The Gaze of Celestina:
Celestina's Anamorphosis and the Sixteenth-Century Reader

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the reasons for the success of Fernando de Rojas's masterpiece in terms of its readership's cultural and ideological horizons, both at the moment of the work's inception and over the course of the sixteenth century. My purpose is to explore the conceptual relationships between the changing sociohistorical settings in which *Celestina* came into being and circulated as a printed text. In the sixteenth century, anamorphosis is one particular cultural phenomenon in which text and sociohistorical context converged in experiencing the literary work of art. The aesthetics of anamorphosis, known by writers and artists and exploited by them since antiquity, was also a widely used optical artifice in late medieval and Renaissance fine arts. Anamorphosis entails a heuristic exercise of manipulated perspectives created by conveying a visually distorted image whose shape, form, and message change when viewed from different angles or points of view. Drawing on Renaissance and post-modern theories of anamorphosis and semiotics, Lacanian hypotheses and materialist criticism, my work develops a theory of the work's reception based on the presence of anamorphic images in the text, whose explicit shapes and meanings are not always visible at first sight. The principle is also a recurrent presence in the works of Lacan and Žižek, in which anamorphosis is associated with the shifting function of the gaze that shapes psychological and ideological modes of perception. In the main, I adapt this method from pictorial—and filmic—analyses to textual criticism, where it serves as a tool to assess the texting and perusal of *Celestina* in terms of the continuous negotiation of the work's reception and meaning. In this way, my dissertation seeks to discover the question of *Celestina*'s abiding human and intellectual appeal through a theoretical and contextualized study of its readership that, in general terms, brings into focus anamorphic spaces in Rojas's work as imagined and performed by *Celestina*'s audience up to the beginning of the seventeenth century.

DEDICATION

To my parents, Antonio and Susana.

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All illustrations of Fernando de Rojas's *Celestina* are taken from 'Celestina visual' [celestinavisual.org].

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All citations from *Celestina* in Spanish are taken from Dorothy Sherman Severin's 1987 edition of Rojas's work (Madrid: Cátedra). These citations are followed by the number of the page in which they appear in brackets, without further reference to author, editor or year of publication. The accompanying English version have been extracted from Margaret Sayers Peden's translation of *Celestina*, edited with an introduction by Roberto González Echevarría (New Haven: Yale U. P., 2009). Nonetheless, when I consider that Sayers Peden's translation fails to render accurately Rojas's words, I have taken the liberty to amend it. These modifications are not signaled. Given that Sayers' translation excludes the paratexts, I have resourced to Perter Bush's translation (New York: Penguin Books, 2010). Once again, I have taken the liberty to modify the translation when I have considered it inaccurate. When I cite from works other than *Celestina*, the source of the translation is immediately acknowledged. The rest of the translations are mine, unless otherwise indicated.

INTRODUCTION

Celestina is one of the most exceptional and enticing titles of Spanish literature, possibly overshadowed only by Cervantes' *Don Quijote*. It became in the sixteenth-century Iberian Peninsula a 'best-seller,' and was overall one of the most popular literary works of the European early modernity. The book, which tells the story of two young lovers in an early modern emergent city, and of the bawd who facilitates their physical union in complicity with a criminal underworld comprised of servants and prostitutes, has held an unrelenting appeal for the reading public since the time of its first appearance ca. 1499. *Celestina*'s novelty situates it on the threshold of modernity, in between a medieval and early modern epistemological paradigm (see Pattison 2009). For the first time in European letters urban organized crime became not only the center of attention, but also a conquering force, signifying the end of a divinely preordained world sustained by providential justice. The rupture of social order portrayed in *Celestina* manifests a change in the teleological understanding of the universe, dismissing medieval transcendental values rooted in the metaphysical discourses of Christianity and courtly love in favor of a devastating assertion of secularity and material desire.[1]

The creative process that gave birth to the work we now refer to as *Celestina* is obscure. In the work's prefatory and concluding materials, in which his very identity is concealed, Fernando de Rojas, *Celestina*'s author, throws doubt on the work's origin and intention.[2] First published as a comedy in sixteen acts, *Comedia de Calisto y Melibea* (Burgos, ca. 1499), *Celestina* is an extension of a single-act manuscript Rojas claimed to have found and completed during a brief respite from his studies of jurisprudence at the

[1] The concept of 'discourse' is developed by Foucault in *The Archeology of Knowledge* (1972, 55). On the whole, 'discourse' reveals the performative nature of governing systems of knowledge, external to the self.

[2] Leaving the question of authorship aside and in accord with the opinion of a great majority of Celestina's scholarship, I consider Fernando de Rojas to be author of the entire work but Act 1 and the concluding verses by Proaza, in whose composition I nonetheless argue he participated. Furthermore, I sustain Rojas' authorship through my analysis of *Celestina*, in which a coherent design surfaces attesting to a single authorial mind, as already hypothesized by Gilman (1956, 1972), who in his works vindicated the Rojas' artistry. An overall introduction to the question of authorship can be found in any critical introduction to *Celestina*. See, for example, Severin (1987), Lobera (2000) or Russell (2013).

University of Salamanca. In the *carta* to a friend of his that opens the *Comedia de Calisto y Melibea* published in Toledo in 1500, Rojas recounts his find of some manuscript papers written by an unknown author, who in the later *Tragicomedia* he suggests might have been either Rodrigo Cota or Juan de Mena. Rojas thus introduces himself as the first reader of the story he will subsequently complete. A few years later and, Rojas claims, in response to his readers' desire, he set his hand to the text again. Rojas then produced a significantly altered and amplified twenty-one–act version of the work, which he retitled as a *tragicomedia* [tragicomedy].

Rojas's *Celestina*—both work and character—very soon became an object of popular fascination in early modern Europe. The popularity of *Celestina* is beyond question. In all, Rojas's novel-in-dialogue most likely surpassed eighty editions in sixteenth-century Spain; in addition to the significant number of editions that might have been lost (Whinnom 1980, 191). Not only numerous editions were printed in the Iberian Peninsula and Italy, but it was also translated into all the major vernacular languages as well as Latin and Hebrew. In addition, it prompted a large number of adaptions, imitations and continuations. *Celestina*'s continuations gave rise to a new literary genre, the so-called *celestinesca*, inaugurated by Feliciano de Silva's *Segunda Celestina* (1534). Furthermore, in a society vexed by criminality, suspicion and dissent, *Celestina*'s morality and didacticism became a matter of contention among the intellectuals debating the benefits and dangers of reading, such as Juan de Valdés and Juan Luis Vives, who referred to it as a *nequitiarum parens*, a 'mother of wickedness,' in his *De institutione feminae christianae.* On account of its reception *Celestina*, one of the first early modern 'best-selling' books, lays bare the complexities of meaning and interpretation in a culture in which medieval transcendental discourses have been displaced by an increasingly secular society that peruse the growing body of printed fictions as a form of entertainment.

On account of the complex circumstances of its composition and its ambiguous generic affiliation, scholarship has concentrated mainly on the study of *Celestina*'s literary sources, its apparent didacticism, its philosophical background and, above all, on the thorny question of its authorship and process of writing. The majority of studies on *Celestina* miss out on theoretical approaches, which nonetheless provide an insightful tool to grasp *Celestina*'s conceptual base, in which questions of gender, polity, and popularity coalesce.

Against this scholarly background, this dissertation establishes a more conceptual relation between the protean sociohistorical space in which *Celestina* came to life and its public. With the purpose of exploring the lasting allure that Rojas's book has held, and continues to hold, for readers from a theoretical and contextually informed perspective; this dissertation discusses Rojas's masterpiece in relation to general aesthetic, epistemological, ideological and cultural notions both at the moment of its inception and over the course of time up until the seventeenth century.

One particular component of the literary phenomenon in which text, subject and life seemingly come together is readership. In the experience of the literary work of art, philological, moral, religious and civic concerns converge, as has been well noticed by intellectuals from classical antiquity to the present time. As he made clear in *Celestina*'s Prologue, Rojas himself was fully aware of the fluidity of meaning, a dynamic process that involves a handful of human agents, from author to readers and printers. Furthermore, Rojas was aware that creation was indebted to the literary tradition, portraying himself first and foremost as a reader. The study of reading and reception is key to grasping the relation between humankind and the literary text, composed to circulate and to be read. It is in the convergence of composition and consumption where texts come into being, acquiring on meanings and uses. On this account, this dissertation sheds light on the abiding question *Celestina*'s human and intellectual attraction through a theoretical and contextualized study of readership in and of the text.[3]

'When we look at the best-sellers of the Golden Age it is hard to believe that literary merit alone suffices to explain their success,' states Whinnom (1980, 196-197), who endorsed the study of popular literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries not in terms of literary excellence, but of human appeal. In this regard, Whinnom (1980, 189) acknowledges that 'ultimately, perhaps, we can offer no more than pseudo-psychological and pseudo-sociological explanations which are largely unverifiable.' What Whinnom perceived as purely hypothetical, and therefore tenuous, is verifiable not in empirical data, but in a dialectical argumentation about the function of language and texts in the construction of

[3] The reception of *Celestina* has been most remarkably studied by Snow (1995, 1997, 2001, 2002) Deyermond (2001), Chartier (1989a), Severin (2005), Scott (2017) and, to a certain extent, Gerli (2011a), among many others.

selfhood, on the one hand, and of the sociohistorical consciousness, on the other. In this regard, at the end of the Middle Ages, an emergent subjectivity entailed a heightened awareness about the force of the word to create and to satisfy human want for rank, money and sex, distancing more and more mankind from God. Foucault (1971), and later Reiss (1982) situates the coming of modernity in this epistemic and linguistic break, which revealed the fragmentation of experience and its disenfranchisement from a higher order. By the end of the fifteenth century, as modern states were beginning to mature, the world was no longer perceived as a divine text to be deciphered, but as a secular and material order governed by terrestrial matters. As personal value opened the possibility of an unprecedented social mobility, it arose a renewed awareness of the self and subjectivity. The new men of letters, such as Fernando de Rojas, represented the spirit of an age in which men had more than ever before in the power to craft its own life.

During the fifteenth-century, modern Western society experienced a radical change that would determine the course of its ensuing history.[4] By the end of the previous century, as the devastating plague of Black Death was coming to its end, a financial revolution took place in the hands of the new rich, who moved to the cities and began to invest in trade and art. In this climate, in which the middle class emerged and developed, life became more egalitarian, focused on the individual's merit. As the members of the new prosperous bourgeoisie could not turn to his ancestry in search of social recognition, they involve themselves in the government of the state in order to gain a name. As civic service became a source of virtue and pride, men's facet as a sociopolitical and cultural agent took over the previous understanding of humankind as a divine entity. Middle class men educated themselves at the university, an institution that proliferated and flourished. From the universities emerged a body of bureaucrats that defined themselves with regards to their service to the community. While the businessman, the merchant and the jurist came to occupy a central position in the life of the community, the traditional power of the European old nobility and of the Church decreased significantly, suffocated under an increasing centralization of state power. On the other side of the social spectrum, people from country towns fled into the cities, filled with poverty and chaos. Also, by the fifteenth century,

[4] Burke (1985) offers a brief history of late medieval and early modern European social and epistemological changes. For a more detailed and historically informed account, see Kamen (2000).

religious practice became more and more a private matter, leading to a novel understanding of religiosity, Protestantism. At the same time, religious suspicion and bigotry concretized in the establishment of Inquisition tribunals all around Europe. The severity of punishment emphasized the dangers of excessive autonomy and desire.

As in the case of its European neighbors, living conditions in Castile were changing rapidly as the Iberian Peninsula was preparing to enter modernity.[5] From the ascension of the new Trastamaran dynasty to the Castilian throne, the reign had been plunged into social and political unrest. This profound crisis was the result for the most part of the onerous halo of illegitimacy surrounding the new dynasty, who had achieved power by virtue of fratricide. The old nobility, unsupportive of the adventitious Trastamaran dynasty, were deprived of their wealth and prerogatives. At the same time, those who supported the new regime received generous rewards in the form of privileges—*prebendas—,* lands and fortune. Nonetheless, even these upstart and prosperous noblemen began to feel displaced and redundant. The development of a professional army had drove them out of the battlefield and a growing body of clerks in charge of the administrative bureaucracy were also excluding noblemen from the rule of the country. In particular, the age in which Fernando de Rojas composed *Celestina* bore the hallmark of a female sovereign, Isabel I, who had seized power just a few decades before Rojas would complete the anonymous manuscript of Act 1.

Isabel of Trastámara seized the throne of Castile through violence and political maneuvering. Straight away Isabel I, The Catholic Queen, launched a political program destined to unify Castile politically, spiritually and ethnically. The queen's agenda soon precipitated into unchecked repression, intended to purge the body politic of those considered their contaminating subjects. Isabel's concern for unification and religious purity resulted in a series of epoch-making events, first and foremost, the symbolic completion of the Reconquista, the institution of the Holy Office of the Inquisition and of the statutes of 'blood purity,' and the expulsion of Jews from the Kingdom of Castile. Also, under the patronage of the queen, in the year 1492, Christopher Columbus embarked on a trip in search of a western route to the Indies opening the path for a trans-Atlantic expansion, whose repercussions were by the end of the fifteenth-century still unforeseen. In order to reinforce and centralize monarchic control, Isabel shattered the power of the old nobility and of the

[5] For a political and social history of the Iberian Peninsula, see Kamen (1991).

Church. During her reign, administrative competence transferred into a new group of men of letters almost exclusively educated at the University of Salamanca, the utmost center of learning in Castile and deeply involved in the ideological affairs of the Catholic Monarchs.

Against this background, Fernando de Rojas's *Celestina* portrays a tragic love, firmly anchored in the medieval tradition, against a framework of sociopolitical transformation that depicts a newly emergent urban society at its center. In the profoundly unidealistic universe of *Celestina*, urban organized crime becomes a conquering force at the same time that female desire and autonomy threaten to annihilate the established social system. The rupture of the patriarchal order portrayed in *Celestina* manifests a dismissal of medieval transcendental values, rooted in the discourses of Christianity and courtly love in favor of a devastating assertion of carnal life and social ambition. 'Celestina's uniqueness lies in its exploration of the human subject as something that emerges out of a fundamental reconfiguration and rethinking of desire, and from the trauma of the conclusive awareness that lives lived desiring have no reachable or knowable metaphysical object or foundation,' posits Gerli in his Lacanian analysis of desire in *Celestina* (2011a, 36). Rojas's conscious display of human desire and of its violent and deadly ends is rooted in language and linguistically fulfilled. *Celestina* uncovers the perverse counter-discourse of courtly ethics and metaphysics and, along with it, further problematizes the processes of cognition, representation and interpretation, bringing them into the realm of carnality and materialistic ambition. *Celestina*'s relativism and skepticism evidences the inadequacy of human linguistic and sensorial powers to apprehend truth. *Celestina*, intimates Marina Brownlee (1990), exploits a fundamental paradigm of the sentimental fiction, a paradigm that has its origins in Ovid's *Heroides*. *Celestina*'s linguistic solipsism and fetishism exceeds by far the linguistic relativity of the sentimental fiction, its most immediate antecessor. *Celestina*, which takes place in a semblance of a late fifteenth-century urban center, consistently articulates the chasm between two metaphysical and epistemological systems. This conflict translates into a constant struggle between the self and the Other, a Lacanian concept that encapsulates human sense of alienation from the transcendental kernel of existence. This alienation is embedded in language, which structures, but also limits, our knowledge of the world. As *Celestina* brings to the fore the desiring nature of mankind, it betrays the artificiality and performativity of the metaphysical discourses of courtly love and Christianity. Nonetheless,

this revelation is not conspicuous. In *Celestina*, Rojas's projects the previous transcental in to a crooked mirror and through their distorted reduplication hint at their other, darker side. In this reduplication, the reader's own sense of alienation and his/her resulting desire for union is inscribed.

The theory I advance in this dissertation is that the reason why *Celestina*/ Celestina became a personage of clear fascination and a figure of a larger folk consciousness in early modernity resides in its anamorphic glimpse into the Lacanian Other, which stands for all that is perceived by the self as an alien and, hence, desired. Drawing on medieval and post-modern theories of anamorphosis, my work develops a theory of *Celestina*'s reception based on the presence of anamorphosis in the text.[6] My aim is to explain *Celestina*'s success in terms the anamorphic space of the gaze. Through anamorphic redoubling, Rojas attempts to capture the *gaze*, a psychoanalytical concept developed by Lacan in the *Four Fundamentals of Psychoanalysis* in order to communicate the irreducible alienation between the human mind and the existential kernel that governs and structures life. Rojas's *Celestina*, consciously or unconsciously, partakes in the aesthetics of anamorphosis, an optical artifice based on the reduplication and distortion of perspective. *Celestina* is in dialogue with the Renaissance epistemological crisis and revolution. Due to the development of perspective in the fifteenth-century, the Renaissance placed a renewed emphasis, at the same time, on the cognitive potential of the human mind to measure the universe and to tailor it to his its own standards, and on the miseries of earthly life, alienated more than ever before from God. In this vein, Márquez Villanueva states that *Celestina*'s 'trágico amargor es de un radical repudio de toda ulterioridad o sentido superior para un encuadre del puro o "científico" hecho humano' (Márquez Villanueva 1993, 142) [tragic bitternes implies a radical repudiation of any form of ulteriority or higher existential ulteriority in favor of a pure or 'scientific' framing of humanity]. Rojas gives literary expression to the clash between a newly found scientific confidence on the capacities of humankind and a pinching awareness of the senselessness and contingency of life. He does so in the context of an emerging society in which men and women enjoyed a greater degree of mobility, becoming to a certain extent the agents of their own life.

[6] The anamorphic quality of *Celestina* is noted by Gerli (2011a) and Scott (2017, 14)

Chapter 1 explores the concept of anamorphosis both in terms of its Renaissance origins and its post-modern theorization. Anamorphosis is one particular component of Renaissance art, in which due to the developments of perspective the image becomes an extension of the look of the observer. In the late fifteenth-century, anamorphosis inaugurated perspectivism by bringing to the fore through artistic representation a new relation between the world and the self. In the point or space of anamorphosis, the observing self meets the gaze of the Other, encapsulated in the work of art, either pictorial or literary, through reduplication. Anamorphosis is a recurrent presence in the works of Lacan and of his Marxist interpreter, Slavoj Žižek. In literature, I suggest, anamorphosis emerges in connection to the arbitrariness and performativity of language, the material support that mediates the relation between humans and the world, and upon which knowledge is built. Anamorphosis stands for the refractory side of language, so feared by philosophers like Plato, theologians such as St. Augustine of Hippo, and early modern linguists, most eminently, Lorenzo Valla and Elio Antonio de Nebrija. The textual space of anamorphosis signals the impossibility of fixing meaning as a result of the conventionality of language and, hence, of cultural and ideological discourses.

Anamorphosis stands for the foreclosed underside of representation, inseparable from the Lacanian Other, that results from the function of unconscious desire. In Lacan and Žižek's works, anamorphosis is associated with the shifting function of the gaze, which shapes psychological and ideological modes of perception. The one single vantage point of anamorphosis, theorizes Lacan, escapes human cognition powers as it pertains to the Real of human existence, which is impossible to apprehend and synthetize due to the necessary mediation of the Symbolic. Anamorphosis, further theorizes Žižek, creates a threatening sense of excess in knowledge and meaning, forcing the observing self into subjectivization and epistemological recategorization. As Žižek (1994) intimates, the lady is the literary tradition of courtly love the point anamorphosis, that is to say, the uncanny element that when looked at from a straight glance appears as a distortion. The phallic anamorphosis, explains Žižek (1991), is the repressed underside that dwells well within the idyllic, sanctioned exterior. Every event or action consists of two sides, a double nature that endlessly reproduces itself 'as in a double mirror play' (Žižek 1991, 90). From this continuous reduplication, a surplus knowledge arises in the form of an incongruous detail that brings

about suspicion and discomfort. The surplus knowledge created by anamorphic reduplication propels the reading subject to compulsively elicit new hidden meanings in order to apprehend meaning, which through the same effect of anamorphosis is incessantly postponed, deferred.

Against this theoretical background, I propose that Fernando de Rojas's *Celestina* consciously attempts at the anamorphic subtleties produced by the threatening look of the Other, thus giving rise to a verbal space suffused with multiplicity and inextricable contradictions in which the grotesque and the burlesque fuse. I bring Renaissance and postmodern theories of anamorphosis into the function of medieval voyeurism elucidated by Spearing (1993), Gossy's theory of the 'untold' in early modern Iberian literature (1989) and the study of reception in order to look into *Celestina*'s human appeal on the threshold of modernity. I suggest that *Celestina* attempts at capturing the gaze, the place from where the Other looks into the subject, which manifests in the text as anamorphosis.

As introduced in the first chapter, in the medieval courtly tradition, poets and readers assumed a distanced position from the text. This detachment was possible on account of the strict separation between the voyeur, a secret onlooker, and the object of observation, the female body. As I develop in Chapter 2, *Celestina* creates a space of verbal anamorphosis that explores predefined of notions love, truth and power, through a superimposition of discourses. These discourses are redoubled, taking an awry form. In this mirrored distortion, a specter of the foreclosed Real surfaces. I suggest that Rojas seeks to capture the gaze, the places from where the Other looks into the subject, who is attracted to it. *Celestina*'s anamorphosis is the effect of a redoubling and deformation of medieval discourses. This crooked projection brings to the surface everything that is Other to the medieval transcendental discourses in terms of gender, sexuality and class. The failure of the metaphysical discourse of courtly love, and together with it of Christianity, underpins Rojas's *Celestina* a text where the trafficking of sexuality transgresses and benefits from patriarchal social norms, bringing about a rupture of the phantasy of love. Through anamorphic redoubling, *Celestina* makes manifest the unfeasibility of courtly idealization and exposes its narcissistic and deadly ends. *Celestina* focuses on what is left unsaid, foreclosed, in the previous tradition in order to bring about an awareness of the gazing Other. From this space, in which the Other is contained, the text gazes into the reader, who is forced to abandon his/her position as a neutral observer in order to endow it with meaning. The gaze of *Celestina*

breaks down the illusion of voyeuristic separation, theorized by Spearing (1993) and discussed in Chapter 1, in order to bring to the fore the libidinal instincts of the ego. Anamorphic redoubling manifests in language through linguistic fetishism, asides and an unexpected literality of curse. It is this space of anamorphosis, which is a form of textual gap, that Celestina's readers approach. Due to the gaze of *Celestina*, the reader becomes immersed in a continuous strife that result from the unyielding variety of perspectives it admits. In this lean towards subjectivization resides *Celestina*'s human appeal. To be sure, *Celestina*'s space of anamorphosis, in which the reader is already inscribed, and whose vantage point can only be apprehended by a subjective reflection of the self, returns to the reading subject an image of his or her own humanity and is the key to understanding its success, as Rojas already envisioned.

The obscene reduplication introduced in *Celestina* desautomatize the reading act, calling for the reader's subjectivization, in which resides the intellectual pleasure of reading. In *Celestina*, meaning arises as result of a dialogue between the self and the Other, the book. In this regard, *Celestina* lures the readers to revel in eroticism and rudeness, mobilizing the Other within him/herself. Accordingly, the narcissistic projection of the reader upon the text that characterized the engagement with courtly lyric and prose becomes impeded. Contrary, *Celestina* gazes into the reader, whose desire is inscribed in the text, and challenges him/her to confront the Real of human existence. Every reader reads from what he or she is and wants, which is not only projected in the text, but already inscribed in it. The text gazes at the reader from a place where his or her obsessions, fears and yearnings are already contained, not to put the soul to test—as the *Libro* did—but to enable the subject to investigate and to come to face with its innermost self. Chapter 3 focuses on the textual space that is given-to-be-seen and which is articulated in *Celestina*'s preliminary and concluding materials. As he made clear in Celestina's Prologue, Rojas himself was fully aware of the fluidity of meaning, a dynamic process that involves a handful of human agents, from author to readers, printers, editors, etc., who since early modernity have mediated and determined to a great extent the encounter between the literary work and society.

Reception was at the center of inventive and compositional practices up to early modernity; nonetheless, by the late fifteenth-century, authors began to find themselves in a different footing. In the midst of a changing system of epistemological and ethical values,

Rojas began questioning and redefining the scholastic notion of signification authority. The late European Middle Ages witnessed the gradual spread of literacy among the un-professional laity, a phenomenon that gave rise to a new and broader reading public. The beginning of modern literature as a whole can be traced back to the fifteenth century, when a secular public more than ever before accessed literature as a source of pleasure due to the spread of literacy. The aural transmission of literary texts developed into solitary and silent reading, in a movement from a public to a private space, which opened the possibilities of interpretation. Literacy expanded from courtly and nobiliary circles into body of professionally trained bureaucrats and middle-class citizens. As the habit of silent reading spread among lay men and women, they began to demand a more reading material, especially vernacular works of prose. Also, these works began to focus on interiority and eroticism, facilitated by the privacy of reading. The emerging secular reading public a change in traditional categories for reading was no longer a means to an end, but an end in itself. Reading became a source of pleasure and enjoyment, a recreational activity. This radical change led to a change in the understanding of authorship and readership.

