middle-class characters creates sympathy for those who choose to duel, because the experience of the individual trapped in the web of public opinion is highlighted over the law. During a moment of outrage, the king in *Por acrisolar su honor* expresses his desire for vengeance as “loca passion mia” (33), an association that continues throughout the eighteenth century. Theatrical conflicts frequently center on a contradiction between reason and emotions—or “passions”—and dueling serves as a tool to explore these conflicts. In *Por acrisolar su honor*, the increased emphasis on individual characters’ internal struggles with dueling points to future portrayals of characters grappling with their passions. Thus the stage is

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30 “my crazed passions” (33).
set to consider the central questions of how honor is filtered through sentiment, how eighteenth-century Spanish theater articulated the conflict between using violence to defend one’s honor and the Enlightenment ideal of avoiding excess, and what notions about honor influenced the relationship between dueling characters and their nation.
Chapter Three: Legislating Dueling: Jovellanos’ *El delincuente honrado*

Don Justo, a Judge of the Royal House and Court in Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos’ 1773 sentimental comedy, *El delincuente honrado*, or The Honorable Culprit, laments the state of dueling legislation in Spain because of its harshness:

“Cuando haya mejores ideas acerca del honor, convendrá acaso asegurarlas por ese medio; pero entretanto las penas fuertes serán injustas y no producirán efecto alguno” (536).\(^1\) Justo, whose name describes his character, observes a divide between Spain’s anti-dueling laws and the honor code that renders the former ineffective. In the same conversation he notes that in the past Spain’s laws and the public’s ideas about honor coincided more: “Nuestra antigua legislación era . . . menos bárbara. El genio caballeresco de los antiguos españoles, hacía plausibles los duelos, y entonces la legislación los autorizaba; pero hoy pensamos poco más o menos, como los godos, y, sin embargo, castigamos los duelos con penas capitales” (536).\(^2\) The quote “El genio caballeresco de los antiguos españoles, hacía plausibles los duelos” (“The knightly temperament of the ancient Spaniards made duels plausible”) reflects the connection between honor and authority observed in many Golden Age Spanish comedias.

According to Justo, while the public has continued to hold to the role of the duel in maintaining one’s reputation, or, honor, the state has imposed an anti-dueling law that

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1 “When better ideas about honor exist, perhaps it will be a good idea to enforce them in that way [with severe anti-duelings]; but in the meantime, strong penalties will be unjust and will not have any effect” (536). Unless otherwise stated all quotes from *El delincuente honrado* are from the 1787 edition included in *Obras completas de Jovellanos*, Vol. I (1984) edited and annotated by José Miguel Caso González. This version appeared with the pseudonym Don Toribio Suarez de Langrèo, and Caso González asserts that it is the only one on which Jovellanos worked (477).

2 “Our ancient legislation was . . . less barbaric. The knightly temperament of the ancient Spaniards made duels plausible, and back then legislation authorized them; but today we think more or less like the Goths, and despite that, we penalize duels with capital punishment” (536).
demands the death penalty for anyone who would engage in ritualistic combat to defend his honor and fails to differentiate between the challenger and the one who is challenged.

As John H. R. Polt summarizes *El delincuente honrado’s* legal thesis in his 1959 article on the play, he notes that “the ‘punishment’ must not only ‘fit the crime’, but the definitions of ‘crime’ and ‘punishment’ must fit the human beings with whom they are ultimately concerned”. With this quote Polt identifies the correlation between Jovellanos’s ideas and those of Montesquieu (188). The most well-known inspiration for Jovellanos’s legal thesis, however, is surely Beccaria’s 1764 treatise, *Dei delitti e delle pene* (Sebold 419), whom Foucault cites frequently in *Discipline and Punish* as he delineates the late eighteenth-century shift in penal law toward a punishment that “must proceed from the crime” (106).

The protagonist of *El delincuente honrado* confronts the possibility of a penalty that does not correspond with his offense: Don Torcuato himself was recently responsible for the death of another in a duel that he himself did not initiate but rather sought to avoid. Although he never instigated the duel and several times attempted to dissuade his opponent from continuing with his challenge, Don Torcuato nevertheless faces the death penalty for his participation in an illegal, yet widely accepted crime.

Dueling legislation highlights two ongoing subjects of debate of the eighteenth century: dueling itself, which had elicited many philosophical arguments throughout Europe, and legislation, another heated topic in many countries. In this chapter I analyze the representation of dueling and honor in Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos’ 1773 sentimental comedy, *El delincuente honrado*. While José de Cañizares’ *Por acriollar su honor* reveals a shift from a more vertical honor code based on hierarchy and subject to
the monarchy’s authority toward a more horizontal, yet inflexible honor code based on reputation, Jovellanos’ *El delincuente honrado* presents a different conflict between two concepts of honor. The dilemma of Jovellanos’ protagonist, Don Torcuato, represents the encounter between honor-as-virtue and honor-as-reputation. It also portrays the conflict between two rigid laws: the law of the state, which throughout the eighteenth century attempted to reassert its dominion over personal matters of honor, and the law of the duel, which threatened to destroy the reputation of an individual who did not adhere to it, and thus that individual’s ability to operate within society. I propose that the sentimental portrayal of Torcuato as a representational middle-class individual tormented by his decision to duel in *El delincuente honrado* articulates a conflict between the honor code and legislation that pits the individual against the state.

Unlike the other central texts of this study, *El delincuente honrado* has already served as the focus of critical commentary by several scholars. In addition to descriptive studies and articles discussing the play’s numerous translations (Joseph G. Fucilla, José Caso González and Belén Tejerina Gómez), critics have analyzed it as the first example of a new genre—the sentimental comedy—in Spain (McClelland, Kosove) and as an artifact of intellectual life in eighteenth-century Spain (Jean Sarraillh), particularly Seville (Polt). The portrayal of Don Torcuato as a representational middle-class individual has been analyzed in detail by scholars such as Russell P. Sebold, who has argued for the classification of the play as an early example of Romanticism (420) and Yvonne Fuentes, who focuses on the legal thesis that questions how a law can be fair if it judges a man

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3 There is a very large bibliography of studies on Jovellanos, particularly his life, his library and political ideas. For an exhaustive bibliography, including primary documents as well as studies, see the “Bibliografía Jovellanista”, [www.jovellanos.net/biblio/todosobrec.htm](http://www.jovellanos.net/biblio/todosobrec.htm), part of a website dedicated to Jovellanos and maintained by the Ayuntamiento de Gijón.
who acts according to the laws of honor and of his society” (101). Aristófanes Cedeño also studies Torcuato as an individual with an internal conflict motivated by shame to accept the dueling challenge and then to consider fleeing after the fact (281).

However, the legal thesis—described by Ángel Ossorio y Gallardo as “la inflexibilidad de las leyes frente a las exigencias de la vida” (154)—has been critics’ most frequent theme of analysis (such as Ossorio y Gallardo, Sarrailh, Piero Menarini and McClelland), and this chapter is not the only study to explore the conflict between the individual and the state as articulated in *El delincuente honrado*. Fuentes states the legal thesis as a question: “How can a law be fair if it judges a man who acts according to the laws of honor of his society?” (101). Polt argues in “*El delincuente honrado*” that Torcuato really does not experience an internal conflict, because his “rectitude . . . is such that it precludes inner conflict and forces the character *a priori* to accept what fate (destiny, duty) has in store for him” (172), though regarding the legal thesis, he does state that for Jovellanos not only must the punishment fit the crime it must also fit the society and its particular historical context (187). John Beverley’s analysis, particularly apropos for this chapter, explores the role of the play’s sentimental elements, such as Anselmo’s and Laura’s tears and testimonies for Torcuato, as they initiate a resolution for this protagonist’s conflict with the law and honor codes (159). Beverley observes a transfer of internal alienation and conflict from Torcuato to Justo (160).

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4 “the inflexibility of the laws before life’s demands” (154).

5 Polt’s statement also includes Justo, though I do not agree with him about a lack of internal conflict for either Torcuato or Justo.
While critics have dealt with the legislation’s failure, Torcuato’s internal conflict and, in the case of Beverley, the key role of sentimentality in the play’s resolution, they have not analyzed in depth the law’s failure to protect Torcuato’s honor, the monarchy’s efforts to guard its own reputation, nor the burden placed on sentimentality to resolve Torcuato’s crisis. The duel is considered briefly in McClelland’s chapter on El delincuente honrado, and in Menarini’s study, “Tre contemporanei e il duelo: Jovellanos, Iriarte, Montengón”, which offers a general comparison and contrast of the stances on dueling in El delincuente honrado, Tomás de Iriarte’s El señorito mimado (1787) and Pedro de Montengón’s El Eusebio (1786-1788). However, these works focus on the duel in light of the legislation against it. An in-depth analysis of dueling—the circumstances surrounding Torcuato’s combat with the Marquis as well as the dueling language employed by multiple characters, including legal representatives like Justo and Simón—provides a point of reference to consider the tensions caused by the law’s failure to resolve honor conflicts, the monarchy’s preoccupation with its own reputation and the problematic role of sentimentality. Ultimately this study calls into question sentimentality’s ability to carry out a resolution to the conflict between Torcuato and the state.

As Act I opens, Don Torcuato, who has recently fought in a duel against the Marquis of Montilla and killed him has also recently wed Marquis’s widow, Doña Laura. The king has recently issued a new anti-dueling decree and desires to make an example

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6 In addition to mining both Torcuato’s and Justo’s speeches about the harshness of the laws and observing the influence of Beccaria and Montesquieu, Polt also contrasts Justo with Simón to showcase how Jovellanos criticizes unyielding legislation: “Simón is unable to rise to a philosophic level on which he can judge not only individuals but also laws and institutions; his criteria are totally formalistic, and he accepts as valid whatever has been decreed by constituted authority. This position is in conflict with Justo’s, since Justo not only judges individual guilt by legal standards, but also examines these standards themselves in the light of ethical principles. He is, therefore, both a minister and a critic of the society he serves” (173).
of this particular duel. Consequently, the magistrate, Don Justo, has begun a rigorous investigation to identify and punish the other duelist. Don Torcuato plans to flee the country to avoid death and also because he is ashamed of himself.

The emotional defenses offered in Torcuato’s favor by his wife Laura and particularly by his friend Anselmo add credibility to Torcuato’s character, augmenting the sympathy surrounding his dilemma. Such a portrayal criticizes sweeping legislation that does not account for either individual experience or the cultural reality of societal expectations and highlights the inability of the state to resolve matters of honor. Finally, the representation of Don Justo, the Judge of the Royal House and Court, emphasizes the law’s impotence in honor conflicts and creates additional sympathy for this conflict, particularly on the law’s side. Justo himself is also a good man, but he is unable to save Torcuato using his role as judge or even father.

I. Dueling Legislation: An Effort to Establish the State’s Authority

The conflict articulated in *El delincuente honrado* reflects the historical situation in Spain at the time. In *The Eighteenth Century Revolution in Spain*, Richard Herr describes the efforts of the Bourbon kings to consolidate power. For instance, Felipe V removed most of the remaining political and economic privileges of Aragón. Among these privileges was the conviction of the Aragonese cortes, or parliament; Felipe V instead invited Aragón to send deputies to Castille’s corte (11). According to Aguilar Piñal, in *La España del absolutismo ilustrado*, while neither Felipe V nor his sons were despots in the usual sense of the term, they were absolutists who conducted themselves with a keen awareness of their divine right to rule (32) and a preoccupation with maintaining security and order (128). Aguilar Piñal proposes that:
Más que despótico yo diría que el Estado español del siglo XVIII fue, por el contrario, además de ‘absoluto’, ‘vacilante’, incapaz de llevar a buen término la mayoría de las reformas que requerían pasos valientes y decididos, y a partir de los años setenta, ‘temeroso del futuro’, y por eso, ‘repressor de las ideas burguesas de libertad’. (32) 7

The legislation on dueling reflects the mood described in the above quote by pointing to a state that insisted on maintaining a hold over honor and viewed duels as contrary to its authority and laws.

*El delincuente honrado* examines the consequences of the clash between the dueling laws of the state and the threat of social rejection due to a loss of reputation.

Specifically, a new anti-dueling law first described by Torcuato in the third scene of Act I references the 1757 decree signed by Fernando VI (Caso-González “*El delincuente honrado*, drama sentimental” 109) and creates the primary conflict of the work.

According to Torcuato in this scene, “la corte, que cuando el desafío estaba, como ahora, en San Ildefonso, esperaba con ansia las resultas de este negocio . . . Las recientes pragmáticas de duelos, . . . y la cercanía de esta ciudad al Sitio, interesaron al Gobierno en él” (490). 8

While Díaz-Plaja suggests the practice of dueling was not very prevalent in Spain during the eighteenth century (28), the decrees against it, as well as other texts from the

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7 “More than despotistic, I would say that the Spanish state in the eighteenth century was, on the contrary, besides ‘absolute’, ‘vacilating’, incapable of carrying out the majority of the reforms that required valiant and decisive action, and, from the 1770’s on, ‘fearful of the future’ and because of that, a ‘repressor of the bourgeois ideals of liberty’”(32).

8 “the Court, that when the duel was, as now, in San Ildefonso, eagerly awaited the results of this investigation . . . The recent dueling decrees . . . and the proximity of this city to the Court, led the government to take an interest in it” (490).
period which discuss it\(^9\) suggest that at the least dueling served as a source of heated debate. Indeed, as previously mentioned, both Felipe V and Fernando VI issued anti-dueling decrees in 1716 and 1757 respectively, and the language from the former law states that dueling remained a problem for Spain:

No habiendo hasta ahora podido las maldiciones de la Iglesia y las leyes de las Reyes mis antecesores desterrar el detestable uso de los duelos y los desafíos, sin embargo de ser contraries al Derecho Natural y ofensivos del respeto que se debe a mi Real Persona y Autoridad . . . Si el desafío llegase a tener lugar, serán (los contendientes) castigados con pena de muerte. (Spain, Felipe V, 702(20))\(^{10}\)

An additional decree issued by Felipe V in 1723 demonstrates an attempt on the part of the State to maintain its authority over honor and reiterate the 1716 prohibition against dueling:

Teniendo prohibidos los Duelos, y Satisfacciones privadas . . . y deseando mantener rigurosamente esta absoluta prohibicion; he resuelto para que no quede sin castigo las ofensas, y las injurias que se cometen, y para quitar todo pretexto à sus venganças, tomar sobre mi, y à mi cargo la satisfaccion de ellas . . . Y con

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\(^9\) In addition to the 1716, 1723 and 1757 decrees, other texts which deal with dueling include a 1780 letter from the Archbishop of Toledo and a discourse on dueling printed in *Memorias de la Real Academia de la Historia* (1796), which may be found in the Biblioteca de Ciencias Morales y Políticas, R.3411. The discourse, written by D. Martín Ulloa, who, according the John H.R. Polt, was a contemporary of Jovellanos who also participated in Pablo de Olavide’s literary circle in Sevilla (“El delincuente honrado”), between 1757 and 1762 (4), most likely because of the 1757 decree, is entitled, “Disertación sobre el origen de los duelos, desafíos y leyes de su observancia, con sus progresos hasta su total extincion” (35-98). The number of texts concerning dueling, however, which also includes newspaper articles in the *Diario de Madrid* and *Diario de Valencia*, among others, strongly suggests that the practice was anything but extinct.

\(^{10}\) “To this day neither the condemnations of the Church nor the laws of my predecessors the kings have been able to banish the detestable use of duels and challenges, however contrary they are to the Natural Law and offensive to the respect that is owed my Royal Person and Authority . . . If a dueling challenge were to take place they (the duelists) will be punished by death” (Spain, Felipe V). This manuscript, 702(20), was provided for me by the Biblioteca de Ciencias Morales de Políticas.
este motivo prohíbo de nuevo, á todos generalmente, sin excepción de personas, el tomarse por sí las Satisfacciones de cualquiera agravio, è injuria. (Spain, Felipe V, MA/634(1)) 11

This decree places honor disputes beneath the umbrella of the Crown as it states that the monarchy will “take charge of the satisfaction of all offenses.” Other primary documents from the time support this stance by insisting that satisfaction for offenses belongs to the law instead of to the individuals involved. In a letter to a confessor concerning dueling, the Archbishop of Toledo condemns the practice as a barbaric custom now contrary to the laws of Reason and the State:

El desafío es un resto de la mayor barbarie: es una mala reliquia . . . es un atentado contra la autoridad pública: es quitar á los Jueces de la mano la vara de la justicia: es usurpar el cetro á los Soberanos: es publicar que no hay Superiores y Xefes para castigar los delitos: y es decir que falta providencia en las Leyes y Ordenanzas para castigar los excesos, ó vengar las injurias. (Papeles varios de la Real Capilla, Biblioteca Histórica Municipal) 12

Despite efforts to eliminate dueling via legislation, the practice persisted. A lecture at Barcelona’s Academy of Jurisprudence given in 1788 and published in the Memorial

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11 “Having prohibited duels and personal vengeance . . . and desiring to rigorously maintain this absolute prohibition; I have resolved to take upon myself the satisfaction of all offenses, so that affronts and injuries do not go unpunished, and to remove any pretext for vengeance. And for this reason, I prohibit again, for all people, without exception, the taking upon oneself the satisfaction of any offense or injury whatsoever” (Spain. Felipe V. Compilación de varias Reales Cédulas y otros papeles impresos y M.S. curiosos, n.d. Biblioteca Histórica Municipal, Legajo 5, No. I, 4 (Tomo 1), MA/634(1).

12 “The dueling challenge is a vestige of the greatest barbarity: it is an undesirable relic . . . it is an offense against public authority: it is to take the wand of justice from the Judges’ hands: it is to usurp the scepter of justice from the Sovereigns: it is to publicly declare that there are no Superiors or Authorities to punish crimes; it is to say that the Laws and Ordinances are stripped of divine authority to punish excesses or avenge injuries” (Papeles varios de la Real Capilla, Biblioteca Histórica Municipal), M/30(21).
literario in early 1789 insists that the public remained incapable of denying the law of the duel:

Ellos no llegan a comprender el poderoso recurso que halla el hombre de honor insultado, en su honor mismo, y en la satisfacción que le presta su interior inculpable; enteramente persuadidos que sola la venganza es el tribunal a que puede apelar en este lance, y que sólo la sangre de su contrario puede lavar las manchas que su honor padece. Ésta es la piedra angular de los duelistas y del duelo. (cited in McClelland 413)\textsuperscript{13}

As a result of the severity of dueling laws and the pervading notion that only an opponent’s blood could satisfy an offense against one’s honor, individuals confronted with a dueling challenge were also confronted with a choice as to where their honor disputes would be settled: within the State’s tribunals or on the field of honor. *El delincuente honrado* articulates a similar conflict concerning jurisdiction over honor conflicts between the Crown and individuals. Such a representation diverges from the notion of a theater whose primary purpose was to reform the public in an entertaining way, because the dilemma offered in Jovellanos’s work remains somewhat unresolved.

II. Jovellanos and Theater Reform

Eigtheenth-century Spanish society possessed two primary modes of communication with the masses: the pulpit and the theater. With the emergence of periodical publications it initiated another means of educating the public, though even

\textsuperscript{13} “Finding themselves fully persuaded that vengeance is the only tribunal to which a man can appeal in this difficult situation, and that only the blood of his opponent can wash the stains that his honor suffers, they do not quite understand the powerful alternative that the affronted man of honor finds in his very honor, and in the satisfaction that his virtuous soul gives him” (cited in McClelland 413).
these frequently lent space to debating matters connected with theater. For example, in Volume IV of El Pensador, Joseph Clavijo y Fajardo reiterates the role of theater in educating the public: “Ninguna persona de mediana instruccion debe ignorar, que la institucion del Theatro es corregir las costumbres, ridiculizandolas” (18 OR B3 part 2).\footnote{“No person of medium instruction should ignore that the institution of the Theater is to correct customs by ridiculing them” (18 or B3 Part 2).}

Ultimately the theater provided one of the key vehicles of reform, because its accessibility to the public afforded opportunities for numerous spectators to frequently and passively absorb lessons (Carnero 10).

Literary and philosophical debates wrestled with multiple facets of theater reform, such as what lessons should be imparted to the public and what dramatic devices would best instruct. In his (1790) discourse, “Memoria para el arreglo de la policía de los espectáculos y diversiones públicas y sobre su origen en España” (“Report on the Regulation of Spectacles and Public Entertainment and on their origin in Spain”), Jovellanos exalts the potential of the theater in instructing the public, attributing to it a heavy responsibility that extends far beyond mere entertainment: “se deduce que el gobierno no debe considerar el teatro solamente como una diversión pública, sino como un espectáculo capaz de instruir o extraviar el espíritu y de perfeccionar o corromper el corazón de los ciudadanos” (n.p.).\footnote{“one deduces that the government should not regard the theater only as a public diversion but rather as a spectacle capable of instructing or misleading the spirit, and perfecting or corrupting the hearts of the citizens” (n.p.).}

Upon mentioning “corazón de los ciudadanos,” (“hearts of the citizens”) Jovellanos reiterates his support for legislative reform of theater and references the role of sentiment in this transformation. In a later section of the
discourse, he enumerates several of the specific lessons which the public should learn from this new theater:

He aquí el grande objeto de la legislación: perfeccionar en todas sus partes este espectáculo, formando un teatro donde puedan verse continuos y heroicos ejemplos de reverencia al Ser supremo y a la religión de nuestros padres, de amor a la patria, al soberano y a la constitución; de *respeto a las jerarquías, a las leyes y a los depositarios de la autoridad* . . . Un teatro, en fin, donde no sólo aparezcan castigados con atroces escarmientos los caracteres contrarios a estas virtudes, sino que sean también silbados y puestos en ridículo los demás vicios y extravagancias que turban y afligen a la sociedad: el orgullo y la bajeza, la prodigalidad y la avaricia, la lisonja y la hipocresía, la supina indiferencia religiosa y la supersticioso credulidad, la locuacidad e indiscreción, la ridícula afectación de nobleza, de poder, de influjo, de sabiduría, de amistad, y, en suma, todas las manías, todos los abusos, todos los malos hábitos en que caen los hombres cuando salen del sendero de la virtud, del honor y de la cortesía por entregarse a sus pasiones y caprichos. (n.p., italics mine)\(^\text{16}\)

Among the above list of qualities to be fomented by the theater, and indirectly, legislation, is included “respeto a las jerarquías, a las leyes y a los depositarios de la autoridad.”

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\(^{16}\) “Herein lies the main objective of legislation: to perfect this spectacle in all its parts, forming a theater where one can see continuous and heroic examples of reverence to the Supreme Being and the religion of our forefathers, or love for our country, our Sovereign and the constitution; of respect for hierarchies, laws and those entrusted with authority . . . A theater, then, where not only are characters contrary to these virtues punished with tremendous lessons, but the other vices and extravagancies that disturb and afflict society are also mocked and ridiculed: pride and baseness, prodigality and greed, flattery and hypocrisy, ignorant religious indifference and superstitious beliefs, loquacity and indiscretion, the ridiculous affectation of the nobility, of power, influx, of wisdom, of friendship, and, in summary, all the manias, all the abuses, all the bad habits into which men fall when they stray from the path of virtue, of honor and courtesy by handing themselves over to their passions and whims” (n.p.).
autoridad,” qualities which echo the insistence of anti-dueling decrees, as well as the Archbishop of Toledo’s letter, that an individual’s honor is to be defended by the law, and thus, the state. In addition, a different description of honor is included that links it with “virtud” and “cortesanía” instead of reputation or even family lineage.

As Jovellanos recommends specific reforms to theater, he commences with “dramas,” suggesting that “La reforma de nuestro teatro debe empezar por el destierro de casi todos los dramas que están sobre la escena” (n.p.),\(^\)\(^1\) which appears to include those influenced by Lope and the Calderonian school, since he states that he does recognize the novelty, beauty and genius of some of these dramas. Nevertheless:

¿qué importa si estos mismos dramas, mirados a la luz de los preceptos y principalmente a la de la sana razón, están plagados de vicios y defectos que la moral y la política no pueden tolerar? ¿Quién podrá negar que en ellos, según la vehemente expresión de un crítico moderno, ‘se ven pintados con el colorido más deleitable las solicitudes más inhonestas, los engaños, los artificios, las perfidias, fugas de doncellas, escalamientos de casas nobles, resistencias a la justicia, duelos y desafíos temerarios, fundados en un falso pundonor, robos autorizados, violencias intentadas y ejecutadas, bufones insolentes, y criados que hacen gala y ganancia de su infames tercerías’? Semejantes ejemplos, capaces de corromper la inocencia del pueblo más virtuoso, deben desaparecer de sus ojos cuanto más antes. (n.p., italics mine)\(^1\)\(^8\)

\(^1\)\(^7\) “The reform of our theater should begin with the elimination of almost all the dramas that are currently in theaters” (n.p.).

\(^1\)\(^8\) “what does it matter if these same dramas, seen in light of the precepts and particularly in the light of healthy reason, are swarming with vices and defects that morality and politics cannot tolerate? Who can deny that in them, according to the vehement expression of a modern critic, ‘the most dishonest requests, deception, artifices, treachery, the kidnapping of damsels, invasions of noble houses, resistance to justice,
Among the vices of these works, Jovellanos specifically mentions “duelos y desafíos temerarios, fundados en un falso pundonor” as capable of corrupting the public. This statement also echoes other textual condemnations of dueling which appear in legislation and numerous texts, such as periodicals.

The neo-classical polemic arose in the midst of these efforts to reform the theater and its public. Proponents of neo-classicism insisted on certain aesthetic precepts as the only effective literary vehicle to instruct society. Guillermo Carnero lays out three central neo-classical principles: 1) a firm insistence on only one set of standards for literature, based on Greek and Latin traditions, reason and the needs of the public, 2) a belief that the eighteenth century, a time of enlightenment had been called upon to carry out social reforms and to mold a new citizen, one who was happier and more useful to society, and 3) the assertion that while “inspiration”, rooted in the irrational, might be a necessity in the creative process (13), it was insufficient to produce a “correct” work without rational reflection and study (14).

According to neo-classicists, tragedy was the key genre for improving the theater. Neo-classical tragedies, typically written in verse, conformed to the unities, and represented monumental characters confronted by “overwhelming, awe-inspiring” power. They were to contain themes of separation, discovery and recognition in order to arouse the emotions of their spectators (Kosove 31-2). By representing monumental characters, tragedies focused on universal, generalized ideals instead of situations found in contemporary life (Caldera 69).

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*rash duels and challenges founded on a false sense of honor, authorized robberies, violence attempted and executed, insolent buffoons, and servants who celebrate and profit from their vile pandering are seen painted with the most delightful colors?’ Similar examples, capable of corrupting the most innocent public’s virtue, should disappear from their eyes as soon as possible” (n.p., italics mine).
In Spain, however, tragedies found less success than the parodies which emerged to mock them, such as those penned by Ramón de la Cruz (McClelland 79). McClelland lists the lack of trained actors and the failure of stylized French and Italian acting methods to connect with the public among the factors contributing to the neo-classical tragedy’s lack of success in Spain (43), but Palacios Fernández states that the public simply preferred diversion over the pathetic tension offered in tragedies (196). McClelland notes that “High Tragedy was positively ousted by the middle-class play of domestic misfortune and the military thesis-drama—a kind of Low Tragedy which regarded heroism and pathos in a changed light and from a closer range” (79). Palacios Fernández traces the rise of sentimental from their origins in English theaters at the end of the seventeenth century to their elaboration in French theaters during the first half of the eighteenth century. Spanish authors read and translated many French works (173), until, “Las traducciones de autores franceses, realizadas con mayor o menor fidelidad a los textos, se convirtieron en un ejercicio habitual de nuestros dramaturgos” (Palacios Fernández 174). Eventually, sentimental comedies replaced neo-classical tragedies and became an apt tool for influencing and reforming society.

As he describes the large number of French works’ in Jovellanos’s personal library, Aguilar Piñal observes that during the eighteenth century, lettered Spaniards had access to the editions of works by the philosophes (“Le livre français dans la bibliotèque de Jovellanos” 405). Thus many scholarly Spaniards of the time were aware of trends in philosophical thought in Europe, such as the rise of sentimentality as a means of connecting the individual with what is right. In Sources of the Self (1989), Charles

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19 “Translations of French authors, carried out with more or less fidelity to the original texts, became a habitual exercise for our playwrights” (Palacios Fernández 174).
Taylor states that “Sentiment . . . is in a certain way the touchstone of the morally good” and that as the century progressed, sentiment became a compass which reason had to take into consideration (284). Discussions about the use of sentiment in literary works appear in Spanish periodicals from the time, such as in Josef Herrera’s Correo de Madrid ó de los ciegos. In 1802, Andrés Miñano remarked that sentimental comedies connected with the public, who “is predisposed in their favor and does not readily forget the emotions they arouse” (416). As she describes the rise of sentimentalism in European thought during the early eighteenth century in The “Comedia Lacrimosa” and Spanish Romantic Drama, Joan Kosove links it with a push toward social reform: “Literature became more ethical. Its aim was moral; it became didactic and dogmatic. The sentimental drama, essay, poetry and novel reflected the morals and customs of the times. The authors were writing for a public intensely interested in political, economic and social matters” (16).

In “Memoria para el arreglo de la policía de los espectáculos y diversiones públicas y sobre su origen en España”, Jovellanos views the potential of the theater to correct vices in terms of its ability to “introducir el placer en lo más íntimo del alma, excitando por medio de la imitación todas las ideas que puede abrazar el espíritu y todos los sentimientos que pueden mover el corazón humano” (n.p.). Thus the emphasis on the usefulness of sensibility connected with the desire to achieve the greatest possible

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20 A series of articles appear in Josef Herrera’s Correo de Madrid ó de los ciegos in July of 1790. Herrera affirms that the use of sentiment in works is sometimes appropriate if used for noble purposes, stating that “un sentimiento noble y generoso nos dá un testimonio agradable de la superioridad de nuestra alma sobre las cosas baxas y terrestres. Un sentimiento fino y delicado nos dá un placer puro, que nos embarga sin turbarnos, y que nos penetra sin confundirnos” (17 July 1790, vol. VII, Hemeroteca Municipal, 20 May 2008).

21 “to introduce pleasure into the most intimate part of the soul, by means of imitation, all the ideas that the spirit can embrace and all the sentiments that can move the human heart” (n.p.).
utility in the theater. McClelland attributes part of the rise of sentimental comedies in Europe to “the loud spokesmen of religious and moral welfare” who “had placed the European stage in the position of having to justify its utility in word and deed”. Since high tragedy, with its lofty heroes and conflicts, did not lend itself to obvious and immediate moral lessons (397), sentimental comedies, or “Low Tragedies”,22 offered critics a new avenue to reform the public. In general terms, sentimental comedies vindicated honest, hardworking victims, condemned wicked characters who might have been commerce tyrants or someone from another accessible situation in life. These theatrical works examined the tragic situations that emerge in ordinary life in part to instruct the public against the dangers of greed and various other moral dangers, but also to study human motives and tragic consequences (McClelland 399). Palacios Fernández explains that this dramatic genre sought to represent “realidad total” (“total reality”), a motive which influenced its diversion from classical tragedy in elements such as its inclusion of both sorrowful and humorous events (209).

The focus on middle-class characters also enabled playwrights to articulate situations relevant to the common man. According to McClelland:

the middle-class mind was the one most disposed by circumstances to lend itself to the cause of State-directed utility advocated by philosophers, partly because the middle-class mind was both the most available for scientific experiment in real life and the most comprehensible to the majority of authors. Therefore middle-class man in this sense was often put forward to demonstrate how the average human mind functions under given circumstances and stresses. (400)

22 McClelland offers a list of terms that are synonymous with “sentimental comedy” and which he classifies under the general name “Low Tragedy.” These terms include: Drame, Domestic or Urban Drama, Drama of Sensibility, Sentimental Drama and Lachrymose Drama” (397).
As noted by Kosove, in contrast with the classical tragedy, sentimental comedies did not present monumental heroes of high rank and insurmountable problems but rather offered more common characters struggling with social injustices such as forced marriages, cruel, oppressive laws and greedy authority figures (31). Additional themes in sentimental comedies included a call for freedom to choose one’s spouse, recognition of previously unknown family members, and the more generalized themes of love, pursuit of happiness, friendship, pity and charity (Kosove 33, 35). In both classical tragedies and sentimental comedies, however, “Virtue is rewarded and vice punished. This principle of ‘poetic justice’ is illustrated in many sentimental comedies” (Kosove 30). The virtue of El delincuente honrado’s Torcuato, who attempted to avoid the duel, is recognized both when characters intercede for him and when he is spared the death penalty. Nonetheless, Torcuato is certainly not rewarded, because he is still exiled for not following the dueling decree. Furthermore, several sentimental elements in this work reveal an unresolved conflict for the individual who finds himself trapped between the official anti-dueling law and societal notions of honor. These sentimental aspects also portray a situation where the official law is insufficient to protect its citizens’ honor. Such elements are in keeping with critical observations of sentimental comedies, especially since the situation portrayed reflected a contemporary reality, but it is interesting to note an implicit lack of resolution to the conflict.

III. The Case of El delincuente honrado

Caso González states in “El delincuente honrado, drama sentimental” that Jovellanos composed this play early in 1773 in the midst of a debate among the members
of Olavide’s tertulia about the worthiness of lachrymose comedies (105). The “Advertencia del Editor” in the 1787 edition states that El delincuente honrado was first staged in 1774 in the Aranjuez theater in San Ildefonso (481), the same town referenced as the location of the Court in Act I (486).

In Spanish Drama of Pathos McClelland cites Jovellanos’s El delincuente honrado as the first of the “Low Tragedies” in Spain (404). These “Low Tragedies,” or sentimental/lachrymose comedies, were, according to McClelland, designed to focus on the common man and the typical stresses and strains of his daily life (404). The much debated topic of dueling represented a very relevant issue for Spaniard, and McClelland notes that at that time any legal topic also stirred up strong emotions, making the central theme of dueling legislation a particularly controversial issue in Spain (409).

Jovellanos, who had chosen law as his own profession and was currently serving as a criminal judge in Seville (Santullano 20), possessed a clear connection to this heated topic.

In fact, an edition entitled, El delinquente honrado, tragi-comedia en prosa that was printed in Barcelona states that the play was based on a “Caso sucedido en la Ciudad

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23 Sebold has asserted that El precipitado, by Trigueros, was also written for the same contest (Kosove 45), and in his mention of El delincuente honrado in Ilustración y Neoclasicismo en las letras españolas, Álvaros Barrientos states that “En la misma línea estaba Cándido M[arí]a. Trigueros en El precipitado, de 1773” (216).

24 A 1787 issue of the Diario de Madrid reprints an extract from a dueling law published in 1409 (97) as well as an anecdote about a duel that occurred in Barcelona in 1469 (185). Clearly dueling was a topic of interest among readers (vol. 5, July, Aug, Sept 1787, Hemeroteca Municipal, 26 May 2008).

25 During his lifetime Jovellanos held numerous official positions. In addition to the post of criminal judge in Seville, some of Jovellanos’s other positions included Alcalde de Casa y Corte, or, Judge of the Royal House and Court, the same position held by Don Justo, to which Jovellanos was appointed in 1778 (Santullano 22).

26 This edition may be found in the Biblioteca Nacional de España, T/6975. Among the editions cited in Caso Gonlález’s detailed catalogue of the early publications of El delincuente honrado, another printing by
de Segovia en el Año 1738. This note does not appear to correspond with any contemporary anti-dueling law, an issue addressed by Caso González in “El delincuente honrado, drama sentimental.” Caso González postulates that the Barcelona edition mistakenly printed a 3 instead of a 5, making the actual year of the event upon which the play would be based 1758, one year after Fernando VI’s 1757 anti-dueling decree (109). The fact that El delincuente honrado’s central duel has taken place in the year prior to the play’s first scene supports his statement.

El delincuente honrado was very successful, and Caso González reiterates its popularity: “el Delincuente fue una obra de gran éxito, y acaso la de mayor éxito en la época, porque ninguna otra ha alcanzado el número de representaciones o de traducciones que la de don Gaspar”(106).27 Jovellanos’ sentimental comedy was translated into French, German and Italian, according to Caso González (107). Its showings occurred in at least six countries (107), such as England in 1779 (105).28 El delincuente honrado’s popularity did not constitute a passing fad, but rather endured for approximately fifty years. Before 1830 some thirteen Spanish editions, in addition to a high volume of

Juan Francisco Piferrer in Barcelona, also uses the term “tragi-comedia” (555). One of the key criticism’s leveled at sentimental comedies was, according to Ceán Bermúdez the “defecto . . . de ser un monstruo” (cited in Caso González 555) for its inclusion of elements of both comedies and tragedies. The precise generic classification of El delincuente and other sentimental comedies proved perplexing not only for Spaniards, but for scholars throughout Europe, because, as Polt states, this “new theatrical phenomenon . . . seemed to grow out of nowhere to disturb the neat categories of the eighteenth century”. Polk notes other labels used to describe Jovellanos’s work, such as “comedia tierna” (“tender comedy”), “drama sentimental” and “drama” (Jovellanos’ “El delincuente honrado” n.p.).

27 “El Delincuente was a work of great success, and perhaps the most successful of its time, because no other work has achieved the same number of representations or translations as that of don Gaspar” (106).

28 “Although El delincuente honrado was staged successfully in England, in regard to English translations of the work, Caso González states in the “Notas” to his edition of the play that “De la traducción inglesa nada sé, salvo que se hizo” (“Of the English translation I do not know anything except that it was carried out”) (556).
copies and an Italian edition emerged (Caso González “El Delincuente honrado, drama sentimental” 107).

A. The Conflict

Several key sentimental elements articulate the conflict that Don Torcuato faces between losing his reputation before the public or disobeying the state law against dueling; this conflict reflects a similar tension in Spain at that time. These sentimental elements include the representation of Don Torcuato as a man of unknown origin and the sympathetic portrayal of Don Torcuato’s turmoil through his speeches, other characters’ descriptions of him, and various stage directions. In addition, the efforts by Torcuato’s friend Anselmo and his wife Laura create additional sympathy for the protagonist even as they suggest that the state’s laws are insufficient to protect his honor. However, two of the most striking sentimental components of the play emerge in the portrayal of Don Justo, the magistrate charged with carrying out justice against the remaining duelist, when it is revealed that he is Torcuato’s father, and when his passionate efforts to defend Torcuato against the death penalty fail.

Both the son—Torcuato—and the father—Justo, find themselves trapped in an impossible situation. Their dilemma over dueling echoes the conflict of Fernando and Hernán Ruiz in Por acrisolver su honor. The king in Cañizares’ comedia wishes to prevent the duel, but he declares that his hands tied before the rigidity of the law of the duel. In El delincuente honrado, the king has attempted to quell the duel’s power with a harsh decree and maintain dominion over honor conflicts through tribunals. The law of the duel maintains its rigidity and stands in opposition to an equally unyielding anti-dueling law, enacted by a state which proposes to protect individuals’ honor, but is
insufficient to fulfill this role. Consequently, first Torcuato and then Justo find themselves trapped between these two laws, and the empathy generated by their pathetic situation becomes a vehicle to move the audience and confront it with the need to reform legislation that does not consider the social context and demands too harsh a punishment for a crime.

Whenever Don Torcuato mentions his background, he speaks of his unfortunate lack of roots: “¡Qué desdichado nací! Incierto de los autores de mi vida, he andado siempre sin patria ni hogar propio” (492). In Act IV, as Torcuato reveals more about his childhood and family to Don Justo, he describes his mother’s efforts to restore honor to her son:

Su pundonor y su recato eran extremos . . . clamó continuamente por la vuelta de mi padre, a quien la necesidad obligara a buscar en países lejanos los medios de mantener honradamente una familia. Estaba ya cercana su vuelta, y para entonces un matrimonio que debía asegurarme . . . la legitimidad de mi origen, pero la muerte . . . Un accidente repentino privó a mi madre de la vida . . .” (530)

This description of Torcuato helps to explain his motivation to duel with the Marquis of Montilla in a sympathetic way because it confirms his mother’s love for him, her sense of honor, or pundonor, and also because her death leaves him as an orphan. Torcuato’s frequent reference to himself as desdichado because of his lack of family ties adds to his pitiable state. Finally, as Torcuato has already revealed in the same conversation with

29 “How ill-fated was my birth! Unsure of who gave me life, I have always walked without a country or home of my own” (492).

30 “Her sense of honor and modesty were extreme . . . she continually clamored for my father’s return, whom necessity forced to seek in distant countries the means to honorably support his family. His return was approaching, at which point a marriage that would assure me . . . [of] the legitimacy of my origins, but death . . . a sudden accident deprived my mother of life” (536).
Don Justo, the Marquis used this knowledge about Torcuato’s illegitimacy to provoke him: “me echó en cara un defecto” (529).\(^{31}\) This last insult was the catalyst for Torcuato’s acceptance of the dueling challenge.

