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# Patterns Of Conflict: The Individual And Society In Eighteenth-Century Spanish Literature

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The individual is a member of society from the moment of his or her birth. Despite the measures that society takes to shape and regulate the individual in accordance with its dictates, he feels the need to exert his individuality: he may protest the written and unwritten laws that restrict him; he may strive to influence society in a positive way; his actions may have a negative effect on society.

Since the conflict between the individual and society forms an integral part of the human condition, it is not surprising that it has appeared under diverse guises as an essential theme in all periods of Spanish literature, including the eighteenth century.[1] While it is clearly misleading to interpret literary works as undistorted mirror images of social life, the ways in which these conflicts are resolved do help us to understand which ideals and norms of conduct eighteenth-century society expected the individual to uphold and which ones it allowed him or her to oppose.

Although eighteenth-century Spanish literary works do incorporate the plight of the individual in conflict with or restricted by society, few authors specifically discuss this theme. One author who dares to comment on it is José Cadalso. In his *Cartas marruecas* he points out a contradiction that he sees in Spaniards: on the one hand, they praise individual freedom; on the other, they are enslaved not only by laws imposed on them but by norms of social conduct which they willingly impose on themselves:

> Cada día alaban la libertad ... pero al mismo tiempo se labran a sí mismos la más penosa esclavitud. La naturaleza les impone leyes como a todos los hombres; la religión les añade otras; la patria, otras; las carreras, otras; y como si no bastasen todas estas cadenas para esclavizarlos, se imponen a sí mismos otros muchos preceptos espontáneamente en el trato civil y diario, en el modo de vestirse, en la hora de comer, en la

> especie de diversión, en la calidad del pasatiempo, en el amor y en la amistad. (31:162-63)

Several factors explain why Cadalso's contemporaries were reluctant to discuss the plight of the individual. One is the absolutist nature of the Bourbon monarchy, which discouraged promulgating the rights of the individual or extolling individuality. Another is the traditional, hierarchical nature of society, which writers tended to uphold. Unlike Jean Jacques Rousseau, for example, who saw society as a *negative* force that corrupts the essentially *positive* individual, Spanish authors still viewed society as a *positive* force that shapes the potentially *negative* individual.

Like their medieval and Golden Age predecessors, eighteenth-century Spanish literary works reflect a society that was vertical in structure. It stratified its members in three estates—clergy, nobility, and common people—each of which had specific duties to perform. Eighteenth-century literature also echoes the fact that the notion of status defined solely by lineage had begun to evolve into the modern concept of class determined by wealth.

Although few eighteenth-century literary works depict the clergy, they do portray the nobility—especially *hidalgos*, who constituted the lowest stratum of the aristocracy and were still the object of scathing satire. *Hidalgos* generally resided in the countryside, where they were idle landowners unaccustomed to earning money; indeed, since the Middle Ages they had been theoretically prohibited by law from engaging in crafts. Gradually, however, economic necessity was beginning to force *hidalgos* to work for a living, and in 1770 Carlos III formally lifted the prohibition. Golden Age literature had stereotyped them as poor, vain, and ridiculous, a characterization that would continue in eighteenth-century literature. In his *Cartas marruecas*, for instance, Cadalso satirizes the vanity and pride of the impoverished *hidalgo*:

> Este se pasea majestuosamente en la triste plaza de su pobre lugar, embozado en su mala capa, contemplando el escudo de armas que cubre la puerta de su casa medio caída, y dando gracias a la providencia divina de haberle hecho don Fulano de Tal. (38: 178)

Cadalso also pokes fun at all useless nobleman who have inherited ancient titles but who do not contribute to society:



> Nobleza hereditaria es la vanidad que yo fundo en que, ochocientos años antes de mi nacimiento, muriese uno que se llamó como yo me llamo, y fue hombre de provecho, aunque yo sea inútil para todo. (13: 128)

In another *Carta* Cadalso tells us that there is nothing more tiresome than nobles who judge a man not by what he is but by whom his grandparents were:

> ¿Habrá cosa más cansada que la compañía de los que no estiman a un hombre por lo que es, sino por lo que fueron sus abuelos? Estos son los nobles. (33: 165)

Despite these and many other examples of antiaristocratic satire,[2] Spanish writers did not seek to end the nobility or to change the established order. They were not revolutionaries or even democrats but elitists. Although they undoubtedly considered themselves "enlightened," many of them belonged to the aristocracy, which they defended as an institution.

