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The devil in the comedies of Félix Lope de Vega

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Thesis

THE DEVIL IN THE COMEDIES OF FELIX LOPE DE VEGA

Submitted by

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THE DEVIL IN THE COMEDIES OF
FELIX LOPE DE VEGA

A. INTRODUCTION: Purpose of the Thesis

The purpose of this thesis is to make a general study of those comedias de santos of Lope de Vega in which the devil appears as a speaking character, endeavoring to present the characteristics with which this figure was presented by our dramatist on the Spanish stage of his period.

The devil has always been a very popular character in Spain, especially in the seventeenth century, which was pre-eminently a Catholic century. In spite of all the efforts of the Spanish Inquisition to keep the faith free from superstitions, the people clung to their beliefs in astrology, magic⁽¹⁾, duendes and agüeros⁽²⁾. There seems to have been an excess of credulity and a general inclination to suspect a devil pact whenever an apparent unexplainable act was

- (1) Samuel H. Waxman: CHAPTERS ON MAGIC IN SPANISH LITERATURE. *Revue Hispanique*--Tome XXXVIII
(2) Ángel Salcedo Ruiz: LA LITERATURA ESPAÑOLA, Vol. 2, chapter III, p.51-60

performed. The people blindly believed in all sorts of pacts, apparitions, and miracles, and, consequently, the supernatural afforded an ample dramatic source of sure effect.

This study of the devil has been limited to those comedias de santos of Lope de Vega in which the devil actually appears on the stage, either in his own peculiar figure, or under any disguise. None of Lope's numerous autos sacramentales have been included, for they stand in a class by themselves and somewhat beyond the limited scope of this thesis.

B. THE PLAYWRIGHT: Félix Lope de Vega Carpio (1562-1635)

Félix Lope de Vega Carpio, or Lope de Vega, as he is generally known, is considered as the creator and founder of the genuine Spanish drama⁽¹⁾. He dominated the Spanish stage during almost half a century, attaining a popularity never attained by any other writer in any of the world's literature. His dramatic imagination and gift of improvisation can also be said to stand without a parallel. According to his own admission⁽²⁾ by 1632 Lope had already written fifteen hundred plays, exclusive of autos, loas, entremeses and odd pieces of poetry. Montalván in his Fama Póstuma credited Lope with the writing of eighteen hundred plays. There is really no foundation for such a high figure, and we must admit that his plays must not have surpassed the mark registered by Lope himself in 1632, for we know that he ceased writing plays a few years before his death⁽³⁾.

(1) Conde de Schack: HISTORIA DE LA LITERATURA ESPAÑOLA. (Spanish Ed.) Vol. II, p.430

(2) Lope de Vega: ELOGIO A CLAUDIO, and last phrases in LA MOZA DE CÁNTARO

(3) Schack Op. cit. Vol. II, p.390

According to Fitzmaurice-Kelly⁽¹⁾ only four hundred and seventy plays and four hundred autos have survived from this great mass of writings. Schack goes as far as to say⁽²⁾ that Lope probably wrote a grand total of 21,316,000 verses!

With such a gigantic production to his credit, it is no exaggeration to call Lope el fénix de los ingenios españoles or el monstruo de la naturaleza (prodigy of nature), as he was so often called by his contemporaries and followers.

Practically every form of composition and almost every imaginable theme were utilized by the great dramatist. On contemplating his very prolific literary career, as Professor Ford very well says⁽³⁾, "one is overcome with sheer amazement at the magnitude of his literary labors carried on despite the aberrations and distractions of a life of moral turpitude."

- (1) J. Fitzmaurice-Kelly: SPANISH LITERATURE (A Primer) p.66
- (2) Op. cit. Vol. II, p.388
- (3) J. D. M. Ford: MAIN CURRENTS IN SPANISH LITERATURE (Holt, N.Y., 1919) chapter IV, p.125

Lope's plays, as it is to be expected, were generally hastily written⁽¹⁾, and they present the faults inherent to improvisation. "Depth of philosophical thought was not one of his characteristics; he did not attempt abstruse philosophical problems, and therefore, with all his marvelous fertility of invention in devising dramatic plots, he remains a rather superficial spirit in too many of his pieces."⁽²⁾

- (1) "Y más de ciento en horas veinticuatro
Pasaron de las musas al teatro"
(Lope: EGLOGA A CLAUDIO)
- (2) Ford: Op. cit. p.130

C. THE PLAYS

All of the comedies included in this study are found in the fourth and fifth volumes of the magnificent edition of Lope's works published by the Spanish Royal Academy under the competent editorship of Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo. The introductory notes of the editor at the beginning of each volume have been most enlightening, and it has been found necessary to refer to them rather often.

1. El Prodigio de Etiopía

This play published at Zaragoza in 1645⁽¹⁾ is almost a secular play. It is usually classified among the comedias de santos probably because of the main character, San Moysés (Saint Moses), and because of the supernatural and religious nature of the ending.

(1) M. Menéndez y Pelayo: Op. cit. Vol. IV
OBSERVACIONES PRELIMINARES, p. LXII

Lope de Vega seems to have found his inspiration for this play in two different passages from the Flos Sanctorum of Rivadeneira⁽¹⁾, dealing with the lives of San Moysés and Santa Teodora (Theodora).

According to the legend, San Moysés was a negro born in Ethiopia. He became the slave of a governor of the Republic, who was forced to discharge him because of his bad and desultory habits. Moysés then became a daring bandit. After leading a life of debauchery and crime, he finally repented and became a monk. The devil constantly pursued the penitent with dreams and temptations which made his life miserable. The monk went to the very extremes in penance and privation, in an effort to control the evil impulses of his flesh, and to free himself from his diabolical dreams. The faith and perseverance of Moysés made the devil envious and impatient. He finally appeared to the monk, and taking a club, knocked him unconscious. The friar

(1) Segunda Parte, p.382

was ill for a whole year as a consequence of the tremendous blows received. Saint Isidore, the abbot of the convent, scolded Moysés for having entered into a physical contest with the devil, and assured the penitent that patience and faith are stronger than physical violence. He then blessed Moysés, telling him that his sufferings would cease, for it had been the will of the Lord to humble him, and to make him realize that all his toils and personal valor had been of no avail in the contest. From that moment Moysés' troubles and worries about the devil ceased. He became one of the most notable monks of his time, and died as a priest at a very advanced age.

The legend of Santa Teodora follows that of Moysés in Rivadeneira's work, and although it has no relation at all with the preceding legend, it seems to have suggested the name of Teodora in Lope's play, and also a few of the incidents in the plot.

Teodora was born in Alexandria during the reign of the Emperor Zenon about the end of the fifth century. She married a gentleman of her own class, and became famous because of her beauty and kindness. The devil became envious of such loveliness, and he tried his best to ruin the happiness of the married couple. He inspired an ardent passion in a rich young man, who fell madly in love with Teodora. All of the efforts and advances of the young lover were of no avail. He always was met with indifference and scorn. In despair he went to a diabolical sorceress, who finally brought about with the aid of her magic powers Teodora's downfall. When the young woman realized what she had done, she became greatly ashamed of her sin. Her repentance was so sincere, that she resolved to consecrate herself to a religious life. Dressed as a man, she entered a monastery, where she became famous as a monk. The rest of the legend has no relation whatsoever with our play.

In Lope's comedy, Teodora, the heroine, is also from Alexandria. She is loved by two men at the same time. One is Alexander, conqueror of the Ethiopians. The other is Filippo, his slave, who fell in love with Teodora when he saw her picture in the possession of Alexander. Teodora is not married, as in the original legend, but she appears unwillingly betrothed to Leoncio, the son of the Governor of Alexandria.