Torcuato’s status corresponds to wider trends in theater. The protagonist’s nebulous background fits the new character types represented in sentimental comedies. The “everyman” that Torcuato represents is an enlightened individual, and as Sebold observes, one without any psychological defects (417). Fuentes observes that with Don Torcuato, “Jovellanos chooses a character who does not belong to the higher social class, but one from an unknown background who represents the new honorable man” (105). This new honor “is conceived not as an inherited right but as an earned distinction” (Fuentes 105). Whereas Golden Age theatrical representations of honor connect it with hierarchical elements such as the authority of the monarchy and family lineage in addition to reputation, \(\textit{El delincuente honrado}\) portrays honor based on virtue that competes with the notion of honor-as-reputation: Torcuato is a “\textit{delincuente}” according to the law, and yet he is also “\textit{honrado}”. Polt notes that “The play’s title indicates at once that the conflict . . . rests on the paradoxical nature of this combination” (182). Don Torcuato, as an enlightened “everyman”, represents this new honor and stands in stark contrast to his challenger, the Marquis of Montilla, who, according to Torcuato, “era uno de aquellos hombres temerarios a quienes su alto nacimiento y una perversa educación inspiran un orgullo intolerable” (490).\(^{32}\) The Marquis represents the opposite qualities associated with the “new honorable man” because of his rashness and excess pride.

\(^{31}\) “he threw my flaw in my face” (529).

\(^{32}\) “was one of those rash men in whom a privileged birth and a perverse education have inspired an intolerable pride” (490).
Nonetheless, the sympathetic portrayal of Don Torcuato’s conflict with the Marquis of Montilla suggests that not only does honor-as-reputation continue to exercise a strong societal influence but the state has imposed strict anti-dueling laws that fail to recognize this situation. As an enlightened man, Torcuato denounces honor based on reputation, declaring, “Yo bien sé que el honor es una quimera” (496), but in reality, he cannot deny its influence. He also desires for the state to settle honor disputes: “La buena legislación debe atender a todo, sin perder de vista el bien universal. Si la idea que se tiene del honor no parece justa, al legislador toca rectificarla” (490). However, a recognition of the conflict between the laws of the state and the law of the duel emerges in philosophical discussions, such as Torcuato’s debate with his father-in-law Don Simón over dueling in Act I:

El honor, señor, . . . no está en nuestra mano, sino en la estimación de los demás. La opinión pública le da y le quita. ¿Sabéis que quien no admite un desafío es al instante tenido por cobarde? Si es un hombre ilustre, un caballero, un militar, ¿de qué le servirá acudir a la justicia? La nota que impuso la opinión pública, ¿podrá borrarrla una sentencia? (496)

Torcuato acknowledges that tribunals cannot erase the stigma of cowardice imposed by public opinion if a man turns down a dueling challenge, no matter how noble his reasoning. While this particular speech occurs during a philosophical debate, it also

33 “I well know that honor is an illusion” (496).

34 “Good legislation should take everything into consideration without losing sight of the universal good. If the idea that the public has of honor does not seem just, then it is up to the legislator to rectify it” (490).

35 “Honor, sir, . . . is not in our hand, but rather in the estimation of others. Public opinion gives it and takes it away. Do you not know that the one who does not accept a challenge is instantly viewed as a coward? If he is a distinguished man, a gentleman, a military man, how does it serve him to turn to the law? How can a sentence erase the view of him imposed by public opinion?” (496).
echoes Torcuato’s personal situation, because as he states before Don Justo in Act IV, “El honor, que fue la única causa de mi delito, es, señor, la única disculpa que pudiera alegar . . . Cuando acepté el desafío preví estas consecuencias; por no perder el honor me expuse entonces a la muerte . . .” (528). Torcuato states that he knew the potential consequences of accepting the Marquis’s dueling challenge, but the threat of losing his reputation compelled him to proceed with the duel despite the mandates of the state and also against his own desires. Honor-as-reputation overrides the mandates of honor based on internal qualities.

In addition to the threat of capital punishment, this protagonist is now defined by his internal conflict over dueling. Stage directions emphasize the sentiment in general, but especially the strong emotions that surround the protagonist. *El delincuente honrado* initiates with Torcuato alone on the stage, and the instructions state that he “se levanta con semblante inquieto” (485). Besides highlighting his status as an individual, such stage directions aid in creating a tormented character. Other stage instructions direct a Torcuato “con aire triste y extremamente inquieto” (499), “con extremo dolor”, “con pasión” (505) that “levanta los ojos al cielo y suspira” (504). Jesús G. Maestro has observed that Torcuato: “según los preceptos de la comédie larmoyante propuestos por D. Diderot, comienza la acción no con un discurso verbal, sino mediante signos kinésicos

36 Honor, which was the only reason for my crime, is, sir, the only excuse that I could allege . . . When I accepted the dueling challenge I anticipated these consequences; but I risked death for the purpose of not losing honor . . .” (528).

37 “arises with a worried expression” (485).

38 “with a sad and extremely uneasy air” (499).

39 “with extreme pain”

40 “with passion” (505)

41 “lifts his eyes to heaven and sighs” (504).
Torcuato’s physical movements are scripted to communicate constant anxiety.

These directions add to the sympathy and torturous internal conflict that define Torcuato and are reiterated by the dialogue. At various times Anselmo, Laura and Simón—Torcuato’s father-in-law— all make remarks about Torcuato’s apparent sadness before they know either that he has dueled or that the authorities are actively searching for the other duelist. For example, in Act I, Anselmo marvels that his friend, so recently married, could be so distraught: “Yo no comprendo, Torcuato. Tus ojos están hinchados, tu semblante triste, y de algunos días a esta parte noto que has perdido tu natural alegría” (488). This remark, similar to other observations of Torcuato’s altered state, also suggests that Torcuato is not subject to excess emotions. In keeping with the ideals of some eighteenth-century enlightened intellectuals, Torcuato declares the importance of balancing reason with sentiment: “Si las lágrimas son efecto de la sensibilidad del corazón, ¡desdichado de aquel que no es capaz de derramarlas!” (488). Hence, his tears signal a grave conflict. The tears and sighs which are so prevalent in this sentimental comedy reflect contextual notions about sensibility, and with this particular work they serve a specific function: they define Torcuato as an enlightened man who deeply regrets

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42 “According to the precepts of the lachrymose comedy proposed by D. Diderot, begins the action not with a verbal discourse, but rather by means of kinesthetic signs (gestures, movements, physical expressions...), that define his ludic space in terms of constant adversity, misfortune and worry” (59).

43 “I do not understand, Torcuato. Your eyes are swollen, your face sad, and as of late I have noticed that you have lost your natural happiness” (488).

44 “If tears are an effect of the heart’s sensibility, then how he unfortunate is he who is incapable of shedding them!” (488).
his recent duel, creating sympathy for him in the face of a pursuit by state authorities searching for legal justice.

Before hearing word of the imminent threat of punishment, Torcuato expresses a sense of guilt both for the duel and his decision to conceal it from his wife Laura even as he defends the inevitability of his duel. Torcuato describes himself as a criminal in several instances, at times employing dueling language in his speeches. In his conversation with his friend Anselmo in Act I, Torcuato states that he was the “autor de la muerte del marqués de Montilla” (489).\(^{45}\) In this same conversation, Torcuato speaks of his “delito”, or “crime”, his regrets about having “offended” (“a quien ofendí tanto”, or, “whom I have greatly offended”) his father-in-law Don Simón and the “atroz agravio”, or “atrocious insult” of hiding the duel from his wife (490). Words and phrases like “ofendí” and “atroz agravio”, coded in dueling terminology, suggest that Torcuato’s regret stems more from offending his peers than from offending the state’s laws. While this does not necessarily mean that he holds completely to the pull of honor based on reputation, one must wonder how much he regrets breaking the law.

Other descriptions of his actions escalate as Torcuato states to Anselmo that he is worthy of punishment (490), describes the “perfidia de mis engaños”\(^{46}\) (490) and further laments having deceived Laura:

\[\text{Yo le entregué una mano manchada en la sangre de su primer esposo, le ofrecí una alma sellada con el sello de la iniquidad y le consagré una vida envilecida con el reato de este crimen, que me hace deudor de un escarmiento a la sociedad y} \]

\(^{45}\) “author of the Marquis of Montilla’s death” (489).

\(^{46}\) “treachery of my deception” (490).
siervo de la ley. ¡Qué de agravios contra el amor y la virtud de una desdichada!

(491)

Not only does this speech reflect other moments where Torcuato paints himself with strong language as a “monstruo, que está envenenando” his wife’s heart (507) and a “bárbaro esposo” (507), but it is also coded in dueling terms and associations such as “manchada en la sangre” (“stained with the blood”), “agravio” (“offense”) and even “sellada con el sello” (“stamped with the seal), because “sello” can be connected with a family line, since a family “sello” would identify the author of a letter. The notion of blood reappears numerous times in Torcuato’s descriptions of his duel, and it is invoked to express his regret about the duel, such as in his statement that his hand is “manchada en la sangre” of Laura’s first husband’s blood.

In Torcuato’s full confession to Laura in Act II, he again describes the duel using both criminal and dueling terms:

Ya ves con cuanto ardor se busca al matador de tu primer marido, y cuántas y cuán vivas diligencias se practican por descubrirle. El brazo de la justicia está levantada contra su vida miserable. El Soberano ha empeñado su augusto nombre en esta pesquisa, tu padre y los parientes del muerto están sedientos de su sangre, y tal vez tú misma ofreces el deseo de su muerte a la tierna memoria de tu primer

47 “I pledged to her a hand stained with the blood of her first husband, I offered her a soul stamped with the seal of iniquity and I consecrated to her a life debased by the duty to atone for this crime, which obliges me to compensate society by means of the law through servitude. What offenses against the love and virtue of an ill-fated lady!” (491).

48 “monster, that is poisoning” (507).

49 “barbaric husband” (507).
amor. Pues este delincuente, este hombre proscrito, desdichado, aborrecido de
todos y perseguido en todas partes . . . soy yo mismo. (506)50

Again, Torcuato invokes blood to describe his crime: “sedientos de su sangre” (“thirsty
for his blood”) and uses stronger language such as “matador” (“killer”), “delincuente”
(“delinquent”) and “desdichado, aborrecido de todos” (“ill-fated, abhorred by all”),
reflecting a sense of guilt over this duel and especially the deception of his wife.
Nonetheless, while Torcuato expresses remorse for the duel and extreme regret over
having concealed the affair from Laura, he does not express such regret over having
broken the law, and even persists in maintaining that his duel was inevitable.

In the same conversation with Laura, Torcuato discusses the conflict he suffered
between the law of the state and the law of the duel, a conflict which he could not avoid:

. . . yo soy ese objeto miserable de la ira del cielo y de los hombres; y sin

embargo, viviría tranquilo si no mereciese serlo también de la tuya . . . Pero yo te
he ofendido, y lo conozco. Ocultándote mi situación, hice a tu alma inocente el
más atroz agravio, y esto solo me hace digno de los mayores suplicios. No; la
muerte de tu esposo fue de mi parte un delito involuntario. El cielo es testigo de
cuanto hice por evitarla. Pero mi silencio . . . mi perfidia . . . haberte engañado . . .

50 “Now you see with what ardor your first husband’s killer is being hunted, and how many and what
intense efforts are being put forth to find him. The arm of justice is raised against his miserable life. The
Sovereign has invested his venerable name and in this search, your father and the relatives of the deceased
are thirsty for his blood, and perhaps you yourself offer up the desire for his death to the tender memory of
your first love. Well, this delinquent, this man who is outlawed, ill-fated, abhorred by all and hunted in all
parts . . . is none other than me” (506).
¡Ah! En vano querrá perdonarme tu alma virtuosa; yo no puedo perdonarme a mí mismo. (506-7)\textsuperscript{51}

Torcuato describes his efforts to avoid the duel, which indicates it is not a practice he advocates, and he presents his offenses against Laura repeating dueling terms such as “ofendido” (“offended”) and “agravio” (“offense”). Even “testigo” (“witness”) though used when stating his efforts to avoid the duel, also implicitly references the notion of a “second”. The fact that Torcuato emphasizes his greatest sense of regret over the offense that he has committed against his wife suggests in an oblique way that he also values a horizontal sense of honor more than a vertical one based on the authority of the state and family lineage. Torcuato directly defends his ultimate decision to duel in this same speech when he declares that “la muerte de tu esposo fue de mi parte un delito involuntario. El cielo es testigo de cuanto hice por evitarla” (507).\textsuperscript{52} Such a defense creates sympathy for Torcuato, who clearly did not seek this duel, and as will be seen in Anselmo’s detailed description of the duel, did everything possible to avoid killing the Marquis. His self-defense suggests that the state’s law and its honor tribunals are insufficient to resolve honor conflicts, because despite numerous attempts to avoid the duel, he saw no other recourse but to accept the challenge and quiet the Marquis’s threats. Torcuato’s torment exposes this insufficiency.

\textsuperscript{51} “. . . I am that miserable object of the wrath of heaven and men; and even so, I would live in peace if I didn’t deserve to be the object of your wrath too . . . But I have offended you, and I know it. Hiding my situation from you, I committed the most atrocious offense against your innocent soul, and this alone makes me deserve the gravest physical punishment. No; the death of your husband was an involuntary crime on my part. Heaven is a witness to how much I did to avoid it [his death]. But my silence . . . my treachery . . . having deceived you . . . Ah! Your virtuous soul may pardon me, but it will be in vain; I cannot pardon myself” (506-7).

\textsuperscript{52} “the death of your husband was on my part an involuntary crime. Heaven is a witness to how much I did to avoid it” (507).
In addition, Torcuato’s expressed desire to punish himself and his lament that
exile is his only option—“Ya ves, Anselmo, que en tal conflicto no me queda otro
recurso que la fuga” (490)—further denigrate the law. Torcuato addressed the
challenges of the Marquis of Montilla with the illegal practice of dueling and now
proposes to punish himself. With a self-imposed exile in Act, Torcuato reiterates that his
journey would not be a flight from punishment but rather self-imposed punishment when
he swears as much in his Act I conversation with Anselmo (490) and also when he
reveals to Laura in Act II the reasons for his departure (507). His use of dueling terms
such as “vengarte” (“avenge you”) and “ofendido” (“offended”) in this speech to Laura
reinforce the impotence of the law of the state in matters of honor:

Pero, Laura, consúltele; yo voy a vengarte. No; mi perfidia atroz no quedará sin
castigo. Voy a huir de ti para siempre, y a esconder mi vida detestable en los
horrible climas donde no llega la luz del sol, y donde reinan siempre el horror y la
oscuridad. Y no creas que voy huyendo de la muerte. ¿Qué hay en ella de
horrible para los desdichados? ¡Ah! lejos de tu vista, el dolor de haberte
ofendido será para mi alma un suplicio más duro y más terrible que la muerte
misma. (507)

Facing certain capture and punishment by authorities, Torcuato declares that for him the
worst penalty is both the reality of having offended Laura and the prospect of permanent

53 “Now you see, Anselmo, that in such a conflict, no other recourse remains for me other than flight” (490).

54 “But, Laura, console yourself; I am going to avenge you. No; my horrible treachery will not go without
punishment. I am going to flee from you forever, and hide my detestable life in horrible climates where the
light of the sun does not penetrate, and where horror and darkness always reign. And don’t think that I am
fleeing from death. What is so horrible about death for the ill-fated? Ah! Far from your sight, the pain of
having offended you will be for my soul a harsher and more terrible torture than death itself” (507).
separation from her. This lament adds to the melodrama of this sentimental comedy, but it also places Torcuato’s suffering and self-imposed punishment above the law. The use of terms such as “ofendido” and “vengarte” further prioritize Torcuato’s self-punishment by referencing a practice where people step outside the law in order to resolve their conflicts within the rules of the dueling code.

When Torcuato submits to the authorities by turning himself in, his motives for this action stem from an internal code of honor, which dictates that he save Anselmo, who has been arrested and charged with Torcuato’s crimes. At the end of Act II, Torcuato agonizes over his decision to turn himself in:

En fin, ya no hay recurso . . . Ya no puedo salvar a mi amigo sin exponer mi propia vida . . . ¡Oh nombre odioso! ¡Nombre funesto . . . ! ¿Es posible que en un siglo en que se respeta la humanidad y en que la filosofía derrama su luz por todas partes, se escuchen aún entre nosotros los gritos de la inocencia oprimida . . . ?

Pero ¿sufriré yo que por mi causa . . . ? No; el honor me sujeta a la dureza de las leyes, y yo sería digno de ella si le expusiese por evitarla. Perdona, triste Laura, tú cuyas virtudes eran dignas de suerte más dichosa; perdona a este infeliz el sacrificio que va a hacer de una vida que es tuya, en las aras del honor y de la amistad. (514)

55 Torcuato uses the notion of “vengarse” on more than one occasion to describe his efforts to make restitution to Laura, such as in Act II, when Felipe relays this message to Laura from Torcuato: ‘dile a mi esposa que ya está vengada’ (520).

56 “Ah well, there is no alternative . . . Now I cannot save my friend without risking my own life . . . Oh hateful name! Ominous name . . . ! Is it possible that in a century in which humanity is respected and philosophy sheds its light everywhere, the cries of the oppressed innocents are still heard among us . . . ? But, will I allow that for my sake . . . ? No; honor subjects me to the harshness of the laws, and I would deserve it if I exposed him in order to avoid it. Forgive me, poor Laura, you whose virtues are worthy of a happier fortune; forgive this unfortunate man for the sacrifice that he is going to make on the altars of honor and friendship of a life that belongs to you” (514).
Torcuato questions the “dureza de las leyes” (“harshness of the laws”) when he contrasts the enlightenment of a century in which “se respeta la humanidad y en que la filosofía derrama su luz por todas partes” (“humanity is respected and philosophy sheds its light everywhere”) and the “gritos de la inocencia oprimida” (“cries of the oppressed innocents”) that arise as a result of cruel legislation. He directly references Anselmo and his imprisonment when mentioning the shouts of the oppressed innocents, but the fact that Torcuato states that he would deserve the punishment inflicted by harsh laws if he were to allow Anselmo to be punished suggests that Torcuato implicitly includes himself among the innocent. The internal sense of honor that compels Torcuato to sacrifice himself is an honor based on friendship and justice. In the twelfth scene of Act II, Torcuato tells Simón and Justo: “En fin, soy su amigo, y debo hacer por él cuanto me permitan el honor y la justicia” (513), connecting his friendship with Anselmo and a sense of honor that values that friendship. Jovellanos reaches beyond the bonds of friendship to engender sympathy in his audience when, during the third scene of Act IV, Don Justo realizes and simultaneously reveals to Torcuato that he is his father. The scene unfolds with great emotion, since stage directions portray Torcuato, “De rodillas, y besando la mano de su padre con gran ternura y llanto” (532). This revelation about the family ties between the magistrate and the “delinquent” offers additional insights into the relationship between the state and the individual, because it employs sentimental means to emphasize the divide between these two parties and articulate the difficulty, or even impossibility, of a resolution between them.

57 “Ah well, I am his friend, and I should do everything for him that honor and justice allow me” (513).

58 “On his knees and kissing his father’s hand with great tenderness and weeping” (27).
Prior to their tearful reunion, Justo expresses admiration for Torcuato and anxiety on the young man’s behalf. The magistrate’s regard for Torcuato and angst on his behalf begins to give way to an uneasy sense of recognition. For example, in the fourth act, Justo tells himself, “No sé de qué nace esta inquietud que me atormenta. ¿No pudiera ser que don Torcuato . . . ? Haber nacido en Salamanca . . . No tener noticia de sus padres . . . Su edad . . . Su fisonomía . . . ¡Ah, dulce y funesta ilusión! El fruto desdichado de nuestros amores pasó rápidamente de la cuna al sepulcro . . . !” (528). When father and son are finally reunited, amidst many tears, Torcuato’s imminent death becomes all the more tragic, and his rectitude in facing the sentence stirs additional sympathy: “¡Ay, padre mío! Después de pronunciar tan dulce nombre, ya no temo la muerte” (532).

Torcuato has found his true father, but, paradoxically, this father is unable to help him because of his role as a representative of the law.

B. Testimony of Others: Friendship and Family Ties

Torcuato’s sacrifice in the name of friendship is tied to another sentimental thread: the testimony of Torcuato’s loved ones on his behalf. Laura and Anselmo passionately defend Torcuato and offer to sacrifice their lives for his. Justo intercedes for Torcuato, asking the king to reconsider his decision to have Torcuato executed. This intercession, occurring after the discovery of the blood ties between the judge and the accused, is an example of how Jovellanos has used family ties both for the sake of

59 “I don’t know what is the source of this uneasiness that torments me. It couldn’t be true that Don Torcuato . . . ? Having been born in Salamanca . . . Not knowing about his parents . . . His age . . . His physical appearance . . . Ah sweet and terrible illusion! The ill-fated fruit of our passion passed so quickly from the cradle to the grave . . . !” (528).

60 “Oh, my father! After having pronounced such a sweet name, now I do not fear death” (532).
sentimentality and to heighten the sense of conflict, since it is Justo himself who is charged with carrying out the Torcuato’s death sentence.

These testimonies, particularly those of Anselmo, correspond to the high importance on eye-witness testimony and friendship during the eighteenth century. They create greater sympathy for Torcuato and emphasize his virtue. Testimonies characterize Torcuato and relay to the audience key information, such as the details of his duel with the Marquis, communicated by Anselmo in Act I (491).

During Act I, Anselmo questions Torcuato’s description of his actions as “mi delito, mi perfidia, mis engaños” (490), arguing:

Es verdad que has muerto al marqués de Montilla; pero lo hiciste insultado, provocado y precisado a defender tu honor. Él era un temerario, un hombre sin seso. Entregado a todos los vicios, y siempre enredado con tahúres y mujercillas, después de haber disipado el caudal de su esposa, pretendió asaltar el de su suegro y hacerte cómplice en este delito. Tú resististe sus propuestas, procuraste apartarle de tan viles intentos, y no pudiendo conseguirlo, avisaste a su suegro para que viviese con precaución; pero sin descubrirle a él. Esta fue la única causa de su enojo. No contento con haberte insultado y ultrajado atrozmente, te desafió varias veces. En vano quisiste satisfacerle y templarle; su temeraria importunidad te obligó a contestar. No, Torcuato, tú no eres reo de su muerte; su genio violento le

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61 Polt has extensively document Jovellanos’s encounters with British empirical philosophy, such as John Locke, postulating in “Jovellanos and His English Sources” that the author’s “first and most decisive encounter with the thought of the French and English Enlightenment took place through Olavide and his circle”. He notes that Jovellanos spent many years studying the writings of John Locke, after having observed comments from personal writings dating from 1776 to 1810. Among Locke’s works that were familiar to Jovellanos are Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Thoughts Concerning Education and Treatises of Government.

62 “my crime, my treachery, my deceptions” (490)
Anselmo defends virtuous Torcuato, whom he describes as “reportado y sereno” (“restrained and serene”) and later in the speech as distinguished by “juiciosa conducta” (“judicious conduct”) (491) in contrast with the Marquis, an unrestrained “león furioso” (“furious lion”) who refused to desist in his “temeraria importunidad” (“rash provocation”). The challenger and challenged are complete opposites in terms of personality, social class, and their views of honor.

Other characters corroborate Torcuato’s goodness, such as Simón, the father-in-law who nearly lost his fortune to the Marquis, when in Act III he describes Laura’s happiness with her new husband by contrasting it with her misery with the Marquis:

“¡Oh! ella está loca de contento. Es verdad que salió de un marido tan malo . . . ¡Oh! Torcuato, Torcuato es otra cosa” (516). Laura staunchly defends Torcuato against

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63 The description of this duel contrasts these two characters according to how they carry themselves in the duel. There are other instances in both theater and novels where the behavior of duelists during combat reflects their temperament, a theme which will be discussed further in chapter five.

64 “It is true that you have killed the Marquis of Montilla; but you did it after being insulted, provoked and required to defend your honor. He was a rash man, a man without sense. Surrendered to all manner of vices, and always entangled with gamblers and loose women, after having squandered his wife’s fortune, he tried to rob that of his father-in-law and make you an accomplice in his crime. You resisted his proposals, tried to dissuade him from his vile intentions, and when those efforts failed, you warned his father-in-law so that he would proceed with caution; but without unveiling the Marquis’s plans. This was the only cause of his anger. Not content with having insulted and abused you atrociously, he challenged you various times. In vain you tried to satisfy and restrain him; his rash provocation obliged you to answer. No, Torcuato, you are not the culprit in his death; his violent temper drove you to it. I myself saw that while the Marquis, like a furious lion, sought your heart with the tip of his sword, you, restrained and serene, thought only of defending yourself; and the Marquis without a doubt would not have perished if his blind fury had not driven him into your sword” (491).

65 “Oh! She is beside herself with happiness! It is true that she was freed from such a bad husband . . . Oh! Torcuato, Torcuato is another matter” (516).
Simón’s criticism for the duel: “Padre mío, estoy muy segura de su inocencia. No, Torcuato no es merecedor de los viles títulos con que afeáis su conducta” (521). Felipe, Torcuato’s servant, also declares his love for Torcuato when he states, “No, yo no puedo vivir si pierdo a mi amo” (520). Such strong statements in the protagonist’s favor portray him as a man of virtue, lending him an air of innocence that is further corroborated by Anselmo’s eyewitness testimony of the duel in Act I.

Anselmo’s extensive speech about the duel filters this event for the audience through the sentimental lens of friendship. It demonstrates Torcuato’s efforts to avoid the duel at every possible stage. Though Torcuato even goes so far as to turn down at least one dueling challenge, the tenacity of the Marquis’s pursuit ultimately obligates him to answer. To further highlight his innocence, Anselmo’s description of the duel itself describes Torcuato’s efforts to use his sword only for defense, whereas in his anger, the Marquis loses control and falls on Torcuato’s sword (491). This statement by a friend possesses credibility because it is an eyewitness statement; Anselmo declares, “Yo mismo vi” (“I myself saw”) (491), strongly suggesting that he had served as Torcuato’s second in the duel. Anselmo reiterates his role as a witness for Torcuato in Act III when defending his friend before Don Simón: “Creedme, señor don Simón; yo era testigo de todos sus secretos” (522).

Anselmo and Laura venture beyond the role of witnesses when they pledge to sacrifice themselves on behalf of Torcuato. Anselmo offers himself by refusing to defend

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66 “My father, I am certain of his innocence. No, Torcuato is not deserving of the vile characterizations with which you criticize his behavior” (521).

67 “No, I cannot live if I lose my master” (520).

68 “Believe me, Don Simón; I was a witness of all his secrets” (522).
his innocence when arrested for the crime, and ultimately, he is the one who saves Torcuato from the death penalty by making a direct appeal to the king. The anguish, tears and offers of sacrifice made in Torcuato’s favor promote compassion for him and present a system where the state’s law fails to resolve honor conflicts. Torcuato is restored because of his friend Anselmo rather than through the appeals of Don Justo.

In Act III Torcuato’s wife, Laura, with tears and anguish joins her husband among the “inocencia oprimida” as she is willing to sacrifice her life for Torcuato’s: “le ofreceré mi vida por redimir la de mi esposo; y si no pudiese salvarle moriremos juntos, pues yo no he de sobrevivir a su desgracia” (521). When Laura echoes her insistence on dying with Torcuato in Act V, she is more graphic, invoking a language of blood: “Dejadme, dejadme que vaya a acompañarle; que la sangrienta espada corte a un mismo tiempo nuestros cuellos . . . ¿Por qué no quieren que expiremos juntos?” (547). Her reference to the “sangrienta espada” (“bloody sword”) places the guilt on the harsh anti-dueling law which would shed her innocent husband’s blood. Laura’s cries for Torcuato become cries for blood toward the end of the fifth act when the toll of a bell seems to indicate that Torcuato has already been executed: “Tu sangre corre ya derramada” (548) and “¿Y el justo cielo no vengará la sangre del inocente? ¡Oh, Dios! Atiende a mi ruego, y haz que perezcan los verdugos que le han asesinado” (549).

69 “I will offer my life to redeem my husband’s life; and if I cannot save him then we will die together, since I cannot survive his misfortune” (521).

70 “Let me, let me go to accompany him; let the blood sword slice both our necks at the same time . . . Why don’t they want us to die together?” (547).

71 “His blood has already been spilled” (548).

72 “And a just heaven will not avenge the blood of the innocent? Oh, God! Heed my plea, and take the lives of the executioners who have murdered him” (549).
Anselmo also expresses his desire to save Torcuato even at the cost of his own life: In Act III he laments: “¡Con cuánto gusto hubiera dado la vida por salvarle!” (522) and in Act IV Anselmo reiterates: “¡Ah! no es posible comprender cuánto lastimo sus virtudes ni cuánto me duele su triste situación. ¡Ah! si pudiera a costa de mi vida . . .” (540). In contrast with Laura, however, Anselmo has already been placed in such a position, because he is arrested in Act II on suspicion of being the second duelist, and he refuses to save his own life by revealing Torcuato’s guilt. This situation reveals both the strength of the men’s friendship, which would have been highly valued and admired in the eighteenth century, and Torcuato’s integrity, because the protagonist places his friend above his self-imposed punishment, vowing, “No, yo no sufriré que padezca un momento por mi causa. El está inocente, y voy a socorrerle” and “No, no; voy a delatarme, a librar su preciosa vida y a morir” (508). Thus Torcuato’s virtue is reinforced.

Torcuato’s life is eventually spared because of Anselmo’s testimony before the king, and the protagonist recognizes this when he declares: “Querido amigo, . . . tú has sido mi libertador” (553). When Anselmo expresses his gladness for having helped his friend, he codes his happiness in a dueling term: “He tenido la dulce satisfacción de salvar a mi amigo” (552). For both Anselmo and Torcuato, complete “satisfaction”, or, a resolution for the latter’s honor conflict, arises from the sentimental ties of friendship

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73 “With such pleasure would I have given my life to save his!” (522).

74 “Ah! It is impossible to comprehend how much I esteem his virtue nor how much his sad situation pains me. Ah! If I could, at the cost of my own life . . .” (540).

75 “No, I will not allow him to suffer on my behalf for a moment. He is innocent, and I am going to come to his aid . . . No, no; I am going to turn myself in, to free his precious life and die in his place” (508).

76 “Dear friend, . . . you have been my liberator” (553).

77 “I have had the sweet satisfaction of saving my friend” (552).
rather than the law of the state. The implicit reference to the dueling code suggests that this illegal system for protecting one’s reputation will endure, because the notion of honor-as-reputation is so deeply imbedded in society that it emerges in everyone’s speech, even those who esteem honor as interior virtue.

As early as Act I, when Torcuato describes to Don Simón his initial impression of Don Justo, he praises the judge: “Jamás traté ministro alguno que reúna en sí las cualidades de buen juez en tan alto grado. ¡Qué humanidad!” (494). This admiration is particularly noteworthy given Torcuato’s knowledge that Don Justo’s success in his investigation will lead the protagonist to the death penalty. As he describes Don Justo’s progress to Anselmo early in Act I, Torcuato notes Justo’s rapid advance in the search for the second duelist:

Desde que de orden del Rey vino a continuar la causa el alcalde don Justo de Lara, es infinito lo que se ha adelantado. Aún no ha seis días que está en Segovia, y quizás sabe ya todos los lances que precedieron el desafío. El tomó por sí mismo informes y noticias, examinó testigos, practicó diligencias . . . Antes de su arribo vivíamos sin susto. (490)

Torcuato admires this representative of the law, despite the fact that he is the object of Justo’s investigation.

His respect is reciprocated by Don Justo after the judge observes Torcuato both before and after his confession. Toward the end of Act II, when Tocuato vows to do

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78 “I have never dealt with any minister who alone possesses to such a high degree the qualities of a good judge. What humanity!” (494).

79 “Since the magistrate Don Justo de Lara arrived by order of the King to continue the investigation, he has made an infinite amount of progress. He has not even been in Segovia for six days, and he may already know about all the intrigues that preceded the duel. He himself recorded reports, took statements, examined witnesses, carried out the proceedings . . . Before his arrival, we were living without fear” (490).
everything possible to save Anselmo, Justo marvels to himself, “¡Qué juicio, qué compostura! No he visto mozo más cabal” (513). Toward the end of the first scene of Act III, Don Justo remarks again about Torcuato’s loyalty for Anselmo: “La suerte de su amigo le tiene inconsolable. ¡Qué corazón tan honrado!” (516). Despite Torcuato’s revelation that he is the one responsible for the Marquess’s death, Justo’s respect for him continues as he observes the protagonist. In a speech in the eighth scene of Act III, Justo describes Torcuato’s confession:

Mientras duró la confesión se mantuvo tranquilo y reposado, respondió a los cargos con serenidad y con modestia; y aunque conocía que su delito no tenía defensa alguna contra el rigor de las leyes, no por eso dejó de confesarle con toda claridad. La verdad pendía de sus labios, y la inocencia brillaba en su semblante. Entretanto estaba yo tan conmovido, tan sin sosiego, que parecía haber pasado al corazón del juez toda la inquietud que debiera tener el reo. (524)

This description of Don Torcuato’s confession stirs compassion for him because of its content; it describes Torcuato’s honesty, serenity and reason. However, an examination of this quote in light of its source—the judge—generates another level of insight into the sympathy between Torcuato, the individual, and Don Justo, the judge. The law representative expresses a respect for Torcuato that presents him as inherently innocent:

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80 “What judgment, what composure! I have never seen such a worthy young man!” (513).

81 “He is inconsolable because of his friend’s misfortune. What an honorable heart!” (516).

82 “While he confessed he remained tranquil and calm, he responded to the charges with serenity and modesty; and although he recognized that his crime had no defense against the rigor of the laws, that did not hinder him from confessing with complete clarity. The truth flowed from his lips, and innocence shone in his face. Meanwhile I was so moved, so without calm, that it seemed that all the uneasiness that should have been in the accused had been transferred to the heart of the judge” (524).
Not only is he “tranquilo y reposado” (“tranquil and calm”), he carries himself with “serenidad y con modestia” (“serenity and with modesty”) as well as “claridad” (“clarity”). Nonetheless, Torcuato’s virtue will not save him from the “rigor de las leyes,” (“rigor of the laws”) against which “su delito no tenía defensa alguna” (“crime had no defense”). As a result, Don Justo, the judge, experiences angst on Torcuato’s behalf. The admiration of a “just” law representative for Torcuato highlights the lack of justice surrounding his plight.

In spite of his powerful position as a judge, Don Justo’s efforts to prevent Torcuato’s punishment for his duel are powerless. Don Justo has failed Torcuato first as a father, with his inability to recognize Tocuato as his son and thus bestow a sense of legitimacy on him, and second, as a judge who attempts to administer justice. He is unable to save his son; moreover, as a representative of the law, he admits to having instigated Torcuato’s downfall. Don Justo bemoans this situation lamenting: “Tu desdichado padre ha vuelto de su largo destierro sólo para ser causa de tu ruina” (533).83

Justo expresses a desire for a reform of the anti-dueling law; his stance on the legislation contrasts sharply with that of Don Simón. Caso González comments on this contrast in “El delincuente honrado, drama sentimental,” stating that Simón insists on observing the law to the letter while Justo, who also respects the law, is the one who knows how to use reason to evaluate it (110). During the first act Don Simón ridicules Justo’s desire for reform: “hablando la otra noche don Justo de la muerte de mi yerno, se dejó decir que nuestra legislación sobre los duelos necesitaba de reforma, y que era una cosa muy cruel castigar con la misma pena al que admite un desafío que al que le

83 “Your unfortunate father has returned from his long exile only to be the cause of your ruin!” (533).
Justo’s stance echoes Torcuato’s statement about the dueling legislation in the same scene: “Pero mientras duren las falsas ideas, es cosa muy terrible castigar con la muerte una acción que se tiene por honrada” (496). Together, Torcuato’s and Justo’s stance on the need for the law to consider the reality of society’s perceptions of honor stands in contrast to Simón’s insistence that both duelists should share equal blame and therefore equal punishment. The representation of these two opposing magistrates contrasts two distinct views of the law: Simón represents Spain’s contemporary situation: unsympathetic, rigid legislation which punishes without examining each case individually, whereas Justo’s character calls for legal interpretations that render verdicts in light of individual circumstances.

This divide between Justo and Simón adds greater humanity to the conflict between the law of the duel and the law of the state, because Simón’s character also displays sympathetic traits. When speaking of Simón in Act III, Justo observes that “Ese hombre tiene muy buen corazón, pero muy malos principios” (518). Simón, as a character and one who supports the anti-dueling laws, is a man with good intentions. He loves Spain and his family. Both he and Justo agree on the follies of dueling. However, while Justo maintains that the state should not punish a duelist who defends his honor in order to function in a society that denigrates cowards, Simón insists on the same punishment for both the challenger and the recipient.

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84 “when speaking with Don Justo the other night about my son-in-law’s death, he let himself say that our dueling legislation was in need of reform, and that it was a very cruel thing to punish the one who admits a dueling challenge with the same penalty as the one who provokes? . . . As if it both were not equally at fault!” (495).

85 “But while false ideas endure, it is a very terrible thing to punish by death an action that is considered honorable” (496).

86 “That man has a very good heart, but very bad principles” (518).
The context behind Justo’s observation about Simón’s good heart but bad principles suggests that despite his abhorrence of dueling, Simón still believes in the necessity of maintaining appearances, or, honor, because he insists to Justo:

¡Ah, señor! vos no conocéis todavía el mundo. Antiguamente era otra cosa; pero hoy se juzga sólo por apariencias. Todo consiste en un poco de maña y de ingeniosidad. Los hombres honrados por lo común son modestos; pero los pícaros sudan y se afanan por parecer honrados, con que pasa por bueno, no el que lo es en realidad, sino el que mejor sabe fingirlo. (517)87

According to Simón, virtue is not as important as the ability to impress with good appearances. This view echoes more of a horizontal concept of honor by placing the opinion of society above actually being good. Simón, a former representative of the law, declares that dueling must be punished, but he disagrees with Justo’s professions that “para el hombre honrado la satisfacción de servir bien es el mejor premio”88 when he insists to Justo that “vos no conocéis todavía el mundo” (517).89

Similarly, the state in this work appears to operate out of a perceived need to protect its own reputation. Torcuato has already observed in Act I that the duel’s temporal and geographical proximity to the new legislation and the Court have intensified the Crown’s desire to investigate the case (490). The government’s vested interest in its own reputation appears to motivate its action, suggesting that the state is no better than a duelist, and its laws against the law of the duel are themselves barbaric, or at the very

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87 “Ah, sir! You still do not know the ways of the world. Long ago it was one way, but nowadays one is judged only on appearances. Everything consists of a little bit of cunning and invention. Virtuous men are typically modest; but scoundrels sweat and toil to appear honorable, so that in the end the one who is considered good is not the one who really is, but rather the one who best knows how to fake it” (517).

88 “for the honorable man the satisfaction of good deeds is the best reward” (517).

89 “You still do not know the ways of the world” (517).
least, un-enlightened. Indeed, in Act V, Laura, blaming Justo for Torcuato’s fate, shouts, “Vos me habéis quitado mi esposo; sí, vos me le habéis quitado. Y no os disculpéis con las leyes, con esas leyes bárbaras y crueles, que sólo tienen fuerza contra los desvalidos” (547). Laura’s description of the laws as “bárbaras y crueles” (“barbaric and cruel”) echoes real-life textual descriptions of dueling as an outmoded primitive practice that defied reason. Justo’s statement in Act IV that in terms of honor “hoy pensamos, poco más o menos, como los godos” (536), reflects that same opinion of dueling as a barbaric practice. However, Laura’s condemnation of the laws as “bárbaras y crueles” equates the government’s punishment with the hot-headed Marquis’s dueling challenge. Neither the anti-dueling law nor the law of the duel reflect Enlightenment ideals, because both would destroy Torcuato in order to preserve another’s reputation.

These barbaric laws are as unyielding as the law of the duel itself, and Torcuato has found himself trapped between them. Justo laments their rigidity in the last scene of Act III, when he receives a written order from the king to carry out the death penalty in Torcuato’s case: “¡Oh, duras e inflexibles leyes! En vano gritan la razón y la humanidad en favor del inocente” (525). The common man is unfairly caught in the rift between the two laws, because Spanish society does not always reward virtue, and the government ignores the pull of reputation. In Act IV, while trying to convince Simón about this conflict, Justo explains:

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90 “You have taken my husband from me; yes you have taken him from me. And do not cite the laws as your excuse, those barbaric and cruel laws which enforced only against the defenseless” (547).