The distinguished statesman and author Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos, for example, recognized the need for societal hierarchy—and for societal superiority and inequality, which hierarchy presupposes:

> No pudiendo existir sociedad sin jerarquía, ni jerarquía sin orden gradual de distinción y superioridad, la desigualdad, no sólo es necesaria, sino esencial a la sociedad civil. ("Tratado" 125)

Although Jovellanos defended the nobility as an institution, he did propose reforming the laws governing the customs of primogeniture and entailment, which condemned dispossessed noblemen and *hidalgos* to unproductive lives of poverty and idleness:

> Nada es más repugnante que ver sin establecimiento ni carrera y condenados a la pobreza, al celibato y a la ociosidad a los individuos de las familias nobles cuyos primogénitos disfrutan pingües mayorazgos ... los mayorazgos inmensos ... mantienen en la ociosidad y el orgullo un gran número de hidalgos pobres, tan perdidos para las profesiones útiles, que desdeñan, como para las carreras ilustres, que no pueden seguir. ("Informe" 45-46)

As for the common people, this third estate of laborers and taxpayers

had gradually broadened over the centuries to encompass the bourgeoisie, which had become more numerous with the increase of commerce and the subsequent growth of cities. Eighteenth-century literature presents the gamut of commoners. In keeping with the Spanish tradition of social satire, literary works target those superficial, vacuous bourgeoisie who imitated anything and everything French.[3]

Although commoners would continue to play an important role as protagonists in literary works, Spanish writers of the "enlightened" elite generally regarded the *vulgo* as ignorant and therefore incapable of participating in a democratic process. Fray Benito Jerónimo Feijóo, for instance, attacked the credulity and superstitions of the *vulgo*; he also believed that the masses were incapable of discerning truth from error:

> Los ignorantes, por ser muchos, no dejan de ser ignorantes ... No hay dentro de este vasto cuerpo luz nativa con que pueda discernir lo verdadero de lo falso. (*Teatro* I: 85-87)

To his credit, however, Feijóo recognized that the ignorant are present in every social class, not only in the lowest.[4]

Reformers sought to uplift the *vulgo* through education; indeed, Jovellanos felt that educating the farmer was crucial to reviving the agricultural economy of Spain. The playwright Leandro Fernández de Moratín considered the theater to be the only "school" available to the masses, whom he described as "engulfed in thick clouds of ignorance." The playwright was therefore morally obliged to educate as well as to entertain the masses:

> El pueblo, a quien habitualmente rodea espesa nube de ignorancia, halla en el teatro la única escuela abierta para él, donde se le desengaña sin castigarle, y se le ilustra cuando se le divierte. ("Discurso" 24)

In theory, the traditional social structure restricted the individual to his own estate, which fixed his place in society. In practice, however, social ascent had been common even during the Middle Ages, and it was a recurrent motif in Golden Age literature. Although most Spaniards were still remaining in their class during the eighteenth century, enough commoners were wedding nobles that a law was issued in 1776 (but repealed in 1790) whereby young nobles under twenty-five years of age had to secure their fathers' permission in order to marry. This law indicates that a powerful group of aristocrats was still seeking to protect its customary privileges and influence at a time when the *ancien régime* was beginning to crumble.[5]



Eighteenth-century literature in general continues to express a conservative viewpoint regarding social climbers. José Cadalso, for example, laments the fact that fathers want to make nobles out of their children by any means possible.[6] One of Ramón de la Cruz's *Sainetes*, "La presumida burlada," mocks a social-climbing servant who marries an older man; she then claims that her parents were *hidalgos* and insists that the servants call her *usted* instead of *tú*; in the end, of course, she realizes that she has made a fool of herself.

A stock character of Golden Age comedies was the wealthy but elderly merchant who conspired to marry the young daughter of an impoverished aristocrat. Outwitting both men, the heroine asserted her will and wed her poor but aristocratic sweetheart. Playwrights respected established society by punishing the socially ambitious commoner; at the same time, however, they questioned the custom of arranged marriages, which deprived individuals of the ability to exercise their free will and frustrated their natural desire for love.