Teodora, fearing the impending marriage, agrees to run away with Alexander; but she is really kidnaped by Filippo, who deceives his master in a nocturnal encounter. The fugitives run to the mountain for refuge, and there Teodora discovers the true identity of her companion. Filippo tells the enraged maiden that the substitution had been arranged by Alexander himself, because he wanted to marry another woman. Teodora, desirous of vengeance, assumes the name of Cleopatra, and becomes the chief of a band of robbers.

She commits all kinds of crimes, and is always successful in protecting her modesty against the brutal desires of Filipo.

One day Alexander falls into the hands of the negro. Teodora promises Filipo to give him her hand if he allows her to take her own vengeance. Filipo consents, but just as Teodora is about to kill her lover, she discovers that Alexander was really innocent. She hates to marry the Ethiopian, but as she must be faithful to her promise, she cuts off her hand, and presents it to Filipo. Then she runs away full of remorse for all the evil she has done. The heroic deed of the maiden fills Filipo with tenderness, and as he is a Christian, he repents of his past life, and becomes a monk at the hermitage of Saint Isidore.

In the last scene Filipo appears as the hermit Moysés, struggling with the devil, who pierces and kills him with a javelin. The salvation of the hermit's soul is finally announced at the end of the play by an angel.

As the reader will readily perceive, the secular element in this drama is far above the religious. It almost seems as if the final scene with the devil were merely introduced to justify the title of the play.⁽¹⁾

Of the original legend, Lope utilized only the outstanding facts. The struggles of the Saint against the temptations of the devil did not lend themselves to dramatic portrayal. For this reason Lope presented only the actual physical encounter between the devil and the monk, altering the ending also for greater dramatic effect.

The devil in this play appears as the real servant of God, whose orders he was simply obeying in torturing Moysés. When the sins of the hermit were finally pardoned by God, the devil became so enraged, that he pierced Moysés with a javelin.

From the stage directions we get very little information concerning the physical appearance of

(1) M. Menéndez y Pelayo: Op. cit. Vol. 4
loc cit. p.LXVII

the devil. He is merely described as a galán, with a javelin. Throughout the play he is referred to as el Demonio.

Lope's play was recast by Juan Bautista Diamante in 1674. It appears under the name "El negro más prodigioso", but, according to Menéndez y Pelayo, the recast is not at all worthy of the original.

2. El Cardenal de Belén

This play which first appeared about 1618,⁽¹⁾ deals with the legend which developed around the life of Saint Jerome. It is considered as one of the poorest examples of the genre, and as the worst play ever written by Lope. Schack⁽²⁾ rightly describes it as singularmente monstruosa.

To give an idea as to the extravagance of the plot, let it suffice to say that Lope introduces on the stage no less than four saints, the emperor Julian, the Apostate, a married hermit, the three

(1) M. Menéndez y Pelayo: op. cit. Vol 4, Loc. cit. p. LXXI

(2) Schack: op. cit. Vol III, p. 164

Magi Kings, the World, Rome, Spain, a lion, and a donkey! Innumerable references are made to all sorts of outlandish topics, and the most extraordinary and supernatural scenes are presented throughout the play. The action in the first act takes place in Constantinople and Jerusalem. Thence it moves to Rome and Persia in the second act, and ends in the third in Bethlehem. It would appear that the element of time in the play, not to be outdone by that of the great variety of places, must need spread itself over no less space than that of eighty years! Lope was certainly not a follower of the so-called Aristotelian Unities, and we cannot but wonder what our dramatist would have done with the great opportunities offered by our modern motion pictures.

The sources from which Lope drew the material for his play are many, and by no means clear. He exceeded himself in the use of poetic license, inventing a highly fantastic plot, and writing a play hardly worthy of his masterful pen. His most

immediate source probably was a popular Flos Sanctorum, in which he probably found many of the legendary incidents attributed to Saint Jerome.

The devil takes a rather secondary part in the play. He first appears in the first act as el Demonio, complaining of Jerome's decision to live as a hermit in the desert. He follows Jerome, and awakens in his imagination thoughts of gaiety and love; but the Christian, heedless of the fanciful apparitions created by the Devil, ascends the heights of a rock, and offers his song to God. This is more than the Devil can stand. He goes away in despair.

In the second act the Devil does not appear at all on the stage, but there are several references made to his power of evil.

Julian, the Apostate, is depicted as having dealings with the infernal creature:

"Sacrificar al demonio
Quiero por este suceso.
Que soy su amigo confieso,
Y este es mayor testimonio,
Pues le sacrifico y doy
Honra, incienso y cuerpos muertos,
En obligación estoy.
Cristo no me respondiera
Como él me responde aquí."(1)

The dramatic effectiveness of the foregoing passage was no doubt greatly enhanced by the deep-rooted belief of the people in sorcery and devil pacts. Lope exploited this credulity for his own purposes as a dramatist, but the priest that he was, he did not miss the opportunity to drive home a lesson. At the end of the act San Mercurio appears, deus ex machina fashion, and pierces Julian with a lance. As the Apostate dies, he utters Lope's own anathema against magicians:

"Oh, maldito el hombre sea
Que se fía de hechiceros,
De agüeros supersticiosos
Y de oráculos inciertos!
Adiós, romano laurel,
Que voy al eterno fuego
Porque quise contrastar
La barquilla de San Pedro."(2)

(1) Act II, p.168

(2) End of Act II, p.174

The Devil reappears towards the end of the last act. He is accompanied by the Archangel Raphael, who addresses him as Luzbel. The Devil is a toy in the hands of the Angel. Raphael rebukes him for his daring to enter the birth-place of the Lord, and tortures him, furthermore, with the news of the foundation of the Jeronimian order, and the organization of new monasteries. Luzbel can do nothing other than give expression to his rage upon finding himself so overwhelmingly defeated. He realizes his own impotency and states his contempt and hatred for Rome, as the seat of Saint Peter's successor, and for Spain because of the nation's loyalty and faith.

As a further proof of weakness and submission, when the final tableau of Saint Jerome appears at the end of the play, the Devil promises never to enter a place containing a picture or image of the Saint.

No villain ever displayed greater weakness and meekness than Lope's Luzbel. He was in the hands of a Catholic priest, who was careful to give him his due together with accrued interest.

3. La Gran Columna Fogosa
San Basilio Magno

This play based on the life and miracles of Saint Basil, seems to have been first presented at Plasencia, Spain, in 1620.⁽¹⁾ According to M. Menéndez y Pelayo, Lope took the material for his play from one of the passages in Rivadencira's Flos Sanctorum.⁽²⁾

The legend of St. Basil is similar to the legends of Theophilus, St. Cyprian, and Faust. In the legend of Theophilus we have the first instance of a devil pact of which we have any record in Christian times.⁽³⁾ Theophilus was a priest in Adana, Cilicia, during the sixth century. While occupying

(1) M. Menéndez y Pelayo: op.cit. Observaciones Preliminares, Vol. IV, p. LXXX

(2) Ed. 1623, Vol. I, p.403

(3) S.M. Waxman: CHAPTERS ON MAGIC, Ch.II, p.43. Professor Waxman also states, p.45, that this is the earliest example he has found of a devil pact signed with blood.

the position of "vice-dominum", his governing bishop died, and he was offered the vacancy. He declined the honor because of his extreme modesty, and another priest was chosen bishop. Theophilus was later deposed by the new bishop from his position as "vice-dominum", and in his despondency he had recourse to the black arts. He went to a Jew who had great reputation as a magician. After consulting his master, the magician told Theophilus that the devil would reinstate him if he would sign a pact abjuring Christianity, and denying Christ and the Virgin Mary. The pact was signed, and Theophilus regained his lost position. He was later seized with remorse, and after praying for a long time, he was forgiven by the Virgin. He still had to be pardoned by Christ, but through the intercession of His Holy Mother, the much-desired pardon was also obtained. Theophilus next requested the return of his pact, and three days later, while sleeping, he saw it in a vision. When he awakened

he found the pact on his breast. The repented sinner confessed his sin to all the faithful, and had his pact burned publicly. Three days later, however, he was found dead in the very church where he had received the miraculous aid of the Virgin Mary.

