THE CASE OF LOPE DE VEGA'S AMAR, SERVIR Y ESPERAR (A PROBLEM OF LITERARY RELATIONSHIPS)

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THE CASE OF LOPE DE VEGA'S AMAR, SERVIR Y ESPERAR (A PROBLEM OF LITERARY RELATIONSHIPS)

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When Cotarelo edited Lope de Vega's play, *Amar, servir y esperar*, in 1917,¹ he raised an interesting question of literary relationships. He noted that the plot of this play "es el mismo, hasta con los nombres de los principales personajes (Dorotea, Feliciano, Andrés) de la novela *El socorro en el peligro*, que don Alonso Castillo Solórzano publicó, con otras suyas, a principios de 1625, pero que suena ya aprobada a 5 de septiembre de 1624 en el tomo titulado *Tardes entretenidas*."² Amar, servir y esperar was first printed posthumously in 1635 in one of the *Partes*, XXII.³

"Quién copió a quién?" continues Cotarelo. "Nuestro parecer se inclinaría a favor de Lope, . . . pero la circunstancia de corresponder la comedia a los últimos tiempos del fecundo poeta, si, como se dice al final la estrenó Roque de Figueroa,⁴ y la de ser cierto e indudable que la novela estaba ya escrita y era conocida en 1624 e impresa en el siguiente año, nos hacen vacilar y dejar sin resolver el punto de crítica propuesto."⁵

Several attempts have been made to ascertain the date of composition of *Amar, servir y esperar* in an effort to determine the direction of the literary relationship that obviously exists. Rennert and Castro state without giving their reasons for the assertion: "La fecha se halla, probablemente, entre 1618 y 1623."⁶ Buchanan, probably based on the mention of Rubens (who visited Spain in 1628) and the reference to the Marqués de Guadalcázar (who returned to Spain from his viceroyship in Peru in 1628), offers this as the year of composition.⁷ Montesinos, assuming that the reference to the attack on Callao by the Dutch corsair Jacob L'Hermite contained in the play was made contemporaneously with the historical facts, maintains that it was written in 1624–25.⁸ José María de Cossío, using the same evidence says: "me atrevo a proponer como fecha de su comedia los fines del año

2. Ibid., Introd., xv.
3. Ibid.
4. Aquí, senado discreto,
   *Amar, servir y esperar*
   tuvieron tan justo premio.
   Roque os ama; Lope os sirve
   y yo vuestro aplauso espero. (*Acad. N.*, III, 245b)
1624 o el 1625.” Lastly, Morley and Bruerton, not convinced by the previous arguments and finding that the verse evidence is inconclusive, simply state the termini 1624–35.

Obviously Rennert and Castro are mistaken, because Lope could not refer in 1618–23 to an event that took place in 1624–25. Bruerton and Morley argue convincingly that “if the account of the attack on Callao had been introduced to praise Guadalcázar on his return to Spain early in 1629, we feel that the Marquis would be praised in it instead of being merely mentioned in passing.” (Chronology, page 166). The terminus a quo established in the other three attempts to date the play coincide in 1624. Since the novel El socorro en el peligro was licensed for publication on September 5, 1624, the question of priority raised by Cotarelo still remains unanswered.

The plots of both the play and the novel are very similar throughout half of the works. Briefly the story is the following. Feliciano has fled Madrid after having stabbed a man over a love affair. (This episode, merely mentioned in the play, is fully developed in the novel.) Accompanied by his slave servant, Andrés, on his way to Seville, he is overtaken by a frightful storm and becomes lost in a forest. He rescues Dorotea and Julio, her servant, from a gang of highwaymen who have attacked and killed her relatives and traveling companions, and takes them to an inn. Suspecting that their saviour is also a bandit who has killed his companions to retain sole possession of their prey, Dorotea and Julio flee the inn early in the morning and eventually reach the home of her uncle, don Sancho Tello (Rodrigo de Ribera in the novel), in Seville. When Feliciano and Andrés discover their flight, they too proceed to Seville. Here Feliciano receives a letter recommending him to don Sancho Tello, from whom he is to receive the Order of Santiago. Dorotea sees and recognizes Feliciano and sends him a letter suggesting a meeting on a lake near San Juan de Alfarache. As they approach their meeting place, her boat capsizes and Feliciano saves her from drowning. He now learns why she fled him at the inn and also the fact that she has made the trip to Seville to be married to an indiano who is momentarily expected from Peru. Therefore, they must bring their incipient love to a sudden end.