The problems created by arranged marriages would continue to trouble eighteenth-century authors.

In José Cadalso's *Cartas marruecas*, we read about a woman who was only twenty-four years old when she buried her sixth husband! As extreme as her case might be, she does make a compelling case for freedom of choice. Had she been allowed to choose her first husband, she might still have been married to him; instead, she was forced to obey a father who refused to take her feelings into account:

> Todo esto se hubiera remediado si yo me hubiera casado una vez a mi gusto, en lugar de sujetarlo seis veces al de un padre que cree la voluntad de la hija una cosa que no debe entrar en cuenta para el casamiento. (75:263-64)

Leandro Fernández de Moratín penned several comedies involving arranged marriages. The main characters of these comedies belong to the middle class; although they use the title "*don*" or "*doña*", they are not aristocrats but land-owning farmers and bourgeoisie, an indication that the lines separating the two estates were already blurred by the eighteenth century.

Moratín satirizes greedy parents and guardians who abuse their authority. In addition, he criticizes a social system that teaches a young woman blind obedience, passivity, and hypocrisy instead of preparing her to exert her free will wisely.[7] Moratín's views are reflected in the lament of Isabel, the young victim in his comedy *El viejo y la niña*:

> ¿No sabéis que nos enseñan
> a obedecer ciegamente? ...
> El respeto, la amenaza,
> la edad inocente y tierna,
> la timidez natural,
> ...supo
> la autoridad indiscreta
> oprimir la voluntad. (3.8)

The villainous guardian in *El viejo y la niña* deceived Isabel into marrying an old man, who keeps her under close surveillance to prevent her from straying. The guardian and the husband have ruined not only her life but that of the young man whom she had hoped to marry. Isabel, however, finally takes charge of her own destiny when she leaves her husband and enters a convent.[8]

Moratín's most famous comedy *El sí de las niñas* ends happily for the lovers, but only because the old man realizes *before* he marries the maiden that he is about to make a terrible mistake. He sincerely wants to know how she feels about him. Having been taught the art of saying what she *thinks* people want to hear, she lies to him time and time again. Only after he has repeatedly coaxed her does she finally tell him the truth. His response to her confession echoes Moratín's criticism of the way in which girls were still being raised:

> He aquí los frutos de la educación. Esto es lo que se llama criar bien a una niña: enseñarla a que desmienta y oculte las pasiones más inocentes con una pérfida disimulación. Las juzgan honestas luego que las ven instruídas en el arte de callar y mentir ... Todo se les permite, menos la sinceridad. Con tal que no digan lo que sienten, con tal que finjan aborrecer lo que más desean ... ya están bien criadas; y se llama excelente educación la que inspira en ellas el temor, la astucia y el silencio de un esclavo. (3.8)

The old man then calls off the wedding, and the young lady marries her true love.

Moratín's *El barón* introduces us to yet another meek young woman who is afraid to tell the truth. Her mother, a greedy social-climbing peasant, schemes to marry her to a man claiming to be a baron. Once it is revealed that the baron is a con artist, the daughter weds her secret love. Moratín thus punishes the mother, who comes to her senses: she accepts her station in life and recognizes the folly of her social aspirations.[9]



The young lady in Moratín's *La mojigata* is different from those in his other comedies because, from the very beginning, she takes an active role in assuring her own happiness. Her father's strictness has led her to become an aggressive, disobedient, scheming hypocrite (*mojigata*). She falls in love with a scoundrel who is even more despicable than she is. Because he has seduced her, the father has no choice but to allow them to marry, and he belatedly sees how misguided he was in raising her.

Moratín's message in these comedies is clear: whether timid or bold by nature, a poorly taught young lady is incapable of making wise decisions.

Tomás de Iriarte also wrote two comedies about misguided parents, *El señorito mimado* and *La señorita malcriada*. Be they doting or negligent, the parents in these plays unwittingly create spoiled, irrational, antisocial individuals who are unable to heed the voice of reason. Only when these children are removed from their parental environment will they stand a chance of developing into civilized human beings.