The legend of St. Basil seems to be but a Spanish adaptation of the old Theophilus legend. The popular legends of Frey Gil and St. Cyprian were also variations of the same theme. The Gil legend was effectively dramatized early in the seventeenth century by Mira de Mescua in his Esclavo del Demonio, and the legend of St. Cyprian was later utilized by Calderón in his much discussed México Prodigioso.

All of these legends were peculiarly adapted to the tastes of the Spanish audiences of the period. They present striking similarities, and were evidently derived from a common source. As Professor Buchanan states in his scholarly edition of Mescua's

El Esclavo del Demonio, all these legends can be limited to a fixed formula in which we find: "the signing with blood, the same saving power of Grace exercised by the Blessed Virgin, the consequent renunciation of the devil, and conversion."⁽¹⁾

In the legend of St. Basil we find a Roman aristocrat called Proterius, whose daughter was determined to make a vow of chastity. One of his slaves, at the instigation of the envious devil, fell in love with the maiden. Realizing the impossibility of his desires, the slave went to a necromancer, asking for his help in the attainment of his desires. The magician put the slave in relations with the devil. The latter agreed to fulfill the servant's wishes, provided he signed a pact abjuring Christ and the sacrament of Baptism. The pact was signed, not with blood, however, and the devil started his nefarious task. He inspired in the maiden an ardent passion for her slave, and

(1) Professor Buchanan's Op. cit. Introduction, P.13

Proterius was finally forced to consent to the marriage. Everything was later discovered when it was found that the servant would never enter a church. The disconsolate wife appealed to Saint Basil. Through fervent prayers the Saint reconciled the sinner with the Church and obliged the devil to return the pact, which fell fluttering amidst a big crowd that had gathered to witness the miracle.

In Lope's play, Proterius appears under the name of Heraclio, and his daughter is called Antonia. The erring servant is Patricio. He confesses his devil pact when his wife, finding it strange that he should never enter a church, confronts him with a crucifix. Through the intercession of his wife, Patricio repents of his sin and willingly appears before St. Basil. The Saint advises Patricio to pray, and to do penance. The devils mortify the poor sinner, and in two occasions they nearly kill him, but whenever Patricio sees himself in danger, he finds safety in calling upon St. Basil. The Saint

is finally successful in driving the devils away, and in forcing them to return the written agreement.

In this comedy Lope presents several diabolical figures on the stage. In the first act he presents the Devil disguised as a hermit, tempting with flattery two hermits who dwell in the desert. The temptation fails, and the Devil runs away after discovering his identity. This is the first play of the period in which we find the devil disguised as a hermit. In another play, Fray Diablo,⁽¹⁾ the devil also appears disguised as a mendicant monk.

(1) This play is also attributed to Lope de Vega, but I have not been able to locate a copy. Fray Diablo seems to have served as a basis for a later play of the seventeenth century, El diablo predicador, often attributed to Luis de Belmonte Ferrandez. Both plays present a rather satirical conception of the devil. God forces Satan to disguise himself as a Franciscan friar, and to preach and labor for the welfare of the order as a punishment for attacks against the pious friars. The relationship between these two plays has been carefully studied by Léo Rouanet in the introduction to his French translation of El diablo predicador. (Le Diable Prédicateur, Alphonse Picard et Fils, Paris, 1901)

The Devil next appears at the end of Act I. He comes to answer the summons of Patricio, who has a letter of introduction from the necromancer. Satan is depicted as very distrustful of the promises of man; nothing but a written agreement can satisfy him. He is rightly distrustful, for even under such conditions we have seen how easily he is cheated in the transaction by Patricio and Basilio!

Satan summons one of his assistants, Zaquiél, and orders him to possess himself of Antonia's slave and confidant, in order to inflame the heart of the maiden. Consequently, in the second act Zaquiél speaks through the mouth of Sabina. Antonia already feels an undefinable moral torture, and Zaquiél, in the rôle of Sabina, forces her to admit that this feeling is nothing but love for her slave. From now on, Patricio appears accompanied by the Devil, who tells him what to do and what to say to be successful in his undertaking.

Satan is presented as full of wiles. When Heraclio discovers his daughter's love for the slave, he writes a note to St. Basil asking his advice, but the devil through a clever trick manages to prevent Basil from reading the message. Heraclio at last is forced to consent to the marriage, and then the devil goes away to attend to other urgent matters.

In the third act Satan and another devil appear threatening and torturing Patricio, who has already repented of his sins. Satan is enraged. He tells Patricio that he is the one who came to him requesting his aid, and therefore he is now in duty bound to keep his end of the bargain. Patricio's refusal only serves to increase the devil's wrath. At the suggestion of the other devil who accompanies him, Satan twice tries to kill Patricio, but in both instances is driven away by the unexpected appearance of St. Basil.

Towards the end of the act Satan appears again with other devils, claiming his man from Saint Basil. All his reasoning is of no avail, and Basil insists on the return of the pact. The pact finally falls down fluttering amidst a huge assembled crowd, and Satan and his devils flee to the desert, promising to revenge themselves on the followers of Basil.

As Graf very well says:⁽¹⁾

"In questa istoria, rinarrata con qualche diversità da Giacomo da Voragine e da altri, chi fa la più trista figura non parmi sia il diavolo, il quale, avendo fedelmente mantenute le sue promesse, vuole con ragione che l'altro patteggiatore faccia lo stesso. Il suo diritto è pieno ed inoppugnabile, e San Basilio non può spogliarnelo, se non carpendogli la scrittura che lo sancisce."

In this play, as well as in the preceding, there is not a single clue as to the physical appearance of the devil when he is on the stage undisguised.

(1) Arturo Graf: IL DIAVOLO (Fratelli Trevis, Milano 1890) Ch. VIII, p.229

4. El Serafín Humano

This play is almost as great a dramatic fiasco as El Cardenal de Belén. Lope attempts to depict the whole life of St. Francis of Assisi, and presents a succession of unrelated scenes and events based on legendary anecdotes. The result is a plot entirely lacking in unity and dramatic effectiveness.

In this comedy the devil is represented by Luzbel, a name, like that of Lucifer, applied to the chief of the rebel angels. He is jealous of Saint Francis because the Saint is to secure the chair which the former lost in Heaven. Luzbel attempts to lead him into temptation, and to bring about his sudden death, but all his efforts are in vain. St. Francis is always triumphant, and his piety becomes a fertile seed in the hearts of his followers.

The devil does not appear on the stage until the second act. He comes accompanied by a character

symbolizing the Flesh. The devil urges her to tempt the praying Francis. Luzbel and the Flesh stay on the stage only for a short time. At the instigation of the devil, the Flesh suggests to the hermit evil images and desires. She then goes out with Luzbel, both confident in the success of the temptation. Their hopes, however, are not well founded. The temptation fails, and Francis obtains his first triumph over the devil.