91 “today we think more or less like the Goths” (536).

92 “Oh, hard and inflexible laws! In vain do reason and humanity cry out on behalf of the innocent” (525).
Bien sé que el verdadero honor es el que resulta del ejercicio de la virtud y del cumplimiento de los propios deberes. El hombre justo debe sacrificar a su conservación todas las preocupaciones vulgares; pero por desgracia la solidez de esta maxima se esconde a la muchedumbre. Para un pueblo de filósofos sería buena la legislación que castigase con dureza al que admite un desafío, que entre ellos fuera un delito grande. Pero en un país donde la educación, el clima, las costumbres, el genio nacional y la misma constitución inspiran a la nobleza estos sentimientos fogoosos y delicados a que se da el hombre de pundonor; en un país donde el más honrado es el menos sufrido, y el más valiente el que tiene más osadía; en un país, en fin, donde a la cordura se llama cobardía, y a la moderación falta de espíritu, ¿sería justa la ley que priva de la vida a un desdichado sólo porque piensa como sus iguales; una ley que sólo podrán cumplir los muy virtuosos o los muy cobardes?” (535)\(^93\)

This passage illustrates the impossibility of Torcuato’s avoiding the duel. He is an example of a highly virtuous man, and yet he succumbed to the pressure of protecting his honor and now faces punishment by the same law that exerts a right to protect his honor and settle disputes related to it in tribunals. Justo acknowledges that honor based on virtue should prevail over honor based on reputation; however, while the social reality

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\(^93\) “I know very well that true honor is the result of the exercise of virtue and the fulfillment of one’s obligations. To that end the just man should sacrifice all vulgar preoccupations; but unfortunately, the soundness of this maxim is lost on the multitudes. Legislation that harshly punishes the one who accepts a dueling challenge would be good for a town of philosophers, since for them it would be a great crime. But in a country where the education, climate, customs, and national temperament and constitution inspire nobles toward these inflammatory and thin-skinned sentiments to which we give the name honor; in a country where the most honorable is the least longsuffering, and the bravest is the one with the most impudence; in conclusion, in a country where common sense is called cowardice, and moderation lack of spirit, can a law be just if it takes someone’s life only because he thinks like his peers, and this law only be obeyed by the most virtuous or the most cowardly?” (535).
does not reflect that ideal, and while a solid reputation is a prerequisite for functioning in society, any laws which punish an individual for protecting his honor are unjust.

The contrast between Justo and Simón creates additional sympathy for Torcuato’s plight. Justo’s inability to save Torcuato despite his prominent position and his desire for legislative reform highlights the failure of the law of the state to protect the individual’s honor. The revelation that Justo is Torcuato’s father heightens the sense of his failure on his son’s behalf, because Torcuato’s lack of paternal recognition precipitated his acceptance of the dueling challenge. Justo feels trapped between his love for his son as his father and the mandate that he carry out his role as judge, but neither position is able to help Torcuato.

Justo expresses remorse for having put Torcuato in this situation, as he laments in Act IV, crying, “Sí, sí, yo he sido el cruel que ha acelerado su desgracia . . . ¡Ah!” (538). As Act IV ends, Justo continues to lament his part in Torcuato’s impending execution: “¿Es posible que me he de hallar en la dura necesidad de derramar mi propia sangre . . . ? ¡Hijo desventurado . . . ! ¡La mano de tu bárbaro padre te va a ofrecer el amargo cálice de la muerte! ¡Funesta obligación . . . !” (542). Such a speech must have evoked sympathy in an eighteenth-century audience, because it emerges from the lips of a father in a position of authority that obligates him to put to death the son he has so recently discovered. The representative responsible for carrying out the law has a direct

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94 “Yes, yes; I have been the cruel one who has accelerated his discrass . . . Ah!” (538).

95 “Is it possible that I find myself charged with the harsh duty of spilling the blood of one of my own . . . ? Unfortunate son . . . ! The hand of your barbaric father is going to offer you the bitter chalice of death! What a terrible obligation . . . !” (542).

96 Discurso LIII of a 1781 edition of El censor, which may be found in the Biblioteca Nacional de España, R/16766-R/16773, suggests that the play did generate sympathy: “la simple lectura del Delinquente honrado me hace derramar lagrimas de gozo à un tiempo, y de compasion.” (“the simple reading of El delincuente honrado makes my spill tears of pleasure and compassion at the same time”)
tie to the one who would be forced to drink from the “amargo cáliz de la muerte” (“bitter chalice of death”), and the reference to “sangre” not only describes the blood connection between father and son but implicitly references a shared sense of honor.

Justo attempts to represent Torcuato’s case before the king, but his efforts fail. When Simón expresses hope by stating, “¡Oh! pues si habéis representado, yo confío . . .” (536), Justo quickly replies, “No haréis bien en confiar. Las representaciones de un juez suelen valer muy poco cuando conspiran a mitigar el rigor de una ley reciente” (537). Despite his prominent position, Justo does not hold out much hope for his attempts to intervene against such rigorous and recent laws. His explanation about the prospect of whether Torcuato can be saved alludes to the inflexibility of the state’s anti-dueling law and the law of the duel: “Esa pregunta es bien extraña en quien sabe las obligaciones de un juez. El órgano de la ley no es árbitro de ella. No tengo más arbitrio que el de representar; y pues habéis oído cómo pienso, podréis inferir si lo habré hecho con eficacia” (536). Justo is charged with the duty of carrying out the mandates of the law, but he possesses no ability to intervene in a case where he sees the law as unjust, though he does make an attempt.

The play soon announces the failure of his attempt toward the end of Act IV by having Justo himself read the King’s response to his pleas on behalf of Torcuato:

He dado cuenta al Rey de la causa escrita sobre el desafío, que hubo en esa ciudad el día 4 de agosto del año próximo pasado, entre el marqués de Montilla y don

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97 “Oh! Well if you have interceded for him, I trust . . .” (536).

98 “You will not do well to trust in that. The intercession of a judge is usually worth very little when it attempts to mitigate the rigor of a recent law” (537).

99 “That is a strange question coming from one who knows about a judge’s obligations. The representative of the law is not its arbiter. The only judgment I can make here is to serve as an intercessor, and, if you have heard what I think just now, then you will be able to infer if I have effectively interceded” (536).
Torcuato Ramírez, de que resultó la muerte del primero; y sin embargo de cuanto V.S. expone en su representación a favor del homicida, S.M., considerando el escándalo que ha causado este suceso en esa ciudad, este real Sitio y todo el reino, singularmente cuando estaba tan reciente la publicación de su pragmática de 28 de abril del mismo año, y teniendo asimismo presente que el reo está llanamente confeso en su delito, se ha servido resolver que V.S. ponga en ejecución la sentencia de muerte y confiscación que ha dado en dicha causa, concediendo al reo sólo el tiempo preciso para disponerse a morir como cristiano; y V.S. me dará cuenta de haberse ejecutado en la forma prevenida. (540)¹₀₀

Despite a plea for Torcuato that undoubtedly would have reflected the numerous philosophical arguments made to Simón, the letter cites the “escándalo que ha causado este suceso” (“scandal that this incident has caused”) that took place so soon after the new anti-dueling law, and which points to the monarchy’s desire to conserve its reputation as the chief reason for proceeding with the death penalty. The law of the state will protect its honor at the cost of an individual who attempted to conserve his own, which suggests a perversion of justice.

However, the state is not simply a villain in *El delincuente honrado*, as shown by the portrayal of Don Simón, who despite his stubborn insistence on the need for a harsh penalty for dueling, is nonetheless a man capable of compassion. His compassion

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¹₀₀ “I have communicated in writing to the King the cause of the duel which took place in that city on August 4 of last year, between the Marquis of Montilla and Don Torcuato Ramírez, the result of which was the death of the former; nonetheless in spite of Your Honor’s representation on behalf of the murderer, His Majesty, taking into consideration the scandal that this incident has caused in that city, in this Court and in all the kingdom, especially in light of the recent publication of his decree on the August 28 of the same year, and likewise keeping in mind that the accused has plainly confessed to his crime, has decided that you are to carry out the sentence of death and confiscation of property that has been rendered in this case, only allowing the accused sufficient time to prepare himself to die as a Christian; and you will inform me when he has been executed according to the sentence’s stipulation” (540).
emerges in his treatment of his daughter, Laura, as well as his eventual conversion into another ally for Torcuato. Even more sympathetic than Don Simón, however, is Don Justo, who agonizes over his duty to carry out Torcuato’s sentence. Torcuato as a character may be the one principally defined by his inner conflict, but Justo also shows affliction. For example, even before he realizes that Torcuato is his son, Justo expresses turmoil over the young man’s plight. As Act IV commences, the stage directions represent Justo as “sentado, junto a la mesa con aire triste, inquieto y pensativo” (527), and in the first scene of the same act a scribe remarks of Justo, “¡Qué afligido está!” (527). Justo experiences angst both as Torcuato’s father, lamenting the state of his “¡Hijo desdichado!” (547) and as a law representative, when he bemoans “Cuán graves y penosas son las pensiones de la magistura” (523). Jovellanos contrasts both magistrates’ interpretations of the law, but he also portrays both with the capacity to feel for others. Sensibility plays a key role in articulating the conflict between the law of the state and the law of the duel because it engenders sympathy for Torcuato but it also humanizes the state through Don Simón’s character and later, through the King’s expression of compassion for Justo and his son (553).

C. Verdict and Denouement

Ultimately, it is sensibility that administers justice in El delincuente honrado, a denouement that invites the question: is a belief in the inherent goodness of humanity

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101 “seated at the table with a sad, uneasy and pensive air” (527).
102 “How afflicted he seems!” (527).
103 “Unfortunate son!” (547).
104 “How grave and distressing are the duties of the magistrate” (523).
sufficient to resolve this conflict? Justo never bestows honor upon Torcuato, who had to protect his reputation by succumbing to the Marquis’s dueling challenges. The one who saves Torcuato from the death penalty is Anselmo, who travels to the Court to plead for his friend before the King himself:

A las siete me admitió el Soberano. Le expuse con brevedad y con modestia cuanto había pasado en el desafío; le pintó con colores muy vivos el genio provocativo del marqués, el corazón blando y virtuoso de Torcuato, el candor y la virtud de su esposa, y sobre todo, la constancia y rectitud del juez, diciendo que era su mismo padre . . . y disponía el corazón del Monarca. ¡Yo vi correr tiernas lágrimas de sus augustos ojos! (553)\textsuperscript{105}

The King’s tears on Torcuato’s behalf reveal his capacity for sympathy, but his sudden decision to pardon the protagonist also suggests a regression to the denouements of Golden Age comedias and criticizes the Spanish Enlightenment, because this is the same King who had earlier insisted on putting Torcuato to death in order to protect the monarchy’s reputation.

Despite the seemingly happy conclusion of El delincuente honrado, it is important to note that Torcuato is not completely restored to a place of good standing in Spain. He finds his father, but he is not allowed to stay near him. While, as the audience learns in Act V, the King declares via letter that ‘La suerte de ese desdichado . . . conmuye mi real ánimo, y mucho más la de su buen padre. Anda, ya está perdonado’, Torcuato is not completely pardoned: ‘pero no pueda jamás vivir en Segovia ni entrar en mi corte’

\textsuperscript{105} “At seven, the Sovereign admitted me into His presence. I related to Him with brevity and modesty the proceedings of the duel; I painted for Him with vivid colors a picture of the Marquis’s provocative temper, Torcuato’s tender and virtuous heart, his wife’s candor and virtue, and above all, the judge’s constancy and rectitude, saying that he [the judge] was his [Torcuato’s] very own father . . . and the Monarch’s heart was moved. I saw tears spill from His Majesty’s eyes!’” (553).
The sole basis for the King’s decision— the sympathetic emotions generated in his heart because of Anselmo’s testimony—indicates that a vast burden is placed on sensibility and does not communicate any final decisions about rewriting the legislation. A final irony is that the King’s decision is identical to the resolution which Torcuato had already made at the beginning of the play. *El delincuente honrado* has exposed flaws in Spain’s legislation and societal views about honor, and its *denouement* offers only one possible solution: sentimentality. However, its resolution is tempered with a cautionary note—Torcuato’s exile—that calls into question whether humanity’s inherent goodness and compassion is enough to prevent future conflicts or consistently administer justice.

IV. Concluding Remarks

Don Torcuato represents the ideal, enlightened citizen who believes in honor based on virtue and that it should be the state’s role to defend a person’s honor with fair dueling laws which differentiate among the circumstances of challenges (“nadie buscará satisfacción en el campo, sino en los tribunales; habrá menos desafíos o ninguno” (9)), yet the state remains insufficient to defend his reputation. The legislation is only punitive and ignores matters of honor that lead to dueling in the first place. In their harshness, the laws reflect the barbarity of the law of the duel. Despite his numerous efforts to turn down the Marquis’s challenges, which surely put him at risk to be viewed as a coward, his attempts during the actual duel to reserve his sword for defense only, a virtuous Torcuato is now a criminal who faces the death penalty (if caught) by the law that has

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106 “The luck of this unfortunate man . . . and especially that of his good father, moves my royal soul. Come now, he is pardoned . . . but never again may he live in Segovia or enter my Royal Court” (553).

107 “no one will search for satisfaction for their injuries in the field of honor but rather in the tribunals; there will be fewer challenges or none at all” (9).
failed him. Sentimental elements such as the emotions and tears that describe his genuine remorse as well as the staunch defense and eyewitness testimony of his friend highlight both Torcuato’s efforts to follow the law and the impossibility of fulfilling the legal code’s mandates. Thus a divide exists between the individual and the state, because honor is a remnant from Spain’s ancient past that cannot be covered by the rigidity of a newer law.

Despite a resolution which spares Torcuato from execution, this divide between individual and state over the law of the duel is not completely resolved. Sentimental elements such as Anselmo’s and Laura’s offering of their lives in place of Torcuato’s reference the dueling code—sangre por sangre—as they seek a favorable outcome for the accused. Although in this work the King is able to reinterpret the law and elect to free Torcuato, he only does so from a distance, and his decision is the result of being moved by Anselmo’s testimony. There is no evidence that the king rewrites his decree or sees any error in it. In fact it is Anselmo himself who relates details about both the crime—the duel—and the final punishment to the audience. The primary burden for communicating and resolving the central conflict falls upon sensibility, which elicits the question: Can sensibility bear this weight? Finally, the sympathetic portrayal of Don Justo, a representative of the royal authority who fails in his attempts to save Torcuato, corroborates the inability of the law to protect its citizens’ honor, suggesting the impossibility of reconciliation between the individual and the state. Justo and Torcuato enjoy a tearful reunion as father and son, but the finality of this reunion is deferred by Torcuato’s exile from Segovia and the Royal Court.
El delincuente honrado differs from neo-classical tragedies in its portrayal of a situation relevant to the late eighteenth century and representation of middle-class characters. The subtle lack of resolution between the law of the duel and the law of the state diverges from the categorization by critics such as McClelland and Kosove of sentimental comedies as primarily reformatory. For example, Kosove observes in “The Influence of Lachrymose Comedy on Moratín’s El viejo y la niña” that “The sentimental dramatists proposed a clearly moral goal; they claimed they could correct vice by means of sentiment” (383). Jovellanos’s sentimental comedy reflects more of the tendency of these lachrymose works to portray contemporary characters in relevant situations, which corresponds with Joaquín Ruiz Alemán’s observation that Jovellanos’ political views affirmed the necessity of studying a nation’s social reality in order to address a problem (560). In El delincuente honrado, the sentimental portrayal of the circumstances and characters surrounding the central duel articulates a divisive conflict that traps the individual between the state’s laws and the honor code.
Chapter Four: Enlightened or Barbaric Nations? Comella’s La Jacoba

The opening scene of Luciano Francisco Comella’s La Jacoba (1789) may well confuse twenty-first century readers at first glance. It is a play by a Spanish author set “en Londres y sus inmediaciones”, but the first scene of Act I opens with the Count of Beutif—a name which sounds French—complaining about the heavy criticism that French writers have leveled at Spain. Furthermore, the protagonist, Milord Tolmin, has just returned to London from Italy (Act 1, line 61) after a four-year absence. During the first scene of the comedia alone four different countries are mentioned, and before the end of the fourth act, New York and Jamaica play key roles (626-32). On the surface, La Jacoba’s main conflict revolves around the separation of Milord Tolmin and Jacoba. Milord returns from a tour abroad to discover that someone has circulated a false letter from him stating that he has broken his pledge to Jacoba and married another woman in Italy. In response, Jacoba has married the Count of Esteren, who is quickly revealed to be the letter-forger. As Milord grapples with his response to this news, he frequently invokes his identity as an Englishman to punctuate his vows. These invocations, as well as the references to numerous countries, suggest that national identity plays a key dramatic factor in La Jacoba.

And yet, why would English identity be of interest to Spanish audiences? Undoubtedly, the references to England would be understood by a Spanish audience in terms of Spain. Paul J. Guinard states that during the 1780s in Spain, several theatrical

1 “London and its outskirts”.

2 Because my edition of La Jacoba has no page numbers, all references will cite line numbers.
works “de tema inglés”\textsuperscript{3} appeared in Madrid’s theaters. He is careful to distinguish between English plays and those with an “English theme”, noting that in addition to translations of Shakespeare (285),\textsuperscript{4} adaptations and translations of English works—sometimes cited as such and sometimes not—as well as pieces set in London were fairly common. A 1784 representation of Pamela, based on an adaptation of Richardson’s novel, appears to have initiated a trend.\textsuperscript{5} Other works which appeared in theaters that same year include Antonio Valladares de Sotomayor’s El carbonero de Londres (The Charcoal-Burner from London) and El fabricante de paños (The Cloth-Maker), as well as an anonymous comedy, La virtud consigue el premio y la maldad el castigo (Virtue Gets the Prize and Evil Earns Punishment), and new showings of Calderón’s La cisma de Inglaterra (The Schism in England) (286-7). Guinard observes that generally, the authors most inclined to compose such plays were the popular playwrights—Comella, Zavala y Zamora, Valladares and Moncín—so often under attack by proponents of neoclassicism (287), at least, in part, to cater to “un público interesado por lo inglés” (285).\textsuperscript{6}

Although Comella set La Jacoba in London, the comedia’s opening speech clearly caters to a Spanish audience through its anti-French positioning. According to the stage directions, “El teatro representa un estudio de un sujeto distinguido. Aparece el

\textsuperscript{3} “of an English theme”.

\textsuperscript{4} Guinard states that these translations were often based on French versions of the English originals, noting Lafarga’s observation that France frequently served as a bridge by which Spain partook of theatrical works from other countries (285-6). It is also true that France adapted many Spanish plays of the Golden Age (Zatlin 1).

\textsuperscript{5} Fuentes’ study, El triángulo sentimental del Dieciocho: Inglaterra, Francia, España (1999), is one example among several that deal with this literary exchange. One of Fuentes’ key conclusions is that some Spanish authors were directly influenced by English sentimental literature, without the mediation of French adaptations or translations (4).

\textsuperscript{6} “a public interested in English things” (285).
The Count of Beutif, an enlightened man and friend to the protagonist, Milord Tolmin, is shown reading, an action which reiterates his high social status and points to a good education. His speech appears to react to the contents of the book:

A esta peste de Escritores
Franceses sufrir no puedo;
¡bueno es que se han empeñado
en sus viajes en querernos
hacer creer que aún está España
en aquel obscuro tiempo
en que eran los Españoles
tan solamente guerreros!
¿qué con imparcialidad
jamás hablen? es muy cierto
que en el discurso del siglo
diez y siete decayeron
ciencia y artes en España;
pero en el día no han vuelto
a renacer de manera
que sus rápidos progresos
recordarán prontamente
aquellos grandes talentos

7 “The theater displays a studio belonging to a distinguished subject. The Count of Beutif appears reading” (n.p.).
Clearly the Count of Beutif is complaining about the *leyenda negra*, which condemned Spain as a barbaric country. The Count implicitly references the famous comment by Nicolas Massón de Morvilliers in the *Encyclopédie méthodique*, “¿Qué doit-on à l’Espagne?” (What contributions has Spain made?) Beutif’s admission that science and art had declined during the seventeenth century and have not yet experienced a rebirth point to a struggle to define Spain rather than England. This initial speech extends an invitation to the audience to think about Spain and the *leyenda negra* in the context of Enlightened Europe.

*La Jacoba*, though set in London, stages the struggle over what it means to be a good Spanish citizen in modern eighteenth-century. It is composed in octosyllabic verse, specifically the *romance*, a metrical form that was popular with Spanish audiences. Milord Tolmin has returned to London from a tour of Italy to discover that someone has betrayed him with a forged letter about his alleged marriage, and Jacoba has wed the Count of Esteren. Consequently, Milord contemplates actions that imply a rejection of London and the learning acquired through his travels in Europe. He considers suicide, exile to Jamaica and dueling, a practice that Milord’s rational friend, the Count of Beutif, labels as a barbaric, outdated ritual (157-63). Through the corruption exposed in *La Jacoba*’s villain, the Count of Esteren, the play poses the question: Who is really civilized and who is really barbaric? Are Milord’s urges toward suicide and dueling, seemingly identified with Spain’s Baroque traditions, so barbaric, compared with the

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8 “I cannot bear this plague of French writers! In their travels they have insisted on trying to make us believe that Spain is still in the Dark Ages, when Spaniards were nothing more than warriors! With what impartiality have they ever spoken? It is quite true that in the course of the seventeenth century sciences and arts declined; but to date, they have not been reborn in such a way that their rapid progress will soon remind us of those great talents of the past . . .” (1-18).
Count’s dishonest dealings in Jamaica? How civilized can London really be if citizens like the Count of Esteren can openly flood the city with ill-gotten contraband from the New World (219-20) and so easily deceive another man’s love interest and seemingly close friend?

As the victim of the Count of Esteren’s plot to win Jacoba, Milord Tolmin struggles to decide how to respond to the corrupt villain whose identity is hidden from him, though not from the audience, throughout most of the play. Will he follow the model of Enlightened citizenship and relinquish his claim to Jacoba, or will he follow his passions and choose suicide? Will Milord reject life in London altogether and go into exile, sailing off to Jamaica, or will he cling to the ideals of the Baroque past and fight in a duel against the Count? Milord Tolmin’s decision constitutes more than a choice about how to cope with the loss of Jacoba. In his response he must choose whether to align himself with modern, Enlightened ideas of citizenship or embrace a Baroque past viewed by ilustrados as barbaric. The duel between Milord Tolmin and the Count of Esteren in Act IV punctuates this struggle over national identity through the characters’ debate about whether this duel is necessary or avoidable, barbaric or heroic. Milord Tolmin attempts to use reason to dissuade the Count from persisting in his dueling challenge, but he offers these arguments while participating in each step of the combat ceremony, revealing a dissonance between his words and actions.

The duel and both Milord Tolmin’s and Jacoba’s professed preoccupation with *qué dirán* (“what people will say”), in addition to Beutif’s first speech decrying criticism against Spain in Act I, serve as reminders that the notion of honor-as-virtue had not erased the perception that one’s reputation needed to be guarded at all cost. Díaz-Plaja
observes that dueling maintained a more influential role in Spain than in the rest of enlightened Europe, particularly because of the pull of societal opinion, or *el qué dirán* (233). Mariano José de Larra’s commentary on dueling, though composed in the nineteenth century, echoes the dilemmas surrounding the practice in the eighteenth:

Mientras el honor siga eternizado donde se le ha puesto; mientras la opinión pública valga algo, y mientras la ley no esté de acuerdo con la opinión pública, el duelo será una consecuencia forzosa de esta contradicción social. Mientras todo el mundo se ría del que se deje injuriar impunemente o del que acuda a un tribunal para decir ‘me han injuriado’, será forzoso que todo agravado elija entre la muerte y una posición ridícula en la sociedad. (quoted in Díaz-Plaja 235)⁹

Milord Tolmin’s dilemma over whether to duel with the Count of Esteren is also a struggle over contested definitions of heroism and what it means to be a good citizen of his country. His situation echoes Spain’s own debate about its place in eighteenth-century Europe.

I. Spain’s Struggle for Identity in an Enlightened Europe

In 1782, a question voiced by Nicolás Masson de Morvillers in the *Encyclopédie méthodique* drew little attention in France and most of Europe, but initiated a “crisis of conciencia en la España ilustrada” (Gies 307).¹⁰ Masson’s famous accusation—‘¿Qué se debe a España?’—sparked both furious and anxious replies from Spanish authors and

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⁹ “While honor endures in the place where society has placed it, while public opinion continues to be worth something, and while the law disagrees with public opinion, the duel will be an inevitable consequence of this social contradiction. While the world laughs at anyone who lets himself be insulted without resorting to reprisal or goes to the tribunal to say that “they have insulted me”, it will be inevitable that everyone who is affronted must choose between death and a position of ridicule in society”.

¹⁰ “crisis of conscience in Enlightened Spain” (Gies 307).
inspired a state-sponsored contest for the best defense of Spain (Raillard 35). David Gies and Matthieu Raillard assert that Masson’s article uncovered an anxiety that had been festering for decades. Spanish reactions to Masson exuded “una profunda angustia, un reconocimiento más o menos inconsciente de que la flecha disparada por el enciclopedista francés había tocado un nervio sensible del espíritu hispánico” (Gies 307).11 This “nervio sensible” reflected a crisis of identity. ‘¿Qué se debe a España?’12—who the ilustrados enveloped several questions: ‘¿Qué es España?’13 ‘¿Quiénes somos nosotros?’14 and ‘¿Somos los hijos del Barroco?’15 (Gies 310).

Writers such as Forner, Jovellanos and Nicolás Fernández de Moratín, among many, grappled with Spain’s national identity in terms of its connection with a Baroque past in the context of an enlightened Europe. Was Spain’s legacy one that should inspire pride or was it a past against which everyone should rebel? Gies notes that Forner defined Spain as “un ser barroco”16 and called for a rejection of foreign influence. By contrast, Nicolás Fernández de Moratín had asserted years earlier that Baroque tradition constituted an obstacle for Spain’s passage into modernity. Jovellanos, “simultáneamente apasionado y objetivo”, sought “un equilibrio entre el alma hispana y la razón ilustrada” (310).17 Jesús Torrecilla remarks that in their attacks traditionalists tended to call neo-

11 “a profound anguish, a more or less unconscious decision that the shot fired by the French encyclopedist had touched a sensitive nerve in the Spanish spirit” (Gies 307).

12 ‘What contribution has Spain made?’

13 ‘What is Spain?’

14 ‘Who are we?’

15 ‘Are we the offspring of the Baroque period?’

16 “a Baroque being”.

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classicists “afrancesados” (48), while proponents of neo-classicism labeled traditionalists “ignorantes” and “bárbaros” (65). One of the results of these debates “es una gran variedad de posturas intermedias que contienen determinados elementos de ambos grupos: escritos que, sin aparente conciencia de sus incongruencias, expresan opiniones mezcladas y en gran parte incompatibles” (Torrecilla 51). In Spanish theater, these incongruous elements would appear in works with neo-classical traits, reflecting French influence, that dealt with nationalistic themes (Torrecilla 67).

While Forner was not the first to respond to Masson’s article—Antonio Cavanilles and Carlo Denina prepared rebuttals before him—Forner was in his reaction, according to John H.R. Polt, ‘uno de los más violentos . . . de la época’ (quoted in Gies 311).18 His Oración apologética por la España y su mérito literario19 (1786) won the prize offered by the Academia Española for the best defense of Spain’s progress in the arts and sciences (Herr 223). In the first part of Forner’s Oración apologética, the author both defends Spain and its intellectual contributions to the world and attacks Europe, especially France, and its philosophers. Forner writes:

Conozco bien el siglo en que vivo. ¿Pero acaso la posterioridad hará gala de la precipitación en sus juicios, y juzgará tan al aire como la presente tropa de filosofadores, que confundiendo tiempos y cosas, miden a los elegantes y sólidos escolásticos por la misma línea que a la infacunda y vana turba de realistas y nominalistas? Repruban la escuela, porque han oído que aconteció su primero

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17 “simultaneously passionate and objective . . an equilibrium between the Spanish soul and Enlightened reason” (310).

18 ‘one of the most violent . . . of the time’ (quoted in Gies 311).

19 Apologetic Prayer on Behalf of Spain and Its Literary Merit.
orígen en siglos bárbaros . . . No apruebo los abusos del Escolasticismo; . . . mas
no sin indignación veo que el inconsiderado odio contra el nombre perjudica al
saber de España, temerariamente culpada de escolástica por los que no saben que
atendidos los tiempos, y aun la naturaleza misma de las cosas puede haber grande
y sobresaliente mérito en la profesión de la escuela. Confieso sin dificultad, que
para unas gentes que consideren la religión y moral como objetos de indiferencia;
que gusten de razonar de todo por los principios de su corrupción o antojo; elogiar
el lujo, y reírse de la virtud; franquear las puertas al desorden, y maldecir de la
autoridad de los tronos; llamarse filófosos, y obrar y pensar como sibaritas.
(n.p.)20

Forner defends Spain’s history and contributions while he violently attacks those who
belittle them. The above quote, dealing specifically with Scholasticism, reflects some of
the central tenets of Forner’s defense by questioning the knowledge of the writers who
blanketly labeled Spain as barbaric and sowing doubts concerning the merits of foreign
contemporary philosophers. Forner presents specific examples of Spain’s achievements
to reestablish his country as a contributing member of Western Europe. At the same
time, he contrasts Spain’s useful intellectuals with *philosophes*, whom he portrays as men
of leisure (Raillard 36), and whose ideas he dismisses derisively: “Las admirable pruebas

20 “I am familiar with the century in which I am living. But didn’t I tell you that posterity will reveal their
hasty judgment, and it will bring to light how the current mob of (so-called) philosophers, who, confusing
the times and other things, measure elegant and solid Scholastics with the same standard that they use with
the vain and confusing mass of realists and nominalists? They condemn the school because they have
heard that it originated during the Dark Ages . . . I do not approve of Scholasticism’s abuses, . . . but it is
not without indignation that I see the thoughtless hate that its name damages the reputation of learning in
Spain, and Scholasticism is blamed by those who do not know that if the times and even the very nature of
things are taken into consideration, there can be a great and most significant merit in the scholarly
profession. I confess without difficulty that, for people who consider religion and morality with
indifference, it is pleasing to reason about everything using principles based on their corruption or whims.
They praise luxury and laugh at virtue; they clear the way for disorder, and denigrate the authority of the
throne; they call themselves philosophers, and act and think like dandies” (n.p.).
Contrasting with Forner, Nicolás Fernández de Moratín patently rejects Spain’s Baroque identity, and for many years prior to Masson’s article, laments the poor opinion other countries have of Spain, particularly its theatrical works. In the “Disertación” preceding La Petimetra (1762), “Los errores de las comedias españolas son tantos que en algún modo se disculpan a los extranjeros, quienes con ridiculas mofas y sátiras se han burlado de nuestros grandes autores” (n.p.). Moratín himself criticizes Spanish comedias for their lack of conformity to the dramatic unities and failure to offer moral lessons to the public. His writings lament that while the public held so tenaciously to cultural tradition, often the only outside influences it embraced were superficial fashions (Gies 315). Moratín looked to neo-classical precepts and foreign models as the vehicle to reform theater and its audiences. In a foreword to La Petimetra, he writes:

Conociendo los errores que han advertido los críticos en el teatro español, determiné purgar la Comedia de todas las impropiedades de que comúnmente abundan las nuestras, y así compuse La Petimetra, por el modelo de los más clásicos autores griegos y latinos, italianos y franceses que han merecido el

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21 “Praise admirable proof of knowledge about futile, useless things if you want, but praise them according to their value” (n.p.).

22 The term petimetra designates the female counterpart of the petimetre, which in the eighteenth century was used to describe feminine males overly preoccupied with fashion. Chapter 3 of Rebecca Haidt’s Embodying Enlightenment offers an interesting discussion on the petimetre, and notes that petimetres and petimetras shared similar vices such as “vanity, pride, a lack of spirituality” (109).

23 “The errors in Spanish comedies are so numerous that to some extent, the foreigners who have mocked our great authors with ridiculous jokes and satires are forgiven” (n.p.).
aplauzo de toda Europa, y cuyas obras se representan hoy día fuera de España con general aceptación. (n.p.)

To “purge” (“purgar”) Spanish comedias of all inappropriate material translates to a rejection of the Baroque influence which persisted in theater and embracing modern, contemporary models, such as the neo-classical tragedy (McClelland 87).

Jovellanos’ writing offers a more nuanced struggle with Spanish identity. Like Forner, he sees the danger of foreign influence. His “Sátira primera a Arnesto” (“First Satire to Arnesto”) (1786), composed at the same time that Forner was preparing his response to Masson, attributes the corruption seen in Spanish women to the ‘extranjera pompa’ (“foreign pomp”) and the ‘contagio fatal’ (“fatal contagion”) from the ‘orillas gálicas’ (“Gallic shores”) beyond the Pyrenees (Gies 317). Jovellanos portrays foreign influence and fashion as a corruptive presence whose price is “virtud y honestidad”.

Toward the end of the “Primera sátira a Arnesto” he describes the insatiable greed that this corruption has engendered:

Ya ni el rico Brasil, ni las cavernas
del nunca exhausto Potosí nos bastan
a saciar el hidrópico deseo,
la ansiosa sed de vanidad y pompa . . .

¡Oh ultraje! ¡Oh mengua! Todo se trafica:
parentesco, amistad, favor, influjo,
y hasta el honor, depósito sagrado,

24 “Being aware of the errors that critics have noticed in Spanish theater, I determined to purge the Comedy of all the improprieties that abound in ours, and so I composed La Petimetra, using the model of the greatest Greek, Latin, Italian and French classic authors who have deserved the applause of all of Europe, and whose works are nowadays represented outside of Spain with general success” (n.p.).
It is interesting that similar images of commerce used to describe this corruption appear in *La Jacoba*, where the Count of Esteren’s dealings in Jamaica remain shrouded in suspicion.

Unlike Forner, Jovellanos valued many of Western Europe’s new ideas and philosophies, despite his misgivings about the frivolity of contemporary trends and fashions (Gies 317). In contrast with Moratín—either the father or the son, for that matter—Jovellanos seeks what Gies terms “un equilibrio entre el alma hispana y la razón ilustrada” (310). However, instead of equilibrium, what prevails is tension among a cacophony of voices exerting their opinions about Spain’s relationship to Europe and its identity as a barbaric or illustrious nation.

The clearest trail of this polemic can be traced through Luis Cañuelo’s *El censor*, which swiftly attacked Forner’s *Oración apologética* as well as Denina’s discourse on Spain in its one hundred and thirteenth discourse (Froldi n.p.). Cañuelo criticized Forner’s stance against modern learning and the sciences, implying that religious practices in Spain kept its people subjugated and impoverished. Forner swiftly answered the attack, challenging *El censor* to show how philosophical discourses offered any

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25 “Now neither rich Brazil, nor the caverns of the inexhaustible Potosí are enough for us to satisfy the hydropic desire, the anxious thirst of vanity and pomp . . . Oh insult! Everything is trafficked: relationships, friendship, favor, influence, and even honor, as a sacred deposit, are either bought or sold” (178).

26 “an equilibrium between the Spanish soul and Enlightened reason” (310).

27 Rinaldo Froldi observes that Cañuelo does not address Masson’s article in *El censor* until June 1785, when he writes that Masson’s observations contain several errors but that the matter is not of great importance. Cañuelo insists that “Lo que en realidad sí debe importar a los españoles es ‘ser ricos, ser poderosos, ser ilustrados: que florezcan entre nosotros las ciencias, las artes, la justicia y todas las demás virtudes, y diga todo el mundo lo que le dé la gana’” (“What should really matter to the Spanish is ‘to be rich, be powerful, be enlightened: and that among us flourish science, art, justice and all other virtues, and let the world say what it wants’”) (n.p.).
practical insights (Herr 224-5). The polemic continued for several months and extended into other periodical publications such as *El apologista universal* and *Conversaciones de Perico y Marica* (Herr 226). Jovellanos himself entered the fray with his *romance* “Contra Forner”, in which he portrays the whole exchange as a savage duel, or “horribles lances” (245),28 and compares Forner to the giant Polyphemus (248).

Milord Tolmin’s conflicted sense of identity as a citizen of his country bears some similarities to the struggles for national and cultural identity seen in contemporary Spanish eighteenth-century texts. He expresses contradictory allegiances, at times adhering to the ideals of virtue in his censure of dueling, then aligning himself with the code of chivalry in his knowledge of dueling practices, and all the while swearing that he will leave London altogether and begin a new life in exile. This plurality of opinions in one character points to a conflicted sense of identity. Milord’s foreign travels and his rational arguments against dueling mark him as a participant in Enlightened civilization, which Jesús Torrecilla convincingly associates with the hegemonic influence of France in the eighteenth century. However, Milord’s professed desire to defend his reputation and retaliate against the Count of Esteren also portray him as a proponent of barbaric Baroque ideals associated with the (Spanish) past.

II. *La Jacoba*

Luciano Francisco Comella typifies late eighteenth-century popular theater to the point that Alberto Lista coined the phrase “Escuela de Comella” to describe the body of work produced by ‘dramaturgos populares’ (“popular playwrights”) of that era (Angulo

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28 Caso González states in a footnote to “Contra Forner” that almost every discourse in *El Censor* “era un combate contra algo” (“was a battle against something”) (251), making Jovellanos’ dueling imagery all the more apropos.
Egea 38). Ebersole, who authored a descriptive study which contains several plot summaries of Comella’s theatrical works—though not one of La Jacoba—notes that Comella composed the vast majority of his comedias between 1789 and 1799 during the reign of Carlos IV (10), a time of rising tension in Spain due primarily to fears about the French Revolution and also to economic difficulties and a war against Great Britain (Herr 262, 396-7). Counter-attacks on the philosophical ideals of the Enlightenment and the Revolution were published, 29 reflecting a continuing struggle by Spanish authors to reconcile enlightened doctrines with their religious and historical traditions.

Although Comella’s works drew praise from the public, the press and the censors often expressed contrary opinions. 30 However, La Jacoba initially drew some praise in periodical reviews. 31 The Memorial Literario stated:

Aún no se había puesto en nuestro Teatro un asunto tan delicado como la pintura de los efectos de un matrimonio violento manejado con decoro. El contraste del honor de una mujer casada a vista de un amante, que antes debió casarse con ella, y de las sospechas de su marido que sin recelar aún en su honra, conoce su desamor, hacen la buena trama de esta Comedia, los caracteres principales están bien seguidos, la mayor parte de las situaciones diestramente dispuestas y las

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29 For example, Juan Joseph Heydeck’s two-volume work, Defensa de la religion christiana was published by the Imprenta Real in 1792 and 1793. Herr details the publications of several Catholic apologetic works, particularly during the first years of the 1790s (365-75).


31 Fernández Cabezón states that Comella’s Cecilia, Part I also elicited favorable reviews (113).
According to the reviewer, *La Jacoba* affirms the dangers of the passions and preserves the value of virtue, even though it treads dangerously close to the portrayal of violence through the use of the painting, a portrait of Jacoba that the Count of Esteren initially commissions as a wedding present. It depicts Jacoba “en sus tormentos” (379) and the Count “en acto / de darla una flor, atento” (380-1). However, in his jealousy, the Count orders the painter to alter the portrait and convert it into a visual threat. The new version, unveiled in Act III, now shows Jacoba covered in blood, and the Count standing over her wielding a dagger (between lines 353-3).

The review was not without its criticism, however. Of interest to this study are the comments on the portrayal of dueling, which was judged inverosimile by the *Memorial literario*. The reviewer observes that the verses describing the prohibition of dueling, which in Spain were castigated with capital punishment and the confiscation of goods, do not correspond with the play’s setting in London, and English law, which did not sanction duels (Fernández Cabezón 113). This critique provides further confirmation that *La Jacoba*, though set in London, portrays themes familiar and relevant to Spanish audiences of the late eighteenth century.

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32 “A matter as delicate as the portrayal of the effects of a violent marriage had not yet been represented in our Theater with decorum. The contrast of the honor of a married woman in the presence of a lover who should have married her, and the suspicions of her husband, who, still without casting doubt on her honor, discovers her lack of affection for him, form the good plot of this Comedy. The principle virtues are followed well, most situations are skillfully displayed and the strong passions are painted well, while not failing the rules of virtue and decorum” (113).

33 “in her torment” (379).