From this point on the plot varies in the two works. In the play Feliciano insists on courting Dorotea, hoping for favorable developments (which eventually occur), while in the novel he romantically goes off to the wars in Flanders, seeking a liberating death, but returns in the nick of time to save her from being buried alive and lastly from being murdered by two hoodlums hired by her pitiless husband.

11. The plot of the latter part of the novel is similar to that of Lope's play La difunta pleiteada (1593–1603). Cf. María Goyri de Menéndez Pidal, La difunta pleiteada (Madrid, 1909).
It appears impossible, judging from this rapid summary, to determine which work preceded the other, but a careful scrutiny of minor details of the plot seems to indicate that the play is based on the novel.

In the first place, the suspicion that Feliciano might be one of the bandits who had attacked Dorotea’s party is well grounded in the details of the plot of the novel, but it has no basis in the play. In the novel, after the bandits attacked Dorotea’s party, they broke up into two groups which Feliciano met separately. One of these groups held her and the other withdrew, resentful of the dominance and selfishness of their leader. She was easily convinced by Julio’s suspicions because she “reparó luego en qué cuando acabaron de quitar la vida a su padre, primo y criados y dividido entre ellos sus dineros y vestiduras de seis compañeros que eran, los tres se dividieron de los otros algo sentidos de que el uno de ellos hubiese hecho elección de ella.” There is no such dispersal of the bandits in the play. The six bandits who are reduced to three or four in the play were dispatched collectively by Feliciano, Andrés, Julio, and a shepherd who was also being held. There is no definite indication that any fled alive. Therefore, when Julio tells Dorotea of his suspicions of Feliciano and urges her to flee the inn, he, or rather, Lope, is thinking of the first group of bandits who appeared in the novel but who never figured in the play.

Further evidence that Lope is thinking of the six highwaymen of the novel is found in a statement that Feliciano makes towards the end of the play:

En todos los elementos
quiso Amor que te sirviese:
en la tierra cuando estabas
atada a un tronco silvestre
expuesta a seis salteadores.

(Acad. N., III, 238b.)

Lope forgot that he had reduced the number of the attackers.

A second and very significant detail is to be found in the text of the two letters that Feliciano receives shortly after his arrival in Seville. The resemblance between the texts of these letters should dismiss the possibility of coincidental similarity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Play</th>
<th>Novel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>El día que salió don Félix del peligro de</td>
<td>A un mismo tiempo que don Félix salió del</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>la herida que le distes, se vieron las</td>
<td>peligro de las heridas que le distes,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>informaciones de vuestro Hábito en el</td>
<td>causa de vuestra ausencia, se</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consejo de Ordenes. Con ésta os envío</td>
<td>vieron en el Consejo de las Ordenes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


13. In the cast of characters: “tres salteadores” (Acad. N. III, 214); in the stage directions: “cuatro salteadores” (ibid., p. 216a).

la licencia para que don Sancho Tello os le dé, etc. [The etc. is Lope's.]^{15}

las informaciones de vuestro hábito: con ésta os envío la licencia para que os le dé ahí don Rodrigo de Ribera, caballero bien conocido en esa ciudad. Aguardo a que don Félix esté convalecido para tratar de vuestras amistades. Vuestro padre ignora el origen de la pendencia y la causa della; ha sentido tiernamente vuestra partida, y desea mucho se hagan las amistades para volveros a ver. De lo que sucediese de nuevo os iré avisando, en tanto tomad el hábito, y guárdese Dios largos años. Vuestro amigo,

Don Antonio^{17}

Una mujer desea hablaros, señor Feliciano de Mendoza. No puede ser en su casa, y va esta tarde en un barco a San Juan de Alfarache. Podéis ir en otro y acercaos a quien os hiciere señas con unos listones verdes.^{16}

... Deseo mucho hablaros despacio porque tengo muchas cosas que comunicaros; mas el recato de la casa en que vivo es tan grande, que en ella no puedo cumplir este deseo. Pasado mañana, por la tarde, me esperad en un barco junto a las huertas de San Juan de Alfarache, donde con la señas de un lenzuénio que levantaré en alto, me hallaréis en otro y dí el os daré aviso de lo que habéis de hacer. Dios os guarde.^{18}