Traditional established society was inherently exclusive. It attempted to bar from participating in its mainstream certain people whose ethnic and/or religious ancestry it deemed unacceptable. Included among these men and women were New Christians and *pícaros*, whose characteristic sense of alienation was portrayed in numerous Golden Age novels. Neither belonging fully to established society nor able to disassociate themselves from their past, these marginal individuals lived in a state of negative solitude—not the solitude of their choosing but one that society had imposed on them.

Eighteenth-century literature rarely depicts the plight of New Christians, who were becoming increasingly assimilated into mainstream society; consequently, the conflicts that had marked their lives no longer warranted treatment as literary themes or motifs.

By the eighteenth century, the authentic, alienated *pícaro* had also vanished from the literary scene. Diego de Torres Villarroel's *Vida* is one work that some readers have considered an heir to the picaresque tradition. Its autobiographical form and certain episodes do seem picaresque (as a young man, for instance, Torres Villarroel exploited gullible people by pretending to be a dance master and a professional bullfighter), and its social satire reminds us of Francisco de Quevedo's *El buscón*. Nonetheless, Torres Villarroel is not a *pícaro* because his ancestry is not at all "tainted"; in fact, he stresses his Old Christian lineage. He rises socially and financially, but *within* the mainstream of society to which he already belongs. Has he experienced any lasting conflicts with society? None that he relates. Has negative solitude marked his existence? Not as far as we know.

Another story with picaresque overtones is Padre José Francisco de la Isla's *Fray Gerundio de Campazas*. This novel is a rarity for two reasons: it is one of the few eighteenth-century novels to survive the test of time, and its chief protagonist is a preacher. Readers have long noted the picaresque motifs of social ascent and gullibility. Padre Isla, however, does not satirize the social pretensions of the ignorant Gerundio; instead, he attacks the tasteless, verbose sermons of the renowned preacher that Gerundio has become.

Although the themes of conflict and negative solitude are absent in these two distant relatives of the picaresque, they do appear in several eighteenth-century poems that portray the plight of a person forced to live in exile. When we consider the political upheavals of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, it comes as no surprise that Spanish writers—many of whom were also active in politics—found themselves behind bars or exiled. These individuals shared with true *pícaros* a radical form of negative solitude, and they were unable to control the circumstances that forced them to forsake their world.

One such individual was the poet Juan Meléndez Valdés. Having played an active role in the government of José Bonaparte, he knew that he risked death following the defeat of Bonaparte's army. Meléndez Valdés therefore fled Spain in 1813 and settled in France, where he would die four years later.

In "El Náufrago" Meléndez Valdés poignantly depicts the negative solitude that afflicts him as he likens himself to a shipwreck victim:

> Náufrago, extranjero, errante ...
> ¿Cuándo mis estrechos lares,
> que hoy en soledad se afligen
> sin su dueño, salvo y ledo
> tornarán a recibirle? ... (EC 195-98)

In addition to negative solitude, eighteenth-century poetry treats the theme of positive solitude—the voluntary estrangement from the same corrupt, superficial world that *pícaros* and social climbers hoped to call their own. The individuals who savor solitude and the freedom it brings typify people of all ages who have fled the physical and moral pollutants of urban and courtly life. These people encounter what they seek only in the countryside, where they can enjoy the simple, essential pleasures of life. This theme of *beatus ille* had been treated by so many poets that by the Golden Age it had become a hollow literary convention. Nevertheless, the fact that the theme continued to enjoy popularity well into the eighteenth century attests to the stifling, artificial atmosphere of courtly society.



It was not uncommon for poets to link the theme of *beatus ille* with that of *desengaño*. When a person reaches the state of *desengaño*, he comes to the realization that the things he craved—beauty, wealth, power, and even glory—are transitory and meaningless in the face of death. He then sees reality as it is, not as he imagined it to be; and he understands how insidious are many of the societal values that he once espoused. For the undeceived individual, the solitude and freedom of rustic life take on a spiritual dimension: they offer him the opportunity to learn from the peasant—understandably depicted by eighteenth-century writers as virtuous and innocent—and to change his own life accordingly.