34 “attentive, in the act of giving her a flower” (380-1).
An understanding of the heated debate over Spain’s merit and its place within Enlightened Europe sheds light on the intense rivalry between Luciano Francisco Comella, as a representative of the popular theater which was accused of continuing the worst traditions of Golden Age theater in order to cater to public tastes, and Leandro Fernández de Moratín, a staunch supporter of neo-classical precepts and theater reform. The polemic between Luciano Francisco Comella and Leandro Fernández de Moratín constitutes one of the most famous rivalries in the history of Spanish theater. Their conflict pitted popular theater against neoclassical precepts (Angulo Egea 37). Moratín initiated the attacks in October 1789 in La Derrota de los Pedantes, alluding to Comella when describing “un poetilla ridículo, autor de siete comedias góticas, todas aplaudidas en el teatro, todas detestables” (cited in Angulo Egea 34). Angulo Egea postulates that Moratín’s acerbic remarks were provoked when La Jacoba appeared in theaters and drew praise from critics, who applauded its novel treatment of the difficulties caused by the topic of ill-matched marriages, central to many of Moratín’s own works. In fact, portions of La Jacoba were most likely inspired by El viejo y la niña, which had appeared in cafés and tertulias before its first theater representation in 1790 (34).

Existing studies of Comella have dealt primarily with the Comella-Moratín rivalry and the neo-classical polemic, such as Jorge Alberto Topete’s dissertation, “El neoclasicismo del teatro de Comella”, and several articles, including Mario di Pinto’s “En defensa de Comella”, Fernando Huerta’s “El comediógrafo mal-tratado: Luciano Comella

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35 “a ridiculous poet, author of seven gothic comedies, all applauded in the theater, all detestable” (Angulo Egea 34).

36 Of course, there have been several descriptive studies of Comella’s works. The two main studies are Michael Robert Cave’s dissertation, “La obra dramática de Luciano Francisco Comella”, which does include a plot summary and analysis of La Jacoba, and the aforementioned Ebersole’s La obra teatral de Luciano Francisco Comella.
y la Ilustración”, Rosalía Fernández de Cabezón’s “El teatro de Luciano Comella a la luz de la prensa periódica”. María Angulo Egea’s Luciano Francisco Comella, 1754-1812: otra cara del teatro de la ilustración,\textsuperscript{37} provides the most thorough analysis of Comella in light of this polemic and also as a popular playwright whose works possessed many neo-classical elements and themselves contributed to eighteenth-century debates on a variety of topics.

\textit{A. Milord’s Options: Decorum, Suicide or Exile?}

As Milord Tolmin and Jacoba negotiate the conflict created by the deceptive sonnet and false letter in Tolmin’s name and her subsequent marriage to the Count of Esteren, both characters propose multiple solutions. The options of suicide, and later in Act IV, dueling, reflect an adherence to the passions, as well as Spain’s Baroque past. To follow the path of virtue, Milord Tolmin must forget Jacoba altogether, an option he finds intolerable. Another choice proposed by the Count of Beutif—exile to the New World—implies a rejection of European citizenship altogether.

Upon returning from Italy and discovering that Jacoba, believing the lies about his marriage, has wed another, Milord Tolmin initially considers suicide at the beginning of Act II: “¿para qué / quiero vivir?” (167-8).\textsuperscript{38} He employs logic to conclude that since many others before him have taken their lives to avoid conflict, and because he sees no other way to alleviate his pain and nothing to lose, he will throw himself in the Thames River (168-96). To punctuate his resolution, Milord Tolmin invokes his identity as an

\textsuperscript{37} Angulo Egea has also authored two articles on Comella, including “Fingir y aparentar: la imagen de las mujeres en el teatro sentimental de Luciano Francisco Comella” and “Cadalso en la obra de Comella: con la edición de \textit{El violete universal o el café}.”

\textsuperscript{38} “What reason do I have to live?” (167-8).
Englishman: “ya lo he resuelto: / soy Inglés, y he de cumplirlo . . . / de hacer que el Támesis sirva / de sepulcro a mi cariño” (185-6, 195-6).³⁹ Milord’s self-identification as an Englishman suggests that his promise to throw himself into the river Thames will be fulfilled. His references to Caton and Demosthenes and their suicides associate his decision with the heroic.

The stage directions portray Milord “Al tiempo de irse despechado a arrojar al Támesis” (between lines 196-7),⁴⁰ but his friend the Count of Beutif, enters the scene and immediately halts the suicide attempt. In his arguments against Milord’s desire to take his own life, Beutif invokes definitions of “Englishness” and heroicism that revolve around utility and condemn suicide as a brash act that would bring shame to his country:

¿Heroísmo? una bajeza

del ánimo, sí, un deliquio

de la razón, un esfuerzo

que pretende hacer el brio

por no sentirse capaz

de tolerar los martirios

de la vida. Los Ingleses

que en esto te han procedido

son unos lunares feos

de la nación: y proscritos

sus nombres estar debian

³⁹ “I have already resolved to do it: I am English, and I must keep my vow . . . to make the Thames serve as the grave for my affection” (185-6, 195-6).

⁴⁰ “At the moment of spitefully throwing himself into the Thames” (between lines 196-7).
Demás, que con este arbitrio
a Dios y a la Patria ofendes:
a Dios, porque es el divino
árbitro de nuestras vidas,
y a la Patria porque un hijo
le vas a quitar que puede
honrarla con sus servicios. (207-18, 224-30)

According to Beutif, rather than a “noble heroísmo” (206), Milord’s suicide would make him an embarrassment to his country, and those who commit such acts should be banished from the country’s memory forever. Interestingly, suicide and dueling were sometimes linked as similar examples of rash, unreasonable behavior. Jacoba, whose resolution to take her own life parallels that of Milord’s, also preoccupies herself with how such an action will affect her reputation in London:

si con acero me mato,
a Londres escandalizo;

si con veneno, a los criados

achacarán el delito:

si me precipito . . . Pero . . .

Esto es lo mejor, no hay duda. (381-5, 389)\(^{44}\)

Jacoba’s concerns about “el qué dirán” would have clearly resonated with a Spanish audience. Her statement about throwing herself, while not explicitly elaborated, most likely references drowning herself in London’s famous river Thames, because of the parallels between her decision process and Milord’s.

While Jacoba’s suicide is ultimately preempted by other plot developments, Milord’s decision is altered by Beutif’s argument over what it means to be heroic and a good citizen. Milord declares his agreement with Beutif: “Tienes razón: mis pasiones / dominaron mi albedrío” (231-2).\(^{45}\) This statement offers one interpretation of a good Englishman—and thus a good Spaniard: someone who relies on reason rather than being carried away by passion. Beutif emphasizes that:

\begin{align*}
el & \text{ que ha nacido} \\
 \text{verdadero Inglés obstenta} \\
en \text{ lo adverso el rostro mismo} \\
\text{que en lo próspero; invariable} \\
\text{al mal y al bien, no da indicios}
\end{align*}

\(^{44}\) “If I kill myself with a dagger, I will create a scandal in London . . . if I use poison, the servants will be blamed for the crime. If I throw myself off . . . But . . . this is the best way; there is no doubt” (381-5, 389).

\(^{45}\) “You are right: my passions dominated my free will” (231-2).
Milord’s rash inclinations do not correspond with Beutif’s definition of a civilized member of society who carries himself in the same way regardless of his circumstances and does not succumb to overwhelming emotions.

Another tenet of Beutif’s argument against suicide articulates an additional aspect of this “enlightened” view of citizenship. Beutif states that with such a shameful death, Milord would deprive his country of the service he could render it as a productive citizen (228-30). This statement espouses the importance of social utility among a country’s citizens. A civilized Englishman/Spaniard, then, is one who practices social utility and is governed by reason rather than the passions.

Nonetheless, Milord continues to struggle in his decision over how to respond to the loss of Jacoba because of an inability to accept the response demanded by reason: forget Jacoba and live a life of virtue in London. Though he begs Beutif for advice, he refuses to accept the first suggestion offered by his enlightened friend: “Que su amor des al olvido” (258). Milord counters that this option “No es dable” (258) and pleads with his friend to offer a gentler alternative, which Beutif does: “Vete a América” (263).

Milord’s decision to leave London for the New World represents more than a convenient method to forget Jacoba. Unlike his first trip abroad to Italy, which formed

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46 “The one who has been born as a true Englishman presents the same face in adversity as in prosperity: invariable in bad times and good, he gives no indication of pain or pleasure” (218-23).

47 “Forget your love” (258).

48 “It is impossible” (258).

49 “Go away to America” (263).
part of the standard education for a gentleman,\(^{50}\) Milord’s prospective exile to the Americas constitutes—in the play—a rejection of “civilized” society. In a subsequent scene in the same act, when Beutif presents Milord before the Count of Esteren and Jacoba and they inquire about his decision to go to America, he counters that it is because of his sadness over “El mirar / la poca fe, el trato indigno / de las gentes” (531-3).\(^{51}\) Milord directs his attack at Jacoba, clearly addressing her as he speaks of “La falsedad, la mudanza, / el perjurio y el olvido” (561-2)\(^{52}\) which have become “la única recompensa / que logra el amor más fino” (563-4).\(^{53}\) His next statement, however, expands the accusation of untrustworthy behavior and implicates European society in general. Milord explains to the Count of Esteren and Jacoba that he is leaving London “Por huir de los estilos / Europeos” (566-7).\(^{54}\)

While Milord has previously invoked his status as an Englishman to explain his behavior, his decision to comply with Beutif’s suggestion to go to the New World now appears as a rejection of England and enlightened society. Cave’s dissertation on Comella only briefly addresses the author’s treatment of society in his dramatic works,\(^{50}\) A late-eighteenth-century discourse on “modern” education for young Spanish men states that after completing one year of travel throughout Spain in order to visit its cities and ports (56), a young man should then travel, under the supervision of an escort, to France and Italy and be presented at Court and meet important members of the nobility (“Discurso á los padres de familia sobre la educacion de los hijos” 57). These travels are to last for four years, the same amount of time that Milord Tolmin has spent abroad before the opening of \textit{La Jacoba}. Interestingly, according to the discourse, the purpose of this time is that “en esta edad con las luces adquiridas podrá extender en sus negocios, y miras particulares, como tambien empezar una cultura prolix del ramo que sea mas de su inclinacion, y hacerse admirar y respetar en alguna linea á beneficio de su Patria” (59). Milord Tolmin’s travels are in keeping with the education of young men in Spain at the time, as are his reflections on what it means to be a good citizen of his “Patria”.\(^{51}\) “Seeing people’s lack of trustworthiness and poor treatment of others” (531-3).\(^{52}\) “Falseness, fickleness, perjury and forgetfulness” (561-2).\(^{53}\) “The only recompense that the purest love receives” (563-4)\(^{54}\) “To flee from European ways” (566-7).\(^{54}\)
but he observes that “Ciertas obras que tratan el tema de la sociedad dan la impresión de que Comella concebía la sociedad como un laberinto engañador” (111).\textsuperscript{55} Cave cites Comella’s Los falsos hombres de bien (False Enlightened Men) (1790)\textsuperscript{56} as one example of a comedia in which “el tema de lo falso y engañador de la sociedad es el tema central” (112),\textsuperscript{57} and whose principal character, a “noble savage” who encounters society for the first time, concludes that ‘Las cosas buenas / en las ciudades son raras’ (cited in Cave 112).

Milord’s criticism of “los estilos / Europeos”,\textsuperscript{58} which he contrasts with “el candor más limpio, / la fineza más constante”\textsuperscript{59} of the “indios” among whom he plans to live echoes Rousseau’s writings about the “noble savage” in Emile, who lives free from the trappings of society’s expectations and “lives for himself; he is the unit, the whole, dependent only on himself and on his like” (7). Rousseau asserted that civilization had corrupted humanity’s nature by causing people to view themselves through the eyes of others, or through amour proper (“pride”). As he traces the rise of civilization in the Discourse, Rousseau hypothesizes the rise of “esteem”: “Each one began to look at the others and to want to be looked at himself, and public esteem had a value” (49). This “esteem”, or one’s reputation, weakens the individual by making him excessively dependent on others, because they lead “a man . . . to exchange his independence for

\textsuperscript{55} “Certain works which deal with the theme of society give the impression that Comella viewed society as a deceptive laberinth” (111).

\textsuperscript{56} According to Ebersole, Comella translated Los falsos hombres de bien from an Italian work (46). This is yet another example of the variety of European influences at play.

\textsuperscript{57} “The subject of falsehood and deception in society is the central theme” (112).

\textsuperscript{58} “European ways”.

\textsuperscript{59} “The purest candor, most constant kindness”.

123
dependence, to merge the unit in the group, so that he no longer regards himself as one, but as a part of the whole, and is only conscious of the common life” (Rousseau, *Emile* 8).

**B. The Count of Esteren’s Corruption**

The rampant deception practiced by all characters but most blatantly by Esteren reflects contemporary philosophical ideas on the topic at the time, but it also critically examines them. The Count of Esteren’s connection to both the New World and Europe and the corruption tied to him complicate the question of who is enlightened and who is barbaric.

The Count of Esteren’s exploitation of the New World confirms him as the deceptive villain in *La Jacoba*. With his confession to the audience at the end of Act I that he won Jacoba “con fingimientos” (642), the Count of Esteren reveals the first hint of his corruption. Throughout the play, characters such as the shallow, *afrancesado* (“Frenchified”) Baron of Licot 60 unveil that the Count’s dishonesty extends to his financial dealings in Jamaica. First, the Count himself indirectly communicates that he won his wealth from the New World when he promises Jacoba in Act II that “los infinitos / tesoros que de Jamaica / espero están a tu arbitrio” (354-6).61 Since the audience already knows that he has acquired her hand through deception, these treasures already appear tainted with corruption.

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60 The Baron of Licot, described in the character list as a “joven desmemoriado” (“an absent-minded young man) and portrayed by the stage directions in Act I as “vestido a la Francesa con mucha afectación” (“dressed in French fashions with great affectation”) (before line 310) is the quintessential petimetre, a character type common to Spanish theatrical pieces that criticized French influence and shallow fashions of the day.

61 “The infinite treasures of Jamaica . . . are at your fingertips” (354-6).
As he professes his love for Jacoba in the same act, the Count again uses the allure of his wealth to woo her:

. . . me parece
que todo el oro esquisto
que el Perú aborta, que todos
los topacios encendidos
que el Brasil cria, y en fin
que todo cuanto ha salido
en piedras púrpura y perlas
de Oriente Ceylán y Tiro,
por más valor que le dé
de los hombres el capricho,
según mi amor, de tus aras
es ofrecimiento indigno. (465-76)\(^{62}\)

The hyperbole employed by alluding to riches found throughout the New World rings false, because the Count already suspects Jacoba of infidelity. Before offering her his Jamaican treasures, the Count speculates on whether she still loves Milord (329-31). The gifts which he offers her before they arrive appear more as bribes than as offerings to his beloved, Further, the Baron of Licot’s casual speculations about how the Count has acquired his wealth imply that they have been obtained illegally, and the latter’s angry response confirms it.

\(^{62}\) “It seems to me that all the gold shale that Peru offers, all the fiery topazes that Brazil forms, and finally, that all the precious stones and pearls from Eastern Ceylan and Tyre, with as much value as men’s caprice assigns them, are an unworthy offering at your feet” (465-76).
As a shallow gossip, the Baron serves multiple functions. He allows Comella to amuse the audience by poking fun at *petimetres*, and through the news he shares, the Baron provides the audience with key pieces of information. Early in Act II, when informing the Count that some ships have arrived in London, he initially asks why this information makes the latter so angry—“¿te enfada? / callaré” (196-70)\(^{\text{63}}\) but continues to speculate and indirectly cast doubt on financial dealings in the New World:

\[
\ldots \text{¿Qué oro y plata traen? ¿La verdad? \ldots Amigo, si al volver de la Jamaica en el naufragio perdiste la otra mujer, tu casa ha adquirido unos tesoros con aquel Gobierno \ldots ¿callas? Amigo, ¿me has de decir en qué consiste que traigan distintos Gobernadores de Indias el sueldo que ganan ahorrado, y se mantengan sin él mientras allí se hallan? ¿De qué comen? ¿De qué visten? Dímelo pues; [t]u cachaza me revienta, me sofoca} \ldots (200-15) \text{84}
\]

\(^{\text{63}}\) “Are you angry? I’ll be quiet” (196-70).
The Baron communicates to the audience that the Count’s wife disappeared in a shipwreck, information that is crucial to the *comedia’s* resolution. The questions in this speech, softened only by the lightheartedness of the character, ring more with the air of accusation than idle gossip. They point to dishonest trade in asking how *Gobernadores*—such as the Count—are able to maintain such a standard of living when no one knows the true origins of their wages. What do these ships really contain? The mystery surrounding the disappearance of the Countess renders these vessels all the most ghostlike and sinister.

The Baron persists in his inquiries despite the Count’s efforts to dodge them. Although the Count of Esteren dismisses the Baron’s questions as “sandeces fatuas” (216), the Baron continues to pressure him, stating that he knows about the contents of one ship that arrived the previous week (219-20) and that, “Aunque te dé rabia / te lo he de decir” (222-3).66 Comella delivers these accusations through the lighthearted teasing of the Baron, perhaps to make them more amusing than serious for the audience. The Count angrily leaves the scene, and the Baron continues:

> Él se ha ido; pero a gritos
> se lo dire. Está cargada . . .
> de trigo, ¿Licot? No es trigo:
> ¿de lana? Tampoco es lana . . .

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64 “What gold and silver are they bringing? The truth? . . . Friend, if you lost your other wife in the shipwreck when returning from Jamaica [but] your house has [still] acquired some treasures from that Government . . . Are you silent? Friend, you have to tell me what salary the various governors have earned and put away, and how they maintain themselves on it while they are there? How do they eat? How do they clothe themselves? Tell me then; your slowness is killing me, suffocating me . . .” (200-15).

65 “foolish nonsense” (216).

66 “Although it may infuriate you, I have to say it” (222-3).
Comella suspends the Baron’s speech and prolongs the suspense by interrupting with a new piece of gossip, allowing the audience to draw its own conclusions about the ship’s contents. However, he has already confirmed that the Count’s business in Jamaica reeks of corruption.

When Milord Tolmin speaks to Jacoba in Act II of escaping from the traps of European society, the vices and dishonesty he describes correspond with the Count’s ascent in the London community:

Porque, ¿quién no ha de sentir
ver entronizado el vicio,
y la virtud abatida
por los soberbios impíos?
para subir comúnmente
de escalón sirve el delito, . . .
Si sobre esto yo explicara
la corrupción que ha habido,
mostraría que en los hombres
no hay constancia ni cariño. (537-42, 553-6)[68]
The inconstancy of humanity described in Milord’s speech acquires more specific features in Act III as the audience learns that the Count himself has climbed to his high place in society via a ladder of crime. Milord’s expressed desires to flee the corruption of European society, then, is rendered problematic, because the Count’s activities in Jamaica, as described by the Baron’s questions about the “Gobernadores / de Indias” call into question whether Milord can escape corruption in the New World.

Milord’s plan to sail to America is sabotaged on multiple fronts. First, the Count’s connections there reveal that Milord cannot escape the crimes of his unknown rival. Second, Milord persists in postponing his embarkation to visit Jacoba: once in Act II, when Beutif escorts him to the Count’s home (500-4) and then when Jacoba arranges a clandestine meeting in Act III (265-70). Finally, when the Count learns of Milord and Jacoba’s encounter, he challenges his rival to a duel in Act IV (51-2). The dueling scene unites the conflicting questions circulating in this play as Milord, the Count of Esteren and the Count of Beutif argue over what it means to be English, heroic, honorable and virtuous.

C. The Duel: “Inglés Cobarde” o “Inglés Sensato”?

The scene described for the duel in Act IV—“Sitio remoto con vestigios de ruinas, cipreses y árboles”69 invokes a heroic past, the ruins pointing to the Middle Ages, when kings presided over judicial duels and used one-on-one contests to settle battles. The inclusion of “cipreses”, or “cypresses”, symbolic of death, adds a foreboding, sinister

68 “Because, who has not been sorry to see vice enthroned and virtue demolished by prideful and impious people? Crime commonly serves as a stepping stone to move up [in the world]. If on top of this I described the corruption that has existed, I would demonstrate that in men there is neither constancy nor care” (537-42, 553-6).

69 “Remote site with vestiges of ruins, cypresses and trees”.

129
The duel between Milord Tolmin and the Count of Esteren, however, reveals multiple layers of conflict. Their quarrel over Jacoba and the Count’s anger about the secret meeting between Milord and his wife have brought the two men to the remote location. As the duel proceeds, they spend more time arguing over whether or not dueling is a heroic action for a good Englishman than the reason for their meeting. Their dialogue, as well as the way in which the Count executes the duel’s procedures and Milord acquiesces to the Count’s demands, reveal several inconsistencies. These inconsistencies confirm the Count’s duplicity and create doubts about whether Milord Tolmin can break his ties with the society he has vowed to reject.

When the Count arrives on the scene and orders Milord to take a pistol,\(^70\) the latter uses reason, appealing to the law, to attempt to avoid a fight: “¿Sabéis que estos atentados / están proscritos por ley / divina y humana?” (58-60).\(^71\) The Count insults him: “Sois un Inglés / cobarde” (68-9).\(^72\) Milord counters this “Baroque” definition of national heroism with an enlightened version: “Un Inglés sensato / diréis mejor” (70-1).\(^73\)

\(^70\) *La Jacoba* (1789) and Zavala y Zamora’s *El amante generoso* (1791), are the only two plays featured in this study which portray pistol duels. Billacois states that in France from the sixteenth century one, any weapon—including pistols—was fair game for a duel, though swords remained the most popular option (191). In England, the pistol became the weapon of choice from the 1760s on (Shoemaker 181), so it is not surprising that Milord Tolmin and the Count of Esteren are portrayed using firearms in *La Jacoba*. Rafael Abella writes about how the appearance of pistols in duels altered the ceremony; he contrasts the lack of accuracy and predictability of the pistol with the sword, which was seen as an extension of its user (28). However, Abella does not state when duelists in Spain began to use pistols, though he does mention that several writers of dueling manuals voiced their preference for pistols, and he then cites some examples of these from the nineteenth century (25-6). Nonetheless, fencing manuals and dueling manuals featuring detailed instructions for combat with swords continued to be published throughout the nineteenth century as well. One of these manuals, published in Buenos Aires in 1890 and authored by Ventura Oreiro, states that Spaniards did start to use the lighter foil over heavier swords during the eighteenth century (45), suggesting that pistols did not assume the same level of popularity that they did in England.

\(^71\) “Do you know that these attacks are forbidden by human and divine laws?” (58-60).

\(^72\) “You are a cowardly Englishman” (68-9).

\(^73\) “Perhaps it is better to say a sensible Englishman” (70-1).
In a previous scene at the end of Act II, Milord has already attempted to dialogue peacefully with the Count:

De Inglés a Inglés, Conde, hablemos:

vos no ignoráis que una carta

me ha privado de Jacoba

que antes que de la Jamaica

viniescis nuestro himeneo

también concertado estaba . . .

Como noble os aseguro

que su virtud es tan clara

como los rayos del sol . . .

y porque veáis si procede

con nobleza mi desgracia,

desde aquí de Londres voy

a salir con prisa tanta,

que quizá en la misma prisa

tropezarán mis pisadas. (554-9, 578-80, 582-7)\(^74\)

Milord attempts to convince the Count that he has done nothing to harm Jacoba’s virtue, and that he will nobly deal with his loss of her by physically removing himself from London. As an “Inglés sensato” (“sensible Englishman”) Milord has vocally aligned

\(^{74}\) “Let’s talk, Englishman to Englishman. You are not ignorant of the fact that a letter has deprived me of Jacoba, that before you came from Jamaica, our union was already arranged . . . As a nobleman I assure you that her virtue is as bright as the rays of the sun . . . and so that you can see if my misfortune proceeds in a noble way, from here I am going to leave London in such a hurry, that perhaps in this very rush my footsteps will trip over themselves” (554-9, 578-80, 582-7).
himself with enlightened Europe, informing the Count that “la razón en estos casos” (94) censures violence as a means to resolve conflicts.

Milord’s arguments and Beutif’s entrance support a rejection of Baroque values in favor of contemporary philosophical trends which would group dueling in the same category as suicide. Beutif displays bravery and sentimental heroism by physically inserting himself in the line of fire between the Count and Milord, shouting: “Disparaos; / pero de vuestro furor / mi vida va a ser el blanco” (110-12). Beutif reiterates eighteenth-century objections to dueling and rejects it as a heroic action:

¿ignoráis que están los duelos
por Dios, por el Soberano,
y aun por la naturaleza
proscritos? ¿juzgáis acaso
que el duelo infame es efecto
del valor? vivís errados
si lo juzgáis: de demencia
y de despecho es un acto
solamente. ¿Qué heroismo
ni qué blazon puede daros
el duelo de la pistola,
cuando su destino infausto
no le decide el esfuerzo,

75 “in these cases reason” (94).
76 “Shoot. But my life is the target of your fury” (110-12).
sino tan sólo el acaso? (117-30)\textsuperscript{77}

Beutif associates dueling with insanity rather than heroism. Duels are the result of the most extreme passions. He notes that the use of pistols does not reflect bravery but instead leaves the outcome to chance.

Beutif’s comments on dueling dismiss the ritual and its definition of heroism as relics of a past that should be forgotten:

¿Te llamó cobarde? y bien:  
¿porque así te haya llamado,  
debes la satisfacción  
tomarte tú por la mano?  
¿Ves que esos vestigios torpes  
del tiempo obscuro, esos actos  
que por virtud la barbarie  
reputa de los pasados  
merezcan en nuestros días  
de ningún foro sensato  
la aprobación? (153-63)\textsuperscript{78}

Beutif’s comments reflect a similar attitude toward duels articulated in Ulloa’s history of dueling, written shortly after the 1757 anti-dueling decree (4).\textsuperscript{79} Ulloa states that the

\textsuperscript{77} “Are you aware that duels are forbidden by God, the Sovereign and even by nature? Do you perhaps misunderstand and think that the vile duel is a show of courage? You live in the wrong if you think it. It is only an act of madness and spite. What heroism or emblem can a pistol duel give you, when its wretched destiny is not decided by force, but rather by chance?” (117-30).

\textsuperscript{78} “He called you a coward? And so, because he might have called you that, you should take satisfaction into your own hands? Do you not see that those clumsy vestiges of the Dark Ages, those acts that virtud labels as a barbarity from the past, do not deserve approval from any sensible forum?” (153-63).
illegal duel of honor has its origins in the “inculta y bárbara ferocidad”\textsuperscript{80} of the Germanic tribes, insisting that the Romans did not permit the practice (42). Both Ulloa and the Count of Beutif dismiss the duel as an out-dated, uncivilized practice.

Milord’s friend pleas with him to reject dueling’s definition of honor in favor of a more modern notion of honor-as-virtue. The Count of Beutif mentions the severe anti-dueling laws in place and asks:

\begin{quote}
¿En cuál de ellas has hallado que el hombre que al desafío se niega, o por un acaso no puede asistir a él ha de quedar infamado?
¿Quieres conservar tu honor?
Sé virtuoso. (166-70, 173-4)\textsuperscript{81}
\end{quote}

Beutif insists that the threat of a ruined reputation should not determine Milord’s actions, especially in light of his imminent voyage to the New World. He pleas with Milord to flee from “los principios falsos” (172),\textsuperscript{82} echoing the latter’s professed desire in Act II

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{79} The prologue to the first volume of the Memorias de la Real Academia de la Historia situates Ulloa’s history “casi al mismo tiempo” (“almost at the same time”) as “‘las sabias providencias del Gobierno contra la bárbara costumbre de los duelos’” (“the wise ruling of the Government against the barbaric custom of the duel”) (4).
\item \textsuperscript{80} “uneducated and barbaric ferocity” (42).
\item \textsuperscript{81} “In which of them have you found that the man that denies a dueling challenge, or for some reason cannot attend a duel has to be disgraced? Do you want to preserve your honor? Be virtuous” (166-70, 173-4).
\item \textsuperscript{82} “false principles” (172).
\end{itemize}
“huir de los estilos / Europeos” (566-7), but Beutif is condemning European ideas from the past, “del tiempo oscuro” (158), instead of his contemporary society.

Milord and Beutif have appealed to reason and the law to argue against dueling, but while Beutif’s allegiance to enlightened philosophies is clear throughout La Jacoba, Milord’s struggle continues. Despite his vocal protests against dueling, Milord’s actions during the scene with the Count of Esteren communicate a greater sense of commitment to his reputation than to virtue. After declaring himself to be an “Inglés sensato” (“sensible Englishman”) (70) rather than an “Inglés cobarde” (“cowardly Englishman”) (68-9), Milord responds to the Count’s threat to make public his refusal to duel (75-6) with acquiescence:

Venga la pistola, Conde;  
pero mirad que esta mano  
la recibe solamente  
para defenderme, en caso  
de que queráis vuestro intento  
ejecutar temerario  
y no por el desafío. (77-83)

While the Count’s lack of trustworthiness makes Milord’s excuse of self-defense plausible, his continued participation as the scene unfolds suggests that Milord Tolmin is not fully convinced that virtue makes him heroic. When the Count orders him to remove

83 “To flee from European ways” (566-7).
84 “of the Dark Ages” (158).
85 “Give me the pistol, Count. But see that this hand receives it only to defend myself, in case you want to execute your reckless action and not because of the challenge” (77-83).
his vest, Milord protests, “Entre hombres / de honor eso es excusado” (85-6), but he removes enough clothing to satisfy the Count’s insistence that neither is hiding protection “contra el rigor de las balas” (79). Stage directions reveal that both the Count and Milord load their pistols (99) and Milord’s answer to the Count’s warning that he is about to fire—“Ved que me defiendo” (110) — confirms his full participation.

Milord’s comments and actions also reveal a familiarity with dueling procedures. Besides informing the Count that the duel should be kept quiet—“vuestro honor debe callarlo” (74), his quick responses during the duel, such as his confirmation that the pistols are not loaded (96), and the interweaving of his participation with his arguments against dueling suggest that he might be a better duelist than philosopher:

MT: Pero, Conde,

la razón en estos casos . . .

(Se quita el suyo [vestido].)

CE: Nada escucho. Descargadas ved si están.

MT: Es excusado.

CE: Aquí munición tenemos para cargarlas.

MT: En vano

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86 “Between men of honor that is unnecessary” (85-6)
87 “against the bullets’ rigor” (79).
88 “See that I am defending myself” (110).
89 “Your honor should keep it quiet” (74).
90 “el suyo” refers to Milord’s outer garments, which he is removing in response to the Count’s insistence that neither wear anything to protect themselves from gunfire (88-90).
es vuestro empeño.

(Cargan las pistolas.) (93-99)\(^{91}\)

The last stage direction, which shows both the Count and Milord loading their pistols, reflects a shift in this duel. While previously the Count has initiated each step of the duel, such as the removal of outer garments, now both men proceed in unison: “CE: Ved que disparo. / MT: Ved que me defiendo” (109-10).\(^{92}\)

Milord’s allegiance to dueling and honor-as-reputation is confirmed by his insistence to Beutif that he cannot leave London without physically settling the conflict: “Y así, antes / que consienta en el embarco, / para resarcir mi honor, / qué he de hacer ya he meditado” (145-8).\(^{93}\) Beutif advises him to “Sé virtuoso” (“Be virtuous”) (174) and simply leave London rather than allow himself to be compelled by an outdated, barbaric mode of behavior. And he does this by appealing to reason and the law (149-74), just as Milord himself had done during the dueling scene with the Count. Nonetheless, Milord Tolmin remains skeptical:

No es extraño
para mí lo que tú dices;
y aunque le insinué estos cargos
del todo los desprecio;
pero si volviese osado
a insultarme puede ser

\(^{91}\) MT: “But, Count, reason in these cases . . . (He removes his [outer garments].) / CE: I am not listening to anything. See if they are unloaded. / MT: It is needless. / CE: Here we have ammunition to load in them. / MT: Your effort is in vain. They load the pistols.” (93-99).

\(^{92}\) “CE: See that I am shooting. / MT: “See that I am defending myself” (109-10).

\(^{93}\) “And so, before consenting to the embarkment, to reimburse my [lost] honor, I have already meditated on what I must do” (145-8).
que no pueda tolerarlo
mi prudencia, y que reprimia
su atrevimiento mi brazo. (174-82)\textsuperscript{94}

Milord hints that he may be incapable of avoiding combat with the Count. His prudence and his arm will not allow him to leave if the Count insults his honor. Milord’s preoccupation with \textit{el qué dirán}—“¿Qué dirán si yo me embarco / sin satisfacer al Conde?” (194-5)\textsuperscript{95} reflects a preoccupation of Spanish society with reputation that lingered in the eighteenth century, and disgusts his friend. Beutif condemns Milord and swears that he cannot remain friends with someone who holds such unenlightened beliefs:

Ya; te entiendo. Ve, infeliz,
corre a hacerte desdichado,
y entre el tropel de los necios
a tener lugar . . .
¿Mi amistad?
No vuelvas a pronunciarlo,
que yo nunca la he tenido
sino con hombres sensatos. (201-8)\textsuperscript{96}

\textsuperscript{94} “What you are saying is not strange to me; and although I insinuated these same burdens of everything to him, he rejected them. But if he impudently insulted me again, it is possible that my prudence will not tolerate it, and that my arm will crush his daring” (174-8).

\textsuperscript{95} “What will they say if I embark without satisfying the Count?” (194-5).

\textsuperscript{96} “Now I understand. Go, unhappy one, make yourself an unfortunate man, and have a place among the mob of foolish men . . . My friendship? Never pronounce it again, for I have never had one except with sensible men” (201-8).
Because Milord fears that London will call him an “Inglés cobarde” (“cowardly Englishman”) he refuses to behave as an “Inglés sensato” (“sensible Englishman”), suggesting that barbarity may win over enlightenment. However, Milord’s attempt to use reason to dissuade the Count from the duel during their encounter confirms his confusion over what type of Englishman he is. At the same time, Milord’s preoccupation with “el qué dirán” (“What will everyone say”) calls into question his ability to completely leave society behind.

The Count of Esteren’s duplicitous execution of the duel confirms his dishonesty, but it also suggests that corruption reaches all parts of English/Spanish society. While Milord Tolmin is aware that the Count “se cree agraviado / de mí” (38-9)\(^97\) at the beginning of Act III, the latter never issues an official dueling challenge. The Count’s request that Milord meet him at the remote location does not mention the possibility of combat. Upon arriving at the scene, Milord fearfully speculates:

¿Con qué fin a este lugar
el Conde me habrá citado? . . .
quería hablarme despacio
en este sitio, recelo
que se cree agraviado
de mí, y reconvenirme
querrá acaso el agravio. (29-30, 36-40)\(^98\)

\(^{97}\) “He believes that he is insulted because of me” (38-9).
\(^{98}\) “I wonder to what end the Count has arranged to meet me in this place? . . . He wanted to speak with me slowly at this site, I suspect that he believes that he is insulted because of me, and he may want to reprimand me for this insult” (29-30, 36-40).
The scene’s setting, and the Milord’s use of dueling terms such as “agraviado” (“insulted”) and “agravio” (“insult”) anticipate a private combat for the audience, but from the beginning the Count does not follow the codified procedure for it. Besides not issuing a formal, written challenge or requesting an explanation (Murciano 42), the Count also insists that Milord arrive alone, implying that the duel would proceed without the aid of seconds to ensure that all parties behave honestly (Murciano 42, 83-4). Previous revelations about the Count’s duplicitous epistolary practices to acquire Jacoba have already rendered him untrustworthy. Finally, the Count’s threat to “por todas partes / . . . irlo publicando” (75-6)\(^99\) if Milord does not duel with him obligates the latter to fight or lose his reputation, an intolerable outcome.

The Count of Esteren’s corrupt financial dealings highlight the problematic aspects of enlightened Europe, but his methods for dueling, by connecting him with Spain’s Baroque past, complicates the question of what is barbaric and what is enlightened. The Count swears that Milord Tolmin has insulted his honor (65-6), but it is the Count who has first defamed Milord’s reputation by circulating false letters with the latter’s signature and stealing Jacoba (Act II, 555-6). In addition to challenging Milord Tolmin to a duel, the Count of Esteren has threatened Jacoba with violence by having a portrait of her altered to portray him wielding a dagger over her bloody body:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Que tiene la diestra armada} \\
\text{de un puñal} \ldots \text{y más abajo} \\
\text{en sangre} \ldots \text{que si la vista} \\
\text{con el temor no se engaña}
\end{align*}
\]

\(^{99}\) “make it public in all places” (75-6).
sólo yo . . . Sí, soy . . . (526-30)\textsuperscript{100}

When Jacoba finds this portrait in Act II, she realizes that it constitutes a warning. This image demonstrates to her and to the audience the Count of Esteren’s malevolent control. With this portrait he forces Jacoba to submit to their marriage and Milord Tolmin to leave Europe. The threat of violence against Jacoba also resembles numerous Baroque Spanish honor plays such as Calderón’s *El médico de su honra* (*The Physician of His Honor*) (1637)\textsuperscript{101} and *El pintor de su deshonra* (*The Painter of His Dishonor*) (1650), where female characters are killed by husbands or lovers who suspect or have confirmed infidelity.

The threat of violence, as revealed in the portrait, becomes a visual confirmation of the Count of Esteren’s barbarity. First, he has initiated the central conflict of the play through his manipulation of letters, an act revealed to the audience through dialogue. Next, his duel with Milord Tolmin demonstrates that despite his economic success, he is an unrelenting, unreasonable character. The portrait, which he has commissioned with the riches won in Jamaica, serves as visual evidence that his earnings are blood money. However, while the New World has given the Count the funds to cause the central conflict in *La Jacoba*, it will also provide the final resolution.

\textit{D. Resolution from the New World: Virtue Rewarded and Deception Punished?}

As corruptly as the Count behaves, he eventually repents later in Act IV when the contents of one of the newly arrived ships offer a resolution: the arrival of his first wife,

\textsuperscript{100} “That the right hand is holding a dagger . . . and below covered in blood . . . that if fear is not deceiving my vision, it is I . . . Yes, it is I . . .” (526-30).

\textsuperscript{101} Lope de Vega also wrote a version of *El médico de su honra*, upon which Calderón may have based his version (Cruickshank 11), pp 7-60)
previously thought to have perished in a ship wreck. The Count receives a mysterious summons from the king midway through Act IV which sparks speculation from the Baronet of Licot that the monarch has heard about the duel: “¡El Rey / supo el desafío! Malo . . . De esta vez / va a la Torre por tres años” (373-4, 381-2).¹⁰² Jacoba, believing that Milord Tolmin died in the duel and that the Count will soon be punished for the duel, is certain that her life and reputation are ruined:

Con tu desafío infame,

con la muerte que has dado

a Milord, ¿qué consecuencias

tu honor y el mio sacaron?

¿Qué dirá Londres de mí? (561-5)¹⁰³

In this angry monologue, Jacoba correctly accuses the Count of dishonoring her, though she incorrectly assumes that his crimes against her have begun with his recent jealousy over her meeting with Milord and his dueling challenge:

Bárbaro, traidor, por quién

tu pecho ha sido enseñado

a propagar la perfidia,

la iniquidad y el estrago.

Vuélveme mi honor, o huye . . .

vuélveme, digo, mi honor,

¹⁰² “The king has found out about the duel! Bad . . . This time he is going to the Tower for three years” (373-4, 381-2). “De esta vez” (“This time”) strongly suggests that the Count’s duel with Milord Tolmin is not his first.

¹⁰³ “What consequences for your honor and mine have been reaped by killing Milord in your vile duel? What will London say about me?” (561-5).
The Count, though, is the one who reveals his crimes. He confesses his plot to win Jacoba after restoring her to Milord.