Luzbel appears later in the act accompanied by two other devils. Saint Francis is praying at the top of a high cliff. The devils try to kill him by throwing him down from the rocky height, but Saint Francis drives them away with the simple ejaculation:

"Jesús, Jesús, mil veces Jesús digo!"

Not reconciled with his inability to overcome Francis, the devil reappears with the Flesh in the middle of the third act. He tells her that victory can be obtained only after persistent toils and

struggles, and that it is for her to contend to the utmost if she wants to conquer the Saint. The Flesh gains courage, and again tempts Francis with the suggestion of physical delights. The Saint realizes he is being tempted, and in order to overcome the power of evil, he disrobes and throws himself against the thorns of a thicket of green brambles. The blood that spatters from his body is then miraculously transformed into roses. The devil, enraged at this prodigy, goes away to prepare a last attempt against the life of Saint Francis.

A new character, Horacio, appears next on the stage. The devil approaches him disguised as a traveler and under the assumed name of Nicolás. He tells Horacio that his old enemy, Viterbo, is plotting against his life. He adds that Viterbo has already dispatched a man to set Horacio's castle on fire. In order that he may be able to recognize and capture the incendiary, Luzbel gives an exact description of St. Francis' appearance. Instead of Saint Francis,

Horacio's soldiers capture another friar, Junípero, who is the comic simpleton of the play. The error is finally discovered, and his life is spared. The customary apotheosis finishes the play.

As we shall see later, Lope utilized this same character, Junípero, in another of his plays, utilizing the comic simpleton as his main character.

Luzbel is presented in this play as an envious and weak creature. Lope fails to depict him as really resourceful, for the devil's tricks are very simple, and by no means worthy of his diabolical powers. Luzbel meets defeat after defeat from beginning to end. He certainly is no match for Saint Francis.

5. El Truhan del Cielo y Loco Santo

This play is concerned with two characters already utilized by Lope in his comedy El Serafín Humano. They are Saint Francis of Assisi and Fray Junípero. Saint Anthony of Padua also appears in

the play, but he has only a mere incidental connection with the main plot. Judging from the title and contents of the play, one may infer that Lope's chief purpose was to write the story of Fray Junípero, who was associated with Saint Francis.

Fray Junípero is a rustic simpleton. Together with his comical pranks, Lope is careful to weave a rather romantic love story which arouses interest and keeps the plot of the play moving. The play has several passages abounding in humor, and, in spite of a few exaggerations, it may well be considered a good farcical comedy of the period.

This play might be regarded as a second part of El Serafín Humano, were it not for the fact that several incidents are duplicated. One of the incidents in the play is concerned with the false accusation of the devil which nearly led to the execution of Fray Junípero. This has already been

treated in the Serafín Humano, and in the later play it appears with some slight variations.

Perhaps Lope meant his Truhán del Cielo to be a second part of his Serafín, but not having the original at hand, he probably was not sure of the ground covered in the earlier play. At the end of the Truhán del Cielo, Lope promises a second part. This may have been lost or never written.

The devil in this play is presented as the enemy and hater of humility. He comes in during the second act dressed as a galán. He is enraged on seeing himself outclassed by such an ignoramus as Fray Junípero. He wishes to dazzle the friar with the elegance of his appearance, and to torment him by telling him dos pesadumbres. Junípero, nevertheless, recognizes the devil in spite of his disguise, and forces him to go away very much peeved at being called

"Pelón pelado,
Que no tienes blanca ni cornado."

Later in the act an endemoniada is brought in to be exorcised by Saint Francis. The devil speaks for the girl, and has a lengthy argument with Saint Francis. As in the Serafín Humano, the devil is jealous because he knows that the Saint is to occupy the chair the former once had in Heaven. He tells Francis that he will do all he can to prevent the humble son of a merchant from obtaining the seat formerly occupied by the chief of the rebellious angels:

"Volveré a poner mi silla
Adonde el cielo se asombre,
Porque Dios no la dé al hombre,
Y al hombre que más se humilla."

Saint Francis requests the devil to depart from the girl's body, and with a demonstration of humility, he attempts to force him to go away. The devil resists, and Francis threatens to call Junípero to his aid. At the mention of the simpleton, the devil rushes away, for he cannot stand Junípero's uncontrolled folly:

"De sus humildes locuras
Huyendo el infierno voy
Que no lo puedo esperar."

The devil's attempt at vengeance comes in the last act. He falsely accuses Junípero of plotting against the life of a nobleman. The friar is captured, but before the execution takes place, the falsehood is discovered and Junípero's life is spared. The reader will remember that in the Serafín Humano, Junípero was captured only because he was mistaken for Saint Francis. Such repetitions and variations are to be expected from an author with such a gigantic repertory as that of el monstruo de la naturaleza.

Lope did not improve the character of his devil. He is just as jealous, impotent, unfortunate, and unsuccessful as in the earlier play, and has by no means improved in resourcefulness.

6. San Nicolás de Tolentino

This play was published at Zaragoza in 1641, and according to Menéndez y Pelayo it was written after 1618. The plot is based on the life of Saint

Nicholas of Tolentino. Lope's main source seems to have been Rivadeneira's Flos Sanctorum.⁽¹⁾

There is also the probability of Lope having been influenced by a poem written by a contemporary and friend of his, Don Fernando de Salgado y Camargo. This poem entitled El santo milagroso augustuniano San Nicolás de Tolentino was published in Madrid (Imprenta Real) in the year 1628. Our dramatist wrote for it a laudatory poem.

Lope's play has received a great deal of severe criticisms from different sources. Ticknor calls it "very strange and extravagant" and "of the rudest humor."⁽²⁾ The play is really another of Lope's dramatic fiascos. It is intermingled with a maze of unrelated incidents, and it is unquestionably extravagant. The humor, however, may well be regarded as picaresque rather than rude. It is really characteristic of the epoch.

(1) Vol. III, p.36-38

(2) HISTORY OF SPANISH LITERATURE (1863 ed.)
Vol. III, p.247

The Devil makes his first appearance in the play during the first act. Under the disguise of a mask he approaches Ursino, Nicholas' nephew, and tells him that his lady fair is waiting for him at her home. The young lover falls in the trap, and lets the Devil guide him to the house. As soon as he arrives, Ursino impetuously climbs to a window. He discovers a horrible skeleton, and falls dead on the street. The Heavens suddenly open, and the Supreme Tribunal appears wherein is being conducted the trial of Ursino's soul. The Devil demands his prey, basing his claim on the fact that Ursino died in sin without confession or repentance. Justice carries on the prosecution, and Mercy pleads for the defense. For a moment it seems as though the Devil would win his case, but the Virgin Mary herself appears in Ursino's defense. She pleads his case, and finally obtains from the Judge that Ursino be not condemned to eternal damnation, but to Purgatory, as a recognition of the many virtues and devout prayers of his

uncle. The Devil becomes furious at the triumph of the Virgin, and he goes away swearing to take vengeance on Nicholas.

In the second act the Devil reappears accompanied by the Flesh. Nicholas has already become an Augustinian monk. He wishes to do penance and to torture his body. The Flesh, at the instigation of the Devil, rebukes Nicholas, and tries to dissuade him from doing penance, but her temptation fails. The monk executes his penance by lashing his body with a chain composed of twenty-five links. The Devil has to admit his defeat, and as an excuse for his many misfortunes, Lope makes him say:

"Desdichado soy,
Mas ¿no lo tengo de ser
Si Dios me aborrece tanto?"