Compared with the text of Castillo Solórzano's letter that of Lope is brief, but the "etc." is extremely meaningful. It seems to imply that Lope had in mind the full text. But even more meaningful in trying to establish the priority of either work is the fact that the only bits of prose included in _Amar, servir y esperar_ clearly reflect the text of _El socorro en el peligro_, whereas there is hardly any resemblance between the poetry of the play and that contained in the novel. In fact, the only instance of vague poetical similarity is to be found in the following décima of Lope and the accompanying sonnet of Castillo Solórzano:

```
Amé, servi y esperé;
amó, recibió y pagó
quien vió, quien sintió, quien
dió
 tanto premio a tanta fe.
Partí, llegué, descansé,
dando a un justo porfíar
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Amé, sollicité, rogué, servi;
y aunque servi, sollicité y amé,
ni estimación le dieron á mi fe,
ni mejorado de favor me ví.

Importunando á pretender volví;
 escribí mi pasión, sentí, lloré,
y menos gracia con mi dueño hallé,
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15. Ibid., 223b.
16. Ibid., 226a.
17. _Tardes entretenidas_, p. 237.
18. Ibid., 239–240.
tiempo, ocasión y lugar,  
que al fin vienen a tener  
premio, descanso y placer  

amar, servir y esperar.

(Acad. N., III, 244b.)

con saber que escribí, lloré y sentí.  
Como mi alma el desengaño vió  
que ya tan descubierto se le da,  
de su amorosa empresa desistió,  
mas, vencida de amores, vuelve ya;  
que quien de veras ama como yo,  
con gran dificultad olvidará.  

(Tardes entretenidas, pages 257–258.)

The words amé and serví in the first sonnet offer the only suggestion of the title of the play to be found in the novel, whereas the idea of el socorro en el peligro permeates the entire play and appears explicitly in several instances:

que el favor en los peligros  
hace mayores efectos.  

en virtud  
de mi fe y amor ha sido  
el haberos socorrido.

Saquéla de otro peligro.

Finally, halfway through the third act of the play and again towards the end Lope refers to an incident never mentioned before in the play, in which Feliciano saves Dorotea from a fire:

En el fuego, aquella noche  
que por descuido se emprende  
en tu casa habrá diez días,  
de cuyas llamas ardientes

19. Actually, this sonnet is more suggestive in thought, technique, and details of expression, of another sonnet that Lope had included years before in Angéllica en el Calay:

Herí, maté, rompí, quebré, quité,  
Gente, armas, casas, todo cuanto vi,  
Y aunque quité, quebré, maté y rompí,  
Nunca el amor vencí ni derribé.  
Acometí, llegué, subí, escalé,  
Muros, torres y almenas que batí,  
Y aunque llegué, escalé y acometí,  
Siempre este fiero amor se queda en pie.  
Ninguno en todo el mundo me venció,  
Amor de mi valor triunfando va,  
Y de mis sienes el laurel pisó.  
No digas que venciste, Alcides, ya;  
Di, amor, pues que lo digo también yo,  
Que Roldán a tus pies rendido está.

(Acad., XIII, 447a.)

21. Ibid., 228b.
22. Ibid., 243b.
en estos brazos, en éstos,
siempre a servirte fieles,
fuiste Penate de Troya,
que siempre mis penas eres.\textsuperscript{23}

... de cuyos brazos si agora
mis esperanzas la sacan,
será más que con los míos
del fuego de vuestra casa.\textsuperscript{24}

This incident, which is narrated in very poor verses, is merely an after-
thought that Lope throws in at the last moment. Yet this incident does not
appear in the novel at all. Since Castillo Solórzano’s novel consists, as the
title \textit{El socorro en el peligro} indicates, of a series of incidents in which Feli-
ciano saves Dorotea from accidental death, it is reasonable to suppose that,
had the novelist been following the playwright, he would probably have
exploited this suggestion. In this connection it may be further argued that
the title of the novel is much more indicative of the common plot than that
of the play.

The positive as well as the negative evidence adduced from this com-
parison of the texts of \textit{Amar, servir y esperar} and \textit{El socorro en el peligro} seem
to indicate that Lope based his play on Castillo Solórzano’s \textit{novela}. If this is
the case, it should be noted that this is one of the very rare occasions in
which Lope has been found copying a contemporary of his so closely.\textsuperscript{25} It
should also be added that if the evidence of \textit{periodismo} is rejected the only
safe assumption on the subject of the date of the play is the one made by
Morley and Brereton, 1624–35.

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\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., III, 233b.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 243b.
\textsuperscript{25} The only other similar instance I know of is recorded by W. L. Fichter in
"Lope de Vega an Imitator of Quevedo?" \textit{MP}, XXX (1932), No. 2.