From a Christian preoccupation with the salvation of the immortal soul, Rojas's *Celestina* foregrounds the pleasure of reading. The medieval reading conventions that Rojas links to the genesis of *Celestina* are overturned due to the anamorphic projection and redoubling. *Celestina*'s paratexts—as everything in *Celestina*—are not a series of reductive formulae, but a metaliterary reinterpretation of fifteenth-century conventions and practices. In his paratextual materials, starting from the title, Rojas articulates a dialogic encounter between a contemplative understanding of literature and a reading public eager to take pleasure on the voluptuousness of the letter. Therefore, Rojas slips under the guise of didacticism a recognition of the corporal and desiring nature of language. He does so by placing side by side a series of *topoi* and usages that, by virtue of this juxtaposition and of Rojas's interested exposition of *Celestina*'s reception, are interrogated and reappraised. Rojas envisions his readers' foreclosed desire and anxieties and, together with them, himself as a consummated go-between. In this context, in which performance gave way to the individual reading of the scripted page, the printers began to play a crucial role in the transmission of texts, as pointed in the Prologue added to the *Tragicomedia.*

As part of my approach to *Celestina*'s reception, I combine the above described framework with the study of books as physical objects and a contextualized history of readership. I use a hermeneutical approach to readership and meaning formation that progresses from theoretical considerations into material, cultural and sociohistorical aspects. An analysis of *Celestina*'s printed edition gives an insight into the work's reception as a result of the socialization and historization that entails situating the text in its medium. In effect, states Mckenzie, 'the study of study of the social, economic, and political motivations of publishing, the reasons why texts were written and read as they were, why they were rewritten and redesigned, or allowed to die' (1999, 13) is crucial to historical literary analysis. On this account, and moving beyond ecdotics, I aim to disclose a series of intuitive experiences embedded in the physical medium, in which these readings take shape and are concretized. To be sure, the medium provides a vehicle to understanding *Celestina*'s success and the continuations it spawned, of which Feliciano de Silva's *Segunda Celestina* is the inaugural one.

In her valuable analysis of *Celestina*'s early modern success, Scott (2017, 2-3) situates it in a wider network of texts dealing with the social and moral complexities of mankind, contending that '*Celestina* continued to be meaningful because it engaged with one of the period's defining preoccupations: namely the human condition, an idea often conceptualized in *pro et contra* debates about the misery and dignity of man, which formed one of several strands of thought that characterized the intellectual horizon of *Celestina*'s early modern reception.' *Celestina*'s preoccupation with human condition was one component of its composition and reception both in an Iberian and European context, but it was also one more facet of the early modern radical questioning of the relation between the self and the Other, both as the desiring impulse of the self and society's marginals, who symbolize that transgressive desire. Chapter 4 interrogates the reasons behind Silva's resurrection of Celestina, who had been killed by her confederates, Pármeno and Sempronio, in Rojas's novel-in-dialogue. Silva resurrects Rojas's bawd against a historical context in which everyday poverty and delinquency were taking central stage both in the streets and in literature, where it prompted a debate around the benefits and evils of charity. The main intellectual agent in these debates was Juan Luis Vives, who in his *De subventione pauperum* (1526) deals with the failure of Christian charity to succor the impoverished and proposes a

secularized social reform. Vives' *De subventione* envisions a society in which wealth was equally distributed and in which all workforce was employed and economically independent. Against a new understanding of poverty and under the influence of Vives, Silva resurrects the old bawd Celestina, who becomes in his continuation of Rojas's work a scapegoat.

Silva' *Segunda Celestina* attempts at offering his readers an alternative vision of everyday reality in which *Celestina*'s violent materialism is replaced by a proletarian courtly utopia ruled by love, friendship and loyalty. In this world, in which courtly and Christian values merge with an environment that resembles Silva's immediate historical reality, the margin is either regulated or further pushed to the side so that it does not pose a threat. Silva, the most productive author of chivalric novels, partakes in the debates on poverty through the transformation of Rojas's 'best-seller' into a work in which communal bonds between masters and servants are fostered, whereas marginal 'others' are further stigmatized and contained. In this way, *Segunda Celestina* reveals an author that seeks to provide his, largely, high- and middle-class readers with an image of Vives' ideal urban society. Like the Biblical Lazarus, the patron-saint of paupers, Celestina is given an opportunity to amend her sins; nonetheless, and despite her apparent conversion, she continues her sex traffic. In light of Vives, Celestina comes to stand for the lazy and wicked poor who, notwithstanding religious or secular help, refuses to abandon the lowlife due to the economic benefits and joy it yields. Silva thus negotiates *Celestina*'s anamorphosis. Silva confers upon *Celestina*'s anamorphosis an unmistakable, less nuanced vantage point that contains a vision of the Other's depravity together with a condemnation of the hypocrisy of the privileged classes. Like the later *Lazarillo de Tormes* (ca. 1554)*, Segunda Celestina* presents against a background of social order an anamorphic image of corruption and desolation.

To conclude, Chapter 5 discusses *Celestina*'s success and anamorphosis in the context of the picaresque. I posit that *Celestina*'s success and editorial decline is inextricably linked to the development of the picaresque genre. *Celestina* and the picaresque novel share an anamorphic structure they result of their desire to investigate with the Other; nonetheless, I posit, they have different origins. As David Castillo (2001) first articulated in a comprehensive manner, a significant number of Renaissance 'best-selling' works, among which are the picaresque novel and Cervantes' works, attempt at capturing the gaze of the Other, either as a remnant of the Lacanian Real or as an authority external to the self, which

in Lacan's works is identified with the Symbolic. In this way, anamorphosis becomes a theoretical and hermeneutical tool for the analysis of late medieval and early modern texts. I draw on Castillo's (2001) analysis of picaresque fiction in terms of anamorphosis and suggest that *Celestina*'s anamorphic structure granted it unmatched success during the sixteenth century. In a way that parallels the developments of pictorial anamorphosis, Renaissance writers rediscover the function of textual gaps and seek to exploit them. Texts such as Fernando de Rojas's *Celestina,* the anonymous *Lazarillo de Tormes* and Cervantes' *Don Quijote* dare reader to confront his/her own desire and anxieties in order to elicit meaning. In this subjectivization, reside their success. Of the texts that comprise an anamorphic space, I argue, *Celestina* is the first in the Iberian Peninsula. The seventeenth century brings about a crisis of subjectivity and agency that entails a need at controlling the *pícaro*, as it becomes evident in Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache* (ca. 1599). When the dynamics of anamorphosis are inverted under the influence of a Counter-Reformist aesthetics of *desengaño*, Rojas's book ceased to be consumed and produced, further displaced by a flourishing market of literary entertainment.

To be sure, I adapt anamorphosis from pictorial—and filmic—analyses to textual criticism, where it serves as a tool to assess the texting and perusal of *Celestina* in terms of the continuous negotiation of the work's reception and meaning. In this way, my dissertation deals with the question of *Celestina*'s abiding human and intellectual appeal through a theoretical and contextualized study of its readership that, in general terms, brings into focus anamorphic spaces in Rojas's novel-in-dialogue and analyzes the ways in which they were imagined and performed by *Celestina*'s sixteenth-century readers. In the inscription of the gaze upon the text resides the key to understand *Celestina*'s reception and success in European early modernity. Like the mysterious, eerie stare of Leonardo da Vinci's 'Mona Lisa,' *Celestina*'s gaze follows the observer's look defying him/her to imagine new meanings. Rojas's development of perspective situates his *Celestina* in dialogue with the radical epistemological changes of the late Middle Ages and early modernity and is, I shall argue, the reason of its enduring success.

Figure 0.1. Leonardo da Vinci, ‘Mona Lisa,’ ca. 1503-1506, oil on pane, 77 cm × 53 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

1

ANAMORPHOSIS AND THE RENAISSANCE TEXT

The fifteenth-century Italian Renaissance produced the first techniques for rendering visual perspective through a mathematical representation of space. Perspective developed side by side with geometry and optics in the first half of the fifteenth-century. The Renaissance recuperated the visual theory of the Muslim thinker Al Hazen, born ca. 965 (Burke 1985, 72; 2000, 25-26). Al Hazen, drawing from Greek sources, established that the eye was the apex of a cone of vision whose base was the object itself. Whereas in previous centuries the eye was believed to give out the ray of light that makes vision possible, Al Hazen located the gaze in the observed object and not exclusively in the eye of the beholder. On this account, Al Hazen distinguished between a multitude of rays, of which the perpendicular was the strongest and the oblique, the weakest. Around 1450, on the basis of Al Hazen's optic theory and building on Brunelleschi's geometrical experiments for the dome of Florence's cathedral, Leon Battista Alberti developed a grid that would serve to calculate relative proportion.[7] Alberti's grid converged in a single, central point, which he called the 'vanishing point,' perpendicular to the eye of the observer (Burke 1985, 74). In this exclusive point would converge all the oblique perspectives. Architectural and pictorial perspective was therefore achieved through the geometrical calculation of the size and position of objects in terms of the relation to one another and to the vanishing point. This way, Mantegna, Piero della Francesca and Raphael—among other Renaissance painters—created in their paintings the illusion of depth, making the thing portrayed appear as a truthful representation of nature to the human eye. On the whole, perspective aimed to capture by means of geometry the harmonious order of nature, at the center of which was humankind and the human body, whose proportions provided the basic unit of measurement given that it comprised the pattern for the two most perfect forms, the circle and the square, as depicted in Leonardo's well-known 'Uomo vitruviano.' 'Perspective puts space more firmly into the grasp of the imagination, makes it manipulable to the hand and eye and therefore more readily available

[7] For an account of Albertian perspective—named after Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472)—and anamorphosis, see chapter one of Gilman's *The Curious Perspective*, whose main ideas I outline in this chapter. See also Burke's (1985), 70-83, for a detailed account of the historical and scientific background surrounding Alberti's discoveries.

as a category of thought,' explains Ernest Gilman (1978, 28). The great achievement of perspective was to confer humankind a confidence in its ability to apprehend the world, becoming an integral development of a wider revolution in scientific knowledge that led to a rethinking of our position in the universe.

As humankind was able to spatialize and hence to grasp reality by tailoring it to our measure, the Renaissance recovered Protagoras' notion that the human being is the measure of all things. Protagoras' underlining of the central position of humanity in this epistemological structure positioned man as the ultimate source of knowledge and implied that the rest of things and accidents could be known in comparison to its experience. In this regard, Burke (1985, 77-78) explains that 'Aristotelian thought had endowed objects with "essence," an invisible, in comparable uniqueness. The position of these objects was, therefore, not to be compared with that of other objects, but only with God, who stood at the center of the universe. Now, at a stroke, the special relation between God and every separate object was removed to be replaced by a direct human control objects existing in the same, measurable space.' [8] In this manner, perspective became part of the broader epistemological posture of the Renaissance, a counterpart of Renaissance individualism. As noted by Burke, historically the development of perspective was concurrent with a new cosmological understanding that symbolized the end of a Scholastic transcendental worldview. The Scholastic notion of an absolute theological truth, which endowed every cosmic element with a transcendental worth and hierarchically organized the universe, became invalid. God no longer stood at the center of the universe, but was replaced by man, who had found the clue to master the universe through its intellectual endeavors. The displacement of the realm of God and the emphasis on the physical and temporal world gave rise to a secular awareness that evolved into an emphasis in relativism, contingency and pragmatism rooted in the experience of the diversity in everyday life. This novel attitude became known as Humanism.[9]

[8] In 'Point of view,' Chapter 3 of his *The Day the Universe Changed*, Burke (1985, 55-91) connects in a comprehensive and enlightening manner the developments in science with a change in the epistemological system of the late Middle Ages.

[9] For an introduction to the philosophical and literary aspects of Renaissance Humanism, see Kristeller (1988), 113-137. For classical study on Iberian Humanism, see Di Camillo (1976).

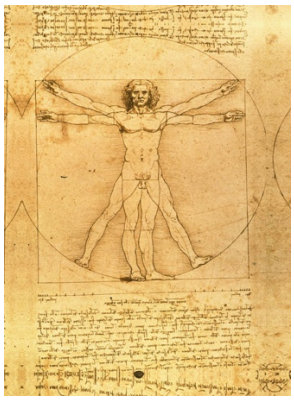

Figure 1.1. Leonardo Da Vinci, 'Uomo vitruviano,' ca. 1490, pen and ink on paper, 34.6 cm × 25.5 cm. Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice.

The Renaissance's newly found confidence in the human ability to measure, and hence to preside over creation, had a darker, less optimistic side, linked to the limitations and paradox of perspective itself. For perspective to work the onlooker needs to position himself or herself right in front of the geometrically measured and proportioned artwork so that the perpendicular look of the subject is aligned with the vanishing point. Therefore, perspective entails a contradiction, for when not looked at from the proper vantage distance and angle—only one of an infinite number of viewpoints—the image becomes distorted, taking on an unnatural, awry appearance. Like so, 'the very fullness and definition of perspective space implies the radical incompleteness of our vision, and the point of view becomes a drastic limitation, a set of blinders, as well as an epistemological privilege' (Gilman, Ernest; 31). Paradoxically, therefore, the perfect representation of reality became only an illusion of truth, a misrepresentation of the object, that is, a forgery. In this context anamorphosis came into being as the other side of perspective for, produced by geometrically enlarging the image, anamorphosis 'questions the fit between appearance and reality that is quietly assumed in a proper perspective picture. Its appearance is carefully constructed to deceive, to conceal the optical truth and produce an experience of doubt and readjustment before it reveals itself' (Gilman, Ernest; 38). That being so, perspective gained an intriguing and obscure dimension that connects with Plato's considerations of *mimesis* as deceptive, three times removed from the realm of universal truth (see *Republic*, in particular Books 7 and 10). In actuality, the aesthetics of anamorphosis' preoccupation with the ways humans perceive and represent the world partake in a deep-seated distrust of the cognitive faculties of the senses and of intellect, a concern that has its roots in Classical Antiquity and the Middle Ages.

The idea that language comprises a negative space is not exclusive of post-modern thinking. This question, which has religious and ideological undertones dates back to classical antiquity and to medieval exegesis. The notion that in any given representation several levels of meaning co-exist originated in Greek philosophy starting with Plato and has a long tradition in Western philosophical semiotics. In his *Republic,* Plato argues against poetry on grounds of its deceitful imitation of the world, a copy of a copy that takes its audience away from the world of absolute, abstract Forms. Umberto Eco sees in second-century Hermetism, which looks into the books in search of an unknown truth that would reveal itself in the form of an allegory, the closest antecedent of Western semiotic thinking (1992, 30). Yet the thinker who exerted the most decisive influence in this domain was Saint Augustine of Hippo. In the Middle Ages, scholars and writers were intensely involved in philological and hermeneutical discussions, consistently questioning both how to make sense of the linguistic sign and how to authorize interpretation, mostly with regard to Scriptural exegesis and theological discourse, although this semiotic anxiety extended to other areas of knowledge different from God and the Christian faith. The metaphysical preoccupation with language was essential to the epistemological and rhetorical systems of the Middle Ages, in which the instability of meaning appeared subordinated to the inadequacy of the letter, which established the limits of human knowledge. In this regard, medieval conceptions of meaning were informed by the main tenets of the theory of language as developed by Saint Augustine (354-430 AD), a forerunner of modern semiotics deeply under the influence of Plato and Plotinus.[10] Such preoccupations persisted during the Renaissance. Under a veneer of intellectual and linguistic optimism, the profound disquietude created by the dissociative nature of language was at the heart of Humanism. As it happens, by the fifteenth century, the effects of post-lapsarian linguistic dispersion might have become even more visible due to the decline of Latin as a trans-cultural and multidisciplinary means of communication. The decay of Latin was accompanied by the loss of religious and ideological certainty due to the rise of Protestantism and to the development of modern forms of government based on an administrative and bureaucratic system. Furthermore, it happened at a time when society was moving from orality into script due to the spread of literacy and the establishment of printing.

[10] Bruce Holsinger (2005) as well as Andrew Cole and D. Vance Smith (2014) have studied and demonstrated the fundamental indebtedness of postmodern theory to the Middle Ages.

Language was for the Renaissance humanist the fabric that structured civilized society so that the success of a nation depended on the maintenance of linguistic unity. This is so because only through linguistic integrity can the written historical and legal corpus preserve their meaning and, hence, their validity. If words stopped signifying the concepts expressed through them; communication would collapse bringing down civilization by eroding the bond that unites things to concepts, a bond upon which depends the construction of reality, community and the self. In a world that was rapidly moving towards an assertation of national, linguistic and individual identity, the changeable nature of language was perceived more and more as a dreadful occurrence. The double-edged awareness of linguistic mobility, both dreaded and celebrated as a sign of individualism, ran parallel to the pictorial developments of anamorphosis, which emphasizes the limitations of cognition due to the breach between reality and representation or, in linguistic terms, between the word and its referent.[11]

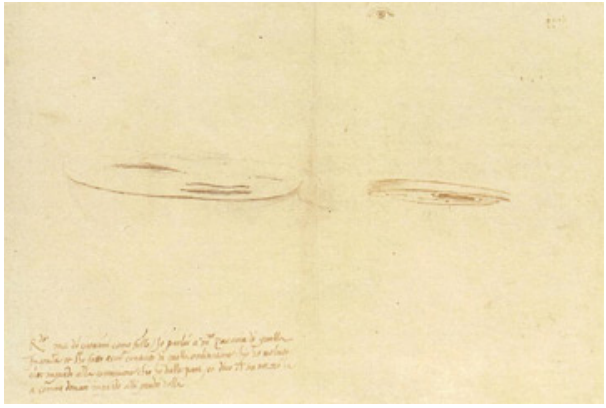

Figure 1.2. Leonardo da Vinci, 'Anamorphosis, study of eye, with juvenile face,' Codex Atlanticus, folio 98*r*. Veneranda Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan.

'Anamorphosis,' a widely known visual artifice in late medieval and Renaissance fine arts, depicts an optically altered object that requires of the spectator's active intervention to be rearranged into a recognizable shape. Anamorphic art was first defined by Leonardo da Vinci in a work known as the Codex Atlanticus, preserved in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana (Milan), and it later gained artistic force in the works of Dürer, who was in Italy around 1506,

[11] For a recent and comprehensive study of the views of Humanism on the relation between language, the self and the world, see De Looze (2016). Also, Mignolo (1995).

and political meaning in those of his disciple Erhand Schön (Baltrušaitis 1977, 33-34).[12] The aesthetics of anamorphosis entail a perceptual distortion and displacement that challenge the abilities of human sensory and intellectual faculties to discern reality, hence propelling the subject to reconsider his or her worldview in the search for meaning out of an apparently meaningless or deceptive shape. The amorphous contours of the anamorphic element in a picture provoke an oscillation of the spectator's gaze and, as a result, interpretative thinking is caught in the gulf between the image and its external reference, which turns into an ambiguous and plural theoretical possibility. In this manner, anamorphosis brings about an awareness of the ultimate alienation between substance and physical appearance, calling into question the reliability of empirical cognition. Anamorphosis is on the whole a heuristic exercise of perspective that directs the attention of the spectator towards the instability of the image and, along with it, towards the limitations of perception and representation. Therefore, the ultimate aim of the anamorphic image is to emphasize through a continuous displacement of meaning the artificial and metaphorical nature of representation as a way to cast a doubt on the abilities of human knowledge and cognition to grasp any claim to universal truth.

All things considered, anamorphosis provides a cognitive metaphor for the acts of composing and interpreting, not only within the domain of fine arts but of literature. Anamorphosis supports the hidden underside of *mimesis*, the one connected to the Real of human existence, to the world of the ideas in the philosophy of Plato, who distrusted art precisely for this reason. As far as art creates a reality beyond that of the object represented, anamorphosis points both to the psychic detour behind sublimation of reality in the work of art and to the point from where the texts gazes at the subject, compelling him or her to go on interpreting in order elicit new hidden meanings and significances in which the key to decipher the text may lie. Anamorphosis, as recovered and theorized in the works of Jacques Lacan, particularly in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (1981, 87-88), then stands for the surplus hidden knowledge brought about by the effects of phallic signifier on the written work that opens up a dimension beyond literal meaning. In other terms, anamorphosis draws the attention of the reader to what Lyotard refers to as the 'Zero' position, 'the position of the Signifier or of the Other…itself an enjoyable [*jouissive*]

[12] The origins and developments of visual anamorphosis up until the twentieth century are explored in depth by Jurgis Baltrušaitis (1977).

position' (Lyotard 1993, 5). As a result, the observer, male or female, is narcissistically moved to take over the shapeless space in order to endow it with meaning, and so to understand a never shown whole, the Real.[13]

Of the three psychological orders postulated by Lacan, the Real is the invariable universal beyond discourse. Contrarily, the Symbolic is the domain of verbal articulation and of the cultural system into which the human psyche must translate itself as soon as the subject begins to speak. In other words, the Symbolic is the world's linguistic fabric upon which the subject forcefully depends in order to relate to other subjects and to physical reality. It is precisely by way of the Symbolic that the radical Otherness—the linguistic materiality—of the Real is perceived. In other words, on account of its timeless and social character, language is perceived by humans as an entity Other to the self and as a remnant that comes to stand for the lack of the Real, with which the subject desires to unite. Language as Other, being anchored in the Real as much as it is in the Symbolic, is then the marker of estrangement and division from an original perception of wholeness, which remains only at the level of the Real and hovers in the unconscious as a traumatic deadlock. Given the materiality of human life, language mediates experience. In fact, experience emerges as a product of the latter due to the fact that it pre-exists the subject. Humans are born into language and language structures human life. The literary work lives within language, the essential medium for communication, and, precisely for this reason, it is a social and cultural object.

The literary text, as art in general, is not simply mimetic, but attempts through language at capturing the Real, a glimpse of which remains inscribed there. Imaginative literature, the artistic form this dissertation discusses, seeks to apprehend through language the sublimated kernel that structures the self but escapes the conscious mind. The literary work creates a parallel verbal universe that evasively unveils the 'real' of human experience through the synergistic agency of displacement and symbolization. The reader then communicates with the text besides him/her through a projection that involves the collaborative action of psychological, contextual and cultural elements. In all, the dynamics of abstraction and subjectification that govern the composition and perusal of the literary work resemble the operations of sexual and romantic desire, which attempts to penetrate a

[13] See Quinet (1995) for a theoretical explanation and introduction to the gaze in Lacan's *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis.*

spiritual abstract truth through a mediatory entity, the beloved. Given this analogy, the book, like the amorous object of desire, functions as a way to attain truth, knowledge and pleasure. Yet neither the literary work nor the object of one's affections is an empty screen on which the subject reflects itself, but a semblance of the Real, an 'object a,' that gazes into the looking subject from the place where he/she desires. The verbal space from which a semblance of the Real gazes into the reading subject, I shall argue, is the axis of the reception of late fifteenth and early sixteenth-century works, that is to say, the locus in which all other factors converge during the act of reading. In the context of this study, I will refer to this abstraction as anamorphosis.

Anamorphosis serves as a cognitive metaphor for a hermeneutical mode of looking at the text in terms of its human appeal. As introduced above, the development of anamorphosis in the Renaissance goes hand in hand with new forms of human subjectivity, which in their turn entail a reconfiguration in the literary representation of love, the dominant topic in medieval narratives, and of reading along with it. The early modern author, I posit, aims at capturing the foreclosed side of love, which is connected to the overwhelming material force of desire that was occluded in medieval courtly narratives. In these narratives, the anamorphic quality of the courtly lady, and together with it of courtly love, is emphasized through a calculated distortion that, when looked from a vantage point, reveals the tragic nature of human desire, completely foreclosed in previous narratives. In this way, as medieval notions of love and woman are displaced, the voyeuristic relation between reader and text is hampered by novel forms of textual subjectivity that challenge the reader's narcissistic projection upon the text with a reminder of his/ her mortal and carnal nature. The reader, whose relation to the text is analogous to the relation between the lover and the idealized object of his/her desire, apprehends the text through an act of interpretation analogous to the one required by visual anamorphosis. As a result, during the act of reading, the subject projects into the imaginative work of art the discourses in which he or she participates: anxieties and desires that return to him or her to either unsettle or reassure.