Several of Meléndez Valdés' poems treat the themes of positive solitude and *desengaño*. One such poem is "De mi vida en la aldea," which describes the spiritual renewal that the poet feels when he can escape the turmoil of the city:

> Cuando a mi pobre aldea
> feliz escapar puedo,
> las penas y el bullicio
> de la ciudad huyendo,
> alegre me parece
> que soy un hombre nuevo,
> y entonces sólo vivo,
> y entonces sólo pienso. (EC 108)

In "Mi vuelta al campo" the poet refers to the labors of rustic life as the companions of virtue and innocence:

> ¡Afortunado el que en humilde choza
> mora en los campos, en seguir se goza
> los rústicos trabajos, compañeros
> de virtud e inocencia! ... (*BAE* 173)

In yet another poem, "El filósofo en el campo," he asks his friend to forget courtly life and to learn from the virtuous peasant:

> No, Fabio amado, no; por estos campos
> la corte olvida; ven y aprende en ellos,
> aprende la virtud ... (EC 288)

Instead of always projecting an idealized image of rustic life, however, Meléndez Valdés does occasionally allude to the harsh realities of a poor

farmer's life.[10] His "El filósofo en el campo," for example, reveals the compassion he feels for the peasant, who is destined to lead a life of misery:

> Miro y contemplo los trabajos duros
> del triste labrador, su suerte esquiva,
> su miseria, sus lástimas; y aprendo
> entre los infelices a ser hombre ...
> El carece de pan; cércale hambriento
> el largo enjambre de sus tristes hijos,
> escuálidos, sumidos en miseria;
> y acaso acaba su doliente esposa
> de dar ¡ay! a la patria otro infelice,
> víctima ya de entonces destinada
> a la indigencia y del oprobio siervo ... (285-86)

In the "Epístola" to Llaguno y Amírola, his friend and Minister of Grace and Justice, Meléndez Valdés pleas for help on behalf of tenant farmers, who are victims not only of Nature's vicissitudes but of social injustice as well:

> Ve en él gemir al mísero colono
> y al común padre demandar rendido
> el pan, querido amigo, que tú puedes
> darle, de Dios imagen en el suelo. (EC 282)

The conflict between the individual and the societal honor code, which achieved such prominence as a theme in Golden Age drama, also provides the thematic basis of many eighteenth-century plays. Most of these works are set in ancient or medieval times, when the honor code wielded considerably more power over the individual than during the eighteenth century.

Since abiding by the honor code implies fulfilling simultaneous obligations, it may happen that one imperative collides with another. How the confused individual resolves the conflict reveals which obligation society considered more important.

We see such a conflict in Vicente García de la Huerta's *Raquel*. This tragedy recounts the adulterous love affair between Alfonso VIII and Raquel, a relationship that has caused Alfonso to neglect his royal duties. His trusted nobleman Hernán García is torn between his loyalty to Alfonso and his duty to Castile. Although the Castilians are determined to kill Raquel in order to cure Alfonso of his lovesickness, García cannot bring himself to take part in her execution, since killing her would dishonor the



King. By alerting Alfonso to the dangers surrounding Raquel, Garc chooses loyalty to his King over duty to his kingdom.

Another theme of eighteenth-century tragedies concerns the conflict b tween true love and honor-duty. Characters are torn between the love th feel for their spouses or lovers, and their obligation to carry out their s cial roles; in other words, they waver between doing what they, as indivi uals, would like to do and what society expects them to do.

One eighteenth-century tragedy that incorporates this conflict is Ma nuel José Quintana's *Pelayo*. This tragedy concerns the future king of As turias, his sister Hormesinda, and the Moorish governor Munuza, who ha captured Gijón during Pelayo's absence. Hormesinda and Munuza fall i love and marry. The Christian nobles attribute to feminine weaknes (*flaqueza*) the fact that she has chosen the love of a Moorish conquer over loyalty to her Christian compatriots, and she feels consumed wit guilt. When Pelayo returns home and tries to convince her to leave Munu za, she is further torn between duty to her husband and loyalty to h brother. The Moors seize Pelayo, and Hormesinda frees him. She has pro en her loyalty to her brother but has caused the Moors to suspect her lo alty to Munuza. The Christians then take Munuza prisoner. In order t prove that she loves her husband, she offers to free him, but he kills h and then stabs himself. Hormesinda has lost her life for trying to reconci the unreconcilable: love and honor-patriotism.[11]

