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"Shame on you for letting me lecture you on life" : the gracioso character and his role as a mentor in Lope de Vega's drama : summary

In: Kolmanová, Magdaléna. *"Afréntate de que yo / te enseño el vivir" : el gracioso y su papel de consejero en el teatro de Lope de Vega*. Primera edición
Brno: Masaryk University Press, 2023, pp. 209-211

ISBN 978-80-280-0217-6 (brožováno); ISBN 978-80-280-0218-3 (online ; pdf)

Stable URL (handle): <https://hdl.handle.net/11222.digilib/digilib.78302>

Access Date: 22. 02. 2024

Version: 20230621

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SUMMARY

“Shame on you for letting me lecture you on life”

The gracioso character and his role as a mentor in Lope de Vega’s drama

The study deals with the so-called *gracioso* type character, a comic servant, in Lope de Vega’s drama, with focus on his role as a mentor. In previous research (Kolmanová, 2011; 2013), it was found that the advice given by the character of comic servant to his master constitutes almost a third of all his dialogues and significantly influences the plot. At the same time, it turned out that there is still an ongoing controversy about the ideological interpretation of the Spanish Golden Age Theater, and therefore there is not a clear answer to the question of the social paradox of a servant who advises his master. In order to explore both internal (plot) and external (historical-social) aspects, Robert Abirached’s theory of the theater character, which divides the theater character into six components, was chosen as the basis of the research. *Persona*, *character*, *dramatic plot* and partly also *actor* form a base for the research of the first part of the goals of the work. In contrast, *type* and *audience* are the components that formed the basis for exploring the second part of the objectives. The research is based on the analysis of a total of thirty plays by Lope de Vega from all periods of his work and all genres.

First, the diachronic aspect of the topic was examined to find out from which literary and non-literary sources this character and its advisory role is based. In the *Persona* chapter, we analyse mainly the language form, volume and diachronic development of the counsels, the *Character* chapter examines the character differences of individual *graciosos*, shown in their advice, while in the *Type* chapter we summarize the basic characteristics of the *gracioso* as a social type. The *Action* chapter analyses the functioning of the advice in dramatic action and the way they influence the plot; the topic of the *actor* in the next chapter examines how the advisor role of the *gracioso* could have been influenced by his interpreter. The audience as an important aspect of the Golden Age Theatre was the basis for the analysis of the general counsels, which are not directed at another

character, but rather an expression of gracioso's wisdom and "personal ideology." The last analytical chapter became an analysis of the advice in individual genres included in all the thirty studied plays, i.e. a comparison of their functioning in comedies and tragedies.

Research has shown that the importance of the advisory role of gracioso is even greater than expected. His advice is found in all the plays examined and makes up an average of forty per cent of all his dialogues. On the whole, the basic dramatic functions of his advice are confirmed. Firstly, they advance the plot, secondly, they hinder it by alerting and moderating the master in various ways. The so-called situational warnings, or advice, with which he warns his master of an imminent danger, has an almost one hundred per cent impact on his master's actions, so the character is indispensable to the plot. In contrast, when the master disobeys his "moral" warning, it often leads to a tragic end, again pointing to the importance of the gracioso as a mentor. The assumption that he advises from the position of an elder has not been confirmed. Neither the theory nor the dramatic texts themselves give a clear answer to at least the approximate age of this character.

In eleven of the thirty plays, he is the architect of an intrigue that helps to unravel the plot, from the smallest to a whole series of intrigues where he *de facto* controls the entire main plot, depending on the specific play. He almost always creates these plots that lead to a resolution on his own initiative. His importance is most confirmed in tragedies, because despite the marginalization of his comicality in this genre, his advice is even more important on average than in comedies. Therefore, we can say that the essence of the character is more of a mentor than a comic. However, the research of the chronological development of the advice also showed that there was a very significant change in its quantity and content around 1610. In the later works, his role as an advisor is established, he gives advice more often and becomes an advisor especially in matters of love. We explain this change by the introduction of censorship, when members of the nobility could no longer be depicted as freely in matters of love, and therefore a third party was needed to formally "arrange" these matters. Another reason is the considerable popularity of this mentoring role among the audience from the lower social class, which the gracioso partly personifies on stage, and can thus bring them a feeling of superiority over the noble audience.

The second part of the goals was to formulate arguments that could contribute to the ongoing controversy about the ideological interpretation of the Spanish Golden Age Theater. It was found that the gracioso character can be divided into two opposing elements in this regard. The first corresponds to the function that is sometimes described as an "escape route", that is, what is in the gracioso of the jester and fool archetype. These are the situations when, on his own initiative, he advises, reprimands, talks back, and sometimes even scolds his master, and it

seems that he is allowed everything. The second element, however, is the one by which society affirms itself in its own rules and it manifests itself in the gracioso by the loyalty, which is his only *sine qua non* characteristic. Although his “personal ideology” includes misogyny, opposition to marriage, etc., he always gets married and also always supports his master in getting a wife. Thus, his jester’s freedom is manifested only verbally, while his actions are always an expression of loyalty, and therefore regarding gracioso we cannot speak of any form of subversion, as some modern critics of Lope’s work speak of it.