Anamorphosis—whether in a pictorial or written representation—is the result of the artist seeking to capture the 'gaze,' defined by Lacan as the Real at the margins of human consciousness and which can only translate into art as a misconstruction (Lacan 1981, 84). Lacan connects the geometric enlargement of the object in anamorphosis to the appearance

of the phallic signifier (Lacan 1981, 87-88). As an 'object a,' the operations of the space or element of anamorphosis engage in the functioning and effects of the phallic signifier. In the Lacanian framework, phallus designates an extra signifier—a signifier without a signified—that stands for the lost object of desire, allowing the subject to experience a transient satisfaction. The phallus functions as an 'object a'—lower-case other—, a '*remainder* produced when that hypothetical unity breaks down, as a last trace of that unity, a last *remainder* thereof' (Fink 59; Fink's emphasis). The 'object a' is nothing more than an ordinary object elevated to the status of the The Thing—another term for the Real derived from Freud's writings and developed by Lacan in the *Ethics of Psychoanalysis*. By holding to the 'object a' the subject develops a longed-for illusion of wholeness that allows him or her to escape the fact that its desire for union is an impossible one doomed to reproduce itself endlessly in speech. With regards to language, Lacan in 'The Signification of the Phallus' defines the phallus as 'the very locus evoked by the recourse of speech in any relation in which that recourse plays a part' (Lacan 2006, 689). The surplus signifier of the phallus is perceived by the effects of its presence, which amount to 'a deviation of man's needs due to the fact that he speaks: to the extent that his needs are subjected to demand, they come to him in an alienated form. This is not the effect of his real dependence…, but rather of their being put into signifying form as such and of the fact that it is from the Other's locus that the message is emitted' (Lacan 2006, 690). In sum, phallus corresponds to a surplus signifier that stands for the subject's demand for enjoyment. It represents what is desirable, which in its turn is inexpressible, hence the lack of a signified. Yet, as a signifier, it possesses a rhetorical force that makes human's primordial desire for wholeness and transcendence perceivable in speech, where it manifests itself as an absence. In art, the 'gaze' serves to emphasize the breach between object and subject and the potential dangers and pleasures this separation entails, appealing to the libidinous desire to watch, which Freud termed 'scopophilia' (*Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, 1905). While the voyeurism associated to scopophilia is essentially active, the focus on the gaze emphasizes the capacity of the observed Other to engender the desire to watch.

As a reaction against formalism, reader-response and reception theories have situated the formation of textual meaning in the readers' subjective discernment assigning to the text a greater or lesser degree of agency in the construction of meaning. However, the endowment

of meaning upon the literary text entails a more complex and multifaceted operation that includes, not only every human agent playing a role in the creation of literature—authors, readers, printers, editors…—, but also the historical, cultural and epistemological conditions surrounding the reading subject, and the text as linguistic construction.[14] To be sure, in the imaginative recreation of what is perceived, however not fully understood, lies the potential for enjoyment. Anamorphosis as the effect of the gaze upon the work of art works as the catalyst for interpretation and, in this case in particular, for the reading act. In all, the reading subject's drive towards the Other compels him or her to fill in veiled textual details in order to elicit meaning. The reader then subjectivizes the text in search for an actualization of the space of anamorphosis. Subjectification is achieved by means of a projection that returns to the subject in the form of a gestalt of an image of its own inadequacy. Going back to Lacan, the third of the orders still to be discussed, is the Imaginary, the domain of the relation between the self and its image and hence of the articulation of the 'I'.[15] The Imaginary is initiated in the unconscious when the infant recognizes his image on the mirror and identifies him or herself with the aesthetic wholeness of the body's reflected form, perceived as fragmentary prior to this moment. This jubilant self-perception of a complete I is nonetheless a fiction, given that the desired totality selflessly recognized in the mirror can never be attained, but is only possible through a specular projection that needs an external medium. Thus the 'mirror stage' inaugurates a permanent dissatisfaction in the subject for it is the phase when he or she feels for the first time the presence of an unobtainable desire that lies within the human's very nature. In other words, the Imaginary is situated in the axis between the ideal ego and the subject's alienation in the Symbolic. The gestalt provoked by the projection of the self brings to the surface the phantoms that dominate its existence, prompting the subject to reassess its thoughts and experiences, exploring its own identity by a redoubling of the self. Such a redoubling parallels the experience of love.

In many ways, the act of reading parallels the metaphysical experience of love, which sparks the soul of the loving subject to ascend upon a projection of itself in the loved one,

[14] For an introduction to reception theories in the field of literature as well as its more recent application to cultural studies, see—among many other scholarly works—Eco (1979), Holub (1984), Bennett (1995), Machor (2001) and Willis (2017).

[15] See Lacan's "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I" in Écrits (2006), 75-81.

thus undergoing the ontological enlightenment that results from communicating with its true essence. Humans feel a profound urge for love as much as for art, the latter being a higher impulse that, as Hegel remarks in his *Lectures on Fine Art*, 'is a man's rational need to lift the inner and outer world into his spiritual consciousness as an object in which he recognizes again his own self' (Hegel 30-31). As observed by Hegel, art is always in dialogue with both the self, which redoubles itself into the work of art in order to attain transcendental awareness, and the totality of the world, encapsulated in the fictional universe of the imaginative work. Art aims at something else, at something that transcends the individual experience: at a universal. Therefore, art—in all its forms—resides at the center of human subjectivity, manifesting from and awakening recondite regions of the psyche, in which the subject is constituted.

'Beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder,' declares the frequently invoked Neoplatonic dictum emphasizing the central role of the looking subject's gaze in the perception of attraction. The idea that love has its origin in sight dates back to classical antiquity, most prominently to Plato, and persists during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. On this account, Book One of Andreas Capellanus' *De amore* begins by defining love as 'a certain inborn suffering derived from the sight of an excessive meditation upon the beauty of the opposite sex, which causes each one to wish above all things the embraces of the other and by common desire to carry out all of love's precepts in the other's embrace' (2). In the Renaissance, the Platonic philosophy of love was reformulated by Marsilio Ficino, who conferred upon it a metaphysical complexion for through the experience of love, he postulated, the soul would ontologically ascend to the hypostasis—the higher reality—to which it belongs. Ficino's idea, developed in his *Symposium* (ca.1469), that beauty, perceived by the eyes is the cause of love lived on in the works of Pico della Mirandola, Lorenzo de Medici, Pietro Bembo and Castiglione, holding a powerful sway during early modernity.[16]

On the other hand, the aggressive look implicated in Platonic theories of love, as Spearing rightfully observes, 'is often accompanied by the paradox that the one who looks is wounded by what the eye receives, whether or not that is itself a look returned by its object' (1993, 10). In effect, Cupid's arrows would hit the heart by passing through the eye so that it

[16] For an account of the developments of Platonic love in the Renaissance, see Kraye (2000), 81-87.

is Love who attacks and wounds the lover's sight, which becomes involved in a dynamics of intromission and extromission. Up until the Enlightenment, 'information was thought to be carried from the object to the observer by particles of light called *species*,' Burke explains (2000, 13). 'These *species* were not thought to move but to multiply themselves, produce likeness of themselves, across the expanse of air that separated the originating object from the beholding eye' (idem).[17] This killer look of the lady, Burk remarks, was known as 'evil eye' in the medieval courtly tradition (Burke, 2000, 25). The medieval poet is then a victim of the sight of an 'object petit a,' a female object of desire whose gaze has the power to stir a man's intellectual soul.

The dynamics that governed sight and, as a result, love, also presided over textual interpretation. In the *Book of Memory* (1990), Carruthers explains that 'reading was considered to be essentially a visual act, despite the fact that most ordinary social reading, at least was done aloud by someone to a group of listeners, throughout antiquity until the Renaissance' (17-18).[18] Whatever enters the mind, Carruthers observes, is seeable through the 'eye of the mind,' which subjects it to interpretation through the potencies residing in the soul. These potencies, as instituted by St. Augustine in *De doctrina christiana*, were memory, will and understanding. Augustine, whose theory of language and reading is essential to understanding medieval and early modern textuality, held that the reader's constitutive faculties of the soul came into play in an exercise of *libero arbitrio* that determined the endowment of meaning according to an inherent sense of moral rectitude. The kernel of the Augustinian interpretative theory was charity or the law of love, which was equated to will

[17] In the first chapter of his *Vision, the Gaze and the Function of the Senses in* Celestina (2000), James F. Burke also connects postmodern gaze theory to Scholastic cognitive theories and Christian Neoplatonic epistemology. The gaze, Burke posits (2000; 2, 25-26), was perceived during the Middle Ages as a panopticon, a concept developed by Foucault and which entails a multitude of intersecting perspectives. In the Renaissance, however, it became under control due to the imposition of a single viewpoint that canceled out the much-feared individual look (Burke 2000, 26).

[18] See also Saenger (1997) for the origins of silent reading and the association between reading and seeing. As Saenger explains, 'in the fifteenth-century, the verb *veoir* and the vernacular phrase "to read with the heart" (*lire au coeur*) were used in French aristocratic texts to refer to private, silent reading, much as in earlier centuries *videre*, "to see," and *inscipere,* "to gaze," had been used as alternatives to *legere*, "to read"' (Saenger 1997, 268).

and to the love of God—*caritas*, as opposed to carnal love, *cupidity*.[19] Augustine's voluntaristic doctrine emphasized love as the motor behind all human actions, distinguishing *amor inordinatus*, excessive love—passion, desire—, from *amor ordinatus*, virtuous and measured love, both of them in eternal battle with each other. Love or will was regarded by Augustine as the primary force that compelled the subject to choose a course of action or, in the event of reading, significance. That being the case, the reader became engaged in an ethical and spiritual quest whose purpose was not to fall into an eroticized, carnal understanding of the letter, but to surpass human language in order to attain a transcendent charitable Truth. In this light, the reader was encouraged to recover with the help of the three essential powers of the soul, among which will or love triumphed, unfailing humanitarian ideals laying under the symbolic structure of the sign. This process was evoked in the medieval *topos* of Augustinian origin that pictures reading as removing the husk from the kernel of the grain. Therefore, reading like loving was a cognitive process that involved the interplay of soul and senses, of spirituality and carnality in a narcissistic projection.

The relation between text, romantic idealism, lust and anamorphosis is patent in the tradition of courtly love developed in medieval texts.[20] Courtly love, although bound to erotic desire, was regarded as an ennobling force for it directed suffering towards virtue, upholding a refined and spiritual idealization of carnal desire, an idealization that was sustained in a secular displacement of Christian values. In fact, during the Middle Ages, it constituted together with Christianity a way towards transcendence, that is towards the mystical union with the Absolute and, hence, towards True knowledge. The tradition of courtly love amounts

[19] 'Whoever, therefore, thinks that he understands the divine Scriptures or any part of them so that it does not build the double love of God and of our neighbor does not understand it at all. Whoever finds a lesson there useful to the building of charity, even though he has not said what the author may be shown to have intended in that place, has not been deceived, nor is he lying in any way' (*On Christian Doctrine*, I. xxxvi. 40, p. 30). See also *On Christian Doctrine*, III. v. 9, p. 83. For a study of the function of the soul in medieval psychological and cognitive treatises, see Harvey (1975) and Pasnau (1997). Nonetheless, these two scholars, like Carruthers, fails to notice that the origin of the association between the senses, the letter and the soul is not in the works of Aquinas, but in those of Augustine. Augustinian theory is recovered by Gerli (2016), who in his study of the *Libro de buen Amor* demonstrates that Augustine's hypotheses lie at the origin of medieval notions of reading and interpretation.

[20] For a classical study of courtly love, see Rougemont (1956), Newman (1968), Boase (1977) and Duby (1994).

from a Lacanian perspective to a perverted search for the Real of human existence by way of an exaltation of the lady as a godlike automaton. As Žižek explains:

> The Lady is thus as far as possible from any kind of purified spirituality: she functions as an inhuman partner in the sense of a radical Otherness which is while incommensurable with our needs and desires… This coincidence of absolute, inscrutable Otherness and pure machine is what confers on the Lady her uncanny, monstrous character—the Lady is the Other which is not our 'fellow-creature;' that is to say, she is someone with whom no relationship of empathy is possible. This traumatic Otherness is what Lacan designates by means of the Freudian term das Ding, the Thing—the Real that 'always returns to its place,' the hard kernel that resists symbolization. The idealization of the Lady, her elevation to a spiritual, ethereal Ideal, is therefore to be conceived of as a strictly secondary phenomenon: it is a narcissistic projection whose function is to render her traumatic dimension invisible. (Žižek 1994, 90)

Within the androcentric structure of language developed by Lacan, woman is constructed with regards to her male counterpart, who desires her in a physical and spiritual manner, 'except that what he takes on is the cause of his desire …*the object a,*' posits Lacan, for whom 'that is the act of love…the polymorphous perversion of the male, in the case of the speaking being' (Lacan 1985, 143).[21] Along these lines, woman is defined in terms of what she is and what she is not with regards to the phallic signifier. As Rose explains, 'within the phallic definition, the woman is constituted as "not-all," in so far as the phallic function rests on an exception (the "not") which is assigned to her. Woman is excluded *by* the nature of words, meaning that the definition poses her as an exclusion' (Rose 1985, 49; Rose's emphasis). In his discussion of femininity, Lacan (1985, 144) crosses through the definite article preceding the signifier woman for 'this *the* is a signifier characterized by being the only signifier which cannot signify anything, but which merely constitutes the status of *the* woman as being not all. Which forbids our speaking of *The* woman.' Lacan's corollary is that woman does not exist, but is only an illusion, a screen unto which the desire for wholeness is projected. In this negative framework against which The woman is defined, she

[21] A number of feminist scholars have challenged Lacan's masculine universal, most importantly Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixous, who have given an alternative vision to sexuality that departs from the centrality of the phallus. For Žižek's answer to this critique, see *The Metastases of Enjoyment* (2005), 201-202.

becomes the ultimate object of masculine fantasy, eventually threatening to take the place of the Other and to become the locus of Truth and, in the end, God. Therefore, the lady in courtly love has a phallic value, being but a function of discourse that comes to represent enjoyment and its loss hence providing an outlet for compulsive desire towards the Other (Žižek 1994, 96-97).

To be sure, in medieval love-narratives, the apparently hollow anamorphosis is circumscribed to the lady, who by itself or in the course of an amorous adventure with a man, is the passive object of voyeuristic pleasure for both the poet and the reader. The lady in courtly literature is an idealization, an 'object petit a' elevated to the status of The Thing in order to produce an ego ideal for the male lover, who projects and recognizes his image on her. The narcissistic reflection of the lover upon his female artificial counterpart conveyed in the tapestry of 'The Lady and the Unicorn' depicting the function of sight in neoplatonic love. The lady is an anamorphosis (Žižek 2005, 95). Anamorphosis in courtly love emerges as a result of the radical Otherness of the lady as a Thing beyond the Other. The lady epitomizes the phallic effect that lies at the core of textual anamorphosis: she is the detail that does not fit given that under its idyllic rendering an obscure nature is latent. The lady is nothing more than an amorphic shadow that is only perceivable in an oblique and distorted way. In other words, it can only be partially intuited for when a strait glance is directed towards it only the amorphous shade of a generic automaton returns. From a temporal perspective, the courtly lady as anamorphosis manifests as an incessant postponement (Žižek 1994, 95), which translates into ceaseless deferment of meaning. Courtly love, an essentially masochistic performance, is built upon a perpetual and paradoxical detour. As Žižek (1994, 96) explains, 'our "official" desire is that we want to sleep with the lady; whereas in truth, there is nothing we fear more than a Lady who might generously yield to this wish of ours—what we truly expect and want from the Lady is simply yet another new ordeal, yet one more postponement'. Woman entails a castration, which is canceled out through an emphasis on the positive side of her representation, that is to say, her abnegation and kindness. Contrary to what happens in medieval pictorial and textual representations, the late fifteenth-century brought an emphasis to bear on the zero position, that is to say, on the erotic, desiring and non-transcental essence of love and life. Thus, anamorphosis points to a larger semantic, but

foreclosed, potential and compels the reader to imagine its fulfillment by confronting his/her own material desire.

Figure 1.3. 'The Lady and the Unicorn. The Sense of Sight,' ca. 1500, wool and silk, … 3.68 m x 2.00 m. Musée national du Moyen Âge, Paris.

The renewed interest on the Real is paradigmatically represented in Holbein's 'The Ambassadors' (ca. 1533), in which the enigmatic, blurred skull at the bottom a rupture that forces the subject to perceive the eluded darker side of reality, rooted in a deep-seated existential uncertainty and sense of frailty. 'The Ambassadors' is a portrait that beyond the point of anamorphosis emphasizes the might of human knowledge and prowess. The skull, only perceptible through a lateral perspective, is a *memento mori*, a dark undermining of the very knowledge and power that the human images in the picture are intended to represent This somber remainder of death lurks under the two distinguished and powerful French emissaries to the court of Henry VIII, imbued with the vanity of worldly matters—from politics to the art—symbolically represented in the objects that lie on the table between them.[22] The point of anamorphosis, where meaning is veiled, confers to the whole painting a disquieting ambiguity that signals towards the illusory nature of human *vanitas*. By means of the shift of perspective from glory to death, the latter presented only as a sinister shadow,

[22] In fact, in order to make the element of anamorphosis more easily perceptible to the eye of the observer, Holbein's portrait was originally hung in a stairwell so that the skull would become clear to the eye in the change of angle through upward and downward movement.

the portrait acquires a deeply nihilistic undertone that stems from an awareness of the temporality of human glorious achievements, which will be erased by the equalizing, ever-present power and presence of death.

Figure 1.4. Hans Holbein the Younger, 'The Ambassadors,' (ca. 1533), oil on oak, 207 cm × 209.5 cm. National Gallery, London.

The human mind systematically denies the ephemerality of life and the inevitability of death, which remains in the shadows of the unconscious due to its terrifying nature. 'At the heart of the period in which the subject emerged and geometrical optics was an object of research,' observed Lacan, 'Holbein makes visible for us here something that is simply the subject as annihilated…the imaged embodiment of … castration' (Lacan 1981, 88-89). Anamorphosis exposes a basic limitation and split of human consciousness that at once discerns and occludes the presence of the Real. The Real, the universal and unknowable truth that resists symbolization, lurks in the unconscious as a traumatic deadlock and erupts fleetingly at the experience of *jouissance*, that is to say, at the moment of death and sexual consummation. The experience of the Real amounts to a terrifying realization of discontinuity and mortality, a threat of alienation against which humans vainly seek refuge in love, reproduction, and above all, in language, the cause and remedy for the human perception of lack. However, the transcendental union between sexes is, according to Lacan, a fantasy,

whose realization is ultimately hampered by the structure of language.[23] Due to the barrier imposed by language, Lacan contends, the human desire for wholeness can never be completely satisfied. In fact, it is precisely the encounter with sexual asymmetry in the Symbolic that brings about a dissatisfaction or—from the point of view of Lacan's masculine universal—a sense of castration.

There is in Lacanian theory a correspondence between the idea of incomplete sexuality and the impossibility to secure truth that connects to an endless circulation of desire and meaning, both of which evidence the lack of an absolute. In other words, as far as the internal division of language parallels sexual alienation, meaning can only be attained in terms of the subject's experiences of *jouissance* in the Other; that is, in terms of its access to enjoyment in the letter, an enjoyment that is inseparable from sexuality. Such a connection between gender and knowledge is not exclusive of Lacan, but had pertained to Western epistemology since antiquity, being firmly established by the discourse of Christianity. To be specific, in the narration of the Fall from Grace in the Book of Genesis (2-3) carnality and understanding coalesce in the Tree of Knowledge, from which God commanded Adam and Eve not to eat. As they consumed the Tree's fruit tempted by the Devil, Adam and Eve recognized their nakedness, feeling shame as a result of a fissure in their prior sense of harmony and union. Since the Fall, the access to knowledge is implicated in the recovery of a prelapsarian synthesis between the sexes through sensual pleasure, *cogito carnality*. In the medieval world, the *concupiscentia oculorum* was one aspect of *concupiscentia carnis* and was paired, not only with lechery, but with curiosity given that ever since humanity's Fall from Grace language and knowledge had become implicated in the materiality of the senses and, therefore, in the pitfalls of mortal flesh.

Being human entails a feeling of discontinuity, explains Bataille (1986), a feeling that is rooted in the insurmountable gulf that separates individuals and that not even reproduction can cancel. As noted Bataille, the nostalgia for what the subject perceives as an original continuity endows reproduction with significance, and along with it, opens the path to

[23] Lacan builds upon the Saussurean notion of the linguistic sign and postulates that the sign is an indicator of difference, a difference that instates the law of sexual difference. To illustrate this point, Lacan's diagram of the relation between the signifier and the signified consists of two identical doors that represent the ladies' and the gentlemen's toilets (see 'The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious,' in *Écrits* [2006]).

understand the profoundly erotic nature of mankind. The desire for union through love and sex is another object of anamorphic art. Using the same optic technique Holbein did, Erhard Schön, the early sixteenth-century Nuremberg woodcut designer and painter, a student of Albrecht Dürer, conveys the erotic nature of existence in his 'Aus, du alter tor!' [Out, you old fool!], in which a pornographic image is concealed in the anamorphic landscape next to the chamber scene. The anamorphosis in the woodcut captures the private and concealed side of the sexual act, which in Western medieval culture remained outside the scope of watching eyes, thus foreclosing the traditional emotional and ethical representation of love scenes. In this manner, the woodcut moves from decorum into sexual license as it draws attention towards the un-idyllic aspect of sexual love in order to arouse a feeling of bewilderment in the spectator. In 'Aus, du alter tor!,' sex is exposed in all its carnality, moving from the voyeuristic on the left into the pornographic representation of a threesome.

Figure 1.5. Erhard Schön, 'Aus, du alter tor!' [Out, you old fool!], ca. 1538, woodcut on paper, 16.5 x 75.1 Albertina, Wien.

The semblance of the Real captured by Holbein and Schön in their artwork takes the form of an inapprehensible pictorial stain that slips and eludes the human eye. In visual terms, the point of anamorphosis stands for the 'gaze,' which Lacan defined as the flying consciousness of the eye (Lacan 1981, 72-73). The gaze, which is prior to the eye of viewer and stares at it, contains in itself an 'object petit a' that brings about in the subject a sense of

'scopic satisfaction:' 'In so far as gaze, *qua object a*, may come to symbolize this central lack expressed in the phenomenon of castration, and in so far it is an *object a* reduced, of its nature, to a punctiform, evanescent function, it leaves the subject in ignorance as to what is beyond the appearance' (Lacan 1981, 77). The gaze prevents the spectator from looking from an objective position forcing it into a doubling of itself that arouses a feeling of estrangement. 'Far from assuring the self-presence of the subject and his vision, the gaze functions thus as a stain, a spot in the picture disturbing its transparent visibility and introducing an irreducible split in my relation to the picture: I can never see the picture at the point from which it is gazing at me,' explains Žižek (1991, 125). Anamorphosis introduces a disturbing asymmetry between the image and the eye of the spectator, forced to shift his or her perspective in the search of certainty. In an attempt to capture and decode anamorphosis, the subject doubles him or herself allowing an undercurrent of desire to come to the surface as a flash. After the observer subjectivizes the anamorphosis; the gaze becomes momentarily indiscernible, covered by the subject's projection of itself. This way the gaze surprises the looking subject, until then confident of his or her role as *voyeur*, and disturbs it by making it aware of an essential annihilation.

'Within medieval love-narratives,' Spearing (1993, 1) notes, 'secret observers, concealed from the lovers as the lovers are from society at large, are frequently represented as responsible for exposing private experience to the public gaze; as readers of or listeners to such narratives, we can be made to feel like we are secret observers; and, in the later Middle Ages, especially the love-poet is often realized as one who looks and tells, himself a secret observer of experiences in which he does not participate.' In other words, in medieval love-narratives, looking is the means by which the private experience of a man and a woman is made public. Love secrecy is characteristic of medieval courtly literature, in which concealment from sight is a consequence of the shamefulness inherent in the sexual act, emphasized by the Christian ideology of the Middle Ages, and of a desire to maintain the appearance of honor. In fact, in the medieval world, in which public shame and sexual satisfaction went hand in hand, 'secrecy may be seen as a means of heightening erotic pleasure' (Spearing 1993, 20) at the same time that watching, or more precisely spying, was tied to sexual desire. The medieval discourse of love situated the origin of attraction in sight and considered the act of looking as a main source for sexual pleasure and a first step towards

physical possession. In medieval love-narratives, the voyeur violates the privacy of the sexual act as he—sometimes, although rarely, she—peeps at the clandestine encounter between a man and a woman, which he would later commit to paper.[24] The voyeur opens up to the public gaze the private space of the bed chamber and of the body, often represented in a metaphorical way that substitutes the description of female nudity for an evocation of an idealized landscape, most frequently a garden or an orchard. In terms of the readers' engagement with the voyeur's text, observes Spearing (1993, 28), 'the physical distance traversed by sight has an analogy in the aesthetic distance involved in the act of reading: however strong the illusory presence of the fiction, as readers we can never literally participate in the narrated action; nor, on the other hand, are we vulnerable to the dangers in which it might involve us in reality.' The medieval reader is a voyeur a secret onlooker at a sexual adventure. However, he/she only perceives an idealistic façade, protected by a safe metonymical and allegorical distance that, as Spearing develops through the examples in his book, prevents the reader from attaining the full sexual potential of scopophilia.[25] Conversely, literary works from the late fifteenth century henceforth—as this dissertation intends to demonstrate—seem to aspire more and more to prevent the reader's detachment from the text so that he/she can no longer assume the position of distant observer.

In his writings, Lacan argues that the unconscious is structured like a language foreign to the self. A language that, as noted by Freud (*The Interpretation of Dreams*), manifests itself through dreams, mistakes, jokes and slips of the tongue, which are symptomatic of repressed energies at the margins of the unconscious.[26] This famous postulation points to a linguistic system discovered by psychoanalysis in the unconscious. In this system, which has

[24] Texts in which the speaker is a woman are not a third, but a first-person narration of a love encounter, in most cases portrayed in a naïve and cheerful tone. See Spearing 1993, 26-30.