Another tragedy about love in conflict with honor-duty is Cienfuegos' *L condesa de Castilla*. Like Quintana's *Pelayo*, this play involves a Moor an two Christians, one of whom is the Countess of Castile. She despises he self for having fallen in love with the Moor: "Yo le amo, le idolatro ... ¿y un vil moro mi albedrío daré, mi honor, mi fama?" (1.8). Unbeknownst t her, however, the Moor is the warrior Almanzor (portrayed in this play as loving, caring man) who killed her husband on the battlefield. When he f nally does reveal his identity, she cannot carry out her pledge to aveng her husband's death. Almanzor is taken prisoner by the Countess's so Sancho García, who discovers that his mother and Almanzor love eac other. Angry, and jealous of his mother's influence at the court, Sanch threatens to kill Almanzor. In revenge, she takes a cup of poison with th intention of giving it to her son; but just as he is about to drink from th cup, she snatches it and drinks the poison herself. Like Quintana' Hormesinda, the Countess must perish because she has chosen love ov honor-duty; as she tells Almanzor moments before her death, "era odiart mi deber; y te amo" (3.6). Sancho realizes that his rashness has also co tributed to his mother's death, and he frees Almanzor. In the last, rath melodramatic scene, grief overcomes enmity, and the two men pledge the eternal friendship.[12]

Jovellanos' *El delincuente honrado* is a comedy that also involves honor-duty in conflict with the love between a woman and the man who killed her late husband. In this play, however, the late husband was a negative individual—a womanizing ne'er-do-well who precipitated his own death by provoking the hero to a duel. Unlike in Cienfuegos' *La condesa de Castilla*, both husband and wife once again find happiness together. Jovellanos has rewarded the couple because love and honor-duty do not exclude each other. The lovers are portrayed as essentially positive individuals: she has fallen in love with a Christian Spaniard, not with a Moor, and he is a truly noble man, unlike her late husband.

*El delincuente honrado* presents yet another conflict: that of a father torn between the love he feels for his son, and his duty to uphold the law that his son has violated. The hero's father is a judge who feels duty-bound to sentence his son to death for having engaged in the duel—even though his son took great pains to avoid bloodshed. The son narrowly escapes death only because a friend secures a royal pardon. The King does not revoke the law against dueling, which in Jovellanos' view is unjust; he merely pardons the hero because of the extenuating circumstances surrounding the duel.

While some dramas depict honor in conflict with unadulterous love, others portray honor in conflict with illicit passion. The noble or royal protagonist in these plays neglects the duties that his social status entails because passion—his tragic flaw—has blinded him to reason.

As we have seen, this conflict appears in García de la Huerta's *Raquel*. During the seven years that Alfonso VIII and Raquel have lived together, Alfonso has virtually abandoned his kingdom, and he has allowed Raquel to wield inordinate power. While Alfonso is away on a hunting expedition, the Castilian people rise up against Raquel, whom they blame for Alfonso's irresponsible behavior. She is mortally wounded just as Alfonso returns home. He belatedly comes to his senses and realizes that his passion has ultimately caused her death.

Courage, virtue, lineage, and duty are those aspects of honor which contribute not only to the individual's sense of dignity and self-worth but also to his reputation. Much to a man's chagrin, however, his reputation also depends on the actions (real or imagined) of other people, especially of the women in his family. Strive as he may to be the master of his honor, he is not, because he cannot fully control his reputation. Just like Golden Age dramatists before him, Jovellanos stresses this supreme irony of the honor code in his *El delincuente honrado*:



> El honor ... es un bien que todos debemos conservar; pero es un bien que no está en nuestra mano, sino en la estimación de los demás. La opinión pública le da y le quita. (1.5)

Because a good reputation was considered crucial to social acceptance, traditional Spanish society expected a woman to adhere to its norms and conventions regarding her conduct with members of the opposite sex. How a woman interacted with a man not immediately related to her profoundly affected both her and her family. This explains why the fear of *¿qué dirán?*, or gossip, often—though not always—served to curb her amorous inclinations.