The Count of Esteren’s confession is spurred by the revelation that his first wife never died and therefore his marriage to Jacoba is not legal. During his information with the king, rather than receive punishment for his duel, the Count learns about the arrival of his wife from the New World:

... aunque cuatro testigos
unánimes declararon
para probar mi viudez
que pereció en el naufragio,
no fue así; porque luego
ella y otros que quedaron
asidos de los fragmentos,
de la nave, se salvaron

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104 “Barbaric man, traitor, who has taught your heart to propagate treachery, iniquity and havoc? Return my honor to me, or flee... I say, return my honor to me, or fear that my brokenness will accuse you from all sides... making public your iniquity, until you are exhausted, ashamed and covered in dishonor, then your jealousy will restore to me the reputation that they took away” (569-73, 577-9, 582-6).
por el favor que les dieron
dos barcos Americanos;
los cuales, después de ir
a Nueva York, los llevaron
a la Jamaica otra vez,
desde donde ahora han llegado. (619-32)\textsuperscript{105}

Instead of a refuge from the corruption of European society the New World delivers a resolution to Milord’s conflict by forcing the Count to relinquish Jacoba’s hand, a fitting resolution given that this cargo also points ironically to his former dealings in contraband. The proceedings could have been quietly carried out, since the Count’s wife, showing true discretion, “se fue a hablar al Ministro / para evitar muchos daños” (637-8).\textsuperscript{106} With this revelation, though, the Count displays repentance by subsequently confessing his scheme to discredit Milord:

Milord, deteneos, que
hasta que haya declarado
los daños que a vuestro amor
mis desvaríos causaron
no soy digno de ellos. Yo
con un soborno villano
adquirí de vuestro agente,

\textsuperscript{105} “ . . . although four witnesses unanimously declared that she perished in a shipwreck in order to prove my status as a widower, it was not so, because later she and three others who remained trapped in the fragments of the ship were saved with the help of two American ships, which, after going to New York, transported them to Jamaica again, from where they have now arrived” (619-32)

\textsuperscript{106} “went to talk to the Minister, in order to avoid a big scandal” (637-8).
Willams, una firma en blanco;
con ella mi loco amor
supuso haberos casado;
intercepté vuestras cartas,
fingí un soneto . . . (653-64)\(^{107}\)

The Count of Esteren’s confession restores him to good standing with Milord, who states:
“Los brazos . . . vuelvo a decir que me deís, / y dejad recuerdos vanos” (664-6)\(^{108}\) and presumably the audience, who is left with the lesson that no one can achieve happiness through dishonest means:

que el Cielo reprueba siempre
bien con prodigios o acasos
los himeneos que se hacen
con fin siniestro o engaño:
de sinceridad los hombres
armen su pecho . . . (685-91)\(^{109}\)

Virtue wins over honor-as-reputation, and all honor conflicts are nullified. The Count’s dueling challenge to Milord Tolmin is ostensibly suspended by the former’s confession of wrongdoing. Jacoba’s restoration to Milord, and Milord’s extension of forgiveness to the Count of Esteren suggest that corruption can be overcome by virtue.

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\(^{107}\) “Milord, wait, for until I have declared the damage that my delirium has caused your love, I am not worthy of [your embrace]. With a villainous bribe I acquired a blank signature from your agent, Willams. With it my mad love feigned that you had married. I intercepted your letters, I wrote a fake sonnet . . .” (653-64).

\(^{108}\) “I say again, extend your arms to me, and leave behind these remembrances, which are in vain” (664-6).

\(^{109}\) “for Heaven always dooms, with marvels and unforeseen events unions that are made for sinister or deceptive purposes. Let men arm their hearts with sincerity . . .” (685-91).
What remains of Milord Tolmin’s conflict with enlightened European society? Presumably, he will stay in London now that he has won Jacoba. As the Count relays his efforts to find Milord and reunite the two lovers, he informs the audience: “hallo a Beutif, que a Milord / llevaba a la nave; hago / que se detengan” (643-5).110 The inconstancy and unfaithfulness from which Milord had decided to flee in Act II no longer affects Milord. Consequently, the pressing need to choose which version of heroism to accept—the enlightened, non-violent path of virtue versus the combative, barbaric mode of dueling—has dissolved without the need for Milord to make a final choice.

Although virtue has emerged victorious in the final lines of La Jacoba, its imposed victory is somewhat problematic. “Los estilos Europeos” (“European ways”) (Act II, 566-7) are given a second chance, and the Count of Esteren has repented of his romantic misdeeds, but has all corruption been addressed? Can his confession and Milord Tolmin’s pardon absolve the Count of the anguish he has caused Milord and Jacoba? What about his illegal duel with Milord? Beutif teasingly suggests that the king desires to meet with Esteren because of his duel, but apparently the confession also implies that Esteren is pardoned for this crime too. Does the confession-forgiveness mechanism adequately resolve the honor conflict between the Count of Esteren and Milord and remake this villain into a repentant, beneficial member of society? Moreover, no additional mention is made of the Count’s nebulous financial dealings in the New World, despite the fact that his wife’s arrival highlights his contraband dealings there. The final lines of the play address only “los himeneos que se hacen / con fin siniestro o

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110 “I am going to find Beutif, who was taking Milord to the ship, I am going to have them detained” (643-5).
engaño” (688-9)\textsuperscript{111} and not necessarily the Count’s crimes in Jamaica, though these same offenses have been used to characterize him as a villain.

III. Concluding Remarks

The central conflict in \emph{La Jacoba}, triggered by the Count of Esteren’s falsification of letters that trick Jacoba into marrying him, and these characters’ efforts to resolve it echoes Spain’s ongoing identity struggle in eighteenth-century Europe. Each potential solution for Milord—whether to conform to decorum and forget Jacoba, escape through suicide, revenge through dueling, or exile—corresponds to common themes in ongoing contemporary dialogues about what it means to be Spanish. Discourses on virtue and decorum reflected the influence of the European, and particularly, French, enlightenment, which condemned suicide and dueling as barbaric. Yet dueling and the defense of honor resonated with a national past of which many Spaniards were proud. This contradiction reflects the fluid exchange of literary translations and adaptations in European countries. Milord’s deliberation over the proper response also explores what it means to be a good Englishman, a debate which the Spanish audience would understand in terms of what it means to be a good Spaniard. The discussion about dueling and the necessity of defending one’s reputation in the face of \textit{el qué dirán} reflects debates about whether to interpret Spain’s past as glorious or barbaric and to what extent Spain should integrate itself into enlightened Europe.

While the \textit{denouement} and the final lines of \emph{La Jacoba} point to a complete embrace of virtue, and thus full participation in the Age of Reason, several facets of the \textit{comedia} reflect Raillard’s assertion that the debate over Spanish identity generated

\textsuperscript{111} “unions that are made for sinister or deceptive purposes” (688-9).
definitions that “were hardly unified, and further reflected the hybridized, indeterminate nature of Spain” (44). The Count of Esteren’s corrupt dealings in Jamaica and his violent threats against Jacoba and Milord Tolmin, as well as his dishonest use of dueling ritual generate two key questions. The first is: How “civilized” is enlightened civilization? This question directly implicates France. However, England, as an influential participant in the Enlightenment, is not immune from this inquiry either. The Count of Esteren’s criminal activity in Jamaica, an English colony, highlights the futility of Milord Tolmin’s plan to escape ‘modern’ society by fleeing to Jamaica, even though it is the New World which provides the play’s resolution, through the arrival of the Count’s wife. The second question key question that arises in La Jacoba is: Can virtue alone overcome corruption? The denouement hinges on the Count of Esteren’s confession and Milord Tolmin’s subsequent forgiveness. The confession-forgiveness mechanism, a hallmark of sentimental literature, is based on the potential for humanity to be reformed. However, the Count of Esteren’s reform has been forced by the arrival of his wife from Jamaica and does not adequately address his actions against Milord Tolmin and Jacoba.

In La Jacoba both the culture of enlightened Europe and Spain’s Baroque past are examined and criticized, and while the Count of Esteren’s repentance and the final lesson imply a leaning toward the ideals of virtue and decorum, the values associated with Spain’s past—particularly honor and chivalry—are not discarded. Rather, the play’s representation of the Count of Esteren’s corruption, the preoccupation with el qué dirán and the duel in Act IV suggest a tense coexistence of multiple definitions of Spanish identity.
The duel in Act IV, with its debate over honor and patriotism, as well as the contradictory enactment of the ceremony itself, offers the most concrete reflection of what Raillard has termed “the hybridized, indeterminate nature of Spain” (44). Milord Tolmin appeals to reason and the law as justification against dueling, but the stage directions portray him as compliant with the honor code. Milord questions Esteren’s exercise of ceremony, confirming that he is familiar with dueling protocol. His arguments with Beutif over why he must ultimately finish the duel with Esteren reveal a deep bifurcation of values within Milord Tolmin that is not resolved by the play’s conclusion. The restoration of Jacoba and the Count’s apology suspend the honor conflict but they do not nullify the pull that reputation exerts on both Milord Tolmin and Jacoba. Finally, the Count of Esteren as the challenger contributes to the ambiguity in the Inglés sensato/Inglés cobarde debate. Esteren, made rich through commerce, represents a more modern citizen, yet with dueling he is resorting to an outdated rite. His use of the duel confirms that he is behaving barbarically, not because he is resorting to dueling, but because of his distortion of the ritual.

A critical examination of eighteenth-century popular theater in Spain which acknowledges this plurality of ideas and influences can move beyond a dismissal of its contradictions and instead explore some of the reasons behind them. La Jacoba offers a dramatic debate about the definition of true heroism and national identity as it calls into question who is civilized and who is barbaric. Trafficking with goods and with human lives is fittingly countered by a quintessential eighteenth-century motif—shipwrecking—that delivers a clean solution to the conflict. The duel in La Jacoba is a dramatic amalgam of Baroque notions of honor and the Enlightenment’s examination of the
dangers of the passions. An examination of its representation of dueling offers a glimpse of the complex intermingling of multiple definitions of Spanish culture, where neither a lone enlightened model such as that envisioned by Moratin nor an identity based primarily on Spain’s Baroque past, such as that defended by Forner, prevails.
Chapter Five: Idleness and Honorable Professions: Valladares de Sotomayor’s *El vinatero de Madrid* (1783)

When Tío Juan the “vinatero” or, wine vendor, draws his sword to challenge the Marquis del Prado to a duel in Antonio Valladares de Sotomayor’s 1783 sentimental comedy, *El vinatero de Madrid*, the Marquis responds with incredulity: “Tío Juan, ¿qué hacéis? ¿Estáis loco?” (n.p. 1338). While the stated objection is Tío Juan’s age, the older man’s supposed inferior social status, the sole reason why the Marquis has reneged on his promise to marry Juan’s daughter, Angelita, is also mentioned as incompatible with *lances de honor*. Nevertheless, Tío Juan insists on continuing with the duel and swiftly deprives the Marquis of his sword, which points in a subtle way to the wine vendor’s carefully hidden aristocratic origins.

Dueling is also at the heart of *El vinatero de Madrid*’s dramatic conflict: Tío Juan lives as a poor wine vendor in order to avoid arrest for a duel he had fought in his youth. His daughter Angelina faces a ruined reputation, because the Marquis, known to have spent time alone with her in her house, has reneged on his promise to marry her due to the perceived disparity in their social statuses. Nicasio, the Marquis’ false friend and also a member of the nobility, wants Angelita for himself, and has impeded the union by informing the Marquis’ uncles about Angelita’s inferior social status and spreading rumors that now threaten her reputation. Tío Juan challenges the Marquis to a duel to compel the young man to fulfill his pledge, but they are interrupted. A revelation about Tío Juan’s noble lineage, disclosed when he faces the dueling charges that led him to

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1 Similar to Comella’s *La Jacoba* and Zavala y Zamora’s *El amante generoso*, Valladares de Sotomayor’s *El vinatero de Madrid* is also authored in verse, specifically the romance form.

2 “Tío Juan, what are you doing? Are you crazy?” (n.p. 1338). The number here and all quotations hereafter from *El vinatero de Madrid* reference the line numbers.
change his identity, removes the obstacle preventing Angelita and the Marquis’ wedding, and all is completely resolved when Tío Juan is pardoned. Tío Juan’s duels, which he fights first as a nobleman and then as a wine vendor, are central to *El vinatero*’s conflict and resolution.

The representation of dueling offers a framework for interpreting a sentimental comedy that has been dismissed by critics such as Kosove and McClelland, the latter of whom accuses Valladares of conflating “foreign sensibility” with “his own captious sentiment of honour” (477). Almost no studies of *El vinatero de Madrid* have been authored, except for El Sayed Ibrahim Soheim’s detailed analysis of the work’s characterization and treatment of arranged marriages in “Don Antonio Valladares de Sotomayor: autor dramático del siglo XVIII”. María Jesús García Garrosa also includes the play in a study that will be described later in this chapter. An analysis of *El vinatero*’s portrayal of the duel acknowledges the societal context and treats in detail some of the contradictory views of honor and social class that reside in this work. In this chapter I will argue that the portrayal of the duel in *El vinatero de Madrid* as practiced by Tío Juan, a character who identifies himself as both a professional and an honorable man, undermines the play’s condemnation of idleness on the part of the aristocracy and subsequent exaltation of labor by the working class. *El vinatero de Madrid* levels attacks at the nobility but fails to convincingly exalt the virtuous worker, because Tío Juan and Angelita, the virtuous laborers that the *comedia* portrays, are ultimately revealed to be members of the aristocracy.

The themes of commerce and recognition, especially when working class characters reveal or discover that they have noble blood, prevail in many sentimental
comedies, particularly those of Valladares. Ostensibly these dramatic devices advocate for social mobility, as stated by Kosove, who writes in *The “Comedia Lacrimosa” and Spanish Romantic Drama*:

I am using the concept of recognition . . . wherein the true identity or station of a character turns out to be other than what was first anticipated, and the discovery is made by the audience and characters simultaneously . . . The interesting thing about this technique is not only that it tends to stir emotion but that it is particularly suited to a genre aimed at the bourgeois or newly liberated class. Discovering wealth, nobility or children, where it appeared there was none, stressed the varied possibilities of existence and by interference the logic and need for mobility and flexibility in society. (62)

If sentimental comedy indeed calls for increased “mobility and flexibility in society”, *El vinatero de Madrid* is a work that “fails within its own goals” (Kosove *The “Comedia Lacrimosa”* 60). It contains contradictory views of honor that exalt the virtuous worker while they reinforce the notion that only people of equal social status should marry. In other words, virtue along is not enough to overcome the societal prejudice that interferes with a legal promissory note of marriage between a marquis and a wine-merchant’s daughter. In regard to dueling, Kosove also notes that “While attempting to criticize the institution of dueling, the character who is treated most sympathetically [Tío Juan] turns out to be an arch duelist” (*The “Comedia Lacrimosa”* 60). A closer examination of the treatment of duels in the play challenges the conclusion that *El vinatero de Madrid* advocates for social mobility and proposes an alternative interpretation. The problems of honor which torment Juan and Angelita, and Juan’s use of the duel to defend their
reputation, expose the excesses of corrupt and idle nobility and the harm they inflict on innocent people. However, Tío Juan’s duels, which he fights from two perspectives—first as a nobleman and then as a working class individual—reveal that *El vinatero de Madrid* ultimately caters to societal prejudices to resolve its dramatic conflicts and thus fails within its own goals.

This chapter will place *El vinatero de Madrid* within the context of the 1783 royal decree under Carlos III (Guillamón 169) that attempted to remove the stigma associated with many trades and professions in an effort to combat the problem of idleness and foment a more productive society. This decree had a direct effect on eighteenth-century Spanish theater, since numerous sentimental comedies dealing with the themes of commerce—such as *El vinatero de Madrid*—emerged shortly after its implementation. An examination of the representation of dueling in *El vinatero de Madrid* reveals the play’s censure of the nobility’s failures, such as abuses against members of the lower classes and against their own peers as well as commentary on the dangers to people’s reputations posed by careless rumors.

The nobility’s excesses are embodied in the ways characters such as the Marquis, and especially Nicasio, the Marquis’ false friend who instigates rumors against Angelita and attempts to dissuade the Marquis from marrying her, spend their free time. The behavior of characters confronted with a dueling challenge or the possibility of a duel corresponds with the virtue they display in their actions. In response to his family’s honor problem, Juan resorts first to the law, appealing to Don Justo, a judge who is eventually revealed to be his long-lost son. When this effort fails, Juan challenges the Marquis to a duel. His virtuous behavior during the duel is meant to corroborate his
identity as an honest, hardworking man, but it also points to a hidden identity as a nobleman. The discovery of Juan’s previous duel, fought when another nobleman slandered his family, reveals that he is an elite member of the Order of Santiago. This secret reveals internal contradictions in this comedia’s call for nobility to serve a useful function in society because of its failure to reconcile Juan’s new identity as a man of commerce with his role as a member of the aristocracy. The portrayal of the Marquis’ and Nicasio’s excesses against Angelita, brought about in part by their idleness, as well as Tío Juan’s praise of hard work (59-62) and challenge to the Marquis to behave with virtue (1280-5), all form part of this lesson for the aristocracy. However, both duels confirm that El vinatero de Madrid opts for a resolution which affirms some of the same prejudices against labor that it attacks, because Juan the wine seller is a noble at heart, but it is his identity as a nobleman by lineage that provides his salvation.

I. Societal Problems of Vagrancy and Prejudice Against Professions

El vinatero de Madrid presents a didactic exaltation of industry and labor through Tío Juan, a hard-working wine vendor who states that “cuando cuesta el pan / más sudor, luego al comerlo / es más delicado, más / dulce, y hace más provecho” (59-62). This statement reflects a similar societal situation in eighteenth-century Spain, in which ilustrados were tackling the massive problem of vagrancy at all social levels. Vagrancy manifested itself through idle servants, nobles and the mendicants who pervaded city plazas. Historian Richard Herr notes that royal reformers—among them Jovellanos—criticized the Church for fomenting vagrancy through its charitable practices. As Herr

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3 “when bread costs more sweat, then eating it is a more delicate, sweeter experience, and it is more beneficial” (59-62).
writes, “It is true that the church maintained orphanages, hospitals, and retreats for the invalid, but it had also for centuries made a virtue of giving food and alms indiscriminately to all who begged at its doors” (31). Many able-bodied people from all social spheres refused to work for their bread.

The nobility also drew criticism for their idleness, a condition perpetuated by prejudices against trades, to be discussed later in this section, and Spain’s land laws. Private lands in entail, called mayorazgos, had permitted nobles to extend their landholdings through several generations. A 1505 law by the Cortes de Castilla had permitted anyone to create a mayorazgo out of as much land as could legally be bequeathed to an oldest son, so commoners were also able to establish a mayorazgo, purchase a title of nobility under Felipe II, and live off of the mayorazgo’s income (Herr 91). Besides the mayorazgos, family estates, or señoríos legos, “lands over which the crown had granted laymen the rights of lords”, also provided significant income to their owners, because Spaniards who lived on these lands had to pay dues (Herr 95).

These land laws, coupled with prejudices against trade, had created an idle noble class who eschewed work, at times choosing poverty over the stigma associated with exercising a trade. Some of the hidalgos who owned small mayorazgos were so poor that they could scarcely be distinguished from commoners and were often seen begging in the streets, bearing their title papers in their pockets (Herr 97). As Herr writes:

A royal ordinance of 1770 gave inadvertent testimony to the sad plight of these hidalgos. In 1682 nobles had been permitted to own factories, provided they did no manual labor. Now Carlos III abolished this limitation, which had fallen into neglect: ‘I order that nothing stand in the way of hidalgos supporting their
families by engaging in a craft, in order to avoid the disadvantage of their living idle or badly occupied and becoming a charge on society’. (cited in Herr 97)

This ordinance was just one among several efforts by the state to combat idleness.

_El vinatero de Madrid’s_ portrayal of Juan as a wine vendor who happens to be a nobleman ostensibly offers social commentary against idle nobility and the state of corruption which plagued Spain’s upper classes. In Act I, when Angelita first informs her father that the Marquis will not keep his word to marry her, the wine vendor philosophizes:

_Ser Caballero, y Señor,

y engañar, son muy puestos,

si hace el Marqués lo segundo,

¿cómo ha de ser lo primero? . . .

¿De qué sirve la nobleza sin buenos procedimientos?

Si a la virtud no conoce,

y la persigue, es lo mismo

que un sol eclipsado, pues

pierde así su lucimiento. (637-40, 655-60) 

Juan’s charge that noble blood without virtue is not honorable, echoes comments made against the aristocracy by Benito Jerónimo Feijóo in the second discourse of Volume IV (1730) of _Teatro crítico universal_: “En algunos escudos de Armas he visto puestas por timbre unas Estrellas. El que ganó este blasón le ostentaba con justicia, porque a manera

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4 “To be a gentleman and lord, and deceive, are incompatible, if the Marquis does the latter, how can he be the former? . . . What good is the nobility without good practices? / If one does not know virtue, and pursues it, he is like an eclipsed sun, for he loses his luster” (637-40, 655-60).
de Estrella brillaba con luz propia. En muchos de los sucesores les deben quitar las Estrellas, y substituirse por ellas una Luna, para denotar que sólo resplandecen, como este Astro, con luz ajena” (n.p.).

Both statements use the image of light to describe the status of their contemporary nobility: a group that had lost its resplendence by valuing only its bloodline and ignoring the need to practice virtuous acts that contributed to society.

In her study of several sentimental comedies that emerged in response to a 1783 royal decree that attempted to render certain trades honorable, García Garrosa provides a concise summary of the historical context surrounding the public’s fearful disdain for many professions. During the eighteenth century a long list of jobs, particularly those associated with manual labor, were classified as dishonorable, and those who practiced them were ineligible to occupy public office or marry members of the upper class.

García Garrosa ties the social stigma of these professions to two factors: 1. the historical association of these jobs with judíos and moriscos and 2. the collective notion that pureza de sangre and hidalguía were incompatible with manual labor or any activity except arms or letters. Anyone, then, who engaged in manual labor found himself in a state of dishonor. As a result of these collective associations, hidalgos chose poverty over labor and the children of artisans abandoned the family trade in order to seek more “honorable” positions. The consequence for Spain was “una sociedad que veía crecer

5 “I have seen stars stamped on some Coats of Arms. The one that earned this crest displays it justly, because like the star he shines with his own light. Many of his successors should have their Stars taken away and substituted with a Moon, in order to signify that they only shine, like this Heavenly Body, with someone else’s light” (n.p.).

6 “Jews”

7 “Moors”, or Muslims who appeared to have converted to Christianity but continued to practice their original religion.

8 “blood purity”

9 “nobility”
alarmantemente el número de desocupados y que coría el riesgo de caer en el estancamiento económico” (674). During the eighteenth century various texts and laws were created that attempt to alter the prejudice against manual labor and convince nobles and plebeians alike that work was virtuous and idleness was dishonorable. García Garrosa labels this premise one of the “pilares básicos de toda la política económica del despotismo ilustrado” (674-5).

Javier Guillamón Álvarez, in Honor y honra legal en la España del siglo XVIII, explores the efforts of the Spanish state under Carlos III to eliminate the stigma associated with certain trades. He relates shifts in concepts of honor to economic changes. Specifically, Guillamón states that “La crisis del régimen señorial de los siglos XV y XVI con la consecuente vigorización del poder económico hará no pocas veces confundir las honras con las riquezas heredadas o adquiridas” (11-12). As a result, rich cristianos nuevos, or people not descended from aristocratic families, were able to buy into a higher social status and certain judicial and diplomatic posts. According to

10 “a society that was seeing the number of unemployed people rise alarmingly and that ran the risk of falling into economic stagnation” (674).

11 For example, in Discurso sobre la honra y deshonra legal (1781), Antonio J. Pérez y López writes, “Ningunas preocupaciones son más perjudiciales al Estado, que las que despojan á la nobleza de su verdadero merito, y las que sepultan los oficios necesarios, y utiles á la Monarquia, en el abysmo de la infamia” (1). Volume III of El censor, also published in 1781, expresses a similar concern for the effect of the public’s prejudice against certain types of labor as it observes that “es evidente que en nuestra España todo género de industria está defraudada de una parte de la recompensa que le corresponde” (87). Other texts that precede the 1783 royal decree discussed in this chapter include Disertación sobre el aprecio de las artes prácticas, by Antonio Artea de Monteseguro, and Memoria sobre el modo de fomentar entre los labradores de Galicia las fábricas de curtidos, by Pedro A. Sánchez. Both of these texts, like the previous two, were published in 1781 (García Garrosa 675). An earlier text, Pedro Rodríguez Campomanes’s 1775 Discurso sobre la educación popular de los artesanos y su fomento, cites among its “objetivos de este discurso” the need to combat the state of decadence which plagued many trades at that time (n.p.).

12 “basic pillars of enlightened despotism’s entire political economy” (674).

13 “The crisis of the seigniorial regiment during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries with the consequent strengthening of economic power led to its fair share of confusion between honor and acquired or inherited wealth” (11-12).
Guillamón, these changes contributed to a “fetichismo de la sangre y estatutos de limpieza” (14). He notes:

La respuesta a esta penetración se llevó a base de la afirmación de la pureza de sangre—esto es, un elemento prácticamente de casta—superpuesto al orden estamental e institucionalizado por sus propios estatutos de limpieza. Se comprende entonces que del ataque a comerciantes, financieros e intelectuales se diera una corriente de aversión que alcanzó ciertas esferas de la nobleza. Y aquí llegamos a la concepción de dos tipos de nobleza: la hidalga y la de la limpieza de sangre, pues era tanto como decir que la limpieza era honor y la impureza deshonor. (14)

As the nobility placed a higher value on blood purity, it attempted to mitigate the perceived threat of rich cristianos nuevos: “Entendido el honor como un factor de integración social, llevará consigo un juego de presión y represión que se refleja en el distanciamiento y descalificación estamental de los que trabajaban ‘por sus manos’” (Guillamón 16).

This social and economic context explains some of the factors that contributed to the scorn associated with many trades. As noted in chapter one, however, many definitions of honor comingled during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the

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14 “fetishes for blood and purity statutes” (14).

15 “The reply to this infiltration was carried out by the concept of purity of blood—which is practically a caste-based element—superimposed on the state order and institutionalized by the same purity statutes. It is understood, then, that the attack against merchants, financiers and intellectuals triggered a stream of aversion that reached certain noble circles. And here we arrive to the concept of two types of nobility: the lower ranks of nobility and that of purity of blood, and thus it was as if saying that purity was honor and impurity was dishonor” (14).

16 “Understanding honor as a factor in social integration, it carried with it a game of pressure and repression that is reflected in the state’s distancing and disqualifying those who worked with their hands (16).
theater represented several of these notions. As Guillamón addresses the theatrical context, he mentions the criticism leveled by eighteenth-century *ilustrados* such as Pedro Rodríguez Campomanes: ‘el pueblo indocto cree que todo pobre es honrado; y este mismo público oye que las artes mecánicas causa deshonor ejercitarlas’ (10).17

*Comedias* portrayed the defense of injuries to honor as practiced by people from all classes (Guillamón 9). Thus, not only were trades devalued by the nobility, but also by the general public.

The negative view of trades became a barrier to the efforts of the Bourbon monarchs to reform trade infrastructure and education. Behind these reform efforts lay the fundamental ideals of social utility and productivity (Guillamón 21). García Garrosa notes that in order for economic growth to be possible, the esteem for work needed to rise (675). Thus in 1783 Carlos III issued the following decree:

> Real Cedula de S.M. y Señores del Consejo, por la qual se declara que no solo el Oficio de Curtidor, sino tambien los demas Artes y Oficios de Herrero, Sastre, Zapatero, Carpintero y otros á este modo, son honestos y honrados; y que el uso de ellos no envilece la familia, ni la persona del que los exerce, ni la inhabilita para obtener los empleos municipales de la República en que estén avecindados los Artesanos ó Menestrales que los exerciten . . . (Cited in Guillamón 169)18

As he summarizes the intersection between many people’s views about work and the Bourbon reforms, Guillamón describes the situation in this way:

17 “the uneducated public believes that every poor person is honorable; and this same public hears that it causes dishonor to exercise mechanical trades” (10).

18 “Royal Decree of His Majesty and Advising Counsel, by which it is declared that not only the Trade of the Tanner, but also the other Arts and Trades of the Blacksmith, Tailor, Shoemaker, Carpenter, and others of this type, are upright and honorable; and that the exercise of them does not debase the family, nor the person that exercises them, nor does it disqualify the person from obtaining the municipal posts of the Republic in which the Artisans or Craftsmen that engage in them may dwell . . .” (Cited in Guillamón 169).
Así, pues, los cambios en el concepto del honor se debieron a muy diferentes razones que van desde el ideal caballeresco y los condicionamientos políticos y religiosos, hasta las de tipo económico y utilitarista del siglo XVIII en el que se encuentra implicado el pensamiento de los reformistas de la España de Carlos III en su intento de homogeneizar lo legal, lo económico y lo cultural. (11)

Guillamón reasons that the exclusivity of honor—specifically as bestowed either via special posts, as a result of limpieza de sangre, another term for “blood purity”, or even because of riches—precluded the success of the Bourbon reforms, which “tendía a ser conservadora del orden establecido, y es por eso que tales innovaciones terminaron denotando contradicciones insolubles” (19). The conflicts which emerge in El vinatero de Madrid reflect the dilemmas posed by the clash between the Bourbon push toward social utility and the negative view of trade labor that persisted in the eighteenth century and beyond.

García Garrosa observes “una repercusión literaria” following the declaration of the 1783 decree. For example, in 1784, Los menestrales, or The Artisans (by Cándido María Trigueros), El fabricante de paños, (The Cloth Maker) El vinatero de Madrid (The Wine vendor of Madrid) and El carbonero de Londres (The Coal Man from London, all authored by Valladares de Sotomayor, appeared in Madrid’s theaters while El trapero de Madrid (The Rag Man of Madrid), also by Valladares de Sotomayor, was shown in Barcelona. In addition, in 1780 and 1790 respectively, El pueblo feliz, or The Happy

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19 “So, then, the changes in the concept of honor respond to many different factors that range from the knightly ideal to political and religious conditions, to even those of an economic and utilitarian nature during the eighteenth century, in which the thinking of the Spanish reformists under Carlos III finds itself implicated in its attempt to homogenize all things legal, economic and cultural” (11).

20 “tended to be conservative of the established order, and for that reason such innovations came to an end, denoting irreconcilable contradictions” (19).
Town (Luciano Comella) and La industriosa madrileña, or The Industrious Woman from Madrid (Francisco Durán) appeared in Madrid (676). These are merely a few examples of sentimental comedies “que desarrollaban en la escena la vida honrosa y productiva de estos plebeyos ejemplares” (673)\(^{21}\) in Spanish theaters.\(^{22}\) She connects these plays with Antonio Capmany’s statement, nine years after the 1783 decree, that the new laws were not sufficient to engender change, and that “Hacía falta que los propios trabajadores estuvieran convencidos del valor de su actividad y del reconocimiento social por ello”\(^{23}\) and, therefore, “para eso estaba el teatro, claro portavoz en tantas ocasiones de la ideología ilustrada, medio sin duda más eficaz que las leyes de educar al pueblo e inculcarle el espíritu reformador. La Real Cédula de 1783 fue llevada a la escena” (675-6).\(^{24}\) According to García Garrosa, in less than a year and a half after the new laws concerning professions, no less than seven theatrical works appeared which dealt with this decree. However, she observes that, curiously enough, these plays tended to deal with the subject matter in distinct ways (676).

García Garrosa concludes that the three works that most clearly transmit to the stage the ideals of Carlos III’s political economy of utility are Los menestrales (The Artisans), La industriosa madrileña (The Industrious Woman from Madrid) and El pueblo feliz (The Happy Town) (692). Trigueros’s Los menestrales (1784) exalts social

\(^{21}\) “that dramatically portrayed the honorable and productive lives of these exemplary plebeians” (673).

\(^{22}\) These seven plays and El huérfano inglés, ó el evanista (The English Orphan, or the Cabinet-Maker) (1796), an adaptation of a French translation that had been shown in Barcelona in 1783, most likely authored by Iriarte, (683), are the main works analyzed in García Garrosa’s article.

\(^{23}\) “Workers themselves needed to be convinced of the value of their activity and the social recognition that comes with it” (675).

\(^{24}\) “The theater was there for that purpose, as a spokesperson for enlightened ideology on so many occasions, without a doubt a more effective medium than the laws for educating the public and instilling it with a reformatory spirit. The Royal Decree of 1783 was carried to the stage” (675-6).
utility, portraying contrasting attitudes about work, honor and virtue through characters such as the Master Tailor Cortines, who, tired of the ridicule he has received for his position, arrives at the Royal Court intent on purchasing a title of nobility, and Don Juan, a hardworking nobleman and mayor (García Garrosa 677). Don Juan expounds upon the following principles, all central to the 1783 decree: Everyone can and should work, virtue is the sign of true nobility, which means that laziness is ignoble, and true nobility and honor should be measured by social utility (García Garrosa 678-9). Don Prudencio, a character in Francisco Durán’s *La industriosa madrileña* (1784), also condemns excessive leisure as a vice and lauds hard work in Act III by warning of the consequences of laziness as contrasted with the rewards of utility: “mientras la ociosidad / labra a sus hijos la ruina, / la aplicación a los suyos / da honor, riqueza y delicias” (836-9).25 Luciano Comella’s *El pueblo feliz* (1789) also praises hard work, but it presents its ideals through the portrayal of a utopic society, described by García Garrosa as a “lugar desbordante de actividad y modelo de progreso” (690)26 inspired by the ideas of the Magistrate, Don Benigno:

 Todo lo ha inovado, todo
de arriva abaxo lo ha vuelto,
ordenando tales cosas
que intolerables se han hecho;
y entre ellas la de que el ocio
es infame aun en aquellos

25 “While idleness leads its children to ruin, / their hard work / gives them honor, riches and delight” (83-9). The play on words between “ociosidad” (“idleness) and “labra” (“leads”), which also denotes several types of labor, suggests that idleness is a negative force at work on those who practice laziness instead of labor.

26 “boundless place of activity and a model of progress” (690).
que deben á la fortuna
nobleza y bienes inmensos. (cited in García Garrosa 690)²⁷

However, these three works

fueron . . . fracasos en los escenarios,²⁸ mientras que el mismo público aplaudió
con entusiasmo otras obras que, en última instancia, tergiversaban esa ideología,
pero que, en cambio, daban a los espectadores lo que querían ver: nobles de
verdad, con títulos y largos apellidos, anagnórisis milagrosas en la última escena
que reconocían el honor de los oficios viles, no con la promesa de un título de
hidalguía en la tercera generación a quien mucho trabajara, sino con el honor y la
nobleza de siempre, los únicos que seguían importando. (García Garrosa 692)²⁹

Of the plays analyzed by García Garrosa in her article, four—*El trapero de Madrid, El
vinatero de Madrid, El carbonero de Londrés y Las vivanderas ilustres*—were authored
by Valladares and represented in 1784. As the next section will show, Valladares’
treatment of commerce, nobility and the 1783 decree offered more conservative
interpretations that, according to García Garrosa, “tergiversaban esa ideología”
(“distorted that ideology”) and thus found greater favor with the public. An analysis of

*El vinatero de Madrid* will reveal to what extent Valladares may have been making

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²⁷ “Everything has been innovated and turned upside down by order certain things / have become
intolerable / and among them is idleness / even for those who owe their fortune /to nobility and immense
property” (cited in García Garrosa 690).

²⁸ García Garrosa mentions that *Los menestrales*, which only last eleven days in the theater, presumably did
not fail because of flaws in its script or representation (679). She quotes a favorable review for *La
industriosa madrileña* found in *Memorial Literario*, noting that while the review praises both the action and
theme of the work, it also recognizes its lack positive public reception (686). Finally, *El pueblo feliz* lasted
eight days after its premier on September 9, 1789 and was represented only seven times until 1800 (690).

²⁹ “were . . . failures on the stage while the same public enthusiastically applauded works which, in the last
instance, distorted that ideology, but that, in contrast, gave spectators what they wanted to see: true
nobleman, with titles and long last names, miraculous reunions in the last scene that recognized the honor
of vile trades, not with the promise of a noble title in the third generation of the family of the one who
worked, but rather with eternal honor and nobility, the only qualities which would continue to matter”.
concessions to his audience’s expectations and thereby distorting the spirit of the 1783
decree that triggered the play’s creation.

II. *El vinatero de Madrid*

Tío Juan’s dueling challenge to the Marquis underlines the threat that idle nobility
pose to his family and illustrates one of Valladares’ prevalent dramatic themes: the
triumph of virtue over the malevolent plans of corrupt privileged characters (Ibrahim
Soheim 248). A November 1784 issue of *Memorial Literario* comments on *El vinatero*:
“Se hallan bien expresados, los efectos y los afectos de la trama y sentimiento” (cited in
Ibrahim Soheim 215).30 According to Kosove, *El vinatero* “attempts to exalt virtue,
friendship, tolerance and charity as the true tenets of dignity and happiness” (60).

Ibrahim Soheim’s dissertation on Valladares unpacks the playwright’s themes in greater detail. He states that in an effort to combat the commonly held notion
that virtue belonged exclusively to the nobility, “la burguesía . . . proclamaba que la
virtud no es patrimonio de la nobleza, sino de todo ser humano que lo demuestre en su
conducta y sus comportamientos”.31 According to Ibrahim Soheim, Valladares, along
with most playwrights, dramatized this ideal in some of his *comedias* by contrasting “un
personaje pechero, pero virtuoso, y uno noble que desacredita su condición de tal con un
comportamiento indigno” (241).32 In the case of *El vinatero de Madrid*, Tío Juan, a

30 “The effects and the affects of the plot and sentiments are found to be well expressed” (cited in Ibrahim
Soheim 215).

31 “the middle class . . . proclaimed that virtue is not an exclusive asset of the nobility but rather belongs to
every human being who shows it in his conduct and behavior” (241).

32 “a plebian, but virtuous character, and a member of nobility that discredits his social sphere with
unworthy behavior” (241). Examples include *Cuál más obligación es la de padre o la de juez* (Which
Obligation is Greater, That of the Father or That of the Judge) (Jacinto/El conde de Castro) (1777),
virtuous, hardworking and honest wine vendor, stands in starkest contrast to Nicasio, the Marquis’ false friend who has instigated the entire conflict and will be discussed in greater detail later, and also to several of the Marquis’ own actions.

The Marquis apparently has plenty of free time, because he has visited Angelita in her home many times. Angelita accuses the Marquis of scheming to enter her house, another implication of excess idle time: “Buscastéis tales pretexto / que en fin en mi pobre casa / entrasteis” (375-7). As a result of these visits, she now faces the insidious threat of gossip, which has the potential to destroy her whether or not she is ever seduced. Juan scolds Angelita for permitting the young man’s visits, noting the resulting damage to the family’s honor:

Las visitas de un Marqués
joven, bizarro, y discreto,
a una muchacha, a una hija
de un infeliz Vinatero
cuya casa está cubierta
de la miseria; ¿qué efecto
te parece habrán causado
en los que las sepan? ¿Y estos
discurre que serán pocos?

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Efectos de la virtud y consecuencias del vicio (Effects of Virtue and Consequences of Vice) (Duling y su hija Enriqueta / Milord Belton y su hijo Carlos) (1781), El Emperador Alberto I y la Adelina (Emperor Alberto I and Adelina) (Adelina / Barón de Tezel) (1781), El trapero de Madrid (Agustín / Anselmo) (1781), El carbonero de Londres (Ricardo / Milord Rusban) (1784), El vinatero de Madrid (Juan / Marqués del Prado, and I would also include the contrast between Juan and Nicasio) (1784), Las vivanderas ilustres (The Illustrious Merchant Women) (Gertrudis / Colonel) (1788) and Valldares’s 1796 El preso por amor o el real encuentro (Imprisoned for Love, or the Royal Encounter) (Faustina / Marqués del Roble) (Ibrahim Soheim, 241).

33 “You searched for such pretexts so that in the end you could enter my poor house” (375-7).
Pues no, hija mía: pocos yo apuesto
a que ha sido en mil estrados
tu nombre el primero objeto
de la conversación . . . (594-607)³⁴

The Marquis has behaved unwisely in visiting a young woman from a different social status while she is home alone. Angelita would naturally become the object of rumors by permitting the Marquis’ visits unsupervised. The disparity in their social statuses would also prevent anyone from believing the Marquis would ever intend to marry her. The typical assumption would be that the Marquis had seduced Angelita, because such occurrences were quite common in eighteenth-century sentimental literature. Jacinta, the Marquis’ sister, acknowledges her awareness of the Marquis’ visits to Angelita, but these encounters, while inappropriate, do not bother her. This knowledge implies that Jacinta does not disapprove of the potential danger to Angelita if the Marquis simply seduces her. In fact, she blithely remarks, “De esas / extravagancias, los hombres / tienen muchas” (1057-9).³⁵ As a result of the Marquis’ irresponsible visits and the rumors that have begun to circulate, the wine vendor’s family reputation may be irrevocably destroyed. However, the Marquis folds under the pressure of the same societal prejudices that fuel the rumors and renegs on his promise to marry Angelita.

Ibrahim Soheim acknowledges that “no en todas estas comedias aparecen nobles malos, sino que en algunas sale el bueno para desempeñar la necesaria función correctora

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³⁴ “The visits of a young, handsome and discrete Marquis to a young lady, a daughter of an unfortunate wine vendor whose house is covered with misery; what effect do you think they might have had in those who find out about them? And these speculations, do you suppose there will be few of them? Well, no, my daughter: I bet that your name has been the first object of conversation in a thousand places . . . “ (594-607).