[25] The male voyeuristic gaze is identified with a phallocentric perspective. On this account, the look of the voyeur has been identified with the male gaze as the masculine subject, who in a patriarchal structure holds the power to determine the feminine object of desire, a passive recipient. Nonetheless, the connection between gaze and gender is not necessarily this direct, let's not forget that phallus in Lacanian theory amounts to the master signifier of desire, independently of the masculine reproductive organ per se and that, due to its castrative power, the woman is the ultimate recipient of phallus. See Berger (1977), Mulvey (1999), Kaplan (1988) and Williams (1989) for a study on the relation between visual enjoyment, women and phallocentrism.

[26] Most notably in 'The Function of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis' and 'The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious,' both of them in *Écrits* (2006), 197-268 and 412-444, respectively.

symbolization as its main feature, linguistic units figuratively contain impulses, desires, needs and fears deferred and suppressed by the unconscious, but communicated in an unfettered and protean manner. In the Lacanian reformulation of the linguistic sign as developed by Saussure, the plurality and ambiguity of the human psyche correlates to that of language where the 'structure of the signifying chain discloses … the possibility … to use it to signify something *altogether different* from what it says' (Lacan 2006, 421; Lacan's emphasis), making it impossible to ascertain the position of the subject with respect to Truth, in absolute terms. Similarly, language and the psyche form a complex whole that makes it impossible, first, to ascertain the veracity of any given statement; and second, to fully unveil the latent meaning of linguistic units, which remains out of reach for the conscious subject. As Žižek (1991, 39) explains, in the Lacanian theory of the sign 'the order of the signifier is defined by a vicious circle of differentiality: it is an order of discourse in which the very identity of each element is overdetermined by its articulation, i.e. in which every element "is" only its difference from the others, without any support by the real.' On this account, in Lacanian theory, the letter becomes a source of material enjoyment—*jouissance*—for through language the subject can experience a glimpse into the Real.

From a psychoanalytical viewpoint language thus becomes the mystifying expression of these latent forces, absent for the conscious mind, yet present in the signifying chain at the innermost level, from where they motivate human speech and actions. That being so, what is verbally expressed encloses an acute sense of dissatisfaction and alienation connected to a foreclosed and deadly desire that is doomed to remain unquenchable. In short, the related schism in language and in the unconscious involves an absence in the signifying chain, where the omission is nonetheless negatively felt as an elusive presence. This veiled absence provides evidence of a compulsive desire to recover an original wholeness that ultimately points towards a natural union and complementarity between the sexes, a union that never existed and whose loss is only felt as a result of symbolization.

To be sure, given the constitution of human language, in any signifying chain there inexorably are 'missing links' between what is consciously conveyed and what is veiled by virtue of the rhetorical force of the unconscious. In terms of literary reception, Wolfgang Iser situates the formation of meaning as well as literary enjoyment in the plurality and impreciseness of language, which he theorizes as 'negativity,' in its turn the sum of 'blank'

and 'negation.' Blanks 'designate a vacancy in the overall system of the text, the filling of which brings about an interaction of textual patterns' (Iser 1978, 181). Blanks induce and guide the reading exercise by regulating the syntagmatic axis of the text, that is, the dense interweaving of perspectives that form the different textual segments organized around a theme-horizon structure. Given the structural qualities and functioning of the blank, its filling entails a series of decisions on the part of the reader to act upon the verbal and propositional indeterminacy of the literary text. The main operation of the blank is to trigger ideation by connecting and combining the sequence of textual schemata and standpoints that constitute the unseen joints of the text (see Iser 1978, 182-203 *et passim*). Furthermore, the filling up of the blank involves in the paradigmatic axis a partial rejection or suspension of the practical validity of social and historical norms, depragmatized and evoked in the text in such a manner so as to activate the reader's ideological consciousness. This partial invalidation, to which Iser refers as 'negation,' brings about a deep questioning of socio-historical values, which are an implicit but unformulated cause for the writing of the text. The ideological dislocation and reintegration entails a reassessment that is central to the formation of the imaginary text in the mind of the reader, who is forced to renegotiate familiar ideological positions. Negations are hence inextricably linked to 'the historical function of the text' at the same time that they bring about a new relationship between the self and the world (Iser 1978, 219).

The double interplay of presence and absence that mediates representation and reception is what Iser calls 'negativity' (1978, 226): 'Unlike negation, negativity is not formulated by the text, but forms the unwritten base; it does not negate the formulations of the text, but—via blanks and negations—conditions them. It enables the written words to transcend their literal meaning, to assume multiple referentiatility, and so to undergo the expansion necessary to transplant them as a new experience into the mind of the reader.' At the paradigmatic level of content, the effects of negativity are failure and deformation, both of which signal towards a deficiency in familiar knowledge through the emphasis on the failure of human efforts (Iser 1978, 227-229). Failure and deformation, two of the basic features of negativity, are the surface signs that indicate a hidden cause' (Iser 1978, 227). Due to the energy of 'negativity,' the reader is compelled to find the hidden cause of this distortion: 'Negativity is therefore at one and the same time the conditioning cause of the deformations and also their potential remedy. It translates the deformed positions into a

propellant which enables the unformulated cause to become the theme of the imaginary object ideated by the reader' (Iser 1978, 228). Negativity thus becomes the most active force in literary communication for it enables comprehension by prompting the reader to trace back what is not given endowing the text with meaning.

As should be clear by now, the underlying structure of the text as a linguistic artifact prevents a straightforward attribution of meaning owing to the fact that the words on the space of the paper only signal to something that still needs to be formulated, as Saussure reminded us. Within this structure, the presence of blanks and negations denote what is absent, while negativity acts as the mediator between representation and the reader's response, thus being the productive force that guides the reading exercise. When blanks and negation are subjectively filled, an attitude toward the text and the world is adopted. This attitude, according to Iser, would be somewhere in between or above the old negated forms and a new relationship between the self and the world. Yet this is not always the case for among the standpoints the reader can occupy there is an ideological space for orthodoxy, conformism and conservatism. On this basis, Barthes (1975, 14) distinguishes between two basic forms of texts: those of 'pleasure,' or 'the text that comes from culture and does not break with it;' and those of 'bliss,' which 'imposes a state of loss…unsettles the reader's historical, cultural, psychological assumptions, the consistency of his tastes, values, memories, brings to a crisis his relation with language.' In the end, the underlying sense of linguistic asymmetry that arises at the act of reading prompts the reader to fill up the gaps with his or her own mental repertoire and disposition in order to endow the text with meaning. For this reason, reading becomes a creative process as much as a process of self-discovery because, in the process of ideation required in order to fill up the blanks, the reader explores his or her own unconscious (Iser 1978, 230-231).

Mary Gossy takes Iser's conceptualizations further into the shared realm of semiotics and psychoanalysis as aligned in the works of Freud and Lacan to formulate a theory of the 'untold' in Peninsular Golden Age texts. Gossy (Gossy 1989, 14) describes the untold as 'an area of slippage…a tension between frustration and invitations where neither synthesis nor fragmentation can be achieved or avoided by the reader…the place *between* in the text—the empty space without which the weave could not be woven, or unraveled' (Gossy's emphasis). The 'untold' would form the unwritten basis of the literary text, an unrestricted and boundless

absence that, unlike negativity, is not anchored by the text and the intellectual horizon to which it pertains, so that it reveals itself as unreadable (Gossy 1989, 10-11). The untold supports the text while confirming through deformation the profoundly inadequacy of human existence. This space of intermittence is the realm of textual pleasure, which arises according to Barthes (1975) as an erotic perversion, focused not on what is manifestly erogenous, but on the intermittence, on the flash between appearance and disappearance.[27] Foregrounding the relation between text and woman, Gossy further identifies the untold with the female sexual organs—hymen and vulva—, a hollow space in between whose fulfillment, as posited by Lacan, is wanted and deferred by the subject.

Gossy's elucidation of the function of the repressed in Golden Age narratives posits vulva—and its metonymic counterpart, hymen—as correlative to Lacan's phallus on the basis that they constitute themselves as surplus signifiers standing for the lost object of desire, the 'object petit a' in Lacanian terms. Thus, the vulva serves as a surplus supplementary signifier to the phallic one. Meanwhile, hymen points to the phantasmatic chimera upon which masculine identity rests as far as it relies on the illusory appropriation and penetration of the female body in order to re-establish the lost wholeness.[28] The hymen as tissue, notes

[27] 'The pleasure of the text,' remarks Barthes, 'is not the pleasure of the corporeal striptease or of narrative suspense,' on the contrary it is 'a far more intellectual pleasure than the other: an Oedipal pleasure (to denude, to know, to learn the origin and the end)' (Barthes 10).

[28] In Derrida's view—upon which Gossy builds—hymen 'is first of all a sign of fusion, the consummation of a marriage, the identification of two beings, the confusion between the two…there is no longer difference but identity. Within this fusion there is no longer any distance between desire (the awaiting of a full presence designed to fulfill it, to carry it out) and the fulfillment of presence, between distance and non-distance; there is no longer any difference between desire and satisfaction' (Derrida 1981, 209). That is to say, as opposed to phallus, which entails castration and alienation; hymen is the signifier of union, which ultimately resides in female enjoyment, that is, in the transformation of the woman into a subject analogous to men. At the textual level, hymen as a supplementary signifier to phallus would mean the cancelation of the alienation between the word and meaning. By virtue of the hymen, 'there is no longer any textual difference between the image and the thing, the empty signifier and the full signified, the imitator and the imitated, etc.,' and yet 'it does not follow that what remains is thus the fullness of the signified, the imitated or the things itself…it is the difference between the two terms that is no longer functional' (Derrida 1981, 209).

Gossy, does not disappear after sexual consummation so that, in anatomical terms, the hymen as a marker of virginity is a fiction: 'In addition, it is a fiction that untells another story, that of the hymen that was and is, regardless of phallic action: the possibility of woman as a subject' (Gossy 1989, 48). Building upon Derrida, Gossy equates hymen with text and identifies the untold story as the narrative that is written over as a result of 'phallic confabulation' (Gossy 1989, 49): 'And so the hymen is fictionalized and made to tell the story of the phallus marking woman as object; stories of marriage, copulation or virginity, or both: but never neither—that is the story of a hymen indifferent to the phallus' (Gossy 1989, 49). The hymen then is a patriarchal construction destined to control female sexuality by tracing virginity or, in terms of textuality, the surface and authorized story that permits access to meaning and under which a darker side of reality is concealed. In sum, the hymen would be a (w)hole, that is to say, as a hollow empty space in between what is articulated and a disowned abstraction and, at the same time, it is the locus of delusive integration.

The untold in literature, states Gossy (1989, 11), unveils in the 'acceptable but undeniable autoeroticism habitually sublimated in Western literature in the form of the sadomasochistic triad of death, honor, and romantic love: whether for a god, a nation, or a woman.' Therefore, Gossy (1989, 12) claims, the 'untold,' which attaches itself to what appears as failed and deformed in the patriarchal Western view, from sexuality to heresy. These ideals of God, love and citizenship, which pertain to the Real, develop as a projection of the self, who tries to find in them some assurance in the worldly space of uncertainty and spiritual alienation. This projection of the reader's ideals upon the text 'parallels the psychology of the idealized romantic love ethos' in which ´the lover projects his idealized fantasies upon his love object; the lover's fantasies spatially or physically overpower the object's subjectivity; the lover eradicates that subjectivity and replace it with his own definition of what the beloved should be' (Gossy 1989, 8). Reading, like loving, would entail a projection of the desiring subject—identified with the masculine and patriarchal law that structures the Symbolic—into the idealized feminine object of desire, traditionally equated

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Therefore, hymen, like phallus a surplus signifier, serves as the key to access meaning, in relative and not absolute terms for the woman, although perceived as the ultimate support of the Other, and is nonetheless the very place where meaning and knowledge fail, collapse, bringing about—in Lacan's terms—*significance*.

with the text, metaphorized in the medieval misogynistic discourse as a woman's body.[29] This way, the text becomes a fetishized entity that is eroticized by the reader in order to gain possession of it and, in that way, explore his or her own identity by a redoubling of the self. In this regard, the literary work of art allows the subject to get in touch with and to evaluate his/her moral and ideological principles by a re-doubling of the self, which is an essential characteristic of anamorphic art.

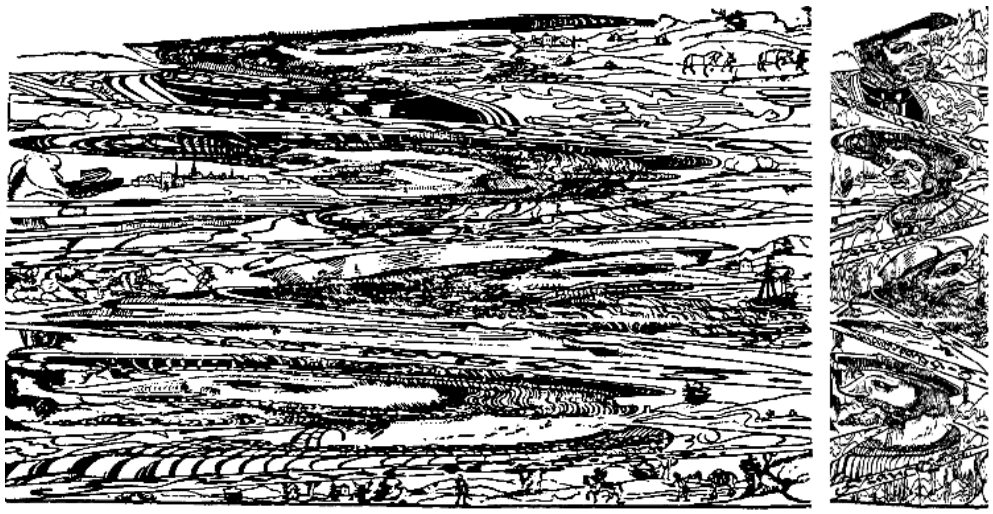

Figure 1.6. Erhard Schön, 'Vexierbilder' [Puzzle Picture], ca. 1535, woodcut on paper, 44.0 cm. x 75.0 cm. Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin.

[29] Howard Bloch points to the creation of woman in the story of Genesis as a linguistic act for the woman emanates from Adam's first imposition of names given the *ad seriatim* creation of the genders (Bloch 1987). The woman, as a metonymical byproduct of man, is conceived as a supplement, and therefore regarded as inferior, debased, even perverse, for she is the embodiment of division, of difference. Furthermore, because the woman's soul, contrary to the spirit of man, does not emanate directly from God, she is further removed from Truth and Knowledge, being associated not with the intellect but with corporeality. 'The perversity of Eve is that of the lateral: as the outgrowth of Adam's flank, his *latus*, she retains a status of *translatio*, of translation, transfer, metaphor, trope' (Bloch 1987, 11). Like so, in the medieval discourse of misogyny, women came to be associated with ornamentation and artifice, which translate into the external embellishment of the body through dressing and cosmetics and into the manipulation and corruption of words by means of rhetoric. Women are the masters of fabrication, of deceit, which takes the form of two correlated artifacts: text and textile. This being so, *Celestina* has been subjected to feminist theoretical analysis, such as Mary Gossy's.

In effect, Schön's anamorphic art was also designed as a political weapon. The confusing landscape of 'Vexierbilder' conceals in the form of an anamorphosis the heads of Charles V, Ferdinand I, Pope Paul III and Francis I, the four most important European rulers. As Baltrušaitis (1977, 11) was able to discern, 'the background which unfolds behind the hidden sovereigns recalls events connected with them and provides a key for deciphering their enigma: behind Charles V—a military scene, horses led by soldiers; behind Ferdinand I—the siege of Vienna (1529-1532), often represented by Schön; behind the Pope—God threatening a Turk, and an armed ship; behind Francis I—Orientals and a camel, an allusion to his relations with the Turks.' Baltrušaitis notes that the landscape is disturbed by the effigies of these powerful men, who 'hover over countries and over scenes of historical vicissitudes like phantoms covering vast tracts of land' (idem). The chaos of the landscape then emerges as a result of the distorting effect of political power and ambition, which although hidden from the sight of citizens brings about disorder. The anamorphic distortion of royal power comes to symbolize the lack of political perspective in European affairs as well as violent side of power, which engenders chaos, although is supposed to bring order and law.

The ideological aspect of texts, which was left fully undeveloped by the School of Konstanz, is recuperated by Marxist criticism. Marxism—at first highly critical of reception theory (Holub 121-134; and Eagleton 1976 and 1996)—and situates the text in larger historical and ideological processes, highlighting the ideological potential in semiotic ambivalence. Within the theoretical scope of cultural materialism,[30] theories of symptomatic reading examine the forces that motivate the creation of a text, but that the text can hardly articulate. Materialist and new historicist critics are aware of the ambivalent and multiple nature of textual meaning, suffused with unresolved difference and contradictions that are the result of the infinite separation between the self and the Other—as the domain of language, transcendence and ideology. In effect, the Lacanian Real is in Marxist terms the occluded side of history, that is, the trauma of a never resolved class struggle (Žižek 1994,

[30] Kamps' (1995) introduction to *Materialist Shakespeare: A History* is particularly useful for understanding the theoretical tenets and development of cultural materialism together with its relation to Marxist criticism, materialist feminism and new historicism.

199).[31] Given the textuality of history—pointed out by Hayden White (1978)—historical processes and ideologies are present in the literary text in a distorted form; in other terms, as an anamorphosis.

Marxist criticism intertwines with psychoanalysis to put forward a theory of 'symptomatic reading' in which textual meaning is inextricable from questions of power.[32] The basis of symptomatic reading is puts forward by Frederic Jameson in *The Political Unconscious.* Jameson (1981, 60) advises that 'proper' interpretation 'always presupposes, if not a conception of the unconscious itself, then at least some mechanism of mystification or repression in terms of which it would make sense to seek a latent meaning behind a manifest one, or to rewrite the surface categories of a text in the stronger language of a more fundamental interpretative code.' According to Jameson, the literary text reveals the network of ideological relations obscured by the Symbolic through a rewriting of a previous ideological subtext, not immediately accessible to the conscious subject. 'The literary or aesthetic act therefore always entertains some active relationship with the Real; yet in order to do so,' explains Jameson (1981, 81), 'it cannot simply allow "reality" to persevere inertly in its own being, outside the text and at a distance.' On the contrary, 'it must rather draw the Real into its own texture, and the ultimate paradoxes and false problems of linguistics, and most notably of semantics, are to be traced back to this process, whereby language manages to carry the Real within itself as its own intrinsic or immanent subtext' (idem). This is in fact what anamorphosis does by articulating the artificiality of perception and, hence, of the Symbolic structure that organizes human life. When reading, the subject interprets an ideological object in light of his/her own ideological values. In the words of Eagleton (1976, 62), 'reading is an ideological decipherment of an ideological product.'

To be sure, anamorphosis requires the active participation of the observer in order to unveil a hidden message, in which an alternative truth, different from that avowed sanctioned views and discourses, is contained. When the reader reads he or she does so from this space of anamorphosis, which propels the subject to look into the text from the place where he or she desires. The reading subject unconsciously projects into the text their own epistemological and ideological universe, which comes to supply what is foreclosed, surfaces

[31] See as well Jameson (1981), 82, and Eagleton (1976), 72.
[32] See Best, for an introduction as well as a critique of 'symptomatic reading.'

as a deformation in the literary work, a remainder of the Real of the human condition. Nonetheless, the ultimate meaning of what is seem and read, depends upon the look of the observer, who can choose between a vision of the Other as Symbolic or Real. The voluntaristic nature of seeing, and hence of reading, already observed by Augustine, is the subject of Schön's 'Was siehst du?,' a distortion of the Biblical story of Jonah. 'Was siehst du?' confronts a representation of Jonah coming out of the whale with the anamorphic depiction of a human figure squatting to defecate. Schön's anamorphic picture compels the reader to interpret, to get lost in the image. In this journey in search of meaning, the onlooker comes face to face with his/her desires and anxieties; thus, plumbing the depths of his/her unconscious.

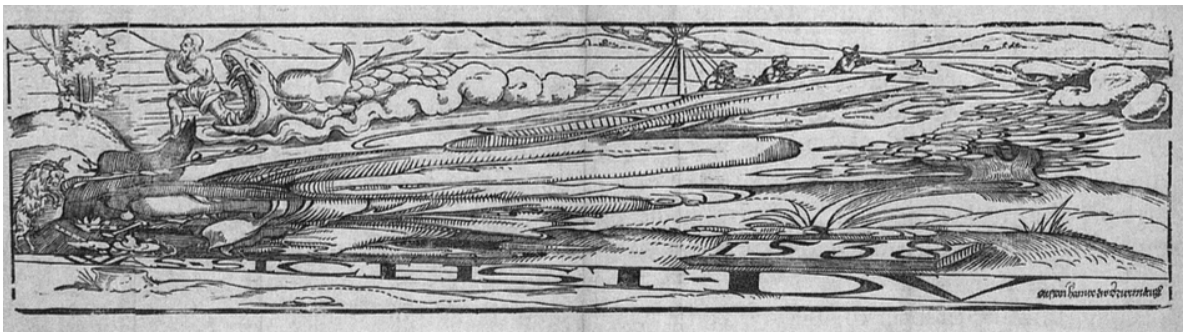

Figure 1.7. Erhard Schön, 'Was siehst du?' [What do you see?], ca. 1538, woodcut on paper, 21. 2 cm. x 85.1 cm. British Museum, London.

In light of the above, it is my theory that negativity is the underlying force in the textual anamorphosis characteristic of early modern texts and that this space of anamorphosis confers on late fifteenth and sixteenth-century texts, such as *Celestina,* a readerly force. In effect, since the late fifteenth-century, the Other becomes the object of the artists' look. Painters and writers consciously attempt at capturing the gaze of the Other, which stands for everything that is alien to the symbolic system of values. In the space of anamorphosis a foreclosed Truth resides, enabling the reader to gain a transient access to *jouissance*, which translate into an enjoyment of the written letter. The space of anamorphosis in the text equates to a residue of the Other, the vast space in between the realm of the Real and of *jouissance,* and the domain of symbolization; and it unveils in language and in the text through the effects of desire and of its signifier. The textual space of anamorphosis renders the text uncanny,

opening it to an infinite number of supplementary meanings in which an erotic and scatological undercurrent lurks.

2
THE GAZE OF CELESTINA

In his analysis of the phallic anamorphosis in Hitchcock's movies, Žižek (1991, 91) notes that 'the "phallic" element of a picture is a meaningless stain that "denatures" it, rendering all its constituents 'suspicious,' and thus opens up the abyss of the search of meaning—nothing is what seems to be, everything is to be interpreted, everything is supposed to possess some supplementary meaning'. On this account, the space of anamorphosis as a manifestation of the phallic signifier evinces a menacing, foreclosed underside of a perverse and obscene nature that provokes and propels interpretation. In Hitchcock's movies, anamorphosis manifests as a slowdown or speed up of the camera's tracking shot precisely at the moment when the opposite would be expected. This way, through a manipulation of the expected rhythm of things, the camera isolates the anamorphic stain bringing about a redoubling of meaning that confers to the image a supplementary signification that glimpses into the Real, 'so delay and precipitousness are two modes of capturing the object-cause of desire, object small *a*, the "nothingness" of pure seeming' (Žižek 1991, 94). Films, explains Laura Mulvey (1999), reinforce already existing psychological and cultural patterns of fascination, which depend on the image of a castrated woman, to arouse scopophilia. The cinema produces a voyeuristic phantasy in which 'curiosity and the wish to look intermingle with a fascination with likeness and recognition: the human face, the human body, the relationship between the human form and its surroundings, the visible presence of the other in the world' (Mulvey 1999, 836). Hitchcock, by altering the natural conventions of representation, produces a blot in which the disavowed Real of symbolic reality fleetingly emerges. Fernando de Rojas in *Celestina* achieves the same effect.

Voyeurism gains new dimension in *Celestina.* Rojas's novel-in-dialogue plays with the breach that separates the intimacy of love and hidden thoughts from the public view, bringing the private and foreclosed aspects of life into the open. In medieval tales of love, erotic desire is concealed under an idyllic façade, the only perspective to which narrator and reader have access. On the contrary, the function of voyeurism in *Celestina* is to disavow the masquerade of love and honor in order to capture the Real of human experience. Rojas's approach to the voyeuristic look theoretically coincides with Lacan's formulations of the gaze. According to Lacan (1981), the gaze implies that the watcher's desire is already

inscribed in the image that is observed. Given the pre-existence of the gaze, it brings about a change in the libidinal economy that prompts a self-recognition in the observer, which all of a sudden becomes the object of observation. As Lacan situates the gaze on the side of the object, the voyeur or voyeuse is no longer a neutral and distant spectator but an active participator that takes pleasure by vicariously engaging in the pleasure of others.