The next episode in which the Devil takes part does not come up until the middle of the third act. Nicholas, who has already given evidence of holiness, appears mending his tunic. He sings, and his song

is answered by a chorus of angels. The Devil appears and manifests his annoyance and disgust at such a supernatural and miraculous spectacle. Then a long scene follows in which Nicholas speaks to his tunic as he mends it. He narrates the story of creation, and the fall and redemption of man. This soliloquy is now and then interrupted by the Devil with several asides full of witticisms. The monk is called away from his task, and the Devil takes advantage of his absence to steal the piece of cloth with which Nicholas was mending his tunic. The purpose of the Devil is to irritate the penitent, making him guilty of the sin of wrath. The friar returns, and instead of displaying wrath at the disappearance of the cloth, he expresses his satisfaction, realizing that the lost article may have been of service to somebody else. The Devil once more becomes enraged at the patience and gentleness of Nicholas, and he goes

away exclaiming in anger:

"Fues no podemos por aquí engañarle,
Demos en darle pelos, golpes, coces.
.....
No le hemos de dejar hasta matarle."

When the Devil reappears, he is accompanied by lions, snakes, and other reptiles and vermin. Saint Nicholas is praying in his cell by the light of an oil lamp. The enraged Devil breaks it. The monk continues his prayers, and the lamp is miraculously restored to its place as if nothing had happened to it. This is more than the patience of the Devil can stand. He attacks Nicholas, trying to kill him with his tremendous blows. The other monks of the convent become alarmed at the tumult heard in Nicholas' cell, and they rush to his help. The scene then becomes a comic burlesque in which the Devil is finally forced to flee by a friar who chases him with a large holy water sprinkler. Nicholas, nevertheless, becomes lame as a result of the Devil's attack.

The rest of the play is concerned with the final episodes of the Saint's life. In the closing scenes he appears ascending to Heaven with the souls of his parents, whom he had just rescued from Purgatory.

In this play Lope has given us another portrayal of an unfortunate devil who meets defeat after defeat. He is not given a chance in his pursuit of Nicholas, and even the Supreme Tribunal fails to treat him fairly! He can do nothing against the celestial powers, and, as he himself declares, God makes him suffer because he despises him very much.

7. El Santo Negro Rosambuco.

This comedy, first printed in 1612, in the Tercera parte de las comedias de Lope de Vega, has come to us greatly mutilated and changed. Lope presents in it a series of extravagant and imaginary episodes wound around the life of Saint Benedict of

Palermo. The secular element in the play is by far of greater dramatic value than the religious. In fact, it may be asserted with Menéndez y Pelayo, that the religious element has ruined a play which in the first act appeared as a rather promising comedy of manners.

Two devils appear on the stage at the end of the second act, beating an enemy of Saint Benedict. They later unexpectedly appear shouting for help to put out a house on fire. There is really no need for these figures in the play. Evidently Lope's purpose in introducing his two devils was to create laughter and to please the audience. They really are two ridiculous caricatures of the followers of Satan.

The play as a whole is unworthy of the author, and merits no further consideration in this study.

8. El Animal Profeta

There is doubt as to the date and authorship

of this play. Some critics assign it to Mira de Mescua, but Menéndez y Pelayo states that although the play may have been later altered and recast by Lope's followers, he originally wrote it.⁽¹⁾

The plot deals with the life of Saint Julian. It may have been inspired in one of the many ancient legends of the Gesta Romanorum series which became connected with the life of the Saint. Schack states⁽²⁾ that "the play comes from a legend found in Hollandi, acta Sanct. 2,974, ed. Auto. Jacobus de Voragine, Legenda Aurea, Hist. 2, and Vicente Bell. Spec. hist. 9.115, and also in Gesta Romanorum, chapter 18." According to Menéndez y Pelayo, a good version of the legend can be found in Gesta Romanorum, herausgegeben von Hermann Gesterley, Berlin, 1872, p.311-312.

Julian, a wealthy young nobleman, kills a deer in the forest. Before the animal dies, he prophesies

(1) Op.Cit. Vol. Iv, OBSERVACIONES PRELIMINARES p.CVI
(2) HISTORIA DE LA LITERATURA, Vol. III, footnote on p.166

that Julian is to kill his parents in a hunting party. Astonished at the horrible prophecy, Julian runs away from home in an effort to prevent the parricide. His struggle is in vain, and his efforts serve only to lead him into committing the very crime he wishes to prevent.

This legend, of an evident fatalist origin, receives very effective dramatic treatment at the hands of Lope. It gives ample room for a discussion of the doctrine of free will (*libre albedrío*), and our dramatist does not miss his opportunity. In all the plays discussed Lope supports this doctrine.⁽¹⁾ In this particular play he defends it in the speeches of some of his characters, but the outcome of the play would seem, at least to a certain degree, to disprove his theory. One of his characters makes the statement that free will is a gift of God to men, that they may better be able to protect themselves before evil comes to their door; and another

(1) It is only through the power of the free will that the devil is very often rendered impotent.

goes as far as to say that Heaven is powerless when pitted against the free will of the individual.⁽¹⁾ Nevertheless, in spite of all the strength of Julian's will, the parricide dictated by fate or Heaven was finally consummated. If fate was thus triumphant over the power of free will, how can Lope reconcile this with his views in favor of the doctrine? It would seem conclusive that he has failed to prove his case. This is not surprising, for as has already been stated, depth of philosophical thought is not a characteristic of Lope. Julian's free will was of value only to prevent his damnation, but proved of no avail in preventing the hateful murder.

The first two acts of the play are entirely secular, the supernatural not being introduced until the very last act.

Julian, after having committed the horrible parricide goes to Rome to obtain the Pope's absolution. He becomes a wandering hermit, and finally

(1) Act I, p.398-399, Vol.IV, ed.cit.

settles at Calabria. Here, hiding his identity, he establishes a hospital for the poor.

Because of Julian's penance and charity, the Devil becomes fearful of losing his soul, and he decides to go to Julian's hospital to annoy him, and to make him realize that his salvation is impossible.

The Devil first appears on the stage disguised as a mendicant patient whom Julian himself is carrying to the hospital on his shoulders. Several minor incidents follow in which the author makes the best comic use of the odoriferous Beelzebub. After arriving at the hospital, the Devil is tormented with the many prayers and praises of God he hears there.

The story of Julian's parricide has become very popular, and it has served as a theme for a well-known ballad. Shortly after the arrival of the Devil at the hospital, a voice is heard singing the doleful song. A lively discussion follows among

the inmates of the hospital, and the Devil takes advantage of this opportunity to express his belief in the utter impossibility of salvation for the soul of such a brutal murderer. Julian is deeply impressed by the words of the Devil, and he stays alone with him to discuss the matter further.

Julian alleges that the parricide ignored the identity of his victims when he committed the crime, and that this ought to be in his favor. The Devil promptly replies that ignorance does not excuse sin, and that in this particular case the murderer's sin was greater because his victims were not in grace when they were killed, and, consequently, they were suffering in hell. Julian is thrown on the verge of desperation when he hears that his parents have been condemned to eternal damnation because of his own crime. The Devil smiles because he sees his vengeance near, and revenge on a soul means to him revenge of God.⁽¹⁾

(1) Act III, p.424

In order to complete his task with a suitable climax, the Devil brings a vision before Julian's eyes. The wretched sinner sees his unfortunate parents suffering in hell, anathematizing their criminal son. Desperation seizes Julian, but in spite of all, he does not give up his hope in the mercy of God, and exclaims:⁽³⁾

"Pues ¿a Dios puede cesar
La misericordia? No,
Porque a faltar, bien sé yo
Que se había de condenar
La mayor parte del mundo;
Pues si en Dios piedad se halla,
Fuerza es el manifestalla;
Pero si yo en el profundo
Estoy, ¿cómo ha de valer?
Mas hasta que dessida
Esté el alma de la vida,
Porfiar hasta vencer.
Es justo, divino Dios;
O volvedme a lo que fui
Antes de nacer, o aquí
Alcance el perdón de vos."