³⁵ “Men partake in many of these extravagances” (1057-9).
para la sociedad” (249). However, in *El vinatero*, Angelita and Tio Juan exercise the primary corrective force in the play as they urge the Marquis to behave virtuously and fulfill his promise. They make these pleas as members of the working class, but they are unable to see any resolution until their noble identity is revealed, suggesting that no matter what their dialogue may say about the meaning of true goodness, the belief that virtue is an exclusive right of the nobility continues to hold sway.

The push for the active participation of the nobility as a corrective force in society reflects a key motive in the criticism of not only sentimental comedies but many works, including Cadalso’s *Cartas Marruecas* and *Eruditos a la violeta*, Meléndez Valdés’s “El filósofo en el campo” (Ibrahim Soheim 149) and the previously mentioned *Teatro crítico universal* by Feijóo. Ibrahim Soheim states that the attacks leveled at the nobility do not question the right of the aristocracy to hold a privileged position in society but rather its negative behavior. Critics maintained that the nobility were obligated to use their status to collaborate in Spain’s progress. However, these same writers observe that instead of carrying out their role as educators and guides in society, the majority of the aristocracy chose leisure instead. In addition to their failure to take up a corrective role in society, many “cometían auténticos abusos y excesos con las clases inferiores para saciar sus deseos y satisfacer sus diversiones” (Ibrahim Soheim 149), as illustrated by the Marquis’ unwise visits to Angelita and Nicasio’s scheme to win Angelita for himself.

The stark contrasts between evil nobility and virtuous workers highlight both the vices of the aristocracy and the utilitarian part that they should play in Spain. Juan and Angelita as corrective forces present several problems, however, precisely because of their hybrid

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36 “committed genuine abuses and excesses with the lower classes in order to satiate their desires and satisfy their whims” (Ibrahim Soheim 149).
identity as workers and nobility. As members of the working class, they fail to convince other characters that true virtue is based on goodness, because they fail to convince the Marquis that Angelita is good enough for him. Once their noble identity is revealed, it becomes doubtful that they will continue to practice a trade, which had been one of the primary hallmarks of their virtue in the first place.

A. Tío Juan’s Duel as a Wine Vendor

*El vinatero de Madrid* stages Tío Juan’s duel with the Marquis in front of the audience at the end of the first act, and this scene serves multiple dramatic purposes. In addition to spotlighting the gravity of Juan and Angelita’s honor conflict and displaying Juan’s virtuous behavior in defending his family and treating the Marquis with an even hand, it offers a visual and temporal sign of Juan’s hidden nobility, a quality to which the play alludes from its opening scene. This secret adds to the play’s suspense and points to the resolution which will allow the Marquis and Angelita to marry, and yet undermines any statement about Juan’s virtue as a member of the working class.

Though Juan has attempted to persuade the young man by appealing to a sense of virtue in completing his promise, these efforts fail before the danger the Marquis sees in disobeying his uncles. Therefore, according to Tío Juan, no other recourse remains but to use ritual combat to repair the injury inflicted on his honor. The language of dueling describes the results of the rumors about Angelita in terms of “injuria” (“injury”) and “agravio” (“insult”), underscoring the vulnerable situation in which she has been placed because of the malevolent intentions of both Nicasio and the Marquis’ uncles.

Nicasio’s scheming indirectly points to an excess of time. The only activity which occupies his time in the play is his plot to seduce Angelita. This young nobleman
has found the time to disclose information about the promissory marriage note to the
Marquis’ uncles and sister, Jacinta (1067-89, 1102-5), accompany the Marquis in his
visits to Angelita (176), attempt to dissuade the Marquis from keeping his promise (1155-
70), slander Angelita’s character by spreading rumors about her (1104-5), and try to woo
the young woman and turn her against the Marquis(21 and following in Act II). Nicasio
is a manipulative, disloyal friend who expends his energy and time for selfish purposes:
to obtain Angelita for himself at any cost to his friend or the young lady herself.

One of Nicasio’s primary methods is to appeal to societal prejudices against
trades and the nobility’s fears of losing honor through association with the working class.
To achieve this end Nicasio twists dueling language. As he attempts to manipulate his
friend into rejecting the wine vendor’s daughter, Nicasio states:

   Y bien, Marqués, ¿qué tenemos?
   ¿Cómo se ha salido de esa
   batalla amorosa? Está
   Angelita satisfecha
   de que era un gran disparate
   pensar fuera esposa vuestra? (1130-5)\textsuperscript{37}

Nicasio inverts the term “satisfecha” as he makes an insincere inquiry into the Marquis’
efforts to free himself of his vow to Angelita, anticipating that in her vulnerable state of
“dissatisfaction” with the Marquis the young woman will succumb to his seduction. This
false friend is the author of Angelita’s disgrace, and once the Marquis expresses remorse
for the pain that he has caused for the wine vendor, Nicasio continues to manipulate

\textsuperscript{37} “And, so, Marquis, what do we have? How has this amorous intrigue turned out? Is Angelita satisfied
that it was complete foolishness to think that she should be your wife?” (1130-5).
dueling language in order to convince the nobleman of the dangers of marrying below his social status. In this Act I warning to the Marquis Nacasio intertwines terms such as “afrenta” (“offense”) and “injuriar” (“insult”) with other expressions invoking familial shame and fear of social death:

¿Y será razón por eso
afrenta vuestra grandeza,
injuriar a vuestros tíos,
y exponeros a una fiera
indignación? ¡Infeliz
de vos, si acaso tuviera
tan gran locura!
Vuestra gloriosa ascendencia
quedaría sepultada
en el horror, la bajeza,
y la ignominia: vos, lleno
de aflicciones y
vergüenza,
y esa mujer castigada
con rigor. Vuestra prudencia
deseche tan vil amor,
pues os sonroja y afrenta. (1155-1170)38

38 “And for that reason will it be right to offend your nobility, insult your uncles, and expose yourself to ferocious outrage? How unfortunate for you, if you were to behave with such unbelievable madness! Your glorious ancestry would be buried in horror, baseness, and disgrace: you, full of afflictions and shame, and
As he invokes fears about the Marquis’ familial reputation, Nicasio destroys Angelita’s familial honor in order to achieve his personal desires.

While Tío Juan, as a wine vendor, appears to invoke the honor code to protect his daughter and find a method to repair the family’s damaged reputation, Nicasio uses dueling terms for more malevolent ends. While relaying to the Marquis’ sister Jacinta the details about her brother’s dilemma, Nicasio reveals in an aside that he is the one who informed his friend’s uncles about the promise to marry the wine vendor’s daughter and that he added “defects that are not found in Angelita” (1104-5). Don Justo, a judge who oversees Tío Juan’s case against the Marquis, is later revealed to be the wine vendor’s long lost son and is charged with executing his father over his past duel. He questions Nicasio’s integrity in Act II when this false friend attempts to persuade Justo to decide against Angelita and her father in their case against the Marquis. Nicasio actively slanders Angelita after stating that “Don Justo, . . . no está bien impuesto / en quién es esa mujer . . .” (628-30). Specifically, Nicasio shares the following falsehoods with the judge:

Aunque en su aspecto
parece que la virtud
brilla, de ella está muy lejos.
No ha sido solo el Marqués
quien mereció su cortejo:

that woman punished severely. Your prudence must reject such vile love, for it shames and affronts you” (1155-70).

39 “defects that are not found in Angelita” (1104-5).
40 “Don Justo, . . . is not well informed about who that woman is” (628-30).
 Otros también le alcanzaron
apenas lo pretendieron;
y yo pudiera decir
que fui también uno de ellos. (632-40)\textsuperscript{41}

This quote offers some of the specific fictitious character flaws to which Nicasio had
previously alluded when he had informed the audience about his false rumors about
Angelita. Such charges would destroy a woman’s honor because they attack her sexual
purity. Interestingly enough, the verb “brilla” once again connects virtue with light,
implicitly invoking Juan’s Act I observation that noblemen without virtuous acts were
like a “sol eclipsado” (“eclipsed sun”) that “pierde su lucimiento” (“loses its luster")
(659-6). However, in attempting to tarnish Angelita’s brilliant reputation, Nicasio reveals
his own lack of integrity, for which he is promptly censured by Justo:

¿Un hombre, que representa
en su exterior bien dispuesto,
ser Caballero, y Christiano,
con modo tan desatento,
injusto, bárbaro, infama
y destroza tan sangriento,
el honor de una mujer,
sea la que fuere? Yo pienso,
que el que así procede, ni es

\textsuperscript{41}“Although her face appears to glow with virtue, she is far from it. The Marquis has not been the only one
who enjoyed her favors: Others who hardly tried to woo her also succeeded; and I could say that I too was
one of them” (632-40).
Justo condemns Nicasio for his destructive slander of Angelita’s honor, and the use of the verb “infama” (“vilifies”) and the term “sangriento” (“bloody”) both connected with dueling and the defense of honor, portray Nicasio as the opposite of Juan, who defends his daughter with a challenge. Nicasio is the perpetrator, and Justo’s additional condemnation affirms this contrast:

Vuestra temeraria audacia,

y falta de miramiento

al próximo, y a mí, y a Dios,

digno os hacen de un severo

castigo: de él os libráis

por ahora; pero si llego

a justificar que es falso,

(que desde luego lo creo)

lo que habéis dicho, seréis

de malvados escarmiento. (651-60)

Justo accuses Nicasio of lying as well as a lack of concern for other people and divine justice. He vows that if it is proved that Nicasio’s harmful words are untrue, he will be made a lesson for other “malvados” (“wicked men”). Nicasio’s punishment would teach

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42 “A man who represents himself in an appearance laid out so clearly, as a Gentleman, and Christian, yet in such a thoughtless, unjust, and barbaric fashion vilifies and rips to bloody shreds, a woman’s honor, regardless of who she might be? I believe that anyone who behaves in that way, is neither a Christian, nor a Gentleman” (641-50).

43 “Your reckless audacity and lack of consideration for your fellow human, and me, and God, make you deserving of severe punishment: which you are escaping for now for now; but if I come to discover that what you have said is false, (which, of course I believe) you will be made into an example for other wicked men” (651-60).
the audience, which would surely have included members of the aristocracy, that his corrupt actions, especially against the defenseless, are unacceptable.

The slanderous remarks are not reserved for Angelita alone. In Act II, as he attempts to manipulate the young woman into accepting him as a suitor, Nicasio denigrates his friend, charging that the Marquis “procede / faltando a lo caballero, / y a lo cristiano” (55-6). According to Nicasio, the Marquis’ intentions for Angelita have always been false, and thus he has not behaved as a chivalrous suitor.

Nicasio’s use of dueling terms confirm for the audience that not only is he dishonest, but he is also a coward. In an attempt to present himself as a “noble” man in contrast with the deceptive, ungentlemanly Marquis, Nicasio informs Angelita that his friend’s alleged intentions against her angered him so much “que estuve casi resuelto / a que mi espada vengase / el honor que en ti respeto” (71-3). Nicasio’s reference to dueling unmask him, however, in its lack of resolution, for he states that he “casi” (“almost”) defended Angelita with the sword, and his use of the preterit tense (“estuve resuelto”) also implies that his urge to physically intercede for her was a one-time phenomenon.

By Act II, Nicasio’s cowardice has already been confirmed, because when Nicasio hears the Marquis’ desire to punish the traitor “con las sangrientas / iras de mi brazo . . . porque / la retrató de manera / el infame” (1186-91) toward the end of the first act, he reveals his fear in an aside to the audience: “De escucharle solo tiembla / todo

44 “behaves contrary to what is chivalrous, and Christian” (55-6).

45 “I almost resolved to turn to my sword to avenge your honor, which I respect” (71-3).

46 “with the bloody wrath of my arm . . . because this dreadful person portrayed her in this way” (1186-91).
mi cuerpo” (1195-6). Not only is Nicasio a threat to Angelita and her family, he is a coward. His response to the Marquis’ generalized dueling challenge as well as his manipulations of the language of the honor code confirm the faults in his character.

Tío Juan’s virtue stands in starkest contrast to the unfaithful, scheming Nicasio. However, failures among the aristocracy are also attributed to other characters, such as the Marquis. The Marquis’ written note of promise to Angelita to marry her is punctuated with a piece of jewelry containing his family’s coat of arms as well as the presence of two witnesses, one of whom is also of noble blood. Valladares’ choice to present the text of the letter during Angelita’s tearful revelation to Tío Juan about her ruined reputation exposes as counterfeit the tendency to equate nobility with virtue:

Por este me obligo a casarme con Angelita Pérez, de estado doncella, hija del vinatero Juan Pérez; a la que he jurado por el Santo Nombre de Dios, cumplirla la palabra y mano que la he dado de ser su esposo, y una joya de oro, que lo acredita, en la que están las Armas, y Blasones de mi Casa. Siendo testigos de ello Don Nicasio de Bargas, mi amigo, y Don Sebastián del Río, mi Mayordomo. Y aquí de nuevo, en caso necesario, afirmo, y ratifico, con el mismo juramento esta promesa, la cual cumpliré sin litigio alguno; sin que por ningún caso haya sido este contrato con violencia, ni inducimento; pues le hago de mi libre, y espontánea voluntad. Y en prueba de ello, firmo este, con los testigos citados en Madrid a 28 de Julio de 1648. El Marqués del Prado. Don Nicasio de Bargas. Don Sebastián del Río. (between lines 558-9)

47 “Just listening to him makes my body tremble” (1195-6).

48 “With this letter I pledge to marry Angelita Pérez, a young maiden, daughter of the wine vendor Juan Pérez, to whom I have sworn by the holy name of God, to fulfill my promise to pledge my hand in
In contrast, despite the now desperate situation of his family, Tío Juan reasons that “En estos casos, importa / ser prudente, y no sangriento” (646-7). His calm reaction adds to the portrayal of this character as an honest man and distinguishes his actions from the Marquis’ failings and Nicasio’s dishonest and sinister deeds. It also sets the stage to view Juan’s later decision to challenge the Marquis to a duel as a necessary last resort rather than the result of inflamed passions. In fact, his initial appeal to the Marquis at the end of Act I is based on a sentimental call to honor a promise to an innocent girl:

¿Discurrís que será justo,
que la que es una doncella,
virtuosa, honrada, e inocente,
por las persecuciones vuestras,
por vuestra palabra, por
vuestras engaños, promesas,
y escrito, quede agraviada,
y sin ninguna defensa (1290-6)  

49 “In these cases, it is important / to be prudent, and not sanguinary” (646-7).

50 “Do you imagine that it could be just, for a young lady, who is virtuous, honorable and innocent, and defenseless, to be insulted by your deceptions, promises, by your spoken and written word, by your pursuit” (1290-6).
The use of “agraviada” (“insulted”) and “sin ninguna defensa” (“defenseless”) both portrays the danger that threatens Angelita if the Marquis does not honor his written word and exposes the Marquis as guilty of an offense against an innocent woman’s honor.

While the Marquis, Nicasio and Tío Juan are all members of the nobility the foolish, cowardly behavior of the Marquis and Nicasio’s malevolent scheming stand in stark contrast to the hard work of the industrious wine vendor. Tío Juan’s devotion to labor characterizes him from the beginning of the play, but his identity as a nobleman assumes greater dramatic importance as the plot unfolds, and his duel in Act I escalates this trend. Juan’s sword and his skilled swordplay point more to aristocracy than commerce. The scene description at the opening of the first act places a “vieja espada” (“old sword”) among the other objects which visually render Tío Juan as a working man:

Salón largo pobre: en el fondo habrá algunas sillas viejas, una mesa pequeña, y una arca inferior: sobre la mesa habrá una capa parda, y montera, y a un lado una espada vieja: en cada extremo del fondo habrá varios pellejos, unos vacíos, y otros que se suponen llenos de vino . . . , y un canastillo con ropa aplanchada: una cuerda cruzará el Teatro cerca del telón, y en ella se verá ropa blanca colgada para secarse . . . (n.p.)

While the majority of the objects, such as the clothing baskets and other laundry and ironing materials, and the tools of Juan’s wine trade, paint a scene of a working class family, the sword inserts a dissonant note in this background. It is more than a tool of weaponry. A “vieja espada” signals nobility on two fronts: 1. fencing is an activity of the

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51 “Long, humble salon: in the background there will be some old chairs, a small table, and an inferior chest: draped over the table is a brown cape, and cap, and to one side, an old sword: at each end of the background there will be various wineskins, some empty, and others that are supposed to be full of wine; . . . and a basket of ironed clothing: a rope crosses the theater near the curtain, with white clothes hung to dry on it . . . “(n.p.)
upper class, and 2. the use of the adjective “vieja” to describe the sword suggests that it is an heirloom belonging to an ancient family.

Juan addresses the sword again later in Act I as he rushes off to confront the Marquis. He declares that if the Marquis does not respond to appeals to keep his promise, “y si se obstina en lo injusto, / le haré conocer lo recto” (697-8). The use of the term “recto” carries a double meaning, since in addition to implying “upright” it is also a fencing term (Merelo 45). With this statement, Juan grabs his sword and addresses his weapon:

Ven conmigo, defensora
de mi honor. Ya hace algún tiempo
que no te uso; pero siempre
delante de mí te tengo
porque me acuerdes que soy,
por honrado, Vinatero.
Vamos a ver al Marqués;
y por Dios, que si le encuentro
reducido a deshonrarme,
me dejará satisfecho
su sangre. Sí, espada mía,
y ya noto, ya experimento,
que puesta en mi mano, animas

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52 “if he insists on continuing in his unfair ways, I will make him familiar with what it upright” (697-8).

53 According to José Merelo y Cadademunt’s *Manual de Esgrima* (1878), the term “recto” indicates the angle formed by the arm and weapon when held straight out from the body (45).
The proximity of Juan’s disclosure of his family’s noble status and his vow to make the Marquis “conocer lo recto” convert the duel into a sign of his aristocratic origins. Once they begin to fight, Juan confirms that his knowledge of dueling terms extends beyond the intellectual. Despite his old age, Juan easily disarms the younger Marquis, who, astonished, cries, “¡Ay, Dios! Perdí la espada” (1357-8). His surprised exclamation hints at incredulity, since the Marquis apparently cannot bring himself to admit that Juan, a wine vendor, actually deprived him of his weapon.

The actual duel does not conform to manual procedures, such as those outlined in Murciano’s *Prontuario del duelo*. Juan does not issue a written challenge nor does he wait to engage in combat. Furthermore, no witnesses or seconds participate.

Logistically, this may at least in part be attributable to the dramatic difficulties of staging duels according to the honor code’s regulations. A written challenge that set the duel for a later time and remote location would present temporal and locational complications for the stage. While Ibrahim Soheim observes that Valladares and his contemporaries in the Comella school eschewed the neo-classical teachings of Luzán, he does note that they

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54 “Come with me, defender of my honor. I have not used you for some time. But I always have you before me, so that you may remind me that I am a wine vendor because of my sense of honor. Let us go see the Marquis.; and as God as my witness, if I find that he is low enough to dishonor me, only spilling his blood will leave me satisfied. Yes, my sword, I now notice, I already feel it, that once in my hand, you animate me in my old age and discouragement; so with you and reason on my side, who will overcome me, supposing that you two will make each cut and scratch into a horror, and a disastrous end” (739-56).

55 “Dear God! I lost my sword!” (1357-8).
attempted to conform to the dramatic unities (78). The question of whether or not the
Marquis would have accepted the challenge is eliminated when Juan approaches him in
person and insists that they fight.

The behavior of Juan and Marquis during their rushed duel in Act I reinforces the
former’s identity as virtuous at the same time that it reveals that in spite of his failures,
the Marquis also has the potential to behave honorably. For example, in his initial
reaction to Juan’s dueling challenge, the Marquis refuses to participate, fearing that he
might take advantage of someone incapable of winning a swordfight: “¿Yo reñir con
usted? ¡Fuera / un grande triunfo vencer / a un anciano ya hecho tierra!” (1339-41).56
While the Marquis’ statement does reveal a lack of respect, his insistence that “Yo no
debo reñir con / quien igual mío no sea” (346-7),57 and when Juan persists in his
challenge, his decision to use his sword “Por la defensa . . . no más” (1352-3)58 confirm
that that the Marquis possesses good qualities. His failure to marry Angelita stems from
weakness before the pressure of his uncles and society rather than an intentional
deception. His behavior during the duel with Juan confirms the virtuous aspect of his
character.

When Juan successfully disarms the Marquis, his refusal to kill the young man
reiterates the noble, or virtuous aspect of his character. Again, his sword is a marker of
familial and personal nobility:

Y pudiera

56 “I should duel with you? What a grand triumph it would be to defeat an old man already turning to dust!”
(1339-41).

57 “I should not duel against someone who is not my equal” (346-7).

58 “For defense . . . nothing else” (1352-3).
Juan’s speech invokes the term “nobleza” (“nobility”) to refer to a person’s moral character as he declares that the one who knows how to wield the sword should also be worthy of carrying it. His words rupture the association commonly made between noble blood and moral worth at the same time that they call for members of the aristocracy to live honorably.

B. Revelation of Tío Juan’s Past Duel as Nobleman

When the Marquis explains the reasons that he cannot fulfill the written promise he made to marry Angelita, he cites the difference in their statuses as the fundamental problem and insists than an unequal union between them would be devastating:

Dices bien: pero Angelita,
fuera es que tu entendimiento
reflexione quien soy yo,
y quien eres. Yo procedo
de ilustres heroes. Tu padre
es un pobre vinatero,

59 “And I could finish you, but I want you to see that I behave with nobility, and see that the one who knows how to use it [the sword] is very worth of possessing it. Raise your sword, and resume fighting” (1359-65).
constituido por su cuna
y oficio, en abatimiento.

Supongo, que me casase
contigo, como confieso
lo juré solemnemente.

¡Qué oprobios, qué sentimientos
tan crueles no afligirían
nuestros corazones! Luego,
que mis tíos advirtiesen,
que con tan vil casamiento
había manchado todos
los timbres que me adquirieron
mis gloriosos ascendientes,
¡qué castigo tan tremendo
su rectitud no impondría
a los dos! Siempre cubiertos
nos veríamos de horror,
de amargura, y de desprecio. (298-321)\(^{60}\)

In a plea to Angelita, the Marquis invokes fear of the consequences that an unequal
marriage would create for his family line. The strong language, such as the term

\(^{60}\) “Well said. But, Angelita, your understanding must reflect who I am and who you are. I come from illustrious heroes. Your father is a poor wine vendor, relegated to despondency by his birth and trade. I suppose that if I married you, as I confess I solemnly swore that we would, what disgrace, what cruel feelings would not torment our hearts! Then, as my uncles warned, how such a vile marriage would stain the noble feats attained for me by my glorious ancestors, what a tremendous punishment their harsh justice would impose on the two of us! We would see ourselves always covered in horror, bitterness and disdain” (298-321).
“manchado”, points to a contamination of the Marquis’ family’s blood line, which includes “ilustres héroes” (“illustrious heroes”) and “gloriosos ascendientes” (“glorious ancestors”). According to the Marquis, their union would devastate his family and result in social death for the bride and groom, “Siempre cubiertos . . . de horror, / de amargura, y de desprecio” (“always covered in horror, / bitterness, and disdain”). This statement reiterates the gravity that the theme of unequal marriage held for Spaniards during the eighteenth century. The danger of “contamination” motivates the uncles’ threats against the couple and precipitates the Marquis’ initial decision to break his vow.

When Nicasio informs Jacinta, the Marquis’ sister, about her brother’s promise to marry Angelita, she instantly blames the latter and condemns the prospect of their marriage as an insult to her family’s honor:

Pues ved, que de vos confío
Mujer infame, tu afrenta
verás resulta de donde
pensaste hallar tu opulencia. (1114-17) 

To Jacinta, Angelita’s claim to the Marquis’ hand is an affront to her family, a desire that makes her a “mujer infame” (“vile woman”).

Dramatic conflicts over marital unions between lovers of unequal economic means abound in eighteenth-century theatrical works, and this theme will be considered more in depth in chapter five. However, for the purposes of discussing the issue of corrupt nobility and the preoccupation with aristocratic blood, it is appropriate to discuss Valladares’ treatment of unequal marriage conflicts both in El vinatero de Madrid and

61 “Well, look, I assure you, vile woman, after your affront you will see the consequences of trying to find your riches here” (1114-17).
several other sentimental comedies. In his analysis of Valladares, Ibrahim Soheim summarizes the two most prevalent resolutions for this theatrical dilemma: either the lovers persevere in forging an unequal marriage despite objections, or the playwright eliminates the conflict via social elevation. According to Ibrahim Soheim, Valladares alone produced at least ten sentimental comedies which represented unequal marriage conflicts. Five Valladares comedias—El trapero de Madrid (The Rag Man of Madrid) (1782), El vinatero de Madrid (The Wine Vendor of Madrid) (1784), Las vivanderas ilustres (The Illustrious Merchant Women) (1788), El preso por amor ó el real encuentro (Imprisoned for Love, or the Royal Encounter) (1796) and Rufino y Aniceta (Rufious and Aniceta) (1807) resolve the dilemma through a social status elevation (210). This elevation may simply be a revelation about a character’s noble identity, as in the case of Juan in El vinatero de Madrid, Agustín in El trapero de Madrid, Jacinto in Las vivanderas ilustres (Ibrahim Soheim 218) and Rufino in Rufino y Aniceta (Ibrahim Soheim 224). The resolution for El preso por amor ó el real encuentro bears some resemblance to Early Modern comedias, because the social elevation is orchestrated by the king, who elevates Faustina to the status of Countess (30).62 The other five Valladares comedias considered by Ibrahim Soheim—A suegro irritado, nuero prudente (To an Irritated Father-in-Law, Prudent Daughter-in-Law) (1775), El usurero celoso y la

62 This resolution by the king may appear to contradict the premise of chapter one, which asserts that by the eighteenth century the monarchy has lost much of its authority over honor conflicts. However, Valladares’ royal solution bears more of a resemblance to his other recognition denouements, which exalt virtue but not at the risk of offending the nobility. As is the case in El delincuente honrado, when the king steps in, the emphasis is more on the sentimentality surrounding the couple than on royal authority, as this quote from the Count del Cerro, charged with carrying out the king’s orders for Faustina, states: “Qué extremo de amor tan noble / por lo amado! Si pudiera . . . / Por este joven se debe / hacer cuanto se pueda: / Nuestros Reyes son benignos: / y es tan grande la clemencia / del Ministro . . . / En fin, veremos” (“What a case of such noble love shown by the lover! If I could only . . . For this young man everything that is possible should be done: Our kings are benevolent: And our Minister shows such great clemency . . . So, we shall see”) (19). Because of their virtue, this couple deserves to be allowed to marry, but Faustina’s elevation to noble status allows for virtue to be rewarded without upsetting the social order.
prudente mujer (The Jealous Usurer and the Prudent Woman) (1777), La hija fingida (The Pretend Daughter) (1780), El culpado sin delito (The Accused Without a Crime) (1782) and El dichoso por la suerte y también por la elección (The Man Who is Fortunate by Luck and Also by Choice) (1782)—do use social elevation to resolve their unequal marriage conflicts, and I assert that this may in part be attributed to the fact that their conflicts do not center around issues of nobility. Two of the conflicts—in A suegro irritado, nuera prudente and El dichoso por la suerte y también por la elección—arise due to an economic disparity (Ibrahim Soheim 224, 234), and two more—El usurero celoso y la prudente mujer and La hija fingida—involve a considerable age difference (Ibrahim Soheim 228-9, 230). El culpado sin delito’s primary marriage conflict centers around a lawsuit between the immediate families of the two lovers, who are also distantly related (Ibrahim Soheim 230); thus nobility is also not an issue.

Ibrahim Soheim observes that Valladares achieves resolutions with conservative denouements that do not offend members of the nobility and affirm the current social order (234). In Ibrahim Soheim’s study none of Valladares’ sentimental comedies conclude with aristocratic characters marrying someone from the lower classes. In El trapero de Madrid, Agustín’s financial intervention on behalf of Rita’s father, Don Basilio, does not constitute a sufficient justification for a marriage between his son Bernardo, and Rita. Don Basilio has attempted to unite his daughter with Don Anselmo, an older nobleman, in order to elevate his social status (n.p. Act I, lines 588-92).

Although Don Anselmo has deserted Rita in the wake of her father’s financial ruin (n.p. lines 745-50) and Agustín, the rag merchant, saves the family from poverty (n.p. lines 878-84), an additional resolution—a revelation late in Act II that Agustín, and thus his
son, Bernardo, are also members of the nobility—is added to this comedia’s conclusion (n.p. lines 863-5).

In El vinatero, Juan attempts four distinct methods to resolve his family’s honor conflict and achieve a marital union between Angelita and the Marquis: In Act I he appeals to the Marquis’ sensibility, tearfully imploring the younger man to keep his word to Angelita. As he summarizes for his daughter in Act II, when his appeal to the Marquis’ virtue through sentiment does not work, he challenges the latter to a duel: “con mis lágrimas rogué / sus pies; y en fin con mi acero / le acordé su obligación; / pero todo sin efecto” (161-4). 63 Juan’s next attempt in Act II leads him to appeal to the law when he visits Don Justo de Lara, Alcalde de Casa y Corte to present their case. However, before he ever meets Justo, Juan anticipates that the law cannot compel the Marquis to marry Angelita:

   Este buen Señor, me oirá:

   justificará el exceso

   del Marqués, y la justicia

   que me asiste; y si en efecto,

   hallo que nada produce

   el fin que tanto deseo,

   entonces será preciso

   usar del postrer remedio;

   aunque me exponga a morir,

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63 “With my tears I begged at his feet; and in the end with my sword I reminded him of his obligations; but all to no avail” (161-4).
Juan’s words anticipate the inevitability of failure: “si . . . / hallo que nada produce / el fin que tanto deseo, / . . . será preciso / usar del postrer remedio” (“if . . . / I find that nothing produces / the result that I desire so much, / . . . it will be necessary / to use the last resort”). He does not word this scenario with hypothetical language, such as “si . . . / hallara” (“if . . . / I were to find”) and “fuera preciso / usar” (“it would be necessary / to use”). Instead, the wine vendor foreshadows the revelation of his past duel and secret noble blood, classified as the “postrer remedio” (“last resort”) in this quote, but a measure which proves to be the only recourse to restore Angelita’s ruined reputation.

Why do the other attempts fail? Despite his impassioned pleas with the Marquis in Act I, sentimental appeals to virtue and the fulfillment of promises do not nullify the divide between their social statuses. Juan’s reasoning does not change the Marquis’ desire to marry Angelita, because the young man has professed his love for her throughout the play. Before entering the young woman’s house to break their engagement in Act I, the Marquis exalts Angelita’s virtue, innocence and beauty and bemoans that he cannot keep his vows to her (189-92). As Juan begs him to marry Angelita, the Marquis declares, “Quiero a vuestra hija / como a mí mismo.  Me llena / su nombre de gozo” (1318-20). When Juan attempts to reason with the Marquis, his efforts are unable to achieve a change of heart because the Marquis is already inclined toward Angelita and desires to honor his word. As the Marquis later informs Justo in Act II, he adores Angelita and wrote his promise to marry her with every intention of keeping

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64 “This good gentleman will hear me: he will justify the Marquis’ excess, and the justice of my case; and if, in effect, I find that nothing produces the result that I desire so much, then it will be necessary to use the last resort; even though it may lead to my death, I will know how to reveal a secret” (187-96).

65 “I love your daughter as much as I love myself. Her name fills me with joy” (1318-20).
his word (488-93). What Juan’s impassioned reasoning cannot change—societal perceptions about unequal marriages between nobility and non-nobility—is actually the primary impediment to this marriage.

Juan’s initial duel with the Marquis also does not resolve his honor conflict, because despite his superior fencing skills, he cannot kill the young man, or else Angelita will have no one to marry. After disarming the Marquis, Juan declares that he will let him live in order to show him how one should proceed with nobility, but the duel is soon suspended when a noise is heard outside the room. The duel has served its dramatic function, awakening the audience to the inconsistency between the wine vendor’s identity as a man of trade and a skilled swordsman and the gravity of Angelita’s honor situation. However, because Juan’s noble identity has not yet been confirmed, the duel also does not achieve a resolution at the end of Act I.

Despite Justo’s inclination to help Angelita and Juan, as expressed by his tears upon learning of their plight at the beginning of Act II (394-5), his power to arrange a marriage between the Marquis and the wine vendor’s daughter are impeded on two fronts: 1. This unequal marriage would take place to the detriment of Justo’s own social status, and 2. Other laws exist which impede unequal marriages and supersede Justo’s authority.

Justo will soon marry Jacinta, the Marquis’ sister, and because he will be part of the same family, he notes with regret that if he compels the Marquis to marry Angelita, “su sangre / y la mía las veremos / manchadas con esta unión” (429-31). The danger to Justo’s own reputation, as well as the societal and dramatic importance of these marital unions is reiterated in this same scene when the Marquis, upon entering Justo’s home,

66 “his blood and mine will be found to be stained with this union” (429-31).
presents the Magistrate with the official papers which will facilitate his own marriage to Jacinta (459-60). These documents are a physical reminder of Justo’s dilemma, where his sentiment urges him to take Angelita’s side, but potentially to the detriment of his own reputation.

This conflict of interest, however, is ultimately overruled by the law. The Marquis references these laws when he informs Justo that “La notable diferencia / del suyo y mi nacimiento, / no me obliga por las Leyes / a casarme” (501-4).67 The laws, he states, will not compel him to keep his promise of marriage to someone from a lower class. Ibrahim Soheim describes a 1776 decree which “Con el fin de evitar matrimonios deshonrosos para las clases privilegiadas y favorecer las aspiraciones de la burguesía a elevarse socialmente”,68 prohibited people younger than twenty-five from marrying without their parents’ or guardians’ permission, and while parents and relatives should not abuse their authority and should allow their children some room to select their own spouse, the law only emphasized that parents give their permission for equal marriages (235). The Marquis’ uncles clearly express their intentions to deny their nephew permission to marry Angelita, and, as he informs her in Act I, they finalize this decision by forcing him to sign a contract to marry a woman of equal social status (261-3).

After the Marquis states that the laws do not obligate him to fulfill a written contract of marriage to Angelita, Justo attempts to persuade him otherwise, but he does so “solo como medianero” (506).69 Although he has recently vowed to Juan and Angelita

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67 “The notable difference between her birth and mine, means I am not obligated by the Laws to marry her” (501-4).

68 “With the goal of avoiding dishonorable marriages for the privileged classes and favoring the middle class’s aspirations to be socially elevated” (235).

69 “only as a mediator” (506).
that justice will restore their honor (409-10), Justo does not engage the Marquis in an authoritative capacity. He also attempts to reason with the young man, reminding him of Angelita’s beauty, kindness and virtue (518-25), but this logic does not undo the fundamental problem, reiterated by the Marquis’ answer to Justo’s inquiry: “Pues a una joven preciosa, / amable, honesta, y que es centro / de la virtud, ¿qué la falta / para poder mereceros?” (526-9). The Marquis replies: “Ser noble” (530). Justo’s hands are tied, and the law does not advance any further in resolving this stalemate. In the next instant Juan informs Justo about his noble status and leaves the scene to search for proof that will confirm his family’s aristocratic identity and initiate additional dramatic conflict (550-55).

The dialogue heightens the sense of anticipation: Justo begs Juan to reveal his secret, because he has awaited the older man “con mucha impaciencia” (779) and desiring to know. Juan responds: “¿Si soy Hidalgo? / ¿Si soy Noble? Pues, Señor, creed, que esto ha sido un engaño, / . . . Porque soy Ilustre (783-5, 786). The three references to social class—“Hidalgo” (“gentleman”), “Noble” (“noble”) and “Ilustre” (“from distinguished blood”)—immediately foreshadow the magnitude of Juan’s background. When he reveals the secret behind his past, Juan informs Justo that he not only belongs to a noble family but is a member of the illustrious Order of Santiago (799-802). The inclusion of physical artifacts, specifically an “Ejecutoria”, a legal document attesting to

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70 “Well, what can a precious young lady, kind, honest, and who is the epitome of virtue be lacking in order to deserve you?” (526-9).

71 “Be noble” (530).

72 “with great impatience” (779).

73 “If I am a gentleman? If I am noble? Well, Sir, believe me, this has been a deception, . . . Because I am from distinguished blood” (783-5, 786).
his noble status and the emblem of the Cross of Santiago on his chest, punctuate Juan’s confession that he is “ilustre” (787), or, a distinguished gentleman. While Juan has previously extolled the virtues of hard work, in this particular moment midway through Act II, he unabashedly displays every aspect of his privileged background. In addition to revealing the legal documentation and the Cross of Santiago, Juan declares that “la sangre que por mis venas / circula” (“the blood that circulates through my veins”) is noble (796-7), and he has been a gentleman from the Order of Santiago74 since the age of six (801-2). These statements emphasize that Juan did not merely purchase or receive a title but is actually an “hidalgo de sangre” or a nobleman by blood. Carlos Ruiz Souza notes: “ser miembro de la Orden de Santiago formaba parte de las aspiraciones más codiciadas por los hombres del siglo XVII”75 because it had become membership had become a symbol of elite social status (n.p.).

Juan’s association with such a prestigious group, physically represented with the Cross of Santiago on his chest, stands in sharp contrast to the previous images of Juan the wine vendor, living in modest housing surrounded by the tools of his trade. With this revelation, Juan transforms into an idealized member of the aristocracy. Since Act I he has proclaimed the benefits and necessity of hard work. For example, before leaving his house after the first act opens, he reminds his daughter: “Mira, cuando cuesta el pan / más

74 The Order of Santiago was a military and religious order founded during the twelfth century. Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza states that in 1170, after Fernando II of León had conquered the city of Cáceres, a group of knights led by Pedro Fernández and supported by both the monarch and the archbishop of Salamanca, Pedro Suárez de Deza, established the Order as part of a strategy to sustain their conquest. Though the order was founded under the name of Saint James the Apostle (“Santiago”), over time it was completely secularized and came under the crown’s authority (n.p.).

75 “to be a member of the Order of Santiago formed part of the most coveted aspirations of men during the seventeenth century” (n.p.).
Juan has demonstrated virtuous behavior, converting into a model of an honest citizen.

Angelita praises her father in Act I:

¡Qué buen padre mío! En él existen con todo imperio la probidad, el honor, y la virtud. Yo no veo cosa en su merced, que no sea admirable. ¡Qué genio tiene tan dulce, y amable! ¡Con qué nobles sentimientos me ha criado enmedio de la miseria en que nos vemos! Su corazón generoso era digno de otro empleo, de otro ejercicio, que fuera mejor que el de Vinatero. (87-100)77

Angelita emphasizes the noble sentiments with which her generous, good father has raised her, and she declares that he is a paragon of virtue and honor who deserves a more

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76 “Look, when the bread is won / with more sweat, then eating it is more delicious, / sweeter and more enjoyable” (59-62).

77 “What a good father I have! In him are found all manner of integrity, honor, and virtue. I do not see anything in him, that is not admirable. He has such a sweet and pleasant temper! How noble are the sentiments with which he as raised me in the midst of the misery in which we see ourselves! His generous heart was worthy of another station, a different trade, something better than the state of a wine vendor” (87-100).
dignified station in life. When his actual social status is unveiled before the other characters, suddenly the audience sees a nobleman whose qualities stand in stark contrast to the misbehavior of the other upper class characters, such as Nicasio, the Marquis’ uncles and the Marquis himself. The nobility should behave as Juan the nobleman rather than commit abuses against people like Juan the wine vendor.

With this resolution to Angelita and the Marquis’ crisis, the play could have concluded. However, Juan’s revelation instigates an additional dramatic conflict when Justo discloses that he is the wine vendor’s long lost son who had abandoned his father in an act of rebellion. Juan mentions to Angelita in Act I that his son: “a los doce años / abandonó el patrio suelo: / y ya han hecho veinte y dos, / que ignoro si es vivo, o muerto” (Act I, 669-72). Upon learning that Juan is a nobleman from Medina del Campo, Justo informs him: ¡Allí nací, allí fui ingrato / a mis Padres!” (Act II, 818-19), and then the Magistrate confesses his full name: Don Justo de Lara y Silba (823), son of Don Juan de Lara (834). Such sentimental scenes of recognition between fathers and sons abound in sentimental comedies, and this particular scene spawns a conflict that closely resembles the plight of Torcuato and Justo in Jovellanos’ El delincuente honrado, except this time the delinquent is the father and the law official is the son. Now that Justo knows that Juan is his father, he must warn him:

Vuestro delito está vivo;

yo logré ver vuestros autos,

y piden perdáis la vida:

78 “at twelve he abandoned his ancestral home: and now for twenty-two years, I have not known if he is alive, or dead” (Act I, 669-72).