Medieval and Golden Age literature attests to the importance that society attached not only to a woman's reputation but to the appearance thereof. Countless dramas present tales of seduced women who must pay a steep price for having lost their reputation: spinsterhood, the convent, or even death. Eighteenth-century Spanish literature, however, offers us few stories of seduction, adultery, and vengeance. One reason for the scarcity of this type of drama was the French influence on urban and courtly society; as a result, the rules governing female conduct were becoming more relaxed, and the state of marriage was beginning to lose some of the prestige that it had held. In the countryside and in small towns, of course, traditional norms remained in effect, a point that the misguided father of Iriarte's *La señorita malcriada* makes while discussing whether or not his spoiled daughter's worsening reputation will ruin her prospects of marriage:

> En las aldeas las mozas
> recogidas y aplicadas,
> las que más bajan los ojos,
> son las que más bien se casan.
> Acá [en la ciudad] va por otra regla. (1.3)

The best known eighteenth-century treatment of seduction is Antonio de Zamora's *No hay plazo que no se cumpla, ni deuda que no se pague, y convidado de piedra*. An imitator of Golden Age plays, Zamora borrowed from Tirso de Molina's *El burlador de Sevilla y convidado de piedra* to produce his version of the Don Juan legend.

The first part of both Tirso's and Zamora's plays concerns Don Juan as seducer. The second treats the punishment that this negative individual has earned for having defied God and society. Tirso's Don Juan is condemned to the eternal fires of Hell because he died unrepentant, but Zamora's Don Juan sees the error of his ways and begs God to save his

soul. Although seduction has caused the two young ladies in Zamora's play to lose their reputation, their fate is not clear. Had these two young ladies been characters in Tirso's play, they would have been precluded from marrying. Zamora, however, does not specifically rule out matrimony, a sign that the traditional notion of reputation was becoming more flexible.

Despite indications that the honor code was weakening, and despite the enlightened ideals of social reform and freedom that we occasionally encounter, eighteenth-century Spanish literature in general continues to present a traditional, conservative view of the individual's role in society. As we have seen, this conservative view is reflected in the patterns of conflict that literary works recreate as well as in the solutions to these patterns of conflict.

Characters who exert their individuality *fail* if their aspirations violate those canons still considered the bedrock of an orderly and harmonious society. Male and female characters, for example, must abide by the limitations and obligations governing the roles to which they were born to play. They should not aspire to a higher social class, since society regarded social climbers as a threat to its *status quo*. The characters' responsibility to their roles should supercede any personal inclination that might hinder them from discharging their duties effectively. Men should manifest courage, virtue, and loyalty to their king and to Spanish law; furthermore, they should defend their family honor and respect the honor of other individuals. Women should safeguard their reputation and remain loyal to the ideals of Christian Spain.

Characters who exert their individuality *succeed* if they limit their defiance of society to certain customs and attitudes—forced marriage, materialism, corruption, and hypocrisy, for instance—which their creators considered harmful.

In the final analysis, then, the destinies of eighteenth-century individuals generally depend on the nature of their conflictive relationships with society. Conflict is resolved to the disadvantage of individuals whose conduct threatens social order and harmony. Conflict is resolved to the advantage of individuals who oppose those customs and attitudes that are detrimental not only to their happiness but to the well-being of society.