The axis of *Celestina* is the verbal recreation of scopic pleasure, which is redoubled through the introduction of the gaze within the voyeuristic look. 'In *Celestina* everyone is driven by a need to see, a compulsion to grasp the objects of desire with the eyes, that is portrayed as an extension of the erotic imagination, a need to apprehend visually and then possess what is caught by the field of vision' (Gerli 2011a, 99). As Gerli subsequently notes, 'the gaze is configured as the conductor of desire and as the mainspring of sexual energy' (idem). *Celestina* aims at capturing the gaze of the Other, which transgresses the limits of sexual appropriateness; therefore, revealing the occluded side of human material existence. The Other's gaze is then inscribed in the text and narratively reinforced through a series of textual mechanisms analogous to those of visual anamorphosis, which geometrically distorts its referent, as if projected in a crooked mirror, in order to challenge the observer to dig into his/ her unconscious as to imagine what is occluded. Through anamorphic duplication and distortion, *Celestina* captures the erotic, egomaniacal and violent nature of humankind. On this account, it transgresses the traditional representation of love, in which virtue and decorum align, in favor of a raw affirmation of material desire.

The theory I advance in this chapter is that Fernando de Rojas's *Celestina*, long before Hitchcock developed his famous anamorphic blot, aims at capturing the gaze of the Other, the marker of the human sense of alienation, which manifests itself in a reduplication of sight and, hence, of speech that produces a surplus knowledge. In this residual excess, the underside of the metaphysical discourses of courtly love and Christianity, the occluded Other, fleetingly emerges. *Celestina* breaks down gendered and physical barriers of medieval voyeurism provoking a reduplication of voices. Characters mirror each other's actions and discourses, which take on as if reflected in a distorting mirror a disfigured shape that points to their arbitrariness and deceitfulness. *Celestina*'s mirroring reduplication, I argue, is a response to the medieval, mainly Augustinian, metaphysical distinction between a heavenly and an earthly region, whose relation is specular. The narcissistic and egotistical self of

Celestina no longer contemplates itself in God's eternal truths in search of knowledge and reassurance, but turns instead to the material world of the senses and to him/herself in search of understanding. To be sure, through anamorphic reduplication in the form of female sexuality, asides, laughter and an unexpected literality of language, Rojas explores the corporeal, figurative and subjective nature of cognition and language. In this manner, Fernando de Rojas's *Celestina* points to the dissimilitude of words, things, deeds and thoughts and to the fetishism of language and the senses, which do not look up towards God, but inwards, towards the hidden reaches of the self. To be sure, *Celestina* aims at capturing the gaze of the Other, the foreclosed aspects of human desire. The gaze creates a space of verbal anamorphosis, marked by attraction and horror, and discernible in any detail that stands out from the idyllic surface of the story. As in the visual aesthetics of anamorphosis, from where I derive my analogy, the verbal anamorphosis only acquires meaning when viewed from one vantage perspective elusive to the human eye. This ultimate and evasive form, a reminder of the material and mortal nature of earthly life, challenges the spectator to face the Real of existence and, along with it, to examine the fundamental principles of his/her system of beliefs. This anamorphic perspective of *Celestina* brings down the idealizing and transcendental tradition, which is denaturalized, defamiliarized. By pointing to the duplicitous and deceitful nature of language and cognition through its reduplication, *Celestina* sets into question the validity of a single, authorized perspective; in this way, bringing visual anamorphosis into the literary text precisely at a time when female power revealed the conventional nature of symbolic codes and relations, a reflection of God's higher order.

On this account, in the last part of the chapter, I connect Rojas's attraction towards the Other with the rule of a female sovereign, Isabel I the Catholic Queen, and the development of a new lettered and middle class. *Celestina* is intrinsically connected to the last years of the Isabel's rule, when traditional hierarchies were in conflict with an emergent subjectivity and social mobility. In effect, Rojas's novel-in-dialogue exhibits a complex network of discourses in which ideology, social abjection, sexuality, gender and belief come together around female power to traffic with desire, in this way defying the limits of patriarchal jurisdiction. At the end of the fifteenth century, the spreading of literacy, schooling, scientific discoveries, territorial exploration, economic growth and new forms of

labor gave rise to the middle man, an autonomous and self-confident, yet split subject, who defines himself through his intellectual fulfillment and civic duty. *Celestina* portrays an urban community moved by material desire, trafficked by an androgynous and quasi preternatural woman, Celestina, whose duplicitous nature is not unlike that of Queen Isabel. Isabel and Rojas's bawd attest to the force of the Other to overturn the patriarchal system of values, which is verbally constituted and sanctioned. These two women, one of them fictional and the other historical, evince the relativity of power, which is usurped from under the system through the verbal manipulation of symbolic values. This being so and bringing *Celestina*'s anamorphosis into its ideological dimension, I propose that Rojas's novel-in-dialogue is a kind of crooked mirror in which fifteenth-century Castile is projected.

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Sight, which in the medieval intellectual framework was the primary means through which the subject communicated with God, the world and the disdainful beloved lady, an artifice of the poets' imagination, is in *Celestina* the main motor of sexual pleasure. The function of the five senses, of which vision was held to be the main one, illustrate the problems associated with cognition in terms of the relation between the earthly region in which humankind dwells and the realm of God, which theologians maintained it mirrored. Human life was considered to unfold in what St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD) refers to as a *regio dissimilitudinis* or 'region of unlikeness,' that is to say, in a spatial and temporal exile from the heavenly sphere of God.[33] The secular, terrestrial world is in Augustinian thought a reflection of the world of God, from which it is alienated. Therefore, the human world was a reflecting Other, a physical, corrupted domain. In the earthly region, the relation between the self, the world and God's timeless verities is mediated by the senses and by language, essentially material and, hence, voluptuous, as implicated in the Biblical narration of the Fall of humankind (Gen. 2-3). Therefore, the resulting medieval and Renaissance preoccupation with the ability of the senses and of language to transcend the deceitful external reality and the carnality of human life in order to apprehend a higher Truth. On account of the alienation between the self and the metaphysical core that structures human existence, sensorial and linguistic perception become implicated in the sensuality of mortal

[33] See Ferguson (1975) for an explanation the notion of *regio dissimilitudinis* and its conceptual implications.

flesh, which hopelessly attempts at the transcendental union with the Other through love and sex. The role of vision in *Celestina* foregrounds the fetishistic nature of perception and of language, which has the power to craft with words what the subject visualizes with his eyes and mind. Vision in Rojass' novel-in-dialogue, rightly notices Burke (2000, 35), illustrates the problematic relation between the interior world of the self and external reality. Cognition in *Celestina* becomes essentially solipsistic and so does language, its correlative. Sensorial cognition and its verbalization are not used as a form to grasp higher, universal ideals, but rather as a vehicle for pleasure. In *Celestina,* external reality does not mirror God's heavenly realm, but instead the inner world of the individual, who through its perception and verbalization projects him or herself upon it. Besides everyday tools, vision and language are dynamic and malleable entities that generate external reality, feeding the scopic fantasies of Rojas's characters.

In *Celestina*, characters are moved by their impulse to look at the object of their fancy and to verbally communicate their visual experience in order to attain sexual satisfaction. Besides sexual intercourse, sight and language are the two mediums external to the self through which characters seek erotic contentment. As we will see in Chapter 3, the desire the subject harbors to spy into the repressed is linguistically satisfied. As it happens, the work opens with the moment when the gaze of the lover meets the gaze of the Other, incorporated in the look of the female object of desire. This encounter occurs when Calisto in pursuit of his hawk first catches sight of Melibea, upon whose contemplation he states: 'En esto veo Melibea la grandeza de Dios' (85) [In this I see Melibea the greatness of God]. When Melibea asks him '¿En qué, Calisto?' (85) [In what, Calisto?], the male lover alludes to the beauty of her body, which he was lucky to enjoy thanks to the secrecy of the place: 'En dar poder a natura de que de tan perfecta hermosura te dotasse, y hazer a mí, inmérito, tanta merced que verte alcançasse, y en tan conveniente lugar que mi secreto dolor manifestarse pudiesse' (86) [In giving nature the power to have endowed you with such perfect beauty, and to have granted me, underserving as I am, the grace of seeing you, and in an appropriate surrounding that allows my secret malady to be manifest]. Castells (2000, 44) interprets Calisto's opening words as a sign of his spiritual understanding of love; nonetheless, as Burke (2000, 37) remarks, 'Calisto does not see Melibea as signaling the power and glory of God or as an object worthy of courtly devotion. He views her in terms of earthly sight, as a creature of

flesh and blood, whose body can satisfy the needs of all his physical senses.' In effect, the hawk has phallic and sexual connotations that allude to hunting analogous to the pursuit of the desired one.[34] The hawk is once again mentioned at the beginning of Act 1 by Sempronio in reference to his mater's sexual agitation. When Calisto demands his servant's presence and interrogates him about his whereabouts, Sempronio replies 'abatióse el girifalte e vínele a endereçar en el alcándara' (87) [The falcon broke free and I came to capture it and return it to its perch]. Furthermore, the secret pain Calisto discloses to Melibea is sexual desire, known in the medieval world as *amor hereos* (Solomon, 1989). Along this same line, the toothache Celestina attributes to Calisto in order to justify her first visit to Melibea is a metaphor for unsatisfied sexual desire (West 1979; Herrero 1986). Celestina disguises Calisto's desire as an apparently innocent 'dolor de muelas' [toothache] to gain access to Melibea's girdle, which would have the power to heal the male lover given that it has touched the relics of the Holy Land, which stands figuratively for the beloved's body. The metaphorical equivalence of *hilado*, *cordón* and *cadena* [skein of thread, girdle and chain], as Deyermond intimates (1977 and 1978) points out, as the hawk, towards hunting, trapping and captivity (Deyermond 1977, 6) and, hence, towards Calisto's aim at having sexual relations with Melibea only for the pleasure of sex.

If Calisto emulates the conduct of courtly lover, he does so to willfully transgress it. Calisto is not a courtly lover gone fool, as suggested by Deyermond (1961b) and Martin (1972), but a human being that craves for the delights of the flesh and the transient union with the Other they entail. In this regard, Martin (1972, 101) notices the strong sexual desire that drives Calisto's speeches; yet, she deems Calisto's yearning the effect of his baseness and lack of nobility, which provoke in him an excess of desire. Whereas the medieval lover, like Narcissus looking at his own image on the water's surface, contemplates his beauty and nobility upon his reflection on the lady (Goldin 1967), Calisto's seemingly neoplatonic vision provokes an erotic impulse that betrays the possibility of narcissistic satisfaction. Owing to the fact that he is not driven by a metaphysical ideal, but by a hunger for the flesh of another human being, Calisto cannot achieve narcissistic contentment. Calisto's look is then returned

[34] For the medieval and courtly implications of the hawk as well as its deployment in *Celestina*, see Gerli (1983 and 2011a).

by an-Other human being, its sexual supplement, who confronts Calisto with an expression of her own desire.

Over the course of the story, Melibea appears as a woman of flesh and blood. She refuses to be a passive and silent goddess destined to satisfy someone else's appetite and, therefore, engages in a dialogue with her suitor. Because she situates herself within the reach of her onlooker, Melibea embodies the gaze of the Other, in which the observer's lust is already inscribed as a provocation. In effect, Melibea's response is directed to ignite to a greater extent Calisto's yearning by returning his look (Gerli 2011a, 141-143). When she returns her suitor's lascivious stare with her own gaze, Melibea opens the possibility of sexual consummation, which is implied in her use of the word *galardón* [token], a euphemism for a sexual favor (Gerli 2011a, 142): 'Pues, ¡aún más ygual galardón te daré yo, si perseveras' (87) [Then, if you persevere, I will give you an even greater reward!]. Melibea was not born to feed Calisto's ego, but she has a sense of self and is a lover in her own right. She is not a passive mirror that reflects and affirms the noble qualities of her male lover, as the lady of the *Lady and the Unicorn* (Chapter 1); in contrast, she is a subject with a desire of her own. Like Susannah in Tintoretto's paintings, Melibea narcissistically turns her look towards herself and back at her observer.

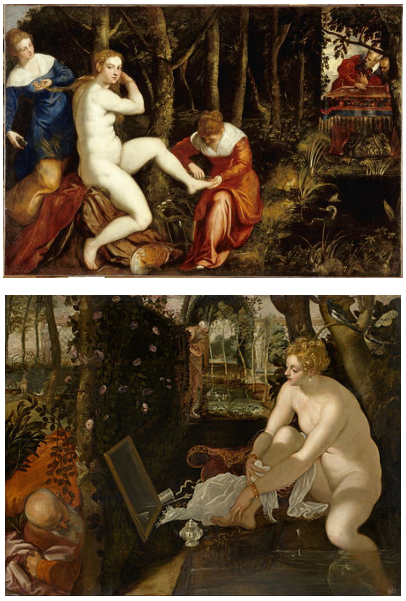

Figure 2.1. Tintoretto, 'Susannah in her Bath,' ca. 1555-1556, oil on canvas, 167cm x 238 cm. Paris, Musée du Louvre.

Figure 2.2. Tintoretto, 'Susannah and the Elders,' ca. 1555-1556, oil on canvas, 146 cm × 194 cm. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.

In the paintings by Tintoretto above, Susannah is not the dormant and inhuman object of the elders' voyeuristic lust, but an independent self. Contrary to the positive characterization of the male lover as a self-reflective Narcissus, the object of whose desire transcends himself; the presentation of Susannah looking at herself in a mirror is, on the one hand, a portrayal of the vanity of women, who were denied the capacity to love by the discourse of gender, on the other, an anxious representation of female subjectivity.[35] As Calisto's look meets the gaze of the unconsciously dreaded Other, canceled out in the previous tradition, the narrative duplicates itself. At this moment, Burke (2000, 44) explains, 'both [Calisto and Melibea] abandon the choric gaze, the panoptic presence, for the specific individual glance with all its attractions to the physical bodies of this world.' As desire is inscribed in the female characters' look as much as in the male's, Rojas transforms voyeurism from a unidirectional economy of observation into a bilateral encounter; through this redoubling giving rise to an anamorphosis. Characters in *Celestina* observe and delight in the sexual encounters of others, embodying an aggressive sexuality that ties together masters and servants sexually, and who sexually want each other. When Calisto first makes love to Melibea in Act 14, he manifests his desire of being observed by Lucrecia stating that 'bien me huelgo que estén semejantes testigos de mi gloria' [I would rejoice that there be such witnesses to my glory] (285). Calisto's exhibitionism is match by Lucrecia's, Melibea's maid, voyeuristic impulse, noted by Lacarra (1990, 73).[36] Lucrecia's sexual desire is aroused by her lady's passion for Calisto, whom she ardently kisses upon her arrival in Melibea's garden and spies hidden in the corners of Melibea's chamber during their trysts and sexual encounters.

The unexpected eroticism of Susannah and Melibea's sight points towards the anamorphic space of the gaze, who is introduced through the Other's active look. The erotic gaze of the Other wounds the male onlooker, whose narcissistic projection is then hampered.

[35] See Berger (1977) 50-51 for a study of the male gaze in Tintoretto's representation of Susannah.

[36] See also Chapter 4, 'Yearning to Look: Desire and the Pleasure of the Gaze,' of Gerli (2011a), 98-122.

Not only so, but as women become subjects, they are also struck by the gaze of their 'others,' their male suitors. At the beginning of Act 10, Melibea exposes the effects of Calisto's gaze upon her when she complains of suffering from lovesickness, a condition restricted to men in the previous courtly love literary tradition. Tormented by the desire that the sight of Calisto arises in her, Melibea desperately wonders about how to preserve her virginity: '¿Cómo lo podré hazer, lastimándome tan cruelmente el ponçoñoso bocado, que la vista de su presencia de aquel caballero me dio?' (238) [How shall I be able to do so, when I am so cruelly aggrieved by the poisonous bite the sight of that nobleman inflicts?], she asks herself. Melibea, who finds herself wounded by the desire of Calisto's look—her Other—has kindled in her, ends her monologue with a self-imprecation that curses the weakness of her sex: '¡O género femíneo, encogido y frágile! ¿por qué no fue también a las hembras concedido poder descubrir su congoxoso y ardiente amor, como a los varones? Que ni Calisto viviera quexoso ni yo penada' (239) [Oh, despicable and weak womankind! Why are women not given the power to reveal their anguishing and ardent love, as men are? O that Calisto should not live with a complaint, nor I with pain]. This complaint about the fragile nature of the woman is, as in the case of Tintoretto's portrayal of Susannah, duplicitous. Although it is representative of the medieval misogynistic tradition, when rehearsed by a woman, it becomes one more aspect of an emerging subjectivity at the end of the fifteenth century. In these lines, Melibea signals the hypocrisy of the discourse against women, morally condemned for being the target of male lust, and asserts her own prerogative to love on equal terms with men.

Melibea's desire, fueled by the master go-between, will lead to her capitulation. As her love affair progresses, Melibea becomes capable of consciously articulating her sexual hunger for Calisto, to whom she makes clear, when he attempts at objectifying her, 'Señor, yo soy la que gozo, yo la que gano, tú, señor, el que me hazes con tu visitación incomparable merced' (324) [Sir, it is I who have the pleasure, I who benefit; it is I to whom your visits do incomparable favor]. This apparently innocuous statement subverts the gender rhetoric of courtly love for, as she vindicates her pleasure and agency, Melibea confers upon herself the dominant position in the game of love, somewhat debasing Calisto to the status of her puppet. In the end, Melibea's recently developed self-consciousness and agency leads her to her death, which—contrary to Calisto—she inflicts upon herself, thus, reclaiming one last time her will and independence.

As pointed out above, Melibea is not the only female character who craves happiness and pleasure; Celestina, Elicia, Lucrecia and, most specially, Areúsa express their desire and take pleasure in looking. Gerli (2011a, 156) notes the similarity between Melibea and Areúsa's discourse of self-knowledge. Despise the social resentment she feels for Melibea, Areúsa shares her desire for autonomy, which is the consequence of a newly found confidence and sense of individuality. During the banquet in Act 9, a celebration of Otherness, Areúsa voices her disdain for social privilege and the servitude that maids suffer.[37] Areúsa takes pride on the independence her occupation provides her, declaring: 'por esto bivo sobre mí, desde que me sé conoçer' (232) [this is why I have lived on my own since I came to know myself]. Areúsa's final words are later evoked by Melibea. After the tragic death of Calisto, the female patrician affirms to regret nothing, other than not having had enough time to get to know and to sexually enjoy her male lover now that she has come to now herself: 'No tengo otra lástima sino por el tiempo que perdí de no gozarle, de no conoçerle, después que a mí me sé conocer' (304) [I have no regret but the time I lost not having the pleasure of him, not knowing him, after I came to learn how to know myself]. To be sure, high and low-class women equally prize their autonomy and so they affirm their freedom to live, feel and love. Without exceptions, female characters in *Celestina* move beyond courtly stereotypes of gender and class, and become agents of their own desire, seducers and not just the object of seduction.

As they turned into self-conscious subjects, women in *Celestina* break down the paradox of detour by engaging in sexual activities and manipulating male desire. Female characters radically violate the masochistic contract that had animated the medieval love ethos, taking possession of their bodies and becoming masters of their own desire. Rojas's women are free, self-sovereign subjects and agents of their lives. In consequence, they threaten to reveal the Real of love—its carnality, fierceness, masochism and eventually, its deadly nature—and, together with it, the arbitrariness and performativity of the patriarchal system, which depends upon the repression and invalidation of female subjectivity. Under the auspices of the old bawd, women in *Celestina* operate by maintaining the reverse underside concealed in order to take advantage of it (Gossy 1989, 46). *Celestina* tells the

[37] See Echevarría (1993, 30) for a brief analysis of *Celestina*'s banquet in light of Bakhtin. See Gerli (2011a) for an analysis of the scene in ideological terms.

story of a group of women who refuse to be a passive *object petit a* of male fantasies, posing a threat to masculinity and to the sanctioned social hierarchy. For this reason, Gossy circumscribes the domain of the 'untold' to female characters, whose difference and marginality she considers epitomized in the mysterious Claudina, 'a repressed and almost unutterable alter ego who signals from beyond the grave that there is an untold story on the reverse of the text' (Gossy 54). A significant part of the unspoken story of *Celestina* lies behind the transgressive, deviant in the case of the old bawd, sexuality of its female characters, who while upholding traditional social norms defy the limits of patriarchal jurisdiction. The female desire outside the courtly and patriarchal construct is a determining aspect of *Celestina*'s anamorphosis, which is the result of the text's desire to see and to communicate with the Other.

In its attempt at capturing the gaze of the Other, *Celestina*'s verbal action fluctuates between concealment and exposure through a voyeuristic redoubling that challenges the limits of gender and class. As Maravall (1972, 127) intimates:

> Los personajes celestinescos de estratos inferiores quieren vivir, gozar, enriquecerse por su cuenta y para sí mismos. Su egoísmo es la energía que mueve su voluntad individualista. Por eso detestan la servidumbre en que están, bajo unos señores cuyos señores cuya instalación en un 'status' privilegiado no tiene, ante sus ojos, fundamento objetivo. Ello les empuja a querer librarse de su servicio—no como clase social, claro está, pero sí por lo menos, personalmente.'
> [Celestina's characters of lower strata want to live, enjoy, get rich through their own means and for themselves. Their egotism is the energy that moves their individualistic will. This is why they detest the servitude in which they live, right under a group of masters whose privileged status do not have, in their view, an objective base. This situation makes them want to free themselves from their service—not like a social class, of course, but, at least, personally]

Celestina is a narrative in which the characters' desire is ignited by self-recognition in the desire of others, both male and female. If Lucrecia desires Calisto, no less Sempronio lusts after Melibea, as he manifests—much to Areúsa's rage—during the banquet of Act 9. The nexus among all of them and the main exponent of Rojas's portrayal of anxious sexuality is the old bawd, Celestina, whose homoerotic desire and androgynous portrayal situate her in control of the phallic signifier, the master signifier of desire. Celestina moves in the frontier between sexes and, because of her trade as a facilitator of sex outside marriage, she trespasses

class boundaries moving in between the underworld of prostitution and through the high ranks of society. Celestina, described by Sempronio in Act 1 as a 'vieja barbuda' [a bearded old crone], takes on the essential masculine attribute, the beard, which comes to symbolize her prowess beyond her gender's conventions. In Act 7, after arousing Areúsa's sexual desire by lasciviously groping her with the feigned purpose of diagnosing her abdominal pain, Celestina physically witnesses from the shadows her sexual encounter with Pármeno. Standing next to Areúsa's bed, Celestina commands Pármeno to sexually possess her protégée so that she can have evidence of his ability: 'Llégate acá, negligente, vergonçoso, que quiero ver para cuánto eres antes que me vaya. Retóçala en esta cama' (207) [Come here, you neglectful, bashful boy. Before I leave I want to see whether you have what it takes. Have some sport with her on the bed]. Celestina's traffic of desire erases the barrier between the voyeur, no longer a male observer, but also a female, and the object of observation, as well as between masters and servants, who as Lucrecia and Sempronio illustrate dare to have a fancy for their superiors. In effect, Sempronio and Lucrecia mirror the actions of their betters. In this way, *Celestina* subverts the prevailing class and gender hierarchy, and emphasizes the negative underside of courtly love: the human impulse towards sexual gratification, which is common to all subjects notwithstanding their sex and rank.

The anamorphic reduplication that arises from Rojas's reconfiguration of sight and voyeurism is built upon the characters' speech. *Celestina* contains an anamorphic stain that textually manifests itself, first and foremost, in the oscillation between the direct speech between two interlocutors and asides, which effect an oblique glance into the Other side of the love experience. In *The Art of La Celestina,* Stephen Gilman (1956) suggests that the fundamental stylistic principle that structures Rojas's work is *yo*-and-*tú* dialogue, which is the result of the meeting of two lives. For the first time in Spanish literature, dialogue was pursued for its own sake, as a reflection of the subjectivity of the speaker, counterbalanced by the perspective of the listener.[38] 'Rojas most elementary demand upon his style was that it possesses direction, not only a point of departure in the life of the speaker but also a destination in the life of the listener' (Gilman 1956, 52). These dynamics allow for the

[38] I consider and, hence, will refer to Rojas' *Celestina* as a novel-in-dialogue given that the level of interiority reached in the dialogic exchanges between its characters is, first, most characteristic of narrative, and, second, unparalleled in late medieval and early modern drama.

introduction both of subjectivity, located in the sentiments of the *yo,* and of perspective, located in the listener's reply and counter-argument.