79 “I was born there, and there I was an ingrate to my parents!” (Act II, 818-19).
lo desean los contrarios:
la justicia solicita
ardientemente encontraros,
y la tenéis a la vista
en mí. ¡Pesar inhumano! (946-53) 

The sudden burden upon Justo presents him with a torturous decision:
si le descubro, os declaro,
y hallo en vos un delincuente:
si quien sois oculto, falto
a la justicia, a mi honor,
y el de mi hermana; con que hallo,
que os doy muerte, si os descubro,
y me deshonro si callo.

Con que, ¿qué haremos, señor,
en empeño tan amargo? (957-65)

Justo’s dilemma engenders a role reversal as it converts Juan into an authority figure.

Whereas previously Justo operated as a representative of the law, now he inquires of Juan as a son before his father. Juan’s answer reiterates their inherent goodness: “¿Y un hijo mío eso duda? / Sin honor la vida, ¿acaso / se puede vida llamar?” (966-68). This time,

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80 “Your crime is still outstanding; I was able to see the official orders about you, and they order you to pay with your life: your enemies desire it: justice ardently seeks to find you, and with my presence justice stands before you. What an inhumane burden!” (946-53)

81 “If I reveal your identity, I pronounce you guilty, and I reveal you to be a criminal: If I hide who you are, I fail justice, my honor and my sister’s honor; as soon as I find you, I cause your death, if I unveil your identity, and I dishonor myself if I remain silent. So then, what will we do, sir, in such a bitter dilemma?” (957-65).
Juan’s reference to “honor” represents honor-as-virtue rather than honor-as-reputation.

As Juan answers Justo’s question, he claims the younger man as his son, further implicating the magistrate’s reputation in the potential marriage between Angelita and the Marquis. Justo was initially involved as Jacinta’s fiancé, and had admitted that his own reputation, or, “sangre” would be tainted by the Marquis’ unequal marriage (429-31). His identification as Juan’s son now implicates him from Angelita’s side. If Juan had never offered proof of his noble bloodline, Justo would have found himself in a paradoxical situation, where his reputation would have suffered no matter the outcome. From Justo’s perspective, not to mention that of Angelita and the Marquis, Juan’s nobility is key in creating a viable resolution.

The conflict surrounding Juan’s past duel and its prospect of punishment comprises more of a secondary role in Act II. Rumors no longer jeopardize Angelita’s reputation, since her noble status will permit her to marry the Marquis and quell any scandals in the Court. The uncertainty surrounding Juan’s fate is short-lived, because a swift, albeit unconvincing solution arrives with the entrance of Juan’s brother, Pablo, late in Act II.

Interestingly, although El vinatero presents a royal decree to dramatize the legal procedures against Juan and communicate some of the details of his crime, a closer examination of the document and surrounding dialogue demonstrate that Álvaro, the deceased duelist’s brother, is using the law to settle a vendetta. When Álvaro appears before Justo, he declares that he intends to “vengarse de vuestro padre, / (si por mi fortuna le hallo) / pues fue quien le dio sangrienta / muerte a mi querido hermano (1014-

82 “And a son of mine doubts that? Without honor, can life really be called life?” (966-68).
His desire to avenge his brother’s death is not surprising, but the language of the governor’s decree place Juan directly into the hands of Álvaro rather than any legal officials: “Entregará este Reo inmediatamente a la Tropa que le presente el mismo Don Álvaro de Avendaño, hermano que fue del difunto Don Pedro, para que le conduzca de su cuenta y riesga a dicha Ciudad, y se ejecute, en la sentencia dada en el criminal proceso que se fulminó, etc” (between 1196 and 1197). According to this royal order, Juan should be handed over to his opponent’s brother, who will carry out the death sentence, converting the proceedings into another phase in the feud between two aristocratic families. The law’s involvement, other than lending a governor’s name to the order (1194-96), is minimal. Don Justo, under the royal decree’s, and thus Álvaro’s orders (1041-42), must hand over his father because the order “¡Es claro!” (“is clear”) (1040).

Like El delincuente honrado, scenes of pathos follow the declaration of Juan’s death sentence. Angelita bemoans her father’s fate: “¡Ah Padre mío! / Nadie habrá que estos brazos / me aparte, sin darme muerte” (1102-4). When she begs the Marquis to intercede for Juan, the young man offers everything in his possession, including his life, to save his father-in-law-to-be: “Déjele usted, Secretario. / Mi hacienda, toda mi sangre, / . . . / mi vida, si es necesario, / perderé por él” (1089-92).

83 “to take revenge against your father, (if by luck I find him) since it was he who killed my beloved brother in cold blood” (1014-17).
84 “Hand this criminal over immediately to the soldier that Don Álvaro de Avendaño, brother of the deceased Don Pedro, presents before you, so that he may take the criminal to said city in his charge at his own risk, and that he may be executed, according to the given sentence imposed upon him in the judicial process” (between 1196 and 1197).
85 “Ah, my father! No one can separate these arms from me without taking my life” (1102-4).
86 “Let him be, Secretary. For him I will lose my property, all my blood . . . my life, if it is necessary” (1089-92).
offer, which Justo promptly declares futile, because “no es posible remediarlo” (1100),
these expressions of sentiment primarily ring with resignation to Juan’s fate. No one
appeals to any royal authority figures to change the sentence. Juan himself is the only
one who asks Álvaro to consider changing his mind, when he begs: “Don Álvaro; y solo
aguardo / que procedáis como noble, / como piadoso, christiano” (1031-33), and his
request is ignored (1034). El vinatero’s use of sentiment in the moments following
Juan’s death sentence heighten the sympathy for this man who faces the consequences of
family vengeance despite the virtue he has shown in his years of exile as a wine vendor.
However, sentiment does not lead to a resolution for this conflict, but rather is a useless
feeling that does little to achieve a resolution.

Instead, Juan’s salvation arrives with his brother, Pablo, who has come to town to
bring Justo his inheritance (1238-54). Upon hearing about the royal order to arrest and
execute Juan, Pablo inquires about the date of the document (1225), and upon hearing the
date—1635—he states that the order is null and void (1226-30). Within the coffers
containing the family fortune, and thus Justo’s inheritance, Pablo happens to have in his
possession “un documento / tan útil, y necesario” (1258-9):

Real indulto de Don Juan de Lara, en la muerte que dio en la noche de día 20 de
Abril de 1632, a Don Pedro de Avendeño, en Medina del Campo, patria de los
dos: conseguido a instancia de Don Jacinto de Avendeño, hijo del difunto Don

87 “it is not possible to resolve it” (1100).
88 “Don Álvaro; and I only wait for you to proceed as a nobleman, a pious, Christian man” (1031-33).
89 “such a useless, and necessary document” (1258-9).
Pedro, y parte principal en esta causa; y de Don Pablo de Lara y Silva, hermano de Don Juan de Lara y Silva. (between lines 1267 and 1268) ⁹⁰

Because this document, from 1744, postdates Álvaro’s decree, Juan is now pardoned (1272-76), and Álvaro relents in his pursuit of vengeance: “y hago / hoy nueva amistad con todos, / siendo la señal mis brazos” (1306-7). ⁹¹

Ultimately, the two decrees point to a conflict between aristocratic families that was settled between members of the family. Juan’s salvation arrives not from the law, his hard work as a wine vendor or the sentimental testimonies of family and friends but rather from the treasure chests of his family’s fortune. Still, a virtuous member of the nobility—Pablo—pursued the pardon, guarded it and delivered the document. Furthermore, Don Pedro’s son granted the pardon. The actual resolution is not achieved solely through one character’s good behavior or money alone, but by elevating Angelita and Tío Juan’s social status.

*El vinatero* points to the need for nobility to cease with their excesses and occupy a helpful function in society. Juan never would have fought in his duel except for the slanderous comments of another rash nobleman who threatened his reputation. From a social standpoint, Juan’s duel with Don Pedro was necessary to preserve his place in society. Kiernan observes that dueling “preserved to the entire class . . . a certificate of legitimate descent from the nobility of the sword of feudal times” (53), strongly linking this ritual of private combat with the nobility’s cessation of intense military activity after

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⁹⁰ “Royal pardon for Don Juan de Lara, for causing the death of Don Pedro de Avendeño, on the night of April 20, 1632, in Medina del Campo, the homeland of both men: acquired at the request of Don Jacinto de Avendeño, son of the deceased Don Pedro, and principal plaintiff in this proceeding; and for Don Pablo de Lara y Silva, brother of Don Juan de Lara y Silva” (between lines 1267 and 1268)

⁹¹ “and today I form a new friendship with everyone, my outstretched arms serving as a sign” (1306-7).
the Middle Ages (52-3). Juan only refers to his duel as a crime a couple of times during the whole play, in Act II (991-2, 1166), and in Act I he states that “un caso de honor / produjo mi abatimiento” (681-2).92 The honor conflict arose because Don Pedro had insulted Juan in the presence of many witnesses, as Juan informs Justo in Act II:

cierto día temerario
me desmintió: allí se hallaban
otros muchos Ciudadanos,
que de Don Pedro el exceso,
y mi afrenta, presenciaron. (839-43)93

This duel, in which Juan participates in order to “mi injuria lavar / con sangre de mi Contrario” (846-7),94 displays the abuses of members of the nobility against their peers.

While Juan does not completely escape all consequences for his duel with Pedro, since he is forced to flee and change his identity, neither is he ever punished, a fact that points to the strength of the social pressures of the time. His decision to challenge the Marquis to a duel in the first act continues to affirm the persistence of social prejudices related to class. It is the gap between Angelita and the Marquis’ social statuses that impedes their union. For this duel, Juan now attempts to fight as a wine vendor rather than a nobleman, and as a result of his social status, the Marquis does not take his challenge seriously. The only moment when the Marquis shows any fear for his own safety is when Juan disarms him, using the training that he presumably had as a young

92 “a case of honor led to my lowly state” (681-2).

93 “One day he brashly called me a liar: several other townspeople were there who witnessed Don Pedro’s excess and my humiliation” (839-43).

94 “wash my injury with the blood of my adversary” (846-7).
member of the aristocracy. This moment in *El vinatero* exalts Juan’s nobility over his supposed identity as a virtuous, hardworking wine vendor.

III. Concluding Remarks

*El vinatero de Madrid*, as well as other works by Valladares, contrasts working-class protagonists with flawed or villainous members of the aristocracy in order to dramatize virtue as a quality that is not exclusive to the nobility. Juan’s interrupted duel with the Marquis at the end of Act I points to the precarious situation of the *vinatero’s* family as a result of the rumors and abuses of members of the upper class. It also foreshadows the revelation that this virtuous wine seller is not only a hardworking citizen but also a member of the aristocracy. Once his true identity is revealed, the audience discovers that Juan is actually an ideal nobleman: he exalts work and honesty and contributes to society through his speech and actions. Despite the detailed descriptions of middle class life, *El vinatero de Madrid* does not necessarily teach about social mobility as much as it uses commerce as a tool to attack the aristocracy. Juan’s social position is not elevated through the purchase of a title. He has been a nobleman since birth. The discovery of Juan’s real identity also provides the final resolution to his family’s honor conflict.

However, while *El vinatero de Madrid* effectively conveys the dangers posed by idle and corrupt nobility to member of the lower classes in its portrayal of the destructive powers of rumors and prejudices, its treatment of the nobility’s abuses among peers as shown through Juan’s previous duel contains inherent contradictions. While the other characters, including Álvaro, receive Juan’s pardon with alacrity, the fact that it was kept secret for so many years is curious. True, Juan’s brother was unaware of his location (1241-42), but Pablo also reveals that the man who gave permission for the pardon—Don
Jacinto de Avendaño, the deceased duelist’s son—requested that “lo callase / hasta que llegase el caso / de ser útil, pues temía / ser de las iras estrago, / si llegaba a descubrirse” (1288-92). Jacinto’s request points to the pardon’s inherently controversial nature. Although Don Pedro, whom Juan had killed, had threatened his reputation with rash comments, Don Jacinto has expressed anxiety about his family’s reaction to this pardon.

Álvaro concedes the “derecho que te ner / pueda en esta causa” (1306-7), but apparently part of his motivation lies in a desire to honor Don Jacinto, whom he reveals died the previous year (1303). After revealing that Don Jacinto has passed away, Álvaro declares his desire that “reine en esta casa / el júbilo” (1304-5). Perhaps Juan’s virtue and Pedro’s abuses alone do not suffice to release the former from punishment. While simply releasing Juan might have appeared to endorse dueling, Juan’s insistence that a loss of honor makes life inviable coupled with the tentative treatment of his pardon blur El vinatero’s stance on aristocratic abuses. Was Juan wrong to challenge Don Pedro? Does Pedro’s family have a right to demand that Juan pay with his own life? Juan is pardoned because Don Jacinto “fue / tan bueno” (1300-1) that he yielded to the “tiernos ruegos” (1282) of Don Pablo, but if the young man were still alive, would Don Álvaro persist in his demand for the death penalty?

The denouement of El vinatero also appears undecided in how to resolve the contradictions within Juan’s character. Now that his complete identity is revealed, can

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95 “he remain silent about it [the pardon] until it because useful, since he feared being ruined by [his family’s] wrath if it were discovered” (1288-92).

96 “rights that he could have in this cause” (1306-7).

97 “jubilation reign in this house” (1304-5).

98 “was so good” (1300-1).

99 “tender pleas” (1282).
Juan the nobleman from the Order of Santiago also operate as Juan the wine vendor? In failing to resolve this question, *El vinatero de Madrid* does not propose a convincing path for the nobility to exercise a useful function in society. The duel and other dramatic conventions—such as the theme of recognition—work within the societal prejudices to achieve a comfortable conclusion, but not necessarily a resolution. It appears that Juan must be converted into a member of the aristocracy in order to expose their abuses. He cannot censure the nobility from his position as a man of commerce. Once Juan has assumed the role of a member of the Order of Santiago, it seems unlikely that he will return to his post as a wine vendor, and the play makes almost no mention of that aspect of his identity until the end, when, as in many Golden Age comedias, all the characters recite a line that repeats the title: “Dad por premio al Vinatero / de Madrid, vuestros aplausos” (1393-4).\(^{100}\) Despite this exaltation, when *El vinatero* concludes, none of its characters belong to the working class, or to Madrid, for that matter.

The final moments of *El vinatero de Madrid* focus on punishing Nicasio’s betrayal of his friend and slander against Angelita with imprisonment (1356-9) and rewarding the virtuous characters, specifically Juan and his son and daughter. Their reward, however, is their inheritance. Pablo informs everyone: “Pues yo mando / que mi Angelita y mi Justo / hereden cuanto allí traigo” (1384-6).\(^{101}\) Presumably Juan’s children will use their inheritance to care for their father, but will they exercise a profession? Justo, as the magistrate, seems to be the only member of this aristocratic group who will work, most likely continuing in his post as magistrate. Valladares’ resolution, then, has removed the need for commerce, and while Juan, Angelita and now the Marquis are

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\(^{100}\) “Give your applause to the wine vendor of Madrid as a reward” (1393-3).

\(^{101}\) “So I order / that my Angelita and my Justo / inherit everything I am bringing here” (1384-6).
virtuous, are they useful? The revelation of Juan’s previous duel offers a resolution that originates from his family’s title and fortune and therefore eliminates the need for him to continue in his work.
Chapter Six: Competing Models of Masculinity in Gaspar Zavala y Zamora’s *El amante generoso* (1791)

Popular Spanish playwright Gaspar Zavala y Zamora’s 1791 sentimental comedy, *El amante generoso (The Generous Suitor)*, dramatizes the domestic conflict engendered by a father’s refusal to allow his daughter Christina to marry the suitor of her choice and his insistence that she wed another who will further the family’s socioeconomic status. The play presents a sharp contrast between these two suitors: Christina’s choice During, a rational, virtuous and sentimental man personified through his acts of generosity and shrewd behavior in the duel he engages in with Kerson, the man elected by Christina’s father Daerts. Kerson, in his frivolity and superficiality bears some resemblance to the figure of the *petimetre*, or “fop” that appears in numerous eighteenth-century Spanish texts.

Zavala y Zamora, who created pieces with wide public appeal and contributed more than a dozen sentimental comedies to Spanish theaters in the late eighteenth century (Palacios Fernández 175), represents the problem of arranged marriage in *El amante generoso*, and similar to *El sí de las niñas (An Innocent Girl’s Consent)*, the prospective bride, Christina, desires to marry another man instead of the groom her father has selected for her. Daerts, Christina’s father, has recently nullified her engagement to the enlightened, virtuous During and forbid them to see one another. This decision has arisen because of a lawsuit initiated by During’s father against Daerts, his first cousin, over the

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1 Frederick Martin states that the first known performance of *El amante generoso* occurred in 1794, with other performances taking place in 1797 and 1811 (264). The play, set in Edinburgh, Sweden, is divided into two acts and was composed in verse, using the *romance* form. The edition that I used for this study does not state its date of publication or the name of the publisher.

2 This title translation reflects Robert G. Trimble’s 2006 English translation of *El sí de las niñas*.
mayorazgo,\textsuperscript{3} or family lands, which Daerts has been occupying dishonestly. Daerts arranges a new engagement for Christina to the superficial, worldly Kerson, with the hope of maintaining the family’s upper-class standing and compelling the wealthy young man to pay the fines that Daerts anticipates will be levied on him by the lawsuit. Christina, however, vows that she will never wed Kerson and continues to permit During to visit her. Daerts threatens to kill Christina if she will not marry Kerson. During wins the lawsuit, but pledges to forgive Daerts’ debt, an offer which Daerts stubbornly refuses. After During insults Kerson, the latter visits During’s house to issue a dueling challenge. In order to expose Kerson as a coward, During has some pistols loaded with gunpowder and pressures Kerson into using pistols rather than swords. A humorous scene follows in which Kerson falls after the first shot, believing that he has been mortally wounded.

Daerts persists in his vows that Christina will not wed During, until Kerson informs him that he will neither pay the family’s debt nor marry Christina without a dowry. During steps in with another financial offer; he will finance Christina’s dowry if she desires to marry Kerson. This generous gesture and Christina’s profession that she does not wish to marry Kerson finally persuade Daerts to concede to the match between During and Christina.

In \textit{El amante generoso} reason and sensibility affirm Christina’s choice, because her beloved, During, is portrayed as an intelligent, virtuous man far superior to her superficial, cowardly fiancé, Kerson. Zavala y Zamora’s portrayal of dueling and honor ultimately frames the marriage conflict as a struggle over two competing models of masculinity. Daerts’s murderous threats to conserve his family honor by killing his daughter engender sympathy for Christina as a victim of a cruel system. A parallel scene

\textsuperscript{3} An explanation of \textit{mayorazgos} is provided on page 171 of chapter 5.
in which the father insists that Christina kill him continues to foster sympathy for Christina because of the turmoil it causes her, but it also ridicules Daerts’ previous threats to take her life. However, El amante generoso’s honor conflicts, which center around a lawsuit between During and Daerts and a duel between During and Kerson, are little removed from property skirmishes. During’s shrewd manipulation of the dueling ceremony with Kerson in the second act portrays a cunning side to this character who, according to Frederick Martin “shines with virtue into every part of the play” (277). While During ostensibly behaves with charity as the amante generoso, his behavior in the duel reveals a manipulative facet that may well extend into his acts of generosity. Daerts’ and During’s conflict over the family’s mayorazgo ultimately nullifies any sentimental commentary over Christina’s right to choose her own husband.

This chapter will first briefly summarize the articulation of the hombre de bien as a literary model for masculinity. Representations of love in novels and sentimental comedies exalted enlightened, virtuous male characters, thus generating models for appropriate femininity and masculinity. Next, Zavala y Zamora’s treatment of honor and marital themes will be considered before turning to the specific case of El amante generoso.

I. The hombre de bien as an Enlightened Model for Masculinity

Literary representations of love, influenced by a more optimistic view of individual emotions and inclinations, in turn generated enlightened models of femininity and masculinity. These newer readings of love emerged in texts that criticized parents’ unlimited authority in choosing mates for their children, the lack of freedom for young people to select their spouses and the ill-suited unions that resulted from arranged
marriages (Andioc 32). Novels and plays still tended to represent unions between men and women of similar circumstances, but they added the element of attraction based on virtue. What was considered attractive for men offered a model of masculinity based on self-control, the ability to express appropriate emotions and dedication as friends, citizens, fathers and husbands.

Mónica Bolufer Peruga, who has authored “Hombres de bien: Modelos de masculinidad y expectativas femeninas, Entre la ficción y la realidad” (“Enlightened Men: Models of Masculinity and Feminine Expectations: Fiction and Reality”), a compelling analysis of textual representations of love in eighteenth-century Spain and their influence on the notion of the hombre de bien, or enlightened man, notes that religious texts from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries cautioned against a passionate love that originated from animalistic, and therefore sinful desires (12). She states that during the eighteenth century, moral discourse on love gave way to a more optimistic view of romantic sentiment, so that people’s natural inclinations need not be at odds with their education. According to Bolufer Peruga:

La ficción, en particular la novela y los relatos sentimentales o el nuevo teatro (el drama burgués la comedia sentimental), pero también los textos pedagógicos e incluso políticos del siglo XVIII, realizan, con una insistencia y una intensidad nuevas, el elogio de ese amor que debe llevar a la unión conyugal: un afecto tranquilo y constante, más parecido a la amistad que a la pasión. (12)⁴

⁴ “Fiction, in particular the novel, sentimental tales or the new theater (middle-class drama, the sentimental comedy), but also pedagogical and even political texts from the eighteenth century, express, with a new insistence and intensity, praise of the love that should lead to a marital union: a peaceful and constant affection, more in keeping with friendship than passion” (12).
This model for love attempts to reconcile the natural inclinations of individuals with the enlightened ideal of social utility and peace. Literary representations of enlightened men and women depicted them as educated individuals whose natural inclinations led them to carry out their marital and civic responsibilities (Bolufer Peruga 12-13).

Because of textual ideals that sought verisimilitude and an intimate identification between the public and protagonists, women and men were supposed to take on, through a process similar to osmosis, the sentiments and virtues of literary characters. Novels such as Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1741) and *Clarissa, or the History of a Young Lady* (1748) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Julie, or the New Heloïse* (1761) provided highly idealized models in which individual happiness and family and social structures appeared to intermingle in a harmonious way that was devoid of tension (Bolufer Peruga 13). Bolufer Peruga observes that these new notions of familial relations and individual sentiment articulated a model for masculinity that required men to rein in their passionate desires and convert them into more refined sentiments, in order to fulfill their roles as responsible, enlightened citizens, friends, fathers and husbands. This model of masculinity was portrayed as the figure of the *hombre de bien*. This figure embodied all the moral and social virtues in accordance with someone, who, while not overtly at odds with religious texts, was not necessarily a devout Christian (15). Rebecca Haidt, in her foundational study on enlightened models of masculinity, argues that the roots of the *hombre de bien* are found in classical ethics, particularly Aristotelian Nicomachean Ethics. According to Haidt, “*Hombría de bien* [“enlightened manliness”] proposes the virtuous ability to control the body as crucial to a larger ethical scheme of masculine self-governance and, by extension, of reform of the nation’s (masculine) leaders” (12).
Sometimes the call for self-control was articulated through the negative portrayal of characters who did not practice restraint. G.J. Barker-Benfield states that sentimental literature’s orientation toward reform tended to address “the liberation of women from their internalized and brutally enforced limitations on one hand, and the reformation of men on the other” (225). Barker-Benfield’s description specifically addresses English novels, but several of these observations also hold true for Spanish literature of the eighteenth century. According to Barker-Benfield, sentimental fiction sought to reform certain aspects of “explicit hard masculinity” as defined by traits like “atheism, materialism, blasphemy, swearing, cruelty to servants, cruelty to animals, and dueling” and “most of all, . . . ‘the villainous aim of libertines’” (227).

Attacks against masculine misbehavior are carried out “By associating their targets quite frequently with the past—with the dueling warrior mentality of an earlier aristocracy . . . as well as with barbarism” (Barker-Benfield 248). The hombre de bien appears in stark contrast to other male archetypes who do not exercise self-control. Bolufer Peruga states that the hombre de bien offers a more middle-class ideal as opposed to an aristocratic model of masculinity, frequently portrayed in literary texts as idle, indifferent, immoral, and coldly calculating in domestic relationships. The desire to act with virtue and exercise a useful function in society conform to an enlightened ethic that stands in opposition “al honor aristocrático cifrado en la gloria de las armas” (Bolufer Peruga 16).5 Ben Beley in Cadalso’s Cartas marruecas (1789) writes to Gazel: “ninguna fama póstuma es apreciable sino la que deja el hombre de bien” (n.p.)6 both in society and literature. This same letter condemns heroes who behave with “venganzas, rencores

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5 “aristocratic honor encoded in the glory of arms” (Bolufer Peruga 16).
6 “no posthumous fame is worthy except that which is left by the enlightened man” (n.p.).
y otros afectos semejantes” (n.p.)\(^7\) and operate with aristocratic notions of honor. A newer and also undesirable masculine figure which emerged in the eighteenth century, the *petimetre*, or “fop”, represented a variation of the aristocratic model. Satiric portrayals of *petimetres*\(^8\) criticized the frivolity, obsession with appearances and fashion, idleness and corruption associated with a culture of consumption. The portrayal of Daerts, who blindly insists on following through with Christina’s engagement to Kerson with threats of violence and hollow statements about family honor, fits this mold. Both Daerts, in his cruel treatment of Christina, and Kerson, in his aspirations to win a dowry, carry out actions that fall within this list of unacceptable masculine behavior.

In contrast with these examples of unacceptable behavior, novels and theatrical works create virtuous male characters who are as irreproachable in their public duties as they are attentive and warm in their relationships as sons, friends and husbands. They articulate emotions through physical signs such as tears, sighs and fainting, but in a manner that remains distinct from feminine expressions of sentiment, because these ‘modern’ masculine expressions of sentiment exist in symbiosis with the classical model of self-control (Bolufer Peruga 18). García Garrosa, in her detailed analysis of French and Spanish sentimental comedies, notes that the code of ethics surrounding the enlightened notion of virtue, intimately connected to portrayals of the *hombre de bien*, was based on the interests of a society “a cuyo progreso debía contribuir el individuo”.\(^9\)

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\(^7\) “vengeance, rancor and other similar emotions” (n.p.).

\(^8\) Two notable examples of these satirical portrayals of *petimetres* would be Ramón de la Cruz’s sainete, *El petimetre* (1764), as well as Tomás de Iriarte’s *El señorito mimado, ó la mala educación* (*The Spoiled Young Man, or Poor Education*) (1787).

\(^9\) “to whose progress the individual should contribute” (145).
This philosophy of virtue posts that happiness lies in exercising a useful function in society (145).

One of the ways that characters display their virtue and useful role in society is through monetary generosity (García Garrosa 120). Tío Agustín, the working-class ragman in Valladares’ *El trapero de Madrid (The Rag Man of Madrid)* (1784), is the one who steps in with a donation to rescue Don Basilio from debt. This generous offer in Act II (878) confirms why a union with Bernardo, Tío Agustín’s virtuous son, would be more advantageous for Don Basilio’s daughter Rita. Don Basilio’s original choice for Rita, Don Anselmo, refuses to marry her once he learns that she lacks a dowry (678-9). In *El amante generoso*, During’s acts of generosity and his seemingly controlled behavior in the face of Daerts’ threats and Kerson’s dueling challenge conform to the standards of enlightened masculinity.

Enlightened male characters, besides fomenting the ideals of virtue and reason, also present an attractive model of masculinity that awakens love in an equally worthy female character (Bolufer Peruga 16). For example, in Rousseau’s novel *Émile, or on Education* (1762), Sophie, after reading *Les aventures de Télémaque* (1699), fears she will never find a suitor who is as appealing as the character Télémaque. However, when she meets Émile, the sentimental and moral education that she has received enable her to recognize in him all the attributes that make him virtuous, and their attraction is instantaneous (440, 453).

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10 Not surprisingly, in Act II, the author adds a revelation from Tío Agustín that Bernardo is of noble birth (871), which ultimately enables this union in a society that condemned unequal marriages. Nonetheless, Tío Agustín’s generosity corroborates the representation of the *hombre de bien* as a generous figure whose sympathy and restraint define him as a superior model of masculinity.
The enlightened model for love, rather than overthrowing the traditional insistence on spouses’ equality of social status, introduces an emphasis on marriage based on esteem and friendship and a social critique of marriages contracted for purely economical purposes (Bolufer Peruga 17). The December 8, 1786 issue of Correo de Madrid ó de los Ciegos describes the consequences that result for women when fathers treat marriage with cold, economic interest and fail to consider the place of compatibility:

El matrimonio de la señorita es una negociación: el padre dispone lejos de ella, y sin su noticia, de la vida entera, y el destino de su hija. En lugar de un amante, que poco á poco hubiera cautivado su corazón, se le presenta un desconocido, un hombre indiferente: se le manda que pase á sus brazos, y se entregue á él sin reservas . . . Las consideraciones del interés se tratan ante todas cosas; y este mercado, aunque hecho vajo el nombre de las leyes y de la religion, tiene algo de dureza y capricho. (71)\textsuperscript{11}

In El amante generoso, Daertes arranges for Christina to marry Kerson in order to further his financial interests. His anger at During, who would presumably protect Christina financially and attempts to cancel Daerts’ debt (12, 23), though, adds a strong element of caprice to his marital choice for Christina.

The theme of love and criticism of arranged marriages also formulated an enlightened model of masculinity as personified in the figure of the hombre de bien, who subjugated his passions to reason and practiced self-control, while still expressing

\textsuperscript{11} “The marriage of a young lady is a business negotiation: the father makes the arrangements for the future of the daughter’s entire life far from her and without her knowledge. Instead of a lover, who little by little won her heart, he presents a stranger to her, an indifferent man. He order her to go into his arms, and she hands herself over to him without reserve . . . Financial considerations are dealt with before anything else, and this market, although carried out under the name of the law and religion, is rather harsh and capricious” (71).
sentiments through physical signs like tears. In *El amante generoso*, During embodies this enlightened model, and it is his virtue which has captured Christina’s heart. During’s rational, restrained behavior in response to Kerson’s dueling challenge demonstrates his superiority as a match for Christina and a masculine role model.

II. Zavala y Zamora on Love and Honor Conflicts

Sentimental portrayals of love and the problem of excessive parental control in their children’s marital choices in English novels like Richardson’s *Pamela* and *Clarissa* eventually found expression in popular Spanish theater, creating intriguing tensions given that many Golden Age traits, such as the portrayal of honor conflicts, also persisted. Fuentes documents the direct influence that these English novels exercised in Spanish theater through dramatic adaptation of the novels (291-2) and numerous dramatic works that portrayed similar themes (303). Specifically, Fuentes mentions a few theatrical pieces by Zavala y Zamora, including *El triunfo del amor y la amistad, Jenwal y Faustina* (*The Triumph of Love and Friendship, Jenwal and Faustina*) (1793) (303) and *Las víctimas del amor, Ana y Sindham* (*Victims of Love, Ana and Sindham*) (1788) (304).

This section will enumerate several sentimental elements that emerged within Zavala y Zamora’s theatrical pieces, changes which coexisted with traditional Golden Age elements, including the tendency for male characters to maintain control over familial honor.

During the 1790s, Gaspar Zavala y Zamora cultivated a variety of genres, such as the heroic, sentimental and mythological comedies, as well as the tragedy, which

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12 Carnero’s introduction to his edition of Zavala y Zamora’s *Obras narrativas* confirms that in addition to theater, the author published novels, some original and others as translations (23-33).
appealed to audiences despite attacks leveled by critics in periodical publications (Carnero “Sensibilidad y exotismo” 9). Zavala y Zamora is included alongside Comella, Valladares de Sotomayor, Rodríguez de Arellano, Moncín and Ramón de la Cruz among the most popular dramatists of the eighteenth century (Fernández Cabezón 8), and like Comella and Valladares, he has been studied very little by scholars. Martin’s “The Dramatic Works of Gaspar de Zavala y Zamora”, Carnero’s introduction to his edition of Zavala y Zamora’s narrative works and Fernández Cabezón’s Lances y batallas: Gaspar Zavala y Zamora y la comedia heroica are the only scholarly works devoted solely to the author. McClelland and Kosove examine Zavala y Zamora in their studies of sentimental theater, with Kosove including a very brief plot summary of El amante generoso, but this summary offers no analysis of the work. Martin’s study of Zavala y Zamora’s heroic and sentimental comedies asserts that there is “very little variation in the types of plays that Zavala y Zamora wrote” (354). He cites several commonalities among the playwright’s renderings of these two dramatic genres, which include the subordination of characterization to the plot (279), use of duels (20) and repetition of themes such as the conflicts surrounding arranged marriages (19).

Therefore, Fernández Cabezón’s observations on Zavala y Zamora’s treatment of honor are useful for this study in spite of the fact that her project deals with the author’s heroic comedies. The consistent “sameness of situation and tone in almost all” of Zavala y Zamora’s dramatic works implies that many similarities exist between the portrayal of

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13 Included among the newspapers which published harsh criticism of Zavala y Zamora are La espigadera, Memorial literario and the Diario Pinciano. In addition, Zavala y Zamora fared none too well in Jovellanos’s Memoria para el arreglo de la policía de los espectáculos y diversiones públicas y sobre su origen en España (1790) and Moratín’s La comedia nueva (discussed in chapter three) (Fernández Cabezón 9). Together with Valladares and Comella, Zavala y Zamora was situated among the popular playwrights who represented ‘la turba que provee nuestros teatros hoy en día’ (“the mass-produced pieces that our theaters provide nowadays”) (cited in Pérez Magallón 69).
honor in the author’s heroic and sentimental comedies. Fernández Cabezón notes that honor is one of the principle motives\textsuperscript{14} driving many of the author’s dramatic conflicts (62). The man—father, brother or husband—oversees the honor of female characters, and women’s chastity impacts the men’s reputation (63). However, it is the male authority figure who acts as custodian over women and the entire family’s honor. Marriage, then, represents a transference of custody: “el marido sustituye al padre y adquiere todas las prerrogativas de éste sobre la mujer” (64).\textsuperscript{15}

Daerts’s murderous threats against his daughter are not unique among Zavala y Zamora’s comedias. Other examples of male protagonists attempting to kill women because of honor conflicts may be found in Zavala y Zamora’s \textit{Alexandra en la Sogdiana} (1795), \textit{Ser vencedor y vencido, Julio César y Catón} (\textit{To Be the Conqueror and the Conquered: Julius Caesar and Catón}) (1793) and \textit{Carlos XII, rey de Suecia: Triunfos de valor y ardid} (Carlos XII, King of Switzerland, Triumphs of Love and Scheming) (1786) (Fernández Cabezón 63, 65).\textsuperscript{16} Fernández Cabezón sees a parallel between the resolutions of honor conflicts in Zavaya y Zamora’s works and those in Golden Age theater (67). She views honor as a force which places limits on passionate love (56), while jealousy serves typically serves as a dramatic force that generates conflicts and action (58).

\textsuperscript{14} The other two motives cited by Fernández Cabezón are exaltation of one’s homeland, or \textit{patria}, with war as a means to defend it, and romantic love (68); both themes are deeply entrenched in dueling and honor.

\textsuperscript{15} “The husband becomes a substitutes for the father, and acquires all the authority that the father had over the woman” (64).

\textsuperscript{16} Specifically, in \textit{Alexandra en la Sogdiana} (1795), Oxiarte attempts to kill his daughter Roxana, in \textit{Ser vencedor y vencido} (1793), Catón tries to kill his daughter Marcia, and in \textit{Triunfos de valor y ardid} (1786), Renchild attempts to kill his wife Isabela (Fernández Cabezón 63, 65).
Martin’s examination of Zavala y Zamora’s lachrymose comedies specifically explores his treatment of arranged marriages: “there is much in these sentimental comedies that is peculiarly Spanish . . . The plethora of situations centered around the implacable fathers who are determined to marry their sons or daughters to people not of their own choice and the ways in which the parental-filial relationships are handled are unmistakably Spanish” (22). In addition to El amante generoso, other sentimental comedies by Zavala y Zamora that feature this type of familial conflict include, Las víctimas del amor, Ana y Sindham (1788), La Justina (1788) and El triunfo del amor y la amistad, Jenwal y Faustina (1793).

While McClelland does not believe that Zavala y Zamora’s theatrical works displayed sentimental extremes (482), compelling evidence to the contrary exists in Zavala y Zamora’s narrative and theatrical works. Zavala y Zamora’s novels, such as La Eumenia (1805) and Oderay (1804), with their fusion of sentimental elements like the key theme of friendship, emotional portrayal of Nature and exaltation of a life of retreat (Carnero 39) and, in the case of Oderay, the exotic representation of the New World and the clear influence of Rousseau’s myth of the noble savage (Carnero 41, 44), confirm the author’s knowledge of and participation in broader eighteenth-century literary practices (Carnero 39, 44). While honor tends to subjugate love in Golden Age theater, some of Zavala y Zamora’s characters are motivated more by love, or sentiment, than their reputation. Fernández Cabezón cites differences in the attitudes of some male characters who would rather be separated from their female love interests than see them killed in an honor conflict. She offers the example of Tribalce, Roxana’s suitor in la Sogdiana, whose speech closely resembles During’s words in El amante generoso. Tribalce vows:
“la amo / con una pasión tan fina, / que aunque de Alejandro sea, / quiero que Roxana viva” (cited in Fernández Cabezón 63). According to Fernández Cabezón, “Sus palabras muestran un cambio de sensibilidad respecto a los amantes del Siglo de Oro, impidiendo que Oxiarte la asesine” (63). Similarly, During voices concern for Christina’s safety, and decides to discontinue his pursuit of her rather than continue to put her at risk (12). In the final act, he even offers to finance Christina’s dowry so that she may marry Kerson and avoid her father’s wrath (30).

Interestingly, though, Christina herself does not appear to behave with the same restraint, as her maid Eliseta notes early in Act I, when she warns her mistress that another servant might learn about During’s secret visits (2). Whereas the _hombre de bien_ tends to lean toward the ideal of restraint, virtuous female characters find themselves in precarious situations when they behave with “The passivity and submission that characterize a dutiful daughter” (Zwinger 8). Christina fits the mold of the virtuous daughter as described by Lynda Marie Zwinger: “The sentimental daughter is a dutiful acolyte to her father, with a loving heart, an innocent mind, and a positive lust for self-abnegation” (5). Christina’s lack of modesty in permitting During’s visits arises as a result of her virtue rather than a rebellious attitude toward Daerts.

Several male characters in Zavala y Zamora’s works exercise the self-control mentioned by both Haidt and Bolufer Peruga as central to the _hombre de bien_. Male characters like Tusell in _Carlos Quinto sobre Dura (Carlos the Fifth Over Dura)_ (1790) choose reason over violence by attempting to dialogue with their enemies. Tusell states:

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17 “I love her with such a refined passion, that even if she might belong to Alexander, I want Roxana to live” (cited in Fernández Cabezón 63).

18 “His words show a change in sensibility from lovers in Golden Age theater, [a change] which keeps Oxiarte from killing her” (63).
... es tal
la confianza que tengo
de la virtud de mi esposa,
que ni á mostrar sentimiento
de hallar á vos con ella
me atreví. Sé por muy cierto
que ni el oro que la tierra
guarda en sus obscuros senos,
i el poderoso atractivo
del más fino rendimiento,
ni en fin la fuerza, podrán
conducir su hidalgo pecho
a una torpeza . . . (12)\(^{19}\)

With this statement to Antonio Doria, one of Emperor Carlos Quinto’s captains who
desires to seduce Tusell’s wife, Christerna, Tusell uses reason to explain the trust he has
in his wife and attempt to persuade Doria from pursuing Christerna. Tusell’s “fineza”
(“goodness”), eventually praised by a repentant Doria (27), represents a departure from
other Golden Age honor plays, in which husbands kill their wives rather than risk
dishonor. Zavala y Zamora’s male characters act more under the influence of reason than
passion, “dotados de una nueva sensibilidad van a preferir vencerse a sí mismos que

\(^{19}\) “The trust that I have in my wife’s virtue is such that I did not dare to show emotion upon finding you
here with her. I know for certain that all the gold that the earth guards in her dark recesses, nor the
powerful attraction of the finest offering, not even force, will be able to drive her honorable heart to such a
blunder . . .” (12).
dejarse arrastrar por una pasión amorosa” (Fernández Cabezón 61). In El amante generoso During represents the self-control central to the hombre de bien. His measured responses in the conflict with Daerts contrast sharply with with the older man, whose rantings demonstrate a lack of dominion over his own emotions. During is also compared with Kerson, who is represented as shallow, foolish and cowardly throughout the play and especially in the duel between the two men. El amante generoso presentsDuring as the most worthy male because of his generosity, which highlights his sensible nature, and the reason he displays in his attempts to assuage Daerts’ anger about the lawsuit and plan to outsmart Kerson in the mock duel.