Julien's prayer is answered. Christ, disguised as a child, comes to the hospital in search of shelter and rest. The unknown child wins with his

~~(1) Act III, p.424~~
(2) Act III, p.425

kindness the confidence of Julian, who confesses with anguished heart that he is not expecting salvation because through his own sin his parents are suffering in Hell. Christ then reassures the sinner, telling him that he is mistaken, and that his illusion is only the result of fear: his parents are in Purgatory and not in Hell. Christ next discovers his true identity, and presents a vision in which Julian actually sees his parents in Purgatory. He hears Christ announcing to them that they are finally to be rescued through the mercy of God, as a recompense for their undeserved assassination and the persistent penance of their son.

The vision vanishes, and the Devil then complains of Christ's attitude. He emphatically asserts that it is not at all fair for our Savior personally to come down to earth to rescue a soul which because of its crime already belongs to Hell. To this Christ promptly answers that Julian's

penance and love for Him have been in excess of his sin, and that thus he is worthy of a magnanimous pardon. The Devil enraged at his unexpected defeat, descends to the realms of his kingdom.

In the ending of his play, Lope does not follow the original legend. Christ is supposed to have appeared to Julian as a leper and not as a child. The sublime beauty of the scene which depicts the leper has been often reproduced in pictures and glass windows, and it is said that the contemplation of a glass window in the Cathedral of Rouen inspired Flaubert to write his Legende de Saint Julien l'Hospitalier.⁽¹⁾ Flaubert follows the legend and reproduces the leper scene, but Lope probably substituted the child in accordance with the old dramatic precept that forbids the presentation of repugnant things on the stage.

(1) Oeuvres de Gustave Flaubert. Trois Contes: Paris, Lemerre, 1883. p.79-138 (See R. Menendez y Pelayo, *Op.cit.*, Vol. IV, Observaciones Preliminares, p.CVII)

The Devil depicted in this play is a rather interesting figure. Lope handles him effectively, placing him in difficult and ridiculous situations that are evidently intended to create laughter on the part of the audience.

Ever since the Middle Ages there has been great discussion among the believers of the devil as to the food this creature really consumes. Although Lope does not settle this point in his play, he hints at the fact that the devil does not feed at all on food intended for human consumption. He uses this as the basis for one of his comic scenes at the hospital. Julian has ordered boiled eggs for the mendicant, but the devil refuses them, and he cleverly lets a hungry servant take advantage of his abstinence. As an explanation the devil says:

"Mi hambre, amigo, aunque es tan rara,
Ningún manjar apetece."

In the list of characters the devil appears as the customary demonio, but during the dialogues

he is often referred to as Beelzebub and Patillas. Much fun is poked at his foul smell. Lope's devils usually walk on to and off the stage in all kinds of disguises, but in this particular play, Beelzebub appears only once. He comes disguised as a beggar to accomplish his task, and when he fails, he goes back to his court.

Although the devil is also defeated in this play, it really cannot be asserted that he receives unfair treatment, as in other plays we have already discussed. Apparently he had no part in Julian's crime, and Julian was under no obligation to him. Beelzebub was counting his chickens before they were hatched, and we cannot blame Lope if he brings Christ down to earth to prevent the evil spirit from attaining his longed-for revenge.

9. San Isidro Labrador de Madrid

This comedy, first published in 1617, seems to have been very popular in the seventeenth century.

The plot deals with the legends surrounding the life of Saint Isidor, patron saint of Madrid, Lope's main source of inspiration, probably was the Vida y milagros del glorioso San Isidro Labrador, composed by Juan Diácono towards the end of the thirteenth century.⁽¹⁾ Lope also wrote two other plays connected with the life of Saint Isidor; La niñez de San Isidro, and La juventud de San Isidro. These two plays are not included in this study.

In the earlier play the devil is included among a rather large cast. He first appears in the second act walking around the fields of Isidor. The devil unexpectedly meets Envy, and questions her as to the reason for her presence there. She answers that she has come because she hates Isidor, and she is trying to bring evil upon him. Envy wishes to secure the devil's help, and in order to make him envious, she says that she thinks it is

(1) M. Menéndez, y Pelayo. Op. cit. Vol. IV
OBSERVACIONES PRELIMINARES, p.CXXI

not at all fair for a mere peasant like Isidor to go to Heaven while Lucifer is in Hell. This statement has the desired effect. The devil becomes angered, and he promises to help Envy in her struggle against the future saint.

In the third act the devil and Envy again appear prying on Isidor. The Saint has already performed several miracles. He now gives a new sign of his supernatural power by making a spring gush out of a rock at the mere touch of his goad. This serves only to increase the envy and wrath of the devil. He wishes to muddle the waters of the spring, but he is stopped by Envy. She tells him that perhaps it is better not to dare the attempt, for it might bring upon them bad consequences. Envy then suggests the use of other tricks, and the devil in desperation goes for help to la Mentira. The new ally appears later with Envy and the devil at a public celebration. They talk of Isidor's wife, Mary, who is living in a

convent far away from her husband. They falsely say that she has become a bad and licentious woman. Their purpose is to make Isidor hear the news. They expect him to become impatient at the thought of his lost honor, and thus to open the way for his subsequent wrongdoing. They do not realize the power of the Saint's meekness. When Isidor hears of his dishonor, he offers it to God as an atonement of the many affronts of mankind:

"Yo la pongo, Señor Bueno,
A cuenta de muchas vuestras,
Pues por tantos culpas nuestras,
Os visteis de afrentas lleno."

The seed of doubt has been planted, nevertheless, in Isidor's heart. He wishes to find out the truth, and so he starts on a long journey towards Mary's convent. An angel comes down from Heaven to warn Mary of the impending danger. She comes out to meet her husband on the road that leads to the town. She halts at the bank of a

wide river, and when she sees her husband on the other side, she miraculously crosses the river by floating on her own mantle. Isidor marvels at the prodigy, and realizes that his wife is innocent. Envy, Falsehood, and the devil, are witnesses of the happy reunion of the saintly spouses. The wicked trio finally rushes away when a band of pilgrims appears with crosses and prayers. The devil recognizes his own defeat, and as he goes away, Lope makes him say,

"Isidro, no quiero más
Contigo: ¡rendido estoy!"

The extraordinary third act of this play extends through a period of over forty years. At the very end of the play, there appears on the stage the sepulchre of Saint Isidor, who has been dead for forty years. There is an oil lamp burning in the tomb, and the Devil tries to put it out. His efforts are of no avail, for there is an angel in charge of this lamp, and he comes down

to fix it every Saturday. While at the sepulchre, the poor devil is unfortunate enough to witness several posthumous miracles of the saint. Lucifer is furious, but, realizing his impotency, he runs away exclaiming:

".....Loco me torna
El ver que tantos milagros
Haga un hombre que con toscas
Abarcas pisa los cielos
Para pisarme la boca."

The devil depicted in this play is the usual unfortunate and weak creature we so often meet in Lope's plays. He seems to be moved mainly by envy and wrath, and even his alliance to la Mentira and la Envidia fails to make him a worthy competitor of the humble peasant!