The I-and-you dialogue is inaugurated in Act 1 in the conversation between Calisto and Sempronio after the former's first, apparently chance, encounter with Melibea in her garden. Due to his social position, Sempronio is alien to the courtly discourses that motivate his master. Sempronio's Otherness translates into his use of misogynistic tenets and example in order to counterbalance Calisto's courtly glorification of Melibea. Having recourse to the discourse of misogyny, Sempronio calls his master's attention towards the reverse side of female idealization and warns him about the dangers of women, arguing that men who surrender their dignity to women make a terrible mistake. Under a veneer of misogyny, Sempronio inscribes the dangers of carnal hunger primarily in women, but also, maybe unconsciously, in men. Sempronio's admonition reveals itself as an account of human carnal desire, which is implicated in the animalistic images that suffuse his condemnation of Calisto's romanticizing infatuation. After Calisto dismisses as a malicious fable the grotesque zoophilic encounters of the mythological tradition, epitomized in the sexual intercourse of Pasiphae with a bull and Minerva with a can (dog), a mythological abuse by Sempronio (Gerli 2011a, 80); he then reminds his master of the affair between his grandmother and an ape. In this context, Sempronio asks Calisto: 'Lo de tu abuela con el ximio, ¿hablilla fue? Testigo es el cuchillo de tu abuelo' (96) [And what about your grandmother with the ape? That was prattle? Your grandfather's knife is the witness to it]. In the medieval tradition the monkey was a symbol of lust, appearing in the margins of manuscripts as a representation of foreclosed desire (Camille 1992).[39] In an analogous manner to Zeus's conversion into a bull, the ape—a much less noble animal—signals the animalistic nature of men, moved by the primitive and bestial instincts of the body towards the satisfaction of its sexual appetites.[40] Sempronio's diatribe against women provides a glimpse into the foreclosed side of courtly tradition, which, deformed as if projected into a curved mirror, reveals the narcissism of male sublimation and the primitive force of masculine desire, and not the evilness of women, as intended by Sempronio. In effect, Sempronio, himself a marginal due to his social position,

[39] For another representation of a monkey as a symbol of lust see Chapter 5, figure 2.
[40] For the sexual symbology of the monkey in *Celestina*, see Green (1956). Sempronio's reference to the *ximio* has been widely discussed by Burke (1976-77 and 1998).

understands perfectly that Calisto's suffering and illness emerge from his sexual appetite and offers to look for Celestina in order to satisfy it. Furthermore, Sempronio's learned advice against women and the evils of love is betrayed by his own material desire for sex and wealth. As it happens, he will become a victim of for both, and of the foolishness and self-destruction it entails. The oral exchange between the two characters serve to introduce the perspective of an-Other, which constitutes itself as an alien to the main discourse that articulate the exchange.

Rojas's characters mirror each other's discourses and actions opening the representation of experience to perspectivism through the multiplication and fragmentation of dialogue and, hence, of experience. This is the reason why the immediate conversation, in which the love story between Calisto and Melibea unfolds, coexists and interplays with a parallel, but marginal side in which the Otherness of language, love, ethics and nobility surfaces. 'In *Celestina* the method for establishing the reflecting other,' which Burke (2000, 21) in light of Christian Neoplatonic theory links to the sublunary world as a mirror of the world of God, 'is to present the margins in contrast with the center and to imply a process of masking and supposed unmasking.' Marginal discourse violates the limits of propriety and points toward the lower instincts and violent ways of humankind. Low-life characters, symbolically associated with the baseness of lower impulses and with the impending nature of material desire, are aware of the artificiality of codes and, therefore, introduce a pragmatic, dismantling view of them. The reduplication of discourse through its projection in the distorting mirror of the margin exposes the underside of Western metaphysics by introducing a critical perspective that contraposes an idealized world of illusions, to a concreate and debased vision of reality. As a result of the multiplication of perspective, the Real of human existence—connected to eroticism, violence, selfishness and, eventually, to the inevitable, unredemptive coming of death—fleetingly surfaces in the form of an anamorphosis. The dual process of 'masking' and 'unmasking' noticed by Burke is the effect of *Celestina*'s space of anamorphosis, which introduces a net of oblique glances against an apparently ordered background. When these skewed textual spaces are observed from a vantage point which can only be fleetingly apprehended, they reveal an image of the Other, which translates into a glimpse into the artificiality of Symbolic codes, torn apart by the force of desire, and of the non-transcendental, material nature of life.

Nonetheless, nothing is as easy as it seems in Rojas's *Celestina* for Calisto and Melibea, who as masters stand for a divinely ordained society, fail to serve as example. Despite their wealth and nobility, traditionally associated with higher ethical standards due to the connection between power, titles and God, Calisto and Melibea are themselves peripheral due to the force of their desire. Calisto and Melibea only apparently uphold the norms by participating in the ritualistic maneuvers of courtly love, canceled out by their unquenchable sexual yearning. In effect, they transgress God's holy order when they move deeper into the margin in order to satisfy their carnal appetites. Given the lack of a virtuous and incorruptible mirrored paradigm of behavior, *Celestina* is as deeply nihilistic. There is no Other to the Other in Rojas's novel-in-dialogue, no ultimate repository and guarantor of a transcendental Truth. That is to say, no God and, hence, there are no values.[41] In the inaugural dialogue of Act 1, Calisto's courtly expression of his love, both to Melibea (see above) and later to Sempronio, is tinged with erotic desire. As Calisto continues to emphasize Melibea's virtues in order to counter balance Sempronio's admoniton, the Otherness of courtly love begins to emerge in his discourse:

> E en todo lo que me as gloriado, Sempronio, sin proporción ni comparación se auentaja Melibea. Mira la nobleza e antigüedad de su linaje, el grandíssimo patrimonio, el excelentíssimo ingenio, las resplandescientes virtudes, la altitud e enefable gracia, la soberana hermosura, de la qual te ruego me dexes hablar vn poco, porque aya algún refrigerio. E lo que te dixere será de lo descubierto; que, si de lo occulto yo hablarte supiera, no nos fuera necessario altercar tan miserablemente estas razones. (100)
>
> [In every way you have glorified me, Sempronio, Melibea is disproportionately, immeasurably above me. Look upon the nobility and antiquity of her linage, her vast patrimony, her most excellent wit, her resplendent virtues, her sublime soul, her ineffable grace, her sovereign beauty, of which I entreat you to allow me to speak further, for it will comfort me. And I shall tell you of her outer beauty only, for if I knew how to tell you of what is hidden, there would be no cause for us to have this wretched exchange].

In Calisto's courtly description of Melibea, erotic and material desire for Melibea's wealth comes forth. Calisto locates the appeal of Melibea not only in what is seen, but most especially in what remains hidden from the public view, her bodily attributes, and, no less

[41] See Lacan (1985) for an explanation of God and the woman as failed guarantors of the Other.

significantly, her inheritance.[42] Although at first Calisto seems to be completely blind to his material desire, this desire nonetheless lurks in his unconscious, from where it manifests itself in language.

The ubiquitous presence of the Other is betrayed by *Celestina*'s characters' subjectivity. Both Calisto and Sempronio unconsciously contravene their statements in speech and action, exposing once again the conventional nature of the Symbolic and in particular, of the discourses of both courtly love and misogyny. Rojas's subjective perspectivism does not stop at the level of double voiced exchanges, but also takes the form of laughter and asides. Inscribed in *Celestina*'s asides, laughter, which for the first time is systematically conveyed in a literary text written in the Iberian Peninsula, is another sign of a concealed, yet latent, meaning and intention. Far from being a simple expression of fun, laughter, explains Gerli (2011a, 122), 'is central to a fuller perception of the elaborate contradictions, emotional subterfuges, connivance, and plots that lie submerged beneath the language of the work.' In Act 1, Sempronio's acknowledgement of his master is preceded by a laugh that brings out the servant's own desire and his contempt for Calisto and his self-centered and elitist sentimentality: '¡Ha, ha, ha! ¿Éste es el fuego de Calisto: éstas son sus congoxas? Como si solamente el amor contra él asestara sus tiros' (93) [¡Ha, ha, ha! This is then Calisto's fire? These are his anxieties? As if loved aimed his shots only against him!] Sempronio continues to laugh at his master during the entire act; thus, revealing the absurdity of courtly codes. When Calisto refers to Melibea as a goddess, Sempronio cannot help but to fall into laughter, asking himself (maybe even the reader): '¡Ha, ha, ha! ¿Oýstes qué blasfemia? ¿Vistes qué ceguedad?' (95) [¡Ha, ha, ha! Have you heard such a blasphemy? Have you seen what blindness?]. Sempronio is not the only one to laugh, he also makes Calisto laugh by uncovering the preposterousness of his words. '¡Maldito seas! Que hecho me has reýr, lo que no pensé ogaño' (95) [Danmed be you! You have made me laugh, which I do not intend to this year], complains Calisto, in this manner displaying his awareness of the theatricality and farcicality of his speech. As it introduces a comic and ironic relief, laughter evinces the arbitrariness and performativity of the Symbolic, which despite its position of discursive dominance is subject to mockery and, hence, to violation.

[42] See Weissberger (1992) for the implications of female inheritance in Isabeline literature.

Laughter and giggling reveal what remains concealed from public utterances and are key, according to Gerli (2011a, 128-129) to comprehend Alisa's brazen acceptance of Celestina's first visit. Alisa's giggling signals her wish to expedite her daughter's marriage no matter the offensive implications of Celestina's mediation. Based on literary, pictorial and legal sources, Gerli (2011a, 136) contends that maybe 'by lending a blind eye to Celestina and the unmistakable motive of her visit, Alisa perhaps wishes her daughter's trysting to proceed, hoping that the lovers will eventually be apprehended *in flagrante,* so as to provide the freer choice of mate for Melibea.' In this passage, laughter serves to express complicity between mother and go-between. Alisa's 'complicitous laughter,' as Gerli refers to it, is but another trace of female independent thinking and agency. Through her giggling, Alisa, probably the worst understood and most despised of Rojas's female characters, emerges as a loving mother who wishes her daughter, in a rather modern manner, to enjoy her life and to marry a man she can love.

To be sure, what is marginally stated in *Celestina*'s laughter is discursively transgressive due to its sexual, demystifying pull. Laughter deauthorizes the discourse it mocks and, as a result of its defamiliarization, calls attention to the hollowness of the symbolic system. Like laughter, asides introduce the dissident perspective through a glimpse into the foreclosed Real, which takes the form of a textual anamorphosis. More often than not, the dialogic action of *Celestina* occurs in the presence of others, who overhear and participate on the side through whispered remarks and commentaries, articulated on periphery of the *yo*-and-*tú* dynamics studied by Gilman (1956). Almost every encounter between two characters becomes vulnerable to the interpretation and critique of others, who are present as spectators or concealed as eavesdroppers. 'Celestina is therefore not as simply dyadic as Gilman suggests; rather, it takes on an added dimension due (in part) to the strategic omnipresence of the servants in scenes in which the main focus is Calisto or Melibea, and the insistent sensitivity of the latter to all discourse that surrounds them,' observes Brocato (1996, 109). The servants and marginal characters of *Celestina*'s urban underworld spy on, monitor, criticize and yet reflect the discursive performances of their masters. Asides are uttered, with the exception of Calisto, by low-life characters who violate and expose the subterfuges of their masters' discourses and self-representation. Eavesdroppers are the watching Other that, from the position of the margin, hold the power to resist and demystify

the dominant discourses of metaphysics and nobility. Asides, which have been analyzed in terms of their dramatic and discursive function, nonetheless point to the complex workings of the text, in particular, to its double nature and, hence, to the space of anamorphosis included there.[43]

Asides, another textual locus where surplus knowledge is contained, permeate the *yo*-and-*tú* dialogue with mockery, sarcasm and ironic foreshadowing. They stage the conflict between classes as well as characters. In fact, this conflict takes its most brutal form in the oblique remarks in which characters wish each other death. In act 6, fraught with asides, Calisto's expression of his desire for Melibea is confronted by Sempronio and Pármeno's mundane view, which point to what is lack in Calisto's speech, namely, the impossibility to attain happiness and satisfaction in love. After his first visit to Melibea, Celestina returns to Calisto's house carrying the young lady's sash, upon which Calisto would displace his idolization through a fetishistic use of language that provides a moment of relief to his erotic desire. While Celestina tells Calisto of her visit to Melibea, Sempronio and Pármeno participate in the conversation through whispered asides. Whereas Sempronio enjoys the love talk, at least at its start, Pármeno incessantly complains about their master's excitement and folly. Both of them protest Celestina's greed, which is monopolizing the little profit so far accrued in their common venture. The disdain Sempronio and Pármeno hold, on the one hand for Calisto, and, on the other for Celestina, translates into startling images of death. In the opening lines of this act, Pármeno comments on his master's exhortation to Celestina to go to the point or to kill him with his own word with a foreshadowing of Calisto's demise: 'no es mucha su vida;' he says to Sempronio, 'luto avremos de medrar de estos amores' (177) [he does not have much life left in him; we will be wearing mourning if this affair advances]. But it is not only Pármeno who unconsciously foresees Calisto's death, Sempronio also anticipates that of his ally wishing him that 'O mal fuego te abrase… O intolerable pestilencia y mortal te consuma, rixoso, imbidioso, maldito! (178) [O may you burn in Hell…may you be devoured by an unbearable, deadly pestilence, you belligerent, envious accursed man!]. As Act 6 paradigmatically attests, asides from eavesdroppers prefigure the tragic ending of the work, which is openly voiced by Sempronio when overcome by loathing he warns his

[43] *Celestina*'s asides have been studied by Lida de Malkiel in her *La originalidad artística de* La Celestina (1970), 'Los apartes, 136-148;' by Finch (1982), and by Brocato (1996).

master: ‘Que mucho fablando matas a ti e a los que te oyen. E assí que perderás la vida o el seso. Qualquiera que falte, basta para quedarte ascuras’ (188) [That all this talking kills you and those who hear you, and by going in that direction you will lose either your life or your reason; the absence of either is enough to leave you in the dark]. The menace of the Real of human desire is the force behind these asides, which provide a further oblique look into the discourse of love and metaphysics, as they compprise one more element of *Celestina*’s anamorphosis. On the whole, mumbled asides disclose the risk of annihilation inherent to material desire and to the peril of the reduction of language to fetishism in order to revel in and satisfy an erotic obsession.

In the presages of death of Act 6 the fetishistic and destructive potential of language becomes manifest. As Gerli (2011a, 85-86) explains: ‘A close reading of the remainder of act 6 reveals just how the representation of language in it marks the transformation of the word into a fetishized, empty object, and how language takes on an anamorphic, protean cast that is altered reflexively by the speaker into its own solipsistic expression of unquenchable, unattainable desire.’ The anamorphic quality of language is the result of the chasm between signifier and signified, which in its turn—posited by Augustine—is the consequence of Humankind’s Fall from Grace. Under the influence of Platonism, Augustine perceived and gave expression to the separation between *signum* and *signatum*, to what we now call in Saussure’s terms signifier and signified. In accordance with Scripture, Augustine situated the fragmentation between words and things at the moment of humanity’s Fall. Since Adam and Eve violated the prohibition to eat from the Tree of Knowledge (Book of Gen. 2: 9), knowledge, and its support, language, became implicated in the material world, in the physicality and voluptuousness of the senses. Due to the estrangement of the human word from the Word and to the corruption of the terrestrial domain, true understanding and knowledge was condemned to the domain of figuration. The original schism makes language oscillate between an apparent literality and a veiled figurative sense, each of them with very different implications. In their literal perception, words are taken strictly at their referential and prosaic value, deprived of the protective shield of symbolism. Interpreted *strictu sensu*, the word is, on the one hand, closer to reality and hence to the materiality of the world; and on the other, as a result of this direct relation, it is more distant from its metaphysical source and ideal. In the opposition between the literal and figurative function of language, what is

at stake is a transcendental, versus a materialistic, notion of the Truth. In effect, in Book Three of *On Christian Doctrine* (1958, 78), Augustine warns about confusing literal and figurative expressions for, when interpreted literally, metaphorical language reflects the servitude of Humankind to the body. According to Augustine, the main trap that readers encounter is, indeed, figurative language, for when interpreted literally it makes the reader's soul perish. In Augustine's words, 'nor can anything more appropriately be called the death of the soul than that condition in which the thing which distinguishes us from beasts, which is the understanding, is subjected to the flesh in the pursuit of the letter' (*On Christian Doctrine* III. v. 9, p. 84). St. Augustine was aware that in order to act properly, one must think properly, which ultimately implies the figurative perusal and understanding of language. Figurative language looks upward to toward Heaven, so that, when interpreted literally, linguistic signs come to reflect only earthly existence, that is to say, humankind's carnal and, hence, mortal, deadly nature.

In the unexpected literality of language, the morbid, unredemptive and lethal nature of human life is inscribed. Human depravity is perceived in the literal, unrhetorical use of language, which as González Echevarría (1993, 15) rightfully observes, is also a trope. Occluded under the guise of figuration, language in *Celestina* contains continuous reminders of death, to which the characters fall prey as they seek to satisfy their appetites and aspirations. The characters, nonetheless, are unable to grasp these omens of violence and death given that the human mind, as Lacan understands, unconsciously denies the painful substratum of the omnipresent Real, clouded always under linguistic figuration. In Act 6, as an expression of his gratitude to Celestina, Calisto heedlessly predicts his own death when he cries out: 'O maravillosa astucia, o singular mujer en su officio...Agora doy por bienempleada mi muerte, puesta en tales manos, y creeré que si mi deseo no oviere effecto qual querría, que no se puedo obrar más, según natura, en mi salud' (183-184) [O what a brilliance, o what a unique woman in your trade ... Now I will consider my death well lived placed in such hands, and I will believe that even if my desire does not have the effect I wish, that permitted by natural order could have worked better for my well-being]. Before, at the beginning of Act 1, the male lover had wished for death to take him in order to stop his suffering: 'Cierra la ventana y dexa la tiniebla acompañar al triste y al desdichado la ceguedad. Mis pensamientos tristes no son dignos de luz. ¡O bienauenturada muerte aquella,

que desseada a los afligidos viene!' (88) [Close the window and let the darkness accompany my sorrow, and blindness my misery. My sorrowful thoughts are not worthy of light. How blessed the death welcomed by the afflicted!]. The unmindful, casual use of language in its literal sense entails not only an omen of death, but also a curse, a *mal de ojo* [an evil eye]. Calisto not only predicts and yearns for his own death, but, as he imprecates against Sempronio, he puts the evil eye on him: ¡Ansí los diablos te ganen!, ansí por infortunio arrebatado perezcas, o perpetuo intollerable tormento consigas, el qual en grado incomparablemente a la penosa e desastrada muerte, que spero, traspassa' (87-88) [Devil take you! May you perish from some sudden calamity, or be visited by an eternal, unbearable torment that immeasurably surpasses the painful and disastrous death that awaits me]. The curses and continuous hints of death point, on the one hand, to the deadly reality of desire implied in the constant universal struggle between Eros and Thanatos; and on the other, to the malleability and power of the word to create the dangers it entails. Besides, the ubiquity of *mal de ojo* and its manifestation in an unexpected literality of language evinces the power of the gaze of the Other to rouse want and the ability to kill.

In fact, the mystic, arcane magic of the word, not just to convey, but to generate is the foundation of witchcraft. Burke, who documents the medieval and Renaissance belief on the *mal de ojo*, locates evil in Celestina's eye. 'Celestina, who personifies the vital spirit of the sensitive soul that carries the *species* from the eyes to the common sense, is also posited in the outer world…as a bearer of the evil eye' (Burke 2000, 69). The supernatural art of Celestina is the manipulation of the senses and of language to provoke and to satisfy desire. Celestina is the Other whose gaze arouses desire and brings death. As a witch, Celestina epitomizes the breach between figurative and literal meaning, which she exploits in her spells, being the main one at the end of Act 3. In the context of Celestina's musings at the beginning of the ensuing act, studied by Gerli (2011b), this spell reveals the hollowness of language, which disconnected from any divine truth falls prey to useless incantation. Magic, intimates Read (1983, 96), is the neurotic play with language, that is to say, the solipsistic employment of the word, used to transform fantasies into reality. 'At a time when linguists are attempting to pursue a strictly "scientific," empirical methodology, and when it is fashionable to regard language as a distinctive sign of our inalienable humanity, Rojas forces us to take seriously the intuitive vision of language as disease.' Language is not the vehicle

for spiritual growth, but for the practice of the occult, which is but a narcissistic instrument to achieve personal, individual contentment, as it becomes evident in the literal use of language.

Celestina is the social and textual element that brings about the subversion of figurative language and its materialization through literality, in which death as the ultimate end of life is inscribed. Nonetheless, not even the shrewd bawd, whose ability is rhetorical, is able totally to discern the hidden Truth that language contains when it is undressed of its tropes. In effect, Celestina conjures up her own tragic end when, trying to persuade Melibea to confide in her, she says:

> No semejes la telaraña que no muestra su fuerça sino contra los flacos animales. No paguen justos por peccadores. Imita la divina justicia que dixo: El ánima que pecare, aquella misma muera; a la humana, que jamás condena al padre por el delicto del hijo ni al hijo por el del padre. Ni es, señora, razón que su atreuimiento acarree mi perdición. Aunque, según su merecimiento, no ternía en mucho que fuese él el delinquente e yo la condemnada. Que no es otro mi oficio, sino servir a los semejantes. Desto vivo, y desto me arreo… (165)
> [Do not be like the spider web, which demonstrates its strength only against the weakest creatures. Do not have the just pay for the sinners. Follow the way of divine justice, which says: The one that sins, let that soul perish, and also the human, which never condemns the father the father for the sin of the son, nor the son for that of the father. Nor it is right, daughter, that Calisto's audacity should bring about my perdition, for because of his privilege it would not take much to make the one condemned. I have no trade but to serve my fellow beings. From this I live and clothe myself.]

Celestina, who just a little earlier had stated that 'la verdad no es necesario abundar de muchos colores' (164) [truth does not demand an abundance of colorful words] fails to perceive the veracity of her own words and the curse she brings upon herself by lying. As Costa Fontes reveals (2005), Celestina inverts Biblical words and phrases, misapplied in order to justify the achievement and satisfaction of individual desire. The name of God is invoked in empty greetings, farewells and in swearing. In an analogous way, scriptural stories, psalms and religious proverbs are turned upside-down and used by Celestina as one more tool to move the characters into having sexual intercourse, presented as the natural, unavoidable activity for all men and women. In order to further enhance her friendship Melibea and to provide justification for her lust, the bawd reaches out for the teachings of

Christ, declaring: '¡O angélica ymagen, o perla preciosa, y cómo te lo dizes! Gozo me toma en verte hablar. ¿E no sabes que por la divina boca fue dicho contra aquel infernal tentador, que no de solo pan viviremos? Pues assí es, que no el solo comer mantiene' (158) [O angelic face, precious pearl, how well you spoke! I am overjoyed to hear you speak. Don't you know what God said against the tempter from hell, that we can't live on bread alone? It's true, eating alone can't sustain us]. *Celestina/*Celestina offers an ironic look into the 'Other' side of established religion through the arbitrariness and subjectivity of language. As there is no ultimate guarantor of meaning, there is no God. Language is void and it ultimately remits only unto the self and not to a divine order.

What's more, as magic also attests to, language holds the power to craft spirituality. The proof is Calisto's religious neologism resonating with liturgical cadences: '¿Yo? Melibeo só, y a Melibea adoro, y en Melibea creo, y a Melibea amo' (93) [¿Me? I am a Melibean, and I worship Melibea, and I believe in Melibea, and Melibea I love].[44] In effect, Calisto's religion is not Christianity, but his love for Melibea and maybe as well, as Costa Fontes (2005, 111) argues, a certain devotion for Celestina. Calisto spends his time in the Church of Saint Mary Magdalen, the paradigmatic Biblical whore, praying to God for the happy conclusion to Celestina's dealings and for the sexual consummation of his passion for Melibea. Moving beyond the assumption that Rojas's *converso* origins is the unspoken cause of *Celestina*'s nihilistic skepticism, blasphemy and the hollowness of religious language is one more aspect of a new epistemological system that displaces God and organized religion in favor of a confident, yet problematic, affirmation of the power of the individual self to apprehend Truth through its own intellection and cognition.[45] In this vein proverbs and folksy commonplaces, twisted by *Celestina*'s characters, loss their authority, wisdom and truth (see Shipley, 1985, and Gaylord 1991, 14-19).

The subject is the distorting mirror that confers upon language an anamorphic quality, which is then captured by Rojas and transposed into the text in order to allow for the specter of the Real to materialize in the resulting deformity. Rojas's awareness of the materiality of life develops into a surplus knowledge hinted at by the effect of the textual anamorphosis.