**•NOTES**

1. I have taken the liberty of including under the heading "eighteenth-century literature" those works written from 1700 (the establishment of the Bourbon dynasty in Spain) to 1814 (the restoration of the Bourbon dynasty).
2. Other examples of antiaristocratic satire are found in Luis Cañuelo's *El Censor*, discursos 162-163.
3. Satire of the bourgeoisie is seen in Diego de Torres Villarroel's *Vida* and *Sueños morales* and in Ramón de la Cruz's *Sainetes*.
4. Feijóo's opinions would be echoed two centuries later by José Ortega y Gasset in his *La rebelión de las masas*.
5. See Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, *Sociedad y estado en el siglo XVIII español* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1976) 328.
6. José Cadalso, *Cartas marruecas*, ed. Joaquín Arce, 14th ed. (Madrid: Cátedra, 1992) 24.
7. See Kathleen Kish, "A School for Wives: Women in Eighteenth-Century Spanish Theater," *Women in Hispanic Literature: Icons and Fallen Idols*, ed. Beth Miller (Berkeley: U of California P, 1983) 184-200.
8. The similarities between *El viejo y la niña* and Cervantes' short "exemplary" novel "El celoso extremeño" are obvious; one notable difference is that the wife in Cervantes' story commits adultery. In Cervantes' view, she is the victim of selfishness and oppression; although she might have resisted the impulse to look elsewhere for love, society should not sentence her to death since its values influenced her father and her husband to mistreat her.
9. The girl's uncle had tried to convince the mother that the baron was a sham and that socially mixed marriages occurred only in comedies. He was referring to Golden Age plays (and short stories) that present the romance of two apparently unequal lovers and the discovery in the denouement that the commoner is really a noble. This solution, like Moratín's, respected the widespread disapproval of socially mixed marriages, on the one hand, and allowed love to triumph, on the other. For more on socially mixed marriages in Golden Age literature, see Sheila R. Ackerlind, *Patterns of Conflict: The Individual and Society in Spanish Literature to 1700* (NY: Peter Lang, 1989) ch. 2.
10. See Carlos Blanco Aguinaga, Julio Rodríguez Puértolas, and Iris M. Zavala, *Historia social de la literatura española (en lengua castellana)*, vol. 2 (Madrid: Castalia, 1979) 61-63.
11. Two earlier tragedies involving the same characters and themes are Nicolás Fernández de Moratín's *Hormesinda* and Jovellanos' *Pelayo*. In these plays, however, Hormesinda (called "Dosinda" in Jovellanos' version) resists Munuza's entreaties of love. Humiliated and vindictive, but hopeful that force will accomplish what sweet words have not, he orders her held captive. Eventually Pelayo returns home,

Munuza is killed, and Hormesinda is rescued. By sparing her, Moratín and Jovellanos have rewarded her for putting duty before love.

12. José Cadalso and José Zorrilla also wrote tragedies about the same characters; both works are titled *Sancho García*. In Cadalso's play, Almanzor—portrayed as a negative, ambitious man—prevails upon the Countess to murder her son. Cadalso punishes her by forcing her to drink the poison that she had prepared for her son.

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# "Macario" de Juan Rulfo y el espacio de un monólogo

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Diversos análisis de la obra de Juan Rulfo destacan que la misma se nutre de dos corrientes, una telúrica, otra cosmopolita. Por un lado *El llano en llamas* y *Pedro Páramo* tienen a sus espaldas la novela de la Revolución, el costumbrismo y el indigenismo. Por otro, la obra de Rulfo se incorpora al movimiento de la "nueva novela" de las décadas de los cuarenta y cincuenta en México y América Latina, que posteriormente da origen al "boom" de las letras del continente. Así, es posible examinar la obra rulfiana de dos maneras; en primer término como una de las cumbres del regionalismo, en la medida que trata temas ya presentes en las obras de la novela de la Revolución relacionados con el ámbito agrario mexicano. En segundo término debe tenerse en cuenta que la narrativa mexicana de los años cuarenta y cincuenta se diferencia de la producida a partir de los años inmediatamente posteriores a la Revolución en tanto las innovaciones que proponen son demasiado radicales para hacerlas pertenecer a la novela regionalista. Dos son los rasgos destacables de esta nueva novela en la que se enmarca la obra de Rulfo: por un lado la toma de conciencia del discurso regionalista y de su relación con la antropología tal como se desarrolla a partir de la Primera Guerra. Por otro lado, esta toma de conciencia conlleva un cuestionamiento del medio expresivo que la narrativa utiliza, el lenguaje.

El lenguaje en Rulfo tiene un papel sumamente importante, ya que es una de las instancias en las que la "mexicanidad" de su literatura se universaliza al mismo tiempo, y en razón de que, se hace más local. El lenguaje por él creado hace posible una presentación subjetiva de la realidad mediante el uso de técnicas que enfatizan la subjetividad, la fijación del punto de vista, y el uso del monólogo interior. Tal es el caso del relato "Macario" del volumen *El llano en llamas* (1953).

"Macario" apareció por primera vez en noviembre de 1945 en el número 6 de la revista *Pan* y fue posteriormente incorporado a *El llano en llamas*. El relato es un buen ejemplo de temas tradicionales tratados mediante formas narrativas novedosas. En este cuento Rulfo propone la percepción de la realidad a través de la subjetividad del hablante, forzando al lector a