10. El Rústico del Cielo

This play, dealing with the life of el Hermano Francisco del Niño Jesús, presents a curious combination of secular and religious elements. It abounds

in a rather cheap and coarse humor, evidently ill adapted to a religious play. The plot is based on personal recollections of Lope, who even went to the extreme of attempting, apparently, to idealize the uncleanness and pungent smell of his rustic and simple hero.⁽¹⁾

The author called the play a tragicomedia, and published it in the Decimoctava parte of his collection (Madrid 1623). The comedy became very popular, and it seems to have even gained the favor of Philip III and Marguerite of Austria. These sovereigns gave little encouragement to theatrical productions, and they probably favored Lope's play because of the flattery it bestows upon them.⁽²⁾

The hero of the comedy is a rustic simpleton called Francisco. Early in the first act he stupidly kills with his sling-shot a forest-keeper.

(1) Act II, p.264

(2) Act III, p.268-269

In order to save Francisco from the gallows, his father sends him out of town. The booby goes into a distant village and secures a position as assistant to the church sacristan. Francisco is so stupid, that when ordered to toll the bells for a funeral he would ring a merry peal, and when ordered to ring a peal, he would toll a knell. He cannot even learn to light a lamp, and the greatly disgusted sacristan is forced to discharge him.

Francisco appeals in his prayers to the Child Jesus. Asking for advice as to the best way to serve Him, he hears a mysterious voice saying:

"Sirve a muchos
Y agradecerás a uno."

The poor simpleton believes that to serve many is to serve the poor in a hospital, thus pleasing one,--God. He goes to the priest, and through his intercession he secures a position in a hospital. At the hospital, Francisco, because of the stupid way in which he carries out his

orders, is constantly annoying and irritating the doctor in charge. In spite of Francisco's many foolish blunders in administering drugs and medicines, his patients always miraculously recover. The miraculous power of the simpleton increases his reputation, and he succeeds in becoming a Carmelite monk. He builds asylums and hospitals, caring for the poor with solicitude, generosity and kindness. He finally dies as a saint in Madrid.

The devil does not appear on the stage until the last act of the play. He comes in accompanied by la Soberbia. He tells her that this man Francisco hurts him even more than Paul or Anthony, for these two saints give him names that are not derogatory, such as Lucifer, Beelzebub, Prince of Darkness, but suggestive of his great diabolical power. Francisco, on the contrary, scornfully calls him el tiñoso (the scab). Francisco, moreover, because of his great love and devotion for the Child Jesus,

is safe from the devil's clutches. La Soberbia incites the devil not to give up so easily, but to fight Francisco to the very end. To this he agrees, but at the same time he plainly states that he knows all his power will be of no avail against Francisco. They then both go off the stage.

The devil appears later in the act, serving the author for expository purposes. The audience is informed that Francisco has come to Valencia. He has delivered the city from a pestilence, has started to build an asylum, and has gained great renown because of his charity. Francisco then enters with several of his followers, and the devil stands aside. He becomes furious when he hears Francisco again referring to him as el tiñoso:

"¡Yo tiñoso! Yo que fui
El lucero que salí
Con el alba!"

What enrages the devil most is to think that such an ignorant fool as Francisco has greater

power over him than many wise men. He plans an attack on Francisco, but the monk smells a rat and chases the devil away, calling him el tiñoso, and showing him an image of the Child Jesus dressed as a pilgrim. When the devil sees the image he rushes away saying:

"Huir quiero, que imagino,
Según le temo Juez,
Que Cristo segunda vez
Viene al mundo peregrino."

The devil does not stay away very long. He returns to the stage complaining because Francisco has added another hospital to the list of his good deeds. The devil is angry and impatient. He orders his ministers to throw down the hospital while he personally attacks Francisco. A great tumult follows, but the devil is finally driven away by Francisco, who threatens to whip him with his cord.

Lope later brings the devil back on the stage accompanied by la Soberbia. Through their dialogue

he tells the audience that Francisco is now in Madrid; his charitable acts have been multiplied, and he has prophesied his own death. The devil continues angry against the monk, for he persists in calling him el tiñoso. The scene then suddenly shifts to the Saint's chamber. Here the devil finally comes, urged by la Soberbia, planning to torture Francisco in his last moments. The monk recognizes the devil, and once more he humiliates him with the scornful name of tiñoso. The devil realizes his defeat and exclaims:

"¡Venciste, simple pastor!
¡Ríndome! Soberbia ven.
.....
Soberbia mía
Baja conmigo al infierno."

The devil lacks throughout the whole play the usual daring of his bravado spirit. He is really depicted as a weak and pessimistic creature. He realizes his own impotency, and he would not have dared to make a single attempt against Francisco had it not been for the instigations of la Soberbia. Lope makes use of the devil mainly for expository

purposes, artificially fostering the development of his plot with the devil's monologues and dialogues. Our dramatist wanted to include so many incidents in his play, that it was impossible for him to present them all on the stage, and he thus was forced to have recourse to narration. Lope perhaps chose the character of the devil to deliver the long expository passages because the words on the devil's lips have a tinge of bitter sarcasm. This undoubtedly was pleasing to the audience, and kept up the interest.

In closing we may add that in this comedy, as in most of his religious plays, Lope is careful to depict the inherent fear that the devil has for Christ and his Virgin Mother:

"Cuando sale el Niño
Lleno de amores,
Y es María la luna,⁽¹⁾
Luzbel se esconde."

(1) Act III, p.273

11. La Bienaventurada Madre Santa Teresa de Jesús.

There is doubt as to the authorship of this play, attributed by some critics to Luis Vélez de Guevara. In the list of Lope's comedies which appeared in El Peregrino en su patria (1618) there is a play entitled La Madre Teresa de Jesús, which may have been the play in question. Menéndez y Pelayo included the play in his edition of Lope, expressing doubt as to the authorship, but stating that the style resembles Lope's more than that of any other writer of the period.

This comedy is a rather mediocre play based on episodes in the life of Saint Theresa. In the first act Theresa appears pursued by her many suitors. The young lady wishes to make a vow of chastity, but her father tries to force her into an unwelcome marriage. Theresa's will prevails, and at the end of the act she announces her final determination to enter a convent.

In the second act Theresa appears as a nun. She is seriously ill, and her soul is about to depart from her body. A curtain is drawn and Justice, Saint Michael, and the devil appear. The Guardian Angel and the devil are in litigation as to the rightful ownership of Theresa's soul. The devil acts as the prosecuting attorney, demanding justice. The Angel, as counsel for the defense, demands mercy. While the litigation is in process, a priest in the convent begins to pray for Theresa's recovery. His prayers are heard by Justice, and she decides to restore the soul to its body:

"Mucho puede conmigo un hombre justo;
Pues que no ha muerto, désele otro término;
Vuelva a su cuerpo otra vez el alma,
Que esté guardada para grandes cosas."

The devil insists on his demands, stating that Theresa's death had already been decreed, and that it is not fair to postpone the execution of the sentence. The devil's arguments are of no avail. The suit is decided against him, and he goes away promising to cause trouble.

Theresa miraculously recovers from her illness, and speaks to the priest concerning the strange vision in which she sees herself tried. The devil is prying around, and he immediately suggests a reply to the priest. The good man tells Theresa not to pay any attention to such visions, for they are simply the work of the devil:

"Muchas almas ignorantes
Señora, se han condenado,
Porque llevar se han dejado
De ilusiones semejantes."

This task accomplished, the devil goes away saying:

"Yo no tengo más que hacer."