III. The Marriage Conflict

Similarly to El sí de las niñas and many other eighteenth-century comedias, the central conflict in El amante generoso revolves around a love triangle that is the result of a prospective arranged marriage. Daerts, the father, plans to marry his daughter Christina to Kerson, but Christina is in love with During. However, while many of the other dramatic conflicts focus more on the lovers, the portrayal of dueling and honor in El amante generoso reveals that the relationships among the male characters, specifically the Daerts-During conflict and the During-Kerson conflict, take precedence over the relationship between During and Christina. As a result, the fundamental conflict is a fight over property.

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20 “endowed with a new sensibility, they are going to prefer to restrain themselves rather than let themselves be brought down by an amorous passion” (Fernández Cabezón 61).
A. The Daerts-During Lawsuit

From the first stage directions and opening scene, *El amante generoso* generates sympathy for Christina, and through revelations about her love history with During, the play appeals to sentiment and reason to argue for During as the superior suitor. The first scene portrays Christina’s physical anguish when she is staged: “sentada en una silla de brazos, reclinando sobre la mano la mejilla, como manifestando su situacion el abatimiento de su espiritu” (1). Her opening lines punctuate her suffering: “Corazón, ¿quándo podrás / latir con algu[n]a descanso?” (1). Christina’s maid, Eliseta, expresses concern about her recent pattern of staying in bed, crying and gazing at her watch to wait for her “idolatrado / Capitancito” (2), a ploy to stir both the audience’s sympathy and curiosity about the possibility of a forbidden love affair.

Nonetheless, the suspense surrounding a potentially rebellious romantic tie does not endure for long, because the second scene soon uses Christina’s musings about her problems to suggest that During is a man of reason. Christina insists to her maid Eliseta that she has made “la elección más ventajosa” (2), and later in Scene IV she reiterates that it is During’s “juicio y providad” that have given him the right to her hand (5).

Early in Act I during a conversation with Eliseta, Christina reveals to the audience that:

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21 “seated in an armchair, resting her cheek in her hand, manifesting in her spirit the despair of her situation” (1).

22 “Heart, when will you be able to beat with any rest?” (1).

23 “idolized little Captain” (2).

24 “the most advantageous choice” (2).

25 “good judgment and honesty” (5).
“A During / le hizo dueño de mi mano, / y mi corazón” (2). Fabricio, Daerts’ majordomo, summarizes the case for During as a reasonable husband for Christina toward the end of Act I, in a plea with Daerts to remember:

que fuera mas acertado

casar á la Señorita

con During. El es honrado,
es atento, es virtuoso;
es vuestro sobrino al cabo,
y se aman con un extremo

puro, que habeis fomentado

vos mismo. (14)27

Adding to During’s intellectual and moral traits and the couple’s mutual attachment, Fabricio, showing more insight than Daerts, reminds his master that matching Christina with During is a more sensible plan.

Daerts himself originally supported the pair, so the key question, then, is what initiated Daerts’s change of heart about During, particularly when both reason and sentiment support the union? Christina’s conversation with Eliseta during the second scene of Act I discloses information about a lawsuit between During’s father and Daerts that led to her father’s bitter, violent anger toward the younger man:

Mi Padre

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26 “It [his character] made During the owner of my hand and heart” (2).

27 “It would be better to marry the young woman to During. He is honorable, he is attentive, he is virtuous; he is your nephew after all, and they love each other with a chaste fervor which you yourself have encouraged” (14).
As a result of a lawsuit over family property initiated by During’s father, Daerts forbids Christina from marrying or speaking to a suitor that he had previously embraced as a potential husband.

Daerts explains to Christina late in Act I that During’s claim to family lands will leave both father and daughter in a state of poverty:

¿Es poco, . . . obligarnos á descender á la suma miseria en que nos hallamos, desde la opulencia grande

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28 “From that ill-fated moment that During’s father filed a lawsuit against Daerts to demand the family lands that Daerts took possession of following the death of his first cousin, During’s uncle, not only has my father forbid him [During] to enter the house, but he has intimated to me with the strangest rigor, to never speak to him again for any reason” (2-3)
en que nos vimos? (13)29

Consequently, Daerts frames the property battle using an honor code more reminiscent of the Golden Age, because without the family lands, he will lose his social status.30 The fact that Christina would benefit from During’s acquisition of the property does not factor in to the father’s thought process. When Daerts finds During inside his house in the sixteenth scene of Act I, Daerts states that the younger man is committing yet another “agravio” (“offense”) against him, and: “Lo que os pido es, que á insultarnos / con vuestra vista jamás / volvais” (12).31 Although Daerts refers to “us” (“insultarnos”) talking of this insult, he clearly thinks only of himself and not his daughter.

While Daerts appeals to the honor code to defend his stance against During, the abuses he commits against Christina and During portray his notion of honor as inflexible, outdated and corrupt. The evident connection between Daerts and Early Modern concepts of honor emerges in the stage directions preceding his first entry: “Daerts con bastón, sombrero, y espada” (8).32 Clearly he is part of the nobility, and the physical presence of the sword marks this identity, as it has for other characters, such as Tío Juan in El vinatero de Madrid. The sword also augments the threat of violence associated with the character, and in the ninth scene of Act I, the audience hears Daerts utter his first vow to kill Christina if she does not relinquish her love for During and assent to his order that she marry Kerson:

29 “Is it a small thing . . . to obligate us to descend to the extreme misery in which we find ourselves, from the great opulence in which we saw ourselves?” (13).

30 The relationship between property and honor extends back into the middle ages, as Robert Nye has amply demonstrated (16).

31 “What I ask you is to never insult us with your presence again” (12).

32 “Daerts with cane, hat, and sword” (8).
The danger for Christina resembles conflicts in many Golden Age honor plays, discussed in Chapter One, because her choice to marry During presents a perceived threat to her father’s honor.

Nonetheless, despite the physical presence of Daerts’ brandished sword, the frequency of Daerts’ threats empty them of any imminent danger at the same time that they cast this father in an unfavorable light. After the previously mentioned quote from the ninth scene of Act I, Daerts threatens to take Christina’s life three more times in the seventeenth scene (13-14) and an additional time in the nineteenth scene of the same act (15). When Christina pleads with him to forgive her for letting During into the house, reminding her father they both have the same familial blood coursing through their veins, Daerts reminds her that he is capable of spilling that same blood (13). He soon renews his threat to Christina: “ó casarte con Kerson, / ó morir hoy á mis manos” (13).34

Christina informs Daerts that if there is no alternative, then she will resolve to die rather than risk offending either During by marrying Kerson or Daerts by marrying During (13-14). Daerts’s threats immediately reach their apex when he replies, “Pues, hija vil, si á

33 “offended and irritated, I will be capable, do not doubt it, of spilling your blood with this same hand that blessed you a thousand times. Careful” (8).

34 “marry Kerson or die today by my hands” (13).
esospira, / verás”35 and approaches Christina “arrancando un puñal” (14).36 Fabricio promptly restrains Daerts while Eliseta removes Christina from the room. Despite the tension surrounding this scene, it is important to note that it occurs rather early in the comedia. After this, the suspense surrounding Daerts’ vows to kill Christina lessens considerably, as the playwright draws more attention to the duel between Kerson and During as well as Christina’s eventual decision to save her family from financial ruin by marrying Kerson (26). This resolution arises as a result of the concern surrounding the imminent loss of social status rather than the threat of violence, suggesting that Daerts’ threats against Christina are more hollow than effective.

The conflict between During and Daerts exposes old views of marriage and honor as counterfeit through the contrast between the two men. Daerts’ lack of control and cowardice reveal that he does not deserve the control that he exercises over Christina. During, however, exhibits restraint in his interactions with Daerts, and proves that he is the better man.

B. The During-Kerson Duel

Although Daerts true conflict lies with During, he never challenges the younger man to a duel. One reason is that the honor code forbids relatives from engaging in one-on-one combat (Cabriñana 288). The hollow threats that Daerts has already directed to his daughter point to another influential reason: Daerts’ cowardice. Given During’s professed intention of protecting Christina, it is doubtful that he would accept a challenge from Daerts, especially while they await a court decision for their case. However, During

35 “So, vile daughter, if you aspire to that, then you will see” (14).

36 “pulling out a dagger” (14).
does accept a challenge from Kerson and arranges a mock pistol duel in order to ridicule
him. The duel between Christina’s potential suitors reveals During’s rational superiority
over Kerson and thus Daerts, who has selected the shallow nobleman for Christina.

The initial catalyst for this honor conflict reverts to the moment when Kerson
arrives at Daerts’ house in the morning, during the tenth scene in Act I, to find Christina
up and completely dressed:

…me escama
un tanto quanto, el hallaros
vestida á estas horas. Eso
indica que algun cuidado
teneis, y nacer no puede
de otra causa, hablemos claros,
que de amor. (9)37

Two scenes later, Kerson playfully attempts to persuade Christina to reveal to him the
identity of her secret lover, swearing that he is not jealous (9), because

Ni yo
me avengo á ser vuestro esclavo,
ni á que vos los seais mia:
no, Madama; libres ambos
viviremos, como viven
hoy, los hombres ilustrados,
vos á vuestro gusto, y yo

37 “It makes me a little suspicious, finding you dressed at this hour. That indicates you are taking special
care of yourself, and let’s speak frankly. That cannot arise from any other cause except love” (9).
This statement reveals Kerson’s intention to maintain an open marriage as well as his complete lack of romantic interest in Christina. During, who has hidden himself in the same room, overhears Kerson speaking of his agreement with Daerts to marry Christina (9), and becomes angry with her, believing that she has betrayed him (11).

Kerson does not become angry with During, even when he realizes that this man desires Christina (12), until the sixteenth scene of Act I, when During insults him in front of Daerts and Christina. In this same scene where Daerts arrives home and finds During in his house, Kerson stands by and watches their exchange, offering commentary. As During tells Daerts that he has only entered their home to bring the older man honor, Kerson humorously interjects, “Alabo / la presuncion”. And when During insults him by stating that in order to behave and speak with honor and virtue, “por ningun caso, / hablará ni obrará, como / hablais vos, y habeis obrado” (12). In response, Kerson initially reacts by “echando mano á la espada”, to which During dismissively replies, “Luego seré / vuestro; ahora sosegaos” (12), stopping Kerson in his tracks. This exchange unveils Kerson’s impetuous side, as well as During’s scorn for his opponent, complete control over the situation and lack of fear over facing the other man.

By anticipating Kerson’s next move, During maintains his dominance in this honor conflict. When Kerson arrives at During’s house early in Act II, the latter informs

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38 “I do not agree to be your slave nor want you to be mine. No, Madame, we will both live free, as enlightened men list today, you according to your pleasure and me according to mine . . . ” (10).

39 “I praise the presumption” (12).

40 “in no case does one speak or act as you speak or have acted” (12).

41 “putting his hand on his sword” (12).

42 “I will be yours later; for now, calm down” (12).
the audience, “Que vendrá, creo / á desafiarme” (16). His previous scornful treatment of Kerson, including the initial insult and the dismissive statement, “Luego seré / vuestro” (I will be yours later”), as well as his anticipation of Kerson’s arrival call into question who really initiates this dueling challenge. Yes, Kerson comes to During’s house, but During has manipulated him like a puppet.

During also determines before speaking to his opponent that Kerson has no intention of following through with his challenge, and resolves “con una burla, / probarle, / y avergonzarle”, and derisively noting that Kerson “es / tan covarde, como necio” (16). The stage directions show him making an arrangement with his maid Rosen after this statement, revealing to the audience that a surprise lies in store. Kerson appeals to his noble bloodline to initiate his challenge:

Los que nacieron
nobles como yo, no sufran
que haya labio tan grosero,
que se atreva á denigrar
su puro honor con dicterios. (16)

During concedes Kerson’s right to complain about the insult (16), but then counters that this does not permit Kerson to kill him in a duel. He appeals to the law—“¿Y sabeis, que prohibidos / están por el Rey los duelos?” and to reason: “desmentireis el concepto en

43 “He must be coming, I believe, to challenge me to a duel” (16).
44 “to expose him and shame him with a joke” (16).
45 “is as cowardly as he is stupid” (16)
46 “Those who were born noble like I was, do not allow for such a rude mouth, who dares to denigrate their pure honor with insults” (16).
que os haya puesto yo, con matarme? No por cierto” (17)—and lectures Kerson that a true nobleman would follow the law (16). During censures Kerson for foolish, ignoble behavior and insists that fighting a duel would only confirm the very insults that instigated his challenge:

… sois un hombre
de poco juicio, y de menos
verdad; que teneis muy baxos
y villanos pensamientos:
que sois vicioso: y en fin,
que á ser venis un compuesto
de todo lo malo? Y bien,
desmentireis el concepto
en que os haya puesto yo,
con matarme? No por cierto
Solo os acreditareis
de mas dichoso, ó mas diestro
en el manejo de espada
Elegid pues otros medios
mas seguros, para que
quede vuestro honor bien puesto. (17)

47 “And do you know that duels are prohibited by the king? . . . Will you disprove the ideas that I have spoken of you by killing me? Certainly not” (17).

48 “You are a man of poor judgment who knows even less truth. That you have very low and roguish thoughts. That you are prone to vice. And so, will you disprove the ideas that I have spoken of you by
Ostensibly this reasoning affirms During's rational superiority over Kerson; During notes that a duel only shows who can handle a sword with more skill. Within this argument During has also reiterated his initial insult. Since he has already stated his intention to ridicule Kerson in the beginning of the scene (16), his call to “Elegid pues medios / mas seguros” (“So choose other, more secure means”) (17), and his appeal to Kerson to behave with virtue “para que / quede vuestra honor bien puesto” (So that your honor will remain in a good position”) (17) contain a hidden warning that the audience understands. If Kerson follows through with the duel, During will humiliate him and expose him as a coward. Kerson’s reputation will be in a worse state than if he had simply desisted with his challenge.

However, Kerson proceeds with the challenge, allowing During to trap him into what Kerson believes is a life-threatening situation. Kerson responds to During’s insults by calling him a coward, a comical assertion given that moments later, when During closes the door to give the two more privacy, he expresses stark fear that a duel is imminent: “Qué miro? perdido soy” (17).49 Once During leaves the scene, Kerson continues to voice his dismay and confirm his lack of bravery:

Por la espada vá. ¿Qué haré
en tan evidente riesgo,
si ni aun tenerla en la mano
sé? Si riño, no hay remedio
me mata: y si no, es capaz

killing me? Certainly not. You will only prove yourself more fortunate or more skilled in wielding a sword. So choose other, more secure means, so that your honor will remain in a good position” (17).

49 “What am I seeing? I am lost” (17).
During never permits Kerson to escape from his challenge. He enters the room carrying two pistols and declares in an aside that he knows how to proceed without breaking the King’s anti-dueling law or being labeled as a coward (17), suggesting that During, despite his appeals to virtue and the law, is not immune to the pull of the honor code nor the desire for revenge.

During accelerates the pace of this dueling ceremony by usurping various steps in the codified ritual, heightening Kerson’s fear, revealing that Kerson knows little about dueling protocol, and augmenting the humor for the audience. Next, During informs Kerson that he has two pistols “Cargadas . . . / las dos, con igual esmero / por mi mano” (17-18), which is not true, since During’s servant has loaded them, and tells Kerson to take one of them. He reminds Kerson that he has selected pistols because as a soldier he would have an unfair advantage with a sword. During informs Kerson that he has loaded the pistols, which is a lie, because the audience soon learns that Rosen has loaded them (18). However, if Kerson knew about the honor code, he would realize that generally seconds should load pistols, and when possible, the pistols should be new and

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50 “He is going for his sword. What will I do in such clear danger, if I do not even know how to hold it in my hand? If I fight, there is no way out; he will kill me. If I do not, he is capable of making public this incident and my cowardice. How can I have abused his sane advice! So, I have erred; let’s appeal for a resolution” (17).

51 “Both . . . loaded with equal care by my hand” (17-18).
unfamiliar to both participants (Murciano 83). In the case of the most severe insults, the offended party was sometimes permitted to have both participants use his pistols (Murciano 84), but the verbal insults that the men have exchanged should not warrant this type of change. Nonetheless, During hands Kerson one of his own pistols instead of providing neutral weapons for both (17). This hasty procedure contrasts sharply with the scrupulous examination required in the dueling code: “En todo caso, las pistolas serán atentamente examinadas por todos los padrinos, y aceptadas que sean, se encierran en la correspondiente caja y se precinta ésta, no rompiéndose el precinto hasta el momento en que va á hacerse uso de las armas, y á la presencia de todos” (Murciano 84).52 Clearly no one carries out any of these practices.

The scene which follows demonstrates Kerson’s ineptitude and lack of bravery. Still unaware of the contents of the pistols’ chambers, Kerson examines his weapon with fear, voicing his complete ignorance about weapons, as well as dueling procedures: “Qué he de hacer?” (18).53 His cowardice in part stems from his lack of training in armed combat, a reminder that the nobility in eighteenth-century Spain was far removed from their military origins, despite their continued reliance on medieval principles. Kerson attempts to extricate himself from this situation by claiming that During’s logical reasoning has successfully convinced him about the evils of dueling: “vuestras razones / tan rara impresion me han hecho, / que tengo por acertado . . . / Que lo dejemos” (18).54

The sudden appeal to reason, of course, stems from fear rather than a change of heart and

52 “In every case, the pistols will be carefully examined by all seconds, and once accepted, they are enclosed in the corresponding box, and this is sealed, the seal not being broken until the momento that the arms are going to be used, and then in everyone’s presence” (Murciano 84).

53 “What am I to do?” (18).

54 “Your reasoning has made such an impression on me, that I am sure it is right . . . for us to leave this behind” (18).
is reminiscent of Don Mariano in Tomás de Iriarte’s (1787) *El señorito mimado*, whose motive for turning his challenger is not out of respect for the law but rather to escape the duel (233-5).\(^{55}\) During, however, in an aside, assures the audience that he intends to fully expose Kerson’s cowardice: “Pues ya mostró su temor, / poner por obra resuelvo, / la burla que le previne” (18).\(^{56}\) To Kerson he states that it is too late, and they will proceed. During taunts Kerson’s declaration of “respect”, which he attributes to his gun: “Esta pistola, no es eso?” (18),\(^{57}\) a mocking reference to the former’s previous insistence that the only way to restore one’s honor is through a duel.

Kerson next attempts to persuade During to move the duel to a remote location—presumably a reasonable expectation, since dueling manuals called for both a neutral location as well as a delay in combat (Murciano 63-4), neither of which are observed by During. Thus, During’s insistence that they continue forces Kerson to face the potential implications of the honor code he has professed to follow: “pues aqui / me insultasteis, aqui debo, / tomar la satisfaccion” (18).\(^{58}\) The men are standing in During’s house, which is hardly a neutral location. During permits no waiting period after Kerson’s initial challenge, and his last statement, which speaks of During’s desire for satisfaction as opposed to Kerson’s, affirms that he controls this process, and that he has created this plan to exact his own brand of revenge.

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\(^{55}\) This scene occurs during the fourth scene of Act III, and Don Mariano’s uncle, responsible for his education, refuses to consent to the duel but censures the young man for his intention to turn in the challenger: “¡Bajos pensamientos! / ¡Delatar un noble a otro! / ¡Y en tal materia!” (“What low thinking! One noble denouncing another! And on such a subject!”) (236-8).

\(^{56}\) “So he already demonstrated his fear. I resolve to carry out the joke that I mentioned” (17).

\(^{57}\) “Isn’t this pistol that [respect]?” (17).

\(^{58}\) “since you insulted me here, I should take my satisfaction here” (17).
The statement “debo, / tomar la satisfaccion” (“I should take my satisfaction”) confirms that while Kerson may believe that he initiated this challenge, During has controlled this *lance* from the beginning. He has assumed the role of the offended party, but also the seconds, witnesses for both sides generally charged with selecting the type of duel and weapons (35). Finally, During also converts into the *juez de campo*, the second who assumes the role of ceremonial facilitator, telling participants when to measure their paces and fire (Murciano 85-90). As *juez de campo* During asserts ultimate control over this duel by firing the first and only shot before Kerson realizes what is happening. As Kerson argues that the noise from their pistols will alert the authorities, During interrupts him:

Kerson: Pero no veis, que al estruendo,

acudirá la justicia,

y:::

During: Nada miro; y supuesto

que vos estais tan remiso,

de aquesta manera [a]vengo

el agravio que me hicisteis. (18)59

Immediately after this statement, the stage directions show that During “Dispara la pistola, y Kerson cae como muerto, soltando la suya” (18).60

During robs Kerson of any notice or opportunity to prepare himself for this shot, maximizing the surprise for both the character and the audience. Kerson initially believes

59 “Kerson: But don’t you see that law enforcement will come because of the noise, and::: / During: I do not see anything. And supposing that you are so reluctant, in that way I will avenge the offense that you committed against me” (18).

60 “Shoots his pistol and Kerson falls as though dead, letting go of his” (18).
he has been fatally shot: “Muerto soy” (18). During’s insulting response, “Lo que hace el miedo” (18), confirms that Kerson has only collapsed because of fright, not because of a gunshot wound. During’s “lesson” for Kerson and his authority over this duel expose Kerson as a coward, but this encounter does not necessarily portray During in a completely virtuous light. He has assumed total control of the duel and purposefully kept Kerson in a state of perpetual confusion. This clear advantage over Kerson appears all the more dubious when one remembers that During, as a member of the military (“Oficial Sueco”), already has an unfair advantage.

Once Kerson realizes that the guns only contained powder, he expresses admiration for During, a fact observed by Kosove (91). However, Kerson vows that “aunque pierda la vida / he de vengar el desprecio” (18). During’s trick has humiliated Kerson, a fact that may eventually endanger the latter’s reputation more than any previous insult. Furthermore, Kerson’s stated intention to avenge this insult carries no weight with it now that During has exposed him as a coward without any ability to engage in combat. Kerson poses no threat to During and does not attempt any additional challenges. The stage is set for During to win Christina’s hand.

C. Financial Generosity as the Final Resolution

Enlightened virtue and reason, as personified in During, prevail when the law finds in favor of his case for possession of the family’s lands. During the nineteenth scene of Act II, an official notice reveals to During and the audience:

61 “I am dead” (18).
62 “Fear makes him that way” (18).
63 “though I may lose my life, I have to avenge this slight” (18).
The law rules that During is the “legitimate” owner of the land and orders Daerts to transfer all property to the younger man. Thus, During, not Daerts, is the one who receives “satisfaction”. The younger order has toppled the older, established order. However, in the process, Daerts finds himself facing a ruined status in society because of his lack of property. He states that he and Christina will descend to a miserable state of poverty (13). If Daerts permitted During to marry Christina, she would not face this poverty, but he himself would have neither the mayorazgo nor his previous position of honor.

Consequently, Daerts, rather than change his resolution on Christina’s marriage, turns to Kerson for financial assistance. When Daerts asks if Kerson will help, Kerson replies that he has neither money nor friends who will give him a loan. To Daerts’ request that he sell some jewels or other valuables, Kerson notes that his possessions “hacen falta a la decencia, / y ostentacion con que debo / presentarme” (22).65 This exchange suggests that Daerts’ plan to financially maintain the family through Christina’s marriage to Kerson would fail on multiple fronts. Besides the flaws in Kerson’s

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64 “I relay to you the pleasant news that by a definitive sentence the Judges have declared you the legitimate owner of the family properties whose ownership you contested. By this sentence they order Daerts to reimburse you for the total of lost fees, that by decree on the eleventh of January of the previous year, were ordered to be deposited to your satisfaction . . . requiring of him and all his descendants, perpetual silence in regard to this lawsuit” (20).

65 “lack the decency and ostentation with which I should present myself” (22).
character, a key element of importance to Daerts—Kerson’s wealth—may be yet another illusion created by a nobleman in denial about his financial status.

Kerson’s strong interest in the outcome of the lawsuit confirms his lack of funds and the inevitable failure of Daerts plan to secure his future through Christina’s marriage. Throughout *El amante generoso*, Kerson’s attitude toward marriage, particularly his disdain for the notion of fidelity, have portrayed him as the diametrical opposite of During, whose love for Christina points to a sentimental view of this social institution. Toward the end of Act II Kerson eagerly asks Daerts, “Vaya, Daerts, / que hay de boda, y que tenemos / de pleyto, que son los puntos / que me interesan” (29). Upon hearing that the ruling in the lawsuit has left Christina without a dowry, Kerson informs the family once and for all that there will be no wedding (29). Both Daerts and Kerson’s selfish desires have led them to contrive a wedding and treat Christina as property, but their moral bankruptcy leads to their financial failure.

Meanwhile During, as the *amante generoso*, attempts multiple times to monetarily rescue Christina and her father. In Act I During offers general financial assistance, and Daerts replies that he would never receive help from the hand of his enemy (12). A couple of scenes later Daerts’ servant Fabricio reveals that During has secretly helped with the daily expenses of their household (15). After the lawsuit awards him the lands and orders Daerts to compensate During, the younger man tries to forgive this debt by sending Daerts a signed receipt for the fine, an act which Christina’s father labels an excessive insult and proceeds to tear up the receipt (23). To accept this offer would mean

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66 “Come now, Daerts, what is new with the wedding and the lawsuit? Those are the two topics that interest me” (29).
conceding defeat and control to During, and Daerts still hopes a marriage to Kerson will enable him to avoid this.

Instead of threatening Christina with death again, Daerts places in her hands the charge with saving their family or permitting its destruction through her acquiescence or refusal to wed Kerson:

Un remedio
solo, nos queda, y está
en tu mano, . . .
que depende de el, tu bien
estár, mi honor, mi sosiego,
y aun mi vida; pues perdido
mi honor, ni aun la vida quiero. (25-6)\(^67\)

Daerts’ plea constitutes an attempt on the part of the author to stir sympathy for Christina and their family’s plight, though in effect Daerts has simply changed the nature of the threat. Whereas previously Christina faced death at her father’s hand for failing to obey his will, now she faces responsibility for her father’s death if she does not marry Kerson. In fact, Daerts hands her a dagger and states: “Sí, sí: pues toma este acero / fiera: termina mis días / tristes, odiosos, y negros, / con tu parricida mano” (26).\(^68\) Daerts still torments Christina in order to protect his reputation, while During’s generosity, at times conducted in secret, attempts to protect her.

\(^67\) “Only one solution remains for us, and it is in your hands, . . . your well-being, my honor, my serenity and even my life depend on it. For once my honor is lost, I do not even want to live” (25-6).

\(^68\) “Yes, yes: so take this sword, wild beast. End my sad, hateful, black days with your patricidal hand” (26).
The scene where Daerts hands the dagger to Christina, which appeals more to sympathy and reflects eighteenth-century popular theater’s interpretation of sentiment, differs little from the scene where he threatens her. Both are attempts to coerce Christina. After Daerts’ impassioned plea, Christina notes,

No hay medio;
ó hacerme yo para siempre infeliz, ó ser objeto de la censura del mundo abandonando en su acervo dolor á mi Padre. Ay, Padre mio! Ay During! (26)

This emotional outburst reflects the impossibility of Christina’s situation and suggests that while During may have won the lawsuit against her father, his victory remains incomplete, because Daerts has again prevented him from winning Christina.

Daerts’ words of comfort to Christina—“Consuelate, / Christina amada, que el Cielo / te hará dichosa, premiando / tu obediencia y tu respecto” (26) ring hollow because he has forced her obedience, and the match will yield neither a moral nor financial profit for the family. Christina’s acquiescence is of little dramatic value, as the main conflicts occur between the male characters, in particular between Daerts and During. Daerts’ efforts to win the lawsuit and maintain ownership of his mayorazgo

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69 “There is no way; either make myself unhappy forever or be an object of reproach to the world by abandoning my Father in his bitter pain. Oh, my Father! Oh, During!” (26).

70 “Console yourself, beloved Christina, for Heaven will make you happy by rewarding your obedience you’re your respect” (26).
remain doomed to failure, because Kerson’s lack of intelligence, character and money render marriage to him a non-option.

Thus from the beginning of the play, During is the only real option for Christina. After Kerson’s final refusal to marry Christina without a dowry, During’s generosity reaches its zenith when he offers to pay her dowry, delivering this sentimental monologue:

. . . Qué os sorprende
la oferta? La amo, me veo
ya sin derecho á su mano
y aunque ella misma el derecho
me quita, por cuya causa
debiera ofenderme, es menos
la ofensa que ella me hace,
que el amor que yo la tengo . . . (30)71

With this offer During affirms once again that he deserves Christina. According to During, the denial of his engagement to Christina should offend him, but he instead chooses the non-violent path of charity.

In fact, During has also revealed that the principle motive for his lawsuit was not to right the wrong committed by Daerts against his father by stealing the mayorazgo, but rather to provide for Christina:

Mi Padre, antes de morir

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71 “What, the offer surprises you? I love her, I see myself without the right to her hand and although she herself takes the right from me, for which I should be offended, the offense that she commits against me is less than the love that I have for her . . .” (30).
aclarar quiso, el derecho
que tenia á los crecidos
bienes, que vos poseyendo
estabais. Se hallaba pobre,
bién veis, que debia hacerlo.
Seguí, despues, la demanda
yo, con el hidalgo objeto,
de hacer feliz á mi prima,
si llegaba á poseerlos,
con ellos, y con mi mano. (28)\textsuperscript{72}

During’s reference to his right to the lands repeats an earlier statement in Act I about
Daerts’ dishonest proceedings with his family (5). Despite Daerts’ numerous rantings
about his wounded honor, During is the one who may rightfully claim that he has been
offended. However, he has exercised restraint by aligning himself with the law and
following the legal proceedings initiated by his father rather than resorting to violence to
contrive a resolution. During’s last offer of charity toward Daerts finally leads the older
man to concede Christina’s hand to During and acknowledge that he has been wrong to
contrive a marriage with Kerson and deny the superior suitor. Daerts speaks contritely
of:

\[\ldots\text{el rubor que me causa}\]

\[\text{pensar que he sido tan necio,}\]

\textsuperscript{72} “Before dying, my father tried to clear up the right that he had to the large properties that you were
possessing. He found himself in poverty, you see clearly that he should have done it. Afterward, I
continued with the lawsuit, with the noble objective of making my cousin happy with them [the properties],
if I were to come to possess them, and with my hand” (28).
que la mano de mi hija
un día llegué á ofreceros:
y que por vos he ultrajado,
y desairado á un sugeto
tan digno como During. (30)73

With this statement, the *comedia* resolves the conflict of a problematic arranged—forced—marriage for Christina. As the victor over Daerts and Kerson, During emerged as the paragon of enlightened masculinity. Nonetheless, the duel between During and Kerson suggests that tensions persisted which threatened to undermine the play’s goals and resolution.

IV. Concluding Remarks

Christina may finally wed the man that she loves, the match supported by reason, virtue and sentiment. During, the more enlightened and generous of her two prospects, has won her hand. Daerts himself admits that he was wrong to try to force her to wed such an ill-suited choice as Kerson. This summary suggests that sensibility and reason, expressed through Christina’s impassioned pleas, tears and laments, as well as During’s expressions of love, his virtuous intention to seek Christina’s benefit, and his arguments against violence, have achieved a neat resolution.

Daerts’ treatment of his daughter and his blindness to Kerson’s true character and motives for marrying Christina criticize a model of masculinity based on honor-as-reputation. Martin aptly points out that “The conflict is sustained only by the

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73 “the embarrassment that causes me to think that I have been so foolish, that one day I ever offered you my daughter’s hand, and that because of you I have offended and slighted a subject as dignified as During” (30).
stubbornness of Christina’s father” (266). Through Daerts, this masculine model is portrayed as irrelevant and barbaric in the face of a superior example, the *hombre de bien* as represented by During.

The mock duel with Kerson demonstrates that the conflict over models of masculinity is not a simple issue of past versus present. Kerson is not a relic from the past but, as a type of *petitmetre*, represents a contemporary example of masculinity gone wrong. He is superficial, and in his cowardice and ignorance of weapons, effeminate. During employs the mock duel to outwit Kerson and expose his bluff, proving that he is a more reasonable man, but the staging of their encounter also exalts During’s virility. Kerson’s speculation about During’s superior knowledge of the sword and pistol, and the physical representation of the pistol shot, while humorous, also create the impression of an actual duel. This scene no doubt appealed to audiences who may have also enjoyed comedias de capa y espada, which also portrayed dueling. Yet, the mock duel, coupled with During’s statements that he should be the one who is offended, suggest that this *hombre de bien* was not immune to the pull of honor-as-reputation. If this is true, then how sustainable is the popular version of the *hombre de bien*? Could During have proven his superiority over Kerson and his own personal restraint through reason minus the physical display of the mock duel?

What becomes of Christina in the midst of this masculine struggle? The representation of the duel relegates her to the background. Christina’s virtuous efforts to pacify both her father and During are rendered irrelevant because of During’s control. She initially states that she will obey her father and not marry During, but she will not marry Kerson (6). Christina exercises self-denial in order to placate her father:
Negué
mis ojos, con gran cuidado
á los quejosos villetes
que me enviaba por mano
desocupada. Negué
mi atención á sus cuidados,
negué mi oído á las quejas,
que solia darme al paso
en la calle . . .
en fin . . . aspirando
á complacer á mi Padre
le negué mi amor. (3)74

During still calls her “falsa” (“false”) when he hears about her engagement to Kerson (11), but when Christina pleads with Kerson to release her from her engagement, the latter refuses (24-5). In response to Daerts’ impassioned, but threatening vow that he will kill himself rather than lose honor, Christina acquiesces, agreeing to marry Kerson (26), though when Daerts asks her in the end if she desires this marriage, Christina replies, “Yo muero” (29).75

No clear, virtuous option exists that permits Christina to honor the original promise and her own desire to marry During and please her angry father. Ana Rueda’s

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74 “With great care I withheld my eyes from the fretful letters that he sent me with his unoccupied hand. I withheld my attention from his caring gestures, I withheld my ear from the complaints that he used to direct to me in passing in the street . . . in the end . . . while aspiring to please my Father I withheld my love from him” (3).

75 “I am dying” (29).
study of the topic of virtue in distress in novels, offers insight for this dramatic scenario. Rueda notes that female characters become victims of their own virtue (207) due to “the failure of sensibility as a pattern of behavior for life” (211). Christina, trapped in a familial honor conflict, becomes a victim because of the lack of virtuous options available for her to effectively deal with this situation. Despite her sympathetic situation, Christina is little more than property in a skirmish between her father and her would-be husband.

During, who espouses a sense of honor based on virtue and generosity, prevails over Daerts, who stubbornly holds to a captious sense of Baroque honor. Daerts’ threats against Christina and During’s desire to protect Christina and aid her father presumably portray one sense of honor—During’s—as superior. However, contradictory views over honor-as-reputation versus honor-as-virtue coexist within the hombre de bien, calling into question the viability of this model of masculinity in eighteenth-century Spanish theater.
Conclusions

An examination of dramatic representations of dueling in sentimental comedies reveals numerous tensions. The central inquiry of this project is to examine how the Golden Age concept of honor morphed during the Age of Enlightenment. During the eighteenth century, the age of sensibility rewrote the duel, transforming it from a ritual connected with the aristocracy into an act tied to individual lives. José de Cañizares’ 1711 comedia, Por acrisolar su honor: competidor hijo, y padre (To Purify Their Honor: Competing Son and Father), a work which precedes sentimental comedies and written by an author who in the past has been dismissed by critics such as McClelland and Cook as an inferior imitator of Baroque theater, foreshadows this shift, which comes to fruition in sentimental comedies.

Another tenet of this project’s investigation is to consider how honor is filtered through sentiment. The works that I examine use sensibility to focus on individuals’ struggles with honor. The central problem confronted by Jovellanos’ protagonist, Torcuato, in El delincuente honrado (The Honorable Culprit) presents a conflict between honor-as-reputation and honor-as-virtue. The vertical concept of honor as hierarchy has not completely disappeared, since the state still attempts to assert its dominion over honor conflicts through harsh dueling laws, and members of the aristocracy may duel to protect their place in the social hierarchy. The sympathetic portrayal of Torcuato as a middle-class individual tormented by his decision to duel articulates a conflict between the honor code and legislation that pits the citizen against the state.

The divide presented in El delincuente honrado also provides insight into how honor affects the relationship between the individual and the state. Sentimental elements
such as the emotions and tears that describe Torcuato’s genuine remorse over his duel, as well as the staunch defense of his friend Anselmo highlight both the protagonist’s efforts to follow the law and the impossibility of fulfilling the legal code’s mandates. Honor is a remnant from Spain’s past that cannot be covered by the rigidity of a new law.

An additional divide which found ample expression in various eighteenth-century Spanish texts was the struggle for Spain’s national identity in the context of enlightened Europe. The famous comment by Nicolas Massón de Morvilliers in the Enciclopédie méthodique which questioned Spain’s contributions to Europe played a significant role in fueling a sort of national identity crisis, or what Torrecilla refers to as an “inferiority complex”. The central triangular conflict in popular playwright Luciano Francisco Comella’s La Jacoba, between Milord Tolmin, Jacoba and the Count of Esteren and these characters’ efforts to resolve it echoes Spain’s ongoing identity struggle in eighteenth-century Europe. A critical examination of eighteenth-century popular theater in Spain which acknowledges this plurality of ideas and influences must move beyond a dismissal of its contradictions and instead explore some of the reasons behind them. La Jacoba offers a dramatic debate about the definition of true heroism and national identity as it calls into question who is civilized and who is barbaric. The duel in La Jacoba is a dramatic amalgam of Baroque notions of honor and the Enlightenment’s examination of the dangers of the passions. An analysis of its representation of dueling offers a glimpse of the complex intermingling of multiple definitions of Spanish culture, where neither a lone enlightened model, such as that envisioned by Moratín, nor an identity based primarily on Spain’s Baroque past, such as that defended by Forner, prevails.
The final question under consideration is: how did eighteenth-century ilustrados use theater to attempt to resolve the conflict between using violence to defend one’s honor and the Enlightenment ideal of avoiding excess? During the age of sensibility, dramatic representations of dueling and honor have begun to revolve around the circumstances of individual characters grappling with their place in society. The law of the duel, previously under the monarchy’s control and associated primarily with members of the aristocracy, is now the subject of an internal, personal struggle. Characters often spend just as much, if not more time arguing about whether they should be dueling in the first place than they do fighting. Gaspar Zavala y Zamora’s El amante generoso features a mock duel, in which the character During manipulates the deadly ritual in order to expose his opponent Kerson as a coward and discredit Kerson’s claim that satisfaction must be obtained through a violent practice rather than through virtue. This humorous duel exalts a more rational, sensible model of masculinity that is seemingly more in tune with a society where most of the aristocracy no longer engages in military service, and where the state’s honor tribunals are supposed to resolve disputes.

While sentimental comedies present conclusions that ostensibly exalt honor-as-virtue and rely on a belief in humanity’s goodness to resolve their conflicts, their representations of dueling point to a tense coexistence of multiple forms of Spanish identity in the eighteenth century. Virtue is never enough to override the accusation that someone is a coward for not accepting a dueling challenge. The inclusion of extra elements that cater to social prejudices of the time also undermines the notion of virtue as honor. Antonio Valladares de Sotomayor’s 1784 El vinatero de Madrid resolves its central honor conflict through a revelation that the protagonist, supposedly a wine
vendor, is actually a member of the aristocracy, thus nullifying all previous objections to his daughter Angelita’s marriage to the Marquis, as well as his praise of the virtues of hard work.

The contradictions revealed with virtuous characters who duel against their wishes may not necessarily reflect a failure on the part of popular Spanish theater to hold to neo-classical precepts. In *El delincuente honrado*, as Torcuato advocates the ideal of honor-as-virtue, he recognizes the reality of honor-as-reputation. Milord Tolmin argues against dueling while walking step by step through the very ceremony that he is attempting to avoid, and then pledges to finish the fight against the Count of Esteren after their duel is interrupted in *La Jacoba*. The pull of *el qué dirán* (“what people will say”) requires dramatic devices such as the revelation of Tío Juan’s nobility in *El vinatero de Madrid*. Gaspar Zavala y Zamora creates an idealized enlightened man in *El amante generoso*, but During resorts to the physical display of a mock duel in order to prove his rational superiority. These sentimental comedies point to a shift toward a more individually-centered concept of honor and use emotions to articulate the internal battles that arise as characters agonize over whether to use violence to defend their reputation when reason decries such excessive force, or face social death. The resolutions of these works exalt the notion of honor-as-virtue, but they turn to dramatic devices which contradict this ideal. Thus, the idea of honor-as-reputation also continues to prevail in these comedias. In conclusion, the tensions revealed by these sympathetic representations of dueling may point to the failure of sensibility as a cohesive model for resolving dramatic conflicts in a society with such diverse definitions of honor and citizenship.
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