[44] See Read (1983, 82) for the use of neologisms in *Celestina* to demonstrate language's capacity of self-generation.
[45] See Gilman (1972) for Rojas' *converso* family and its influence in *Celestina.*

As it brings down the paradox of detour that had structured courtly literature, concealment and delay are impeded in *Celestina* causing the death of its characters. Celestina is killed by Sempronio and Pármeno when she refuses to share the profits of their common venture, and the two servant murderers are, as a result, summarily executed by the authorities of the city. These characters die as a result of their own greed, that is to say, because of their desire to fulfill their wants. Calisto missteps—stupidly in the *Comedia,* and to save his friend in the later *Tragicomedia*— and Melibea casts herself from the tower in her father's stately home in order to be with Calisto in death. As Echevarría (1993, 26) notes, 'Calixto and Melibea do not die because there is no one to mend the latter's hymen [as Gossy (1989, 56) had suggested], but because in Celestina's world—and text—fiction is based on the destruction of others and the reduction of all values to their sheer material representation.' Death, the end of mortal existence and material desire, can no longer be deferred under a veneer of linguistic sublimation in connection to the metaphysical ideals of love and Christianity.[46] On this account, death is the result of the newly found subjectivity and humanity, that is, of a changing relationship with the Other. In his lament, Pleberio calls the attention to this Other, which in the world disguises the Real under a transcendental cover:

> Yo pensava en mi más tierna edad que eras y eran tus hechos regidos por alguna orden; agora visto el pro e la contra de tus bienandanças, me pareces un laberinto de errores, un desierto spantable, una morada de fieras, juego de hombres que andan en corro, laguna llena de cieno, región llena de espinas, monte alto, campo pedregoso, prado lleno de serpientes, huerto florido e sin fruto, fuente de cuydados, río de lágrimas, mar de miserias, trabajo sin provecho, dulce ponçoña, vana esperança, falsa alegría, verdadero dolor. Cévasnos, mundo falso, con el manjar de tus deleytes; al mejor sabor nos descubres el anzuelo: no lo podemos huyr, que nos tiene ya caçadas las voluntades. Prometes mucho, nada no cumples; échasnos de ti, porque no te podamos pedir que mantengas tus vanos prometimientos. (338-339)
>
> [I thought, in my most tender years, that you and your deeds were governed by some form of order; now, having seen the pro and con of your prosperity, you seem to me a labyrinth of errors, a fearsome desert, a den of wild beasts, a game of men who dance the ring-around-the-rosy, a mud-filled lake, a region filled with thorns, a high mountain, a stony field, a meadow of serpents, a flowering orchard without fruit, a fountain of cares, a river of tears, a sea of miseries, labor without benefit, sweet poison, vain hope, false happiness, true grief. You entice us, false

[46] For death, love and the erasure of social boundaries, see Sears (1992).

> world, with your dish of delights, and with the tastiest bite you reveal the hook. We cannot flee from it, for it has already captured our wills. You promise much, you fulfill nothing; you cast us away from you so we cannot ask you to keep your vain promises.]

In his *planctus*, Pleberio unveils the doubly deceiving deceitfulness of life and, with it, of all spiritual and ideological values. He discloses the Real behind the discourse of love, which brings desperation, death and social disorder instead of happiness and fulfillment. The Symbolic, which is verbally constituted and sanctioned, Pleberio senses, is but a façade. In order to evince this fact, 'the old man focusses his complains squarely on the gap separating verbal representations of life and the expectations they create from life as it really is' (Gaylord 1991, 20). Pleberio highlights the limitations of previous narratives, in which the Real is never intuited, and so he laments: 'Pues desconsolado viejo, ¡qué solo estoy! Yo fui lastimado sin hauer ygual compañero de semejante dolor; aunque más en mi fatigada memoria rebuelvo presentes e passados' (339) [Disconsolate and old, how alone I am! I am sad without companion, without an equal with a sorrow similar to my own, however much I sort through my exhausted memory jumbling the present and the past]. Pleberio's condemnation of the world and of love, whose true nature is concealed, synthesizes the feelings of estrangement and loneliness that beset the human subject, a psychological being whose personhood is rediscovered by the Renaissance. But material death is the only thing that awaits this pitiful human creature who craves desperately for material satisfaction and transcendental union.

To be sure, *Celestina* evinces through an exhibitionist reduplication of language the perversion that underlies the metaphysical discourses of the late Middle Ages. Linguistic redoubling glimpses into the carnal underside of courtly metaphors, whose true meaning arises only when they are projected into *Celestina*'s distorting mirror. In this regard, notes Parker (1985, 31-32), *Celestina* is a 'powerful counterweight to the Religion of Love' given that, as he subsequently points out, 'for the first time in Spanish literature the Religion of Love is confronted with the world of sordid reality.' In an analogous manner, the performativity of religion and its factitiousness is covertly exposed through its encounter with profanity, abjection, and magic. In *Celestina,* holy words are used to enable sexual trafficking and to justify material desire, the ultimate reward to which the subject aspires, as

opposed to salvation in God. Furthermore, by placing religion next to magic in a world of mortal contingencies, *Celestina* catches sight of the fallacy and futility of established religion, which like magic depends upon an elaborate, hollow rhetoric of desire. The figurative and metaphoric aspects of language coexist in *Celestina* with an unexpected literality in order to reveal the arbitrariness of perception, of spirituality and of the sanctioned code of values, which occlude the Real of human life. Through an unforeseen new type of referentiality in language, *Celestina* strips it of its metaphysical and heroic dress, laying bare the essential materiality and alienation of human existence and expression, as it becomes evident in Pleberio's *planctus. Celestina*'s truth is secular, pessimistic, drastically nihilistic and wholly materialistic; nonetheless, this truth is anamorphically contained within a narrative of courtly love that professed to be didactic. (see Chapter 3 for *Celestina*'s professed didacticism).

Celestina represents what Barthes (1975, 6-7) refers to as the death of language, which happens at the moment when 'there is no longer a language on the other side of these figures (which means in another sense: there is no longer anything but language).' That is to say, when the relation between signifier and signified has widened to the extreme that there is no ultimate meaning that supports the chain of sounds that constitute a word; or in Lacan's terms, when there is no metaphysical Other sustaining the Other, that is to say, no god to provide humans with linguistic and, hence, epistemological certainties. As Echevarría (1993, 19) explains, 'this excessive referentiality and peeling away of the metaphoric layers of everyday speech constitute not only a corrosive critique of language and of human exchange in general, but also a way of questioning the very notion of representation. If metaphor, the foundation of naming things and exchanging information, value, power, and desire falls so short from its goal, what can be said of the other codes based on it?.' The force of *Celestina* resides in its representation of a senseless life, irreducibly alienated from the absolute and hence deprived of any epistemological certainties. In *Celestina*'s world the thirst for wealth displaces the old courtly and transcendental values. Social conflict and transformation, as Maravall (1968) first pointed out, articulates *Celestina,* a text that reveals a changing historical horizon in which a divinely ordained world is giving way to a new materialistic, mobile social order governed by a deep desire for individual freedom. In *Celestina*, questions of power, class, ethics, belief and knowledge are debated and re-negotiated, putting up a

drama of crisis and transformation (Maravall 1968, 20). Against this background, the awry projection of courtly love in *Celestina* serves to arise questions concerning the relation between power, gender and sex. The masochistic fantasy of courtly love, Žižek (1994) points out, stages the domination of male upon women and pervades the socio-political and discursive realms. As a display of power by virtue of a fundamental fetishism, courtly iconography establishes a 'quilting' or 'anchoring point,' in Lacan's terminology. That is to say, it sets limits to the fear of losing power in the face of the Other. *Celestina* destabilizes the basis of the divinely pre-ordained patriarchal structure, tracing its limitations and impossibility. On this account, I suggest that *Celestina* participates in a network of texts in which the patriarchal discourses of gender and power, with all their epistemological implications, is explored and negotiated in light of a developing subjectivity.

Notwithstanding his *converso* origins, I believe that Rojas's interrogation of the Other is the result of an emergent subjectivity and a new social mobility during the reign of queen Isabel.[47] As a Salamanca-trained jurist close to the Isabeline body of writers educated at Salamanca, Rojas would have been conscious of the relativity and performativity of power, which had been seized by a female underdog, Isabel of Trastámara, who like Celestina was a duplicitous creature. By disclosing the reverse side of sanctioned discourses, *Celestina* overturns the fiction of virginity and love, disclosing the ins and outs of the patriarchal construct. As a result of her professional activity as a sexual enabler outside marriage and as forger of virginity through the stitching up of hymens, *Celestina*/ Celestina, as Gossy (1989) intimates, destabilizes patriarchal reproductive norms, threatening to bring down traditional hierarchies and patrilinear succession, something that Queen Isabel had arguably done on her way to the throne. Rojas novel-in-dialogue came to life in the youthful and dynamic

[47] For Márquez Villanueva (1983, 141), '*La Celestina* puede ser entendida a la luz de la experiencia transcendente del primer grupo generacional judeoconverso que ha de sufrir una serie de difíciles iniciaciones (sexual, universitaria, social, religiosa, política) coloreadas por el trauma de la institucionalización definitiva del Santo Oficio. Gentes que, en su primera juventud, se dan cuenta de que, cristianos o no, han de vivir cada día como una continua muerte, conforme a una experiencia inédita para sus antecesores' [*Celestina* can be understood in light of the transcendent experience of the first generational group of converted Jews, which has to endure a series of difficult initiations (sexual, academic, social, religious, political) tainted by the trauma of the definitive institutionalization of the Holy Inquisition. People, who in their youth, realize that Christians or not have to live every day as in a continuous death, in an unprecedented way].

university milieu of Salamanca, in which along with gaiety, a profound dissatisfaction, uncertainty and fear surfaced due to a renewed realization of the weight of the brutal forces of human life. [48] As *Celestina* is designed to disarm the assumptions of patriarchal order, threatened by the Other, it evinces a strong symbolic and ideological connection to the last years of Isabel's rule, when female power revealed the conventional and arbitrary nature of symbolic codes and relations, distancing Castilian citizens more and more from a higher absolute.

As Barbara Weissberger (2004) eloquently argues, the profoundly absolutist and patriarchal program of Isabel clashed with her sex. The queen embodied a nightmarish contradiction, namely, that God had entrusted a woman the reconstruction of the nation's welfare despite the fact that women were widely considered the main cause of social chaos. The menace posed to the traditional gendered hierarchy by the queen was negotiated through a plethora of fictional and non-fictional written works. Isabel I was well aware of the political uses of writing and she committed herself to its promotion. The queen entrusted men of letters in her closest administration with the task of developing the propaganda that would legitimize and consolidate her claim to the throne. Among those writers under her patronage were a

[48] The emblematic union between the sovereigns and the University of Salamanca was crystalized in the Greek inscription placed on the University's façade upon the visit of the Queen and King in 1480: 'The Monarchs for the University and the University for the Monarchs.' According to Gilman's inquiries, Rojas' period as a student was one of intellectual and administrative rigor and ceremonious etiquette, but also one of juvenile misbehavior and resistance to the norms. As Gilman explains: "To study at Salamanca—an institution far more democratic than military—was to become aware of order and disorder as a problem with which one was personally concerned," and because of this recognition, "rebellion against or adjustment to an imposed order of daily existence was a profound personal experience. For six years or more each student, by the mere fact of being so, was intensely aware of a problematical relationship of self to society" (Gilman 1972, 289). The awareness of conflict between subject and community was probably intensified by the latest sociopolitical measures, first and foremost, by the edict of expulsion, a historical blow to the town of Salamanca, where up until then the Jewish community had lived in peace and prosperity, and to the University community comprised to a large extent by schoolmasters and students of Hebraic lineage who had found refuge in the academic world (Gilman 1972, 299). *Celestina* came to be intrinsically related to both the city and the University of Salamanca, so that from its composition until the present day visiting this Castilian town is to walk the very same streets that *Celestina*'s characters had strode and where they had lived intensely. *Celestina* has become the utmost legend of Salamanca's folklore, providing for the city and the university a self-representation, in which skepticism and a disquieting awareness of worldly inhospitability transpires in the midst of the story of the two lovers.

considerable number of Salamanca-trained jurists, such as, Juan de Flores and Luis de Lucena, who probably coincided with Fernando de Rojas during their studies in Salamanca. In their writings, learned and popular, Isabel's subjects 'seek to articulate and contain, express and mystify the threat to masculine subjectivity that the female monarch and her patriarchal program represent' (Weissberger 2004, xiv). On the whole, the works produced by Isabeline men of letters partake in the gendering and sexualization of political discourse initiated a few decades earlier by Fernán Pérez de Guzmán in his *Generaciones y semblanzas*.[49] As it happens, politics in fifteenth-century Iberia became inseparable from gender and the private life of the monarchs, which was more than ever the subject of public scrutiny. During the reign of Juan II, and of his son, Enrique IV the Impotent, sex and power became inextricably tied in order to defame and undermine the real and symbolic power of the monarch and of his favorites. To these men the weaknesses of women were often attributed—feminized--, while they were also publicly accused of sodomy. Whereas the antifeminist discourse of female lack and inferiority served to disable the power of Isabel's predecessors; during the reign of Isabel, it was the principal discursive tool for her legitimation. Nonetheless, the discourse of Isabel's legitimacy is not exempt of contradictions and uneasiness.

The chronicles of her reign present the Catholic Queen as the living embodiment of both female and male virtues. Long before the other Isabel—Elizabeth of England--Isabel of Castile was portrayed, on one hand, as a virtuous wife and mother, almost as a semblance of the Virgin Mary in her perfection; and, on the other, as a brave and resolute leader and soldier. The mystic androgyny of the queen is best epitomized in her address to the troops she had ordered to spare upon their return to Tordesillas in Juan de Flores' *Crónica Incompleta.* In her address, the bravery of the queen, who utters 'palabras de varón muy esforzado más que de muger temerosa' [the words of a forceful man more than those of a frightened woman] (Flores 1934, 238) contrasts with the cowardice of her husband and his troops. The negotiation of her gender not only served to validate her claim to power, but also manifested

[49] See the studies of Hutcheson, Weissberger, Brocato and Gerli gathered in *Queer Iberia* (1999). The sexualized political discourse is one aspect of the fifteenth-century ongoing discourse of gender, which translates into frequent debates on the question of the woman (see Solomon 1997). These debates intensified during Isabel's reign, permeating the sentimental fiction.

a penetrating anxiety over the anomalous rule of a grotesque and despotic woman, unnatural, alien to her gender. In this regard, Weissberger notes that the literature of the late fifteenth-century reflects an 'anxious masculinity,' which in terms of textuality translates into 'the male writer's search to secure his gender and class superiority by projecting the threatened loss of dominance outward, onto the phantasmatic cause of that loss' (2004, xv). According to Weissberger, Isabeline texts composed by Palencia, Pulgar, Flores, San Pedro and Lucena, among others, strive to contain the perceived loss of masculine power. These university-trained jurists and bureaucrats, many of them of *converso* origins, encapsulate in their writings a complex set of responses to Isabel's sovereignty and ideological program against a newly found awareness of human potential, freedom and subjectivity, typified by those of their class and profession.

Rojas's academic generation formed a self-conscious corporation of lawyers and bureaucrats who aspired to serve and to gain the favor of the queen. According to Ruth El Saffar (1995, 180). These young men of letters aspiring to hold a position of power in the developing nation-state suffered from an internal division, chastised and castrated by the masculine environment of the school and the university. The growing importance of schooling, she posits, alienated Renaissance men from their bodies and its appetites due to the exaltation of reason over emotion, traditionally associated with women. In the masculine environment of the schools and the university young men had to push aside their desire for home and the mother. 'Born with the "I" is an Other who dwells as a reject in the peripheries of the ego,' states El Saffar (1995, 185). This Other, which 'carries the demons of guilt, desire, rage, fear, grief, shame, and ecstasy that in its formation the "I" has expelled' (El Saffar 1995, 183), is identified with the feminine. Against this background, she concludes, Fernando de Rojas's *Celestina* expresses the Renaissance man's sense of frustration and anxiety over matriarchal domination. The concern with femininity and female power goes hand in hand with the late fifteenth-century rediscovery of the subject and of its potential to craft the world and its life. In effect, Celestina is not a straightforward evil creature, but a multivalent character that lures and terrifies. Celestina represents the low, the marginal. In Stallybrass and White's (1986, 4-5) theory of cultural hierarchies, the low 'is the site of contradiction, the site of conflicting desires and mutually incompatible representation,' that is to say, the site where 'repugnance and fascination are the twin poles of the process in which

a political imperative to reject and eliminate the debasing "low" conflicts powerfully and unpredictably with a desire for this Other.' The low in *Celestina*, which is the underside of sanctioned discourses and is epitomized in the old bawd, highlights the force of desire against an increasing desire for freedom, pleasure, lucre, and rank, and an emerging underworld, discussed in Chapter 4 and 5. The double-edged discourse of the low, in which fear and fascination for the Other coalesce, is the key to understanding Rojas's bawd and the radical change she brings in with regard to her textual predecessors.

In this way, *Celestina* can be seen as in dialogue with Juan de Mena's *Laberinto de Fortuna* (ca. 1444), the paradigmatic learned epic poem of the Trastamaran dynasty (Brocato 1999, 338-345). *Laberinto de Fortuna*, which exhorts Juan II to continue the military campaign to expel the moors from the Peninsula, attributes sociopolitical disorder to deviant sexuality, in particular, to adulterous wives and feminized subjects. This genealogical tie is foregrounded by Rojas, who suggests Mena as one of the possible authors of Act 1, and whose echoes can be heard in Celestina's conjuring of the devil. This possibly deliberate, contrived attribution is meant to situate his work within the late fifteenth-century literary canon and to suggest the political undertones of his work, which is not only a bawdy tale like those of Cota, the other possible progenitor of Act 1 advanced by Rojas.[50] The character of Celestina, as it becomes evident in her invocation of Pluto in Act 3, draws from *Laberinto*'s Witch of Valladolid. As Gerli (2011b, 162) notes, there are two crucial differences. Whereas the invocation of the Witch of Valladolid seeks for heavenly assistance to ensure the political future of Castile; Celestina simply looks out to safeguard her reputation and ensure her profit. Furthermore, while the former is followed by a supernatural resuscitation; the summoning of the latter lacks magical efficacy. Witches, who were once the remedy against physical and spiritual evil, came to be considered by the end of the Middle Ages the embodiment of evil. Witches subverted the established social hierarchy by asserting their freedom. Their independency was translated into sexual licentiousness and insatiable carnal lust in texts such as the *Malleus Maleficarum* (1486), an attempt to undermine matriarchal power in the home and in society through a condemnation of witchcraft. Accused of making penises disappear and of causing impotence, witches patriarchy attacked at its foundation by virtue of emasculation. Celestina personifies the threat to the patriarchal system; nonetheless, the

[50] For Cota and the origins of Celestina, see Márquez Villanueva (1993, 122).

threat in Rojas's novel-in-dialogue lies not in the feigned supernatural powers of the old bawd, but in the desire she stirs and in which she traffics. Under a veneer of magic and spirituality, the transgender Celestina is a panderer and an enabler of human lust. In *Celestina* social chaos is not the outcome of witchcraft or female wrongdoing, but the other side of men and women's newly found capacity to craft their own lives, an ability that is accompanied by a realization of the nature of desire and mortality. As a result, Celestina takes on an ambiguous shape, as do the characters around her, starting with the patrician lovers. With regard to Mena's *Laberinto*, *Celestina* exposes the artificiality of the metaphysical discourse of power, inseparable in the ancient regime from the spiritual realm and from masculine virtue and power, and connects it solely to earthly sexuality and ambition.

Celestina, much like the Isabel the Queen, is an uncanny combination of male and female, of human and preternatural attributes, and like her she poses a threat to the patriarchal *status quo*. Celestina, whose name derives from the adjective celestial, heavenly, is according to Costa Fontes a deliberate antithesis of the Virgin Mary, she embodies the temptress serpent. Celestina, like Isabel, claims divine power for herself and instantiates her own cult, inspiring devotion in the society that surrounds her, even among its priests and monks, the supposed guarantors of the spiritual order (Costa Fontes 2005, 116-121). Celestina's androgyny, which is not unlike that of the queen, signals to an aberrant deviation and, hence, her 'otherness' in reference to the natural and social order. At a time in which the Other of life and social hierarchy was sensed more than ever before, androgyny typifies the fluidity of both nature and of symbolic categories, such as gender, which partakes of both. In art, a clear fascination with the grotesque androgyny transpires in the works of the Flemish painter Quentin Massys, such as the *Portrait of an Old Woman* and *A Grotesque Old Woman*. This fascination continued up until the seventeenth century when it became a crucial element of the paintings of José de Ribera (Lo Spagnoletto). Also, Isabel's portraits partake in her androgyny, as it becomes apparent in Juan de Flandes' portrait of the queen (ca. 1500). Nature not only produces harmonious beings, like Da Vinci's Vitruvian Man, it also engenders monsters. These abnormal subjects, society's 'others' challenge sanctioned standards and hierarchies, systematically overturning them. The symbolically charged

human body becomes a crucial site for the negotiation of power.[51] To be sure, femininity and, furthermore, androgynous femininity pose threats to the patriarchal order, which is always at risk of being destroyed, emasculated by its others. As a result, to repress the social 'other' is to contain a socio-political revolution. In *Celestina*, such a revolution, despite the murder of the go-between, cannot be accounted for, as Pleberio remarks; it has already occurred and disorder now reigns in the world, which is ruled by a transgendered Isabel.

Figure 2.3. Quentin Massys, 'A Grotesque Old Woman,' ca. 1523, oil on wood, 64 × 45,5 cm. National Gallery, London

[51] For the physical body as regards to the body politic, see Newton and Rosenfelt (1985), Le Goff (1989), Bynum (1995), Wayne (1991) and Hale (1971), among others. The representation of the body is of crucial importance to the study of another queen, Queen Elizabeth I, as Weissberger (2004) notes. For the negotiation of power through the body in *Celestina*, see Gerli (1999 and 2011a).

Figuere 2.4. Juan de Flandes, 'Isabel la Católica,' ca. 1500, oil on wood, 63 x 55 cm. Madrid: Palacio Real de Madrid.

The urban environment of *Celestina* is determined by the power of an aberrant woman who subverts the established code of principles that govern civilized society. *Celestina* is a text articulated upon the conflict between the self and the Other, which translates into social and economic antagonism between the different groups of society as regards their position in relation to power. *Celestina* takes place not in a geographic and temporal remoteness, but in a semblance of a palpably material late-fifteenth-century Spanish city. By means of this chronotopic shift, as Brownlee (1990, 213) rightly observes, Rojas 'extends the potential for linguistic and societal alienation noted throughout the *novelas sentimentales* by equating his immediate environment with alienation.' *Celestina*'s discursive solipsism evinces the breach between the word and its meaning, and hence between discourse, intention and action at a time when a nearly despotic female monarch had taken possession of public and private rhetoric in order to validate her power. In this regard, it should not be forgotten that, besides the political measures introduced above, prostitution was promoted by Queen Isabel and her ministers in order to advance her power. For example, upon the conquest of Granada, the queen, casting Christian virtue aside, granted Alonso Yáñez Fajardo a privilege to establish brothels in every conquered town (Weissberger 2004, 12-13). This event was parodied in the anonymous *Carajicomedia* (ca. 1514), a political satire in which there are no less than eight whores called Isabel serving a celestinesque leader, La Buyça, who fulfills the aspirations of the powerless, but ambitious men around her while driving them to homosexuality.

Celestina and Isabel are expert manipulators of language, which they use in order to ignite and satisfy the human desire for sex, wealth and rank, a desire that can only be fulfilled through the disintegration of previous symbolic values. Celestina's business as a seamstress and manufacturer of cosmetics, the visible and legitimate counterpart of her illicit activity, point to her fundamental ability, which is the fabrication of a deceit with an appearance of truth through the mending of torn hymens. [52] As a result of her trafficking in desire through the reconstruction of hymens, Celestina leaves behind a textual scar much like the one on her

[52] In effect, weaving is an activity traditionally associated with women in Western culture, who fear the power of its female subjects to generate and to transgress patriarchal rules. See Miller (1986). Also, Gossy (1989, 45-46) from whom I take the reference.

face. This scar, which points to the ideological truth in *Celestina*'s anamorphosis, denotes the violent sociopolitical and ideological inconsistencies of fifteenth-century Spain. Celestina's scar 'stands as a multivalent tangible trace of both her social and spiritual transgressions, a mark on her body that points to a contradiction, to something hidden, to the crossing of boundaries, to infamy, aggression, abjection, and wrongdoing' (Gerli 2011, 43). The scar on Celestina's face, continues Gerli, 'stands both as a reminder and a screen for some offence; it is a healed wound, yet one that recalls all the wounds and traumas Celestina inflicts and, like a closed door, prevents us from seeing what is hidden immediately behind it' (Gerli 2011, 43). Celestina's scar signals the material fabric of society, suffused with tensions and contradictions, epitomized in the queen herself. Like the scar on Celestina's face and the ones she leaves on the maidenheads repaired by her, the space of textual anamorphosis is an uncanny, distorted remnant resulting from the rhetorical force of the phallic signifier. On this account, it comprises a menacing Truth, a surplus knowledge foreclosed from the conscious mind that threatens to overturn the sanctioned *status quo* and social order.

By selling the fiction of virginity, Celestina knits together the story that has come to be identified with her. In the urban society of *Celestin*a, a reflection of fifteenth-century Spain, a feeling of alienation from the Other is the force behind the characters' speech and actions. With the help of a go-between, *Celestina*'s characters move more and more towards the margin in order to see and satisfy their yearning. This same urge moved a new generation of men and women who had escaped the bondage of servitude to find themselves in the hands of a semblance of the dreaded maternal Other. The anxiety and fascination that results from this contact with an all-powerful female Other at the exact same time that humans were—as Areúsa and Melibea would remark—getting to know themselves, I propose, is yet one more aspect of *Celestina*'s anamorphic vision. In this light and far from being a one to one allegorical correspondence, Celestina is in a sense a distorted, anamorphic image of Isabel I and the Castile of her age.

In sum, what is repressed in courtly narratives, that is to say, the Real of human life and desire, is conveyed in *Celestina*'s anamorphosis. Anamorphosis entails a skewing and a fundamental deformation, a deformation that is patent in Celestina's weaving activity. In this manner, which recalls Schön's anamorphic images, Rojas introduces another level of

perception to literary representation. This being so, *Celestina* emerges as a text suffused with unresolved contradictions. Against a background of Neoplatonic idealism, *Celestina* adds through the unconventional reduplication discussed above an anamorphic quality to the verbal articulation of scopic pleasure. In Rojas's novel-in-dialogue, which is centered on the characters' interiority, God, the ultimate, all-seeing guarantor of Truth, recedes as a result of the subject's force to craft reality through language. *Celestina* moves away from an heroic and metaphysical understanding of literature and life to lay bare the pleasures and sufferings of material existence, translated into the story of solipsistic lust and ambition that unfolds among its characters. In the urban universe of *Celestina*, desire, no longer a transcendental force that seeks the divine, 'manifests itself with an anamorphic energy that transgresses, transforms, and dissolves the constituted forms of social life' (Gerli 2011, 35). The deforming power of desire, which arises from language and is only linguistically fulfilled, transfers into the text in the form of an anamorphosis, in which the potential for linguistic enjoyment—entertainment and *jouissance*—resides. By means of the deployment of textual anamorphosis, Rojas seizes the depravity and abjection of humankind and translates them into an urban environment governed by selfishness, corruption, violence and sex as commerce. In this manner, the young jurist Fernando de Rojas, a master rhetorician, comes closer to an understanding of human sense of alienation, which is contained and projected in *Celestina* as an anamorphosis. In this way, Rojas's *Celestina* undermines the values that subtended the society in which he lived, pushing its limits into a world deprived of ideals and not that far distant from the Spain of Isabel I.

Anamorphosis is one more function of *Celestina*'s verbal exchanges, in which a gazing Other is comprised of a multitude of psychological perspectives. Rojas novel-in-dialogue is made of partially hidden sights that enhance the understanding of human material desire. The anamorphic gaze of *Celestina* denaturalizes the text, causing suspicion in the reader. The reader's view is already inscribed in the anamorphosis. In order to fill out this apparently empty space with an object of its own fantasy, the spectator embarks in a heuristic journey of self-discovery, returning to him or herself either transformed or reassured. On the whole, anamorphosis brings about a 'surplus knowledge' which entails a change in the libidinal economy of the letter, for what is not expressed—the repressed or negative underside that mirrors the observable action—takes over the narrative, which is then

perceived as suspicious. This perception of deceptiveness and lack becomes the motor of reading as it stimulates the subject to come up with new meanings. The textual space of anamorphosis, which I have sought to connect to Iser's notion of 'negativity' in the previous chapter, moves in between a sense of absence and an awareness of surplus meaning; thus, becoming the object-cause of textual desire that propels the reader to continue reading. Anamorphic redoubling needs the reader's active participation as the ambiguity it introduces requires the active intervention of a subject to decide upon the validity of opposing or contradictory meanings. The reader then is trapped between didacticism and delinquency, the result of pursuing the satisfaction of impulses that the closed system of values condemned, but that are inherent to the human condition. This redoubling is doubtless the essence of *Celestina*'s anamorphosis and the reason for its early modern success.

3
ROJAS'S ENVISIONED READERS

Fernando de Rojass' *Celestina* questions the notion of representation and interpretation through anamorphosis, which points to the dissimilitude of things and their portrayal, whether pictorial or verbal. The novelty of Rojas's text lies in that it aims to capture the Real behind desire and its metaphysical discourses, thus apprehending in the form of anamorphosis the human sense of alienation. Contrary to the tradition that precedes it, *Celestina* focuses on the negative, perverted and, hence, previously foreclosed aspects of courtly and Christian values, forcing the reader into a realization of his/her own humanity. As Gerli (2011a, 18) explains: 'Celestina thus compels us to move beyond the boundaries of a reading that is content simply with subsuming and decoding a series of thematic and ideological tensions that situate it at the end of a textual tradition. Rather, it forces us to see it as a radical rethinking of these texts and the cultural logic that informs them [i.e. the discourses of Christianity and courtly love] as it defines the world's broad potential for mobilizing the pervasive presence of human yearning.' *Celestina* breaks down the literary illusion of voyeuristic separation in order to create a likeness of the reader's desire, not in terms of its spiritual, but of its sensitive and sexual soul. The collapse of the transcendental discourses of patriarchy culminates in a new interpretative construct and, hence, a novel way of reading that comes closer to the reader's psychology and subjectivity. As the Middle Ages come to their close and the human subject takes central stage in the Renaissance, the text becomes an extension of the human mind. The development of perspective had made possible the inscription of the observer's look in the object of observation. As it happens, the look of the observer is the basic principle that governs perspective, which depends upon the frontal coincidence between the eyes and the vanishing point. Through the pictorial manipulation of perspective, Andrea Mantegna's pictorial compositions, such as the ceiling fresco he designed for the Camera degli Sposi or 'Lamento sul Cristo morto' [The Lamentation over the Dead Christ], gaze into the observer. Mantegna hides under an appearance of truth, a *trompe l'oeil,* the artificiality of art.

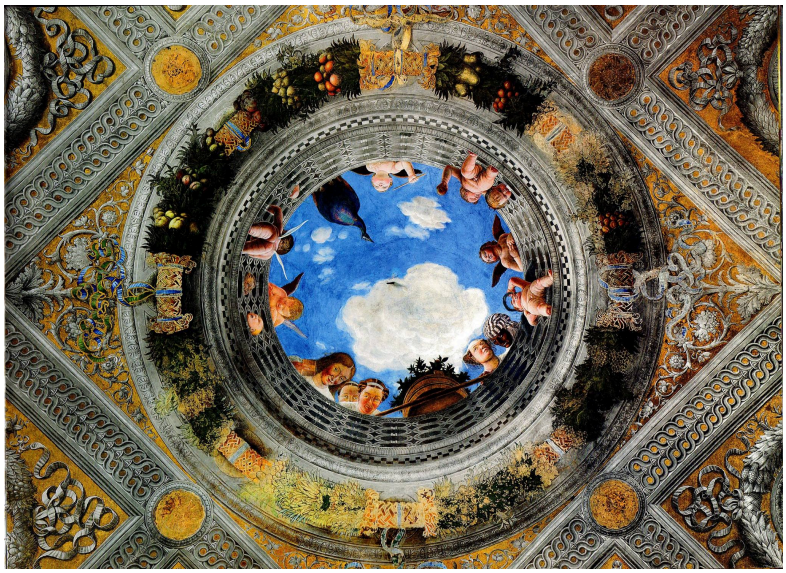

Figure 3.1. Andrea Mantegna, ceiling fresco, ca. 1465-1474. Camera degli Sposi, Palazzo Ducale, Mantua.

In his fresco, Mantegna recourses to the same technique of geometrical distortion that characterizes anamorphosis in order to gaze at the observer, who has to appraise its veracity with the help of his/her cognitive powers. Due to the inclusion of the onlooker's sight in the object of observation, the separation between the observer and the object of observation breaks down. The human figures look down at the onlooker as if he/she were the object the object of watching and the little angles, *putti*, who hang on the rail of the balcony, instead of flying, seem to be about to fall on the observers below. The eye of the picture, which in fact creates the illusion of an oculus that opens to the heavenly realm, combines with the look of the observer in order to create a feeling of estrangement. As anamorphosis, Mantegna's *trompe l'oeil* challenges the illusion of truth and dares the onlooker to reconsider its capacity to distinguish between what is real and factitious due to the human power to create lies. Through a redoubling of perspective, Mantegna captures the gaze, the look of the Other, which bring about in the subject a sense of irreducible alienation from the metaphysical kernel of human existence. 'Literacy admits us to reading so that we can take the full measure of our exclusion' observes Eagleton (1976, 165), 'its effect is to display the secretive knowledge which is always possible but never possessed.' The direct and personal contact with the work of art was also reinforced by private, silent reading, which allowed for an

enhanced and more conscious inclusion of the reader's subjectivity within the text. This inclusion translated over time into erotic and violent content.

Through anamorphic mirroing and deformation, *Celestina* captures the gaze of the Other, bringing the sexual instincts of the libidinal ego to the fore. Whereas the strict separation between the voyeur, a secret onlooker, and the object of observation, the female body, had distanced medieval poets and readers from the text allowing for a narcissistic projection, Rojas's novel-in-dialogue overturns this disassociation and forces the reader into subjectivization. As love transforms into passion and leads to consummation, the reading subject can no longer assume a detached psychological position from the narrative, in which he/she comes to recognize his/her own material desire. As a result, *Celestina* gazes into the reader from a place where his/her fantasies are already inscribed. Rojas's novel-in-dialogue is not a textual mirror in which to attain narcissistic fulfilment, but an 'object a' developed to look into the reader from the place where he or she is and desires. The gaze of the text upon the reader propels him/her to project into the imaginative work of fiction the discourses in which he/she participates, anxieties and desires that return to the reading subject either to unsettle or reassure.

Reading unfolds in *Celestina*, not as a transcendental activity or a collaborative continuum, but as a form of ceaseless strife between readers, each of whom interprets the text in divergent ways. Rojas brings down a representational and cognitive model based on the spiritual likeness of texts, whose ultimate meaning was deemed to reside in God's eternal verities and values. In the paratexts to his work, the young student of law Fernando de Rojas, who claims to be *Celestina*'s first reader, establishes himself as the mediator between the letter and his readers' fantasies, which are voiced loud and clear in the Prologue. Like the character he creates, Rojas becomes in his own account of the work's composition and reception a consummated go-between for in his hands lies the power to provide the readers with the object of their fancy. Rojas lays bare in *Celestina*'s paratexts the complexities of meaning and interpretation in a culture in which, on the one hand, an increasingly secular society had displaced the medieval transcendental discourses and, on other, the notion of author, book and reader were rapidly changing due to spreading of literacy and the advent of the printing press.

This chapter explores Fernando de Rojas's rhetoric of reading and reception starting from *Celestina*'s paratexts, in which questions of meaning and authority are exposed and reappraised.[53] Paratextual materials, from the title to the afterword, are the loci in which authors paradigmatically express their intentions and their take on signification. Yet, the author's position with regards to the text is not always conveyed in a transparent and factual, but rather an ambivalent, imaginary, even misleading, manner. That said, I move beyond biographical approaches to *Celestina's* paratexts in order to discuss the dynamics of invention and reception that contributed to the rise of prose fiction in late fifteenth-century Castile, when new ways of engaging with books, especially works of fiction, were coming into being. In *Celestina*'s paratexts, Rojas starts from a rehearsal of contemplative reading, characteristic of fifteenth-century vernacular Humanism, to transgress it through a nuanced confirmation of the sensual pleasure of the letter. He plays with the fact that every reader reads from who he/she is and so desires to expose a revolution in meaning that goes hand in hand with a novel understanding of the power of human reason and of its autonomy. In the main, I argue that Fernando de Rojas transgresses and reformulates the reading paradigm of the Middle Ages, still very present in late fifteenth-century Castile, testifying to a new cognitive system in which the centrality of God is displaced by a nascent rationality and subjectivism.[54]

The revaluation of epistemological and spiritual values coincided and was most likely a factor that contributed to the spread of lay literacy and the rapid development of the printing press at the end of the fifteenth-century. The move from a predominantly oral to a print culture entailed new forms of engagement with the literary work, mainly through solitary reading, another facet of the Renaissance feeling of individualism and its discovery of the self. As studied by Ong (1997), the silent reader has to reconstruct the story in the book

[53] Out of convenience, I will follow Genette's terminology and use the expression 'paratext' to refer to *Celestina*'s prefatory and concluding materials as a whole. Yet contrary to what Genette suggests, I consider paratexts to be, not an undefined zone or an ancillary presentation of the text to the world, but integral constituents of the literary work in its entirety. I agree with Genette that paratexts function as thresholds, that is to say, that their liminal position situates them between the inner world of the text and the outer world. Nonetheless, instead of the space of authorial and/or editorial influence and transaction, as posited by Genette, I regard paratexts as one more key to the free exercise of literary interpretation, as I believe Rojas himself did.

[54] See Mariscal (1991) for an account of early modern subjectivity.

without a performer or context to help him/her make up for what is missed in the text, that is, for its 'gaps.' The reader, who enjoys more freedom to interpret than the listener and spectator, must actively engage with the text. More than ever before, reading became in the late fifteenth-century a subjective activity. On this account, the author, as Ong (1982, 102) intimates, 'must set up a role in which absent and often unknown readers can cast themselves.' Under the guise of orality, I suggest, Rojas envisions a silent reader of fiction, an abstract and ghostly entity, whose look is inscribed within the text through anamorphosis. Rojas's evocation of *Celestina*'s readers, starting from the friend to whom he addresses his *Comedia* to the disagreement rehearsed in the Prologue to the *Tragicomedia* conceals under an apparent description of real readers an abstraction close to Iser's (1978, 34) notion of 'implied reader,' defined as 'a textual structure anticipating the presence of a recipient without necessarily defining him.' In other words, 'the concept of the implied reader designates a network of response-inviting structures, which impel the reader to grasp the text' (idem). Through an imaginary account of the plurality of contradictory responses the *Comedia* had elicited, Rojas dares his readers to look into and construe the story he created for them. Instead of guiding the reader towards the appropriate response to be elicited, *Celestina*'s paratexts point towards the space of anamorphosis, where the reader's gaze is inscribed, and in so doing challenges the reading subject to imagine. Rojas is aware that texts are a shared experience between a variety of agents, from authors to readers and printers, of whom he complains in his Prologue. By the late fifteenth century, when the market for books was expanding and flourishing, printers came to add new meanings as a result of their transformation of the text into a broadly circulating social artifact, taking up on the role of scribes and performers. The shared, but conflictive, experience of reading is inscribed in *Celestina*'s space of anamorphosis, the effect of which is described is reflected in its paratexts.

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As stated earlier, the metaphysical preoccupation with language established the limits of human knowledge and was essential to the epistemological structure of the Middle Ages, a time when writers and intellectuals consistently questioned how to make sense of the linguistic sign. Humankind's fall from grace had provoked an insurmountable separation between the terrestrial domain and the realm of God. Nonetheless, Augustine posited that an

inner truth persisted within the human heart as a prepossessed knowledge of God, a *veritas interior* that would occasionally arise as a reminiscence in the course of reading. Against this conceptual background, in the medieval epistemological framework reading was a contemplative exercise.[55] In the presence of written word, the reader would embark on an ethical journey of recollection and self-discovery, whose fundamental mandate was to avoid surrendering to a material interpretation of the letter. The scholastic *usus legendi* presupposed a projection of the reader inwards, towards its intellectual anima, and upwards, towards Heaven, in search of enlightenment. The core of Augustine's interpretative apparatus was charity, analogous to the love of God—*caritas*, as opposed to carnal love, *cupidity*. Charity was the 'highest expression of the Word' (Gerli 2016, 85). Augustine's voluntaristic doctrine emphasized love as the motor behind all human actions, distinguishing *amor inordinatus*, excessive love—passion, desire—, to *amor ordinatus*, virtuous and measured love, both of them in eternal battle with each other.[56] On this account, the reader was encouraged to recover, with the help of the three essential powers of the soul—memory, will and understanding—, undying humanitarian ideals laying under the symbolic structure of the sign. On this account, reading was destined to test the reader's religious and moral rectitude through its spiritual or carnal understanding of love. The two of sides of love coalesced in the discourse of courtly love, which conferred upon the lady a god-like quality.[57]

Monastic theories of language and interpretation gradually moved from the cloisters into the secular world, where a heightened uneasiness about the ambivalence of language and the interplay of soul and text in the act reading permeated the literary production of the Middle Ages.[58] The intellectual concern with the mediatory role of language is a central motif

[55] The association between reading and meditation have been studied by Carruthers (1990), chapter 5, 'Memory and the ethics of reading,' 195-233. For a comprehensive study of theories of reading in the West from the Middle Ages until early modernity, see the studies of Parkes, Hamesse, Saenger and Grafton in Chartier, ed. (1999).

[56] See Gerli (2016) for Augustinian voluntarism, in particular, as deployed in the *Libro de Buen Amor.*

[57] The studies of on the religious dimension of courtly love are plentiful. Parker (1985), for example, offers a study of the developments of courtly love in fifteenth-century Castilian literature and in *Celestina*, in particular.

[58] The influence of scholastic theories of language in the European Middle Ages has been studied by Gray (1988), Bloch (1993), Jager (1993), Vance (1986) and Stock (1983, 1996, 2001), among many others.

in the Archpriest of Hita's *Libro de buen amor* (Dagenais; Gerli 2016) and Don Juan Manuel's *El Conde Lucanor* (De Looze 1995), and continued to hold a sway in fifteenth-century Iberian literature. Meditative reading was central to fifteenth-century Castilian literature. 'Vernacular humanists,' argues Miguel-Prendes (2004, 15), 'practiced contemplation, the craft associated with literary composition, as a recollective journey through other texts or places stored in their memory to retrieve subjects and to create original compositions.' [59] In this 'prayer-book' mentality that characterized fifteenth-century poetics, reading as meditation was inseparable from a concern over the limitations of the linguistic sign. The anxiety about the uncertain correspondence between *logos* and *res* permeated the works of the aristocracy, the clergy and the new body of bureaucrats at the service of the Catholic Monarchs, most specially, the sentimental fiction and *cancionero* poetry (see Gerli 1998; Brownlee 1990).

Built upon euphemisms, double *entendre* and sexual metaphors, like the texts mentioned above, the language of *Celestina* brings into focus the desiring nature of humankind, which necessarily conditions the reader's engagement with the inscribed letter. In regard to the preceding language of ambiguity in religious and secular texts Rojas introduces a qualitative difference that resides in a movement from sexual innuendo into a raw assertion of violent sexuality in connection with an emergent, reactive subjectivity. Many critics have argued that *Celestina*'s redoubling is essentially humoristic and parodic (Deyermond 1961b, Martin 1972, Lacarra 1989 and 1990). Solomon (1989) claims that *Celestina* parodies not courtly love but human attempts to satisfy desire from a medical perspective. *Celestina*'s puns and linguistic ambiguity are not necessarily or, at least, not exclusively parodic, but aim at capturing the presence of the unconsciously foreclosed Real. The consummation of desire, which leads to violence and death, allow for the Real behind these metaphors to come to the surface, denaturalizing the metaphors through anamorphic reduplication. This shift is introduced in *Celestina*'s paratexts, which signal through a dynamics of redoubling, concealment and insinuation towards the presence of a larger semantic potential.

Celestina's paratextual material—title, *carta* [epistle], verses, and Prologue—presents the same or related information in varying ways, glossing and reshaping ideas and

[59] See also Weiss (1990) for a study of meditative reading through the works of Enrique de Villena.

conventions that, through analogical examination, take on a wry and ambiguous nature. 'Like Juan Manuel's *Conde Lucanor*,' observes Weiss, 'the epistle and the acrostics offer a frame story, an exemplary anecdote, a poem that summarizes the key ideas as a basis for personal reflection, and a concluding picture (for Juan Manuel a manuscript drawing; for Rojas, a mental picture of crucified Christ)' (Weiss 2009, 153-154). Yet contrary to Don Juan Manuel, who designed his book in an attempt to prevent the potential slide into meaninglessness (De Looze 1995, 342), the author of *Celestina* aims at linguistic plurality. On this account, the ambivalence of *Celestina*'s paratexts is designed to call attention to the impossibility of retrieving meaning and intention, an impossibility that is particularly enhanced in the Prologue to the *Tragicomedia*. The specular structure of the paratexts, which looks back to the medieval practice of ethical reading, as coined by Dagenais (1994), allows Rojas to reintroduce and reformulate his previous statements. In this manner, Rojas exposes the conventional nature of language and the malleability of the letter, whose ultimate meaning depends on the individual subject. Through *Celestina*'s paratexts, Rojas distinguishes himself as an ethical reader, but his readerly values, hence, his rightful understanding of the manuscript papers is constantly put into question, either directly, as the protocols of the *captatio* demand, or most importantly, through his cultivation of an authorial persona that, feigns an internal ethical battle, only to embody the mendacious, contradictory and material nature of language. On this account, Rojas's presentation of his text is designed to call attention to the space of anamorphosis that gazes into the intellect of the reader, who is forced compulsively to re-examine his or her outlook when confronted with the Real.

In the dedication 'To a Friend of His, first printed in the edition of Toledo (1500), Rojas introduces himself as a meditative reader. Rojas begins this first introduction presenting himself and *Celestina* describing the place from where the manuscript papers looked into him, stirring his consciousness. In the presence of the manuscript papers, Rojas recalls the times when, withdrawn to his bedchamber, head resting on his hand, he would free his thoughts and meditate on how to serve his fellow countrymen, who needed a moral defense against the perfidious workings of love: [60]

[60] For an account of meditative postures of reading and composition during the Middle Ages, see Carruthers (1998), 173-174, where she recounts Boethius' physical attitude during the act of

> … asaz vezes retraýdo en mi cámara, acostado sobre mi propia mano, echando mis sentidos por ventores y mi juyzio a bolar, me venía a la memoria no sólo la necessidad que nuestra común patria tiene de la presente obra por la muchedumbre de galanes y enamorados que posee, pero aún en particular vuestra persona, cuya juventud de amor ser presa se me representa aver visto y dél cruelmente lastimada, a causa de faltar las defensivas armas para resistir sus fuegos las quales hallé esculpidas en estos papeles … (69)
> [often in my bedroom while resting my chin on my hand, I have let my mind wander far and wide, and been reminded that our common nation is need of the present work because of the great number of young male lovers it possesses, moreover, being you in particular one of them whose youth I figure torn and hurt by love due to the lack of defensive weapons against its fires, weapons I found inscribed in these papers…]

The original Act 1, claims Rojas, functioned as a mnemonic stimulus for the application of the Christian virtue of caritas, which for his contemporaries translates into the exercise of social responsibility. He would perform his philanthropic duty by continuing the story of the two young lovers as a remedy against his fellow man's spiritual disorder, a message that according to him was already inscribed in the text.

Medieval and Renaissance writers were aware that the experience and understanding of the universe, human and divine, depended upon language. Nonetheless, the ultimate truth contained in the letter was for the former spiritual, while for the latter the product of natural reason.[61] That is to say, whereas the anxiety created by the dissociative nature of language was for medievals spiritual, during, the Renaissance, this concern took on earthly intellectual and civic implications. As is the case in Elio Antonio de Nebrija's grammar and vocabulary of the Castilian language, Nebrija's work exhibits under a celebratory guise an unmistakable anxiety about the ethical, social and political perils of linguistic decay (Mignolo 1995, 29-43; Gerli 1998, 181-182). As a university student of jurisprudence who moved in the same environment in which Nebrija taught, the University of Salamanca, Rojas participated in an intellectual environment that, despite the confident vision of humanism, was aware of the relativity of language as well as its potential to traffic in and attain pleasure, money, rank and

composition. See also Carruthers (1990), 172-174, for a description of the silent and solitary act of reading in the works of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas.

[61] Such distinction have been pointed out by Michael Foucault (1971) and, later, by Timothy Reiss (1982).

power. 'The society portrayed by Rojas appears to be caught in a language crisis,' points out Read (1983, 95), 'and not the least important of his warnings to his fellow men is his portrayal of the catastrophes that result from the debasement of language.' Rojas displays in his epistle a heightened consciousness of the complex web of discourses and contingencies that subtend civilization and upon which social relations are forged. Nonetheless, Rojas's didactic purpose, which is unquestioned by Read—as well as among many other scholars—is betrayed once and again in *Celestina*'s paratexts, in which language reduplicates and contradicts itself.

Whereas in this opening *carta* [epistle] Rojas remarks to have engaged with the text in the rightful, ethical manner; this statement is to be questioned on account of his training in jurisprudence, not just a science of law, but also of the cunning interpretation and use of rhetoric in to order to move and persuade. Rojas's assertion is further undermined in the Prologue to the *Tragicomedia* and in his verses. In the Prologue, Rojas confesses falsely to have yielded against his will to his readers' desire for more erotic content. In the Prologue, he tacitly violates the edifying intention declared in his epistle and reproduced in the *incipit*, which declares 'conpuesta en reprehension de los locos enamorados que vencidos en su desordenado apetito, a sus amigas llaman y dizen ser su dios' [composed in reprehension of foolish lovers who, overcome by their inordinate appetites, refer to and mistake their beloved ones for goddesses] (2). Rojas's play on diversion is best typified in the preliminary and concluding verses, suffused—as we shall see—with conundrums and contradictions that indicate something hidden: Rojas's very identity and intention. In the preliminary and concluding stanzas, didacticism and eroticism inextricably come together in order to lure the reader into intellectual lust. In *Celestina*'s stanzas, a remainder of Christ's sufferings upon the cross, a contemplative *imago rerum*, alternates with a sagacious assertion of the ubiquitous presence of lewdness in the text and in the reader's mind.[62] The paratextual stanzas emphasize the anamorphic character of Rojas's rhetoric of reading and reception, which, built upon an ambiguous remainder of mortality, signals towards salvation in God as much as towards worldly enjoyment. On this account, Rojas dares the reader to look and to interpret:

[62] For a discussion of *imagines rerum