Later in the play Theresa receives authorization to establish the order of the barefooted Carmelites. Her sister has secured a building that can serve as a convent. The building, however, is badly in need of repairs, and there are not funds enough to pay the workmen. Luzbel sees an impending danger in the new convent, and he comes up with

his assistant, Astarot, determined to demolish the walls of the building:

Demonio--

"Astarot caiga en el suelo
La casa de esta mujer;
Date prisa, que recelo
Que a mi pesar ha de ser
Recámara de su cielo."

Theresa secures celestial aid for the construction of her convent. She comes personally to supervise the work of her laborers, who are no others than angels in disguise. The arrival of such powerful workmen thwarts the devil's plans:

Demonio:

"Recogidos artesanos
Del cielo a trabajar vienen;
Mis intentos salen vanos,
Pues a hacer la iglesia vienen
Los obreros soberanos.
Del cielo deben de ser;
Hoy con mis trazas concluyo;
Mucho tengo que temer."

Astarot:

"Ya no podemos hacer
Nada; Luzbel, huye."

Demonio:

"Huye." (Vanse)

The devil thus admits his own defeat and goes away. He does not appear again in the play.

The last act of the comedy is concerned with the narration of the great deeds of Saint Theresa. A few of her miracles are presented on the stage, and the play ends with her death.

As usual, whether right or wrong, Luzbel is presented in this play as losing his suit. The scene of the trial reminds us of the trial depicted in Lope's comedy San Nicolás de Tolentino.⁽¹⁾ In the previous trial the devil is defeated by the power of the Virgin Mary, whilst in this play, the prayer of a rightful man is enough to frustrate the devil's wishes.

As in the case of other saints, the devil pursued Theresa, not because he saw any chance of gaining her soul, but because of the many souls he realized the Saint would snatch from him.

We have already seen that the building of convents, churches, or hospitals always annoys the

(1) cf. p.35

the devil, and that when he is enraged he does not hesitate to engage in a physical encounter. In spite of his physical power, he is always defeated. In the second act of the play the devil comes on with Astarot ready to throw down the walls of the future convent, but the heavenly laborers are too strong an enemy to contend with.

If one were to judge the authorship of the play by the portrayal of the devil, one would not hesitate to assign it to Lope de Vega. The devil in this comedy seems to be the same unfortunate rascal so often met in the plays previously discussed.

D. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The plays discussed in this study are typical comedias de santos of the seventeenth century. To the modern reader they appear as queer and extravagant, to say the least, and perhaps rightly so. They are so radically different from Lope's secular plays, that at times it is really hard to think of him as the author of so many dramatic failures. Nevertheless, we must not be too severe in our criticisms of this phase of Lope's prolific output. A consideration of the epoch and the conditions under which this genre came into being will perhaps help to a better understanding of Lope's position. The comedias de santos developed from the early mysteries of the Middle Ages. On great church solemnities and on feast days of popular saints, these comedias were played before large Catholic audiences. As the plays aimed both to please and instruct the masses in religious affairs, the playwrights considered themselves obliged to depict

faithfully all the accepted legends and incidents connected with the lives of the saints, and, moreover, to present on the stage all the miracles attributed to the different saints.⁽¹⁾ Lope really encountered serious obstacles when he began writing this class of plays. The legends, miracles, and anecdotes of the saints were very popular in this period, and a Spanish audience would never have tolerated a religious play constructed along different lines. Lope wanted the favor of the crowds, and to attain it he was thus forced to follow tradition blindly:

....."considering that the wrath of a seated Spaniard is immoderate, when in two hours there is not presented to him everything from Genesis to the Last Judgment, I deem it most fitting if it be for us here to please him, for us to adjust everything so that it succeeds."⁽²⁾

As regards the devil, we have already seen that Lope, as a Catholic priest, deals with him

(1) Schack, op.cit. Vol.III, p.161-162

(2) Lope de Vega: Arte nuevo de hacer comedias en este tiempo. (1609) (English translation in Barret H. Clark's European Theories of the Drama, p.91)

from the viewpoint of the Catholic dogma, always depriving the evil spirit of a single chance of success.

Throughout the different plays, Lope's devil is depicted as an angry, proud, and jealous creature,--the enemy and hater of purity, piety, and humility. The devil hates Rome as the seat of Saint Peter's successor, and Spain, because of the nation's loyalty and faith. In spite of his pride, he is often willing to humble himself in order to attain his wicked aims. At times he is full of clever tricks, but in spite of them all he is always defeated.

To revenge himself on God, the devil is constantly attempting the perdition of souls. He realizes that his powers are in vain against the faithful chosen by Heaven. He pursues them not for the sake of their own souls, but because of many other souls that might be snatched from his claws through their example and pious intercession.

The celestial powers and the force of the free will always render the devil impotent. He is at times impatient and easily excitable, and when all other means fail, he does not hesitate to enter into physical combat with his enemies. The devil hurts his victims, but he never succeeds in killing them. He is always chased away before completing his task.

The building of convents, churches, hospitals, and asylums mortifies the devil greatly. He looks upon these institutions as dangerous rivals. He tries by all means to destroy them, but they resist his attacks and stand firmly through the power of divine intercession.

Although the devil in one of the plays is driven away by the simple ejaculation,

"Jesús, Jesús, mil veces Jesús digo!"⁽¹⁾

he generally does not seem at all afraid at the sound of the names of God, Jesus, or Mary. In

(1) cf. p.28

fact, he himself often refers to them without hesitancy. Nevertheless, the devil is at all times depicted as instinctively fearful of the power of Christ and the Virgin Mary. He attributes his many misfortunes to the fact that God despises him very much.

The devil is twice presented demanding justice at the Supreme Tribunal during the trial of a soul. In one case he is defeated by the intercession of the Virgin, and in the other through the influence of the prayers of an upright man.

The devil assumes all sorts of disguises in his attempts to lead his victims into temptation, and we see him coming on the stage as a galán, under a mask, as a hermit, as a traveller, and as a miserable mendicant. When he appears under no disguise, we believe he is the conventional theatrical devil with his horns and tail.⁽¹⁾

(1) Lope fails to give in his stage directions any clue as to the appearance of the devil when he comes in under no disguise.

The devil is portrayed as unwilling to partake of food intended for human consumption, and his foul smell is the source of several comic passages. In the list of characters he generally appears as el demonio, but in the course of the plays he is assigned a proper name. The names applied by Lope to the devil are the popular Spanish appellatives: Luzbel, Satanás, Belcebú, Patillas, and el Tiñoso. Luzbel (Lucifer) seems to be the devil preferred by Lope, for he uses this name in most of his plays. Luzbel at times appears with assistants, and in two plays they are given proper names: Zacuiel and Astarot.

Lope's depiction of the devil is in conformity with the Catholic dogma and the popular beliefs derived from the Middle Ages. His comedias de santos are woven around the lives and miracles of saints, with episodes and incidents based on popular legends usually found in common Elos Sanctorum of the period.

Lope contributed the first devil pact play of the seventeenth century--La Gran Columna Fogosa.⁽¹⁾

(1) See page 18

It was based on the legend of Saint Basil. This legend seems to be a Spanish adaptation of the well-known Theophilus legend. Lope's play was followed by Mescua's El esclavo del demonio, based on the legend of Frey Gil, and Calderón's El magico prodigioso, dealing with the legend of Saint Cyprian. All these legends are variations of the same theme, and seem to have originated in a common source. They all present the signing of a devil pact, the consequent repentance of the sinner, the graceful intervention of Divine powers, the renunciation of the devil, and the final conversion.⁽¹⁾

(1) See page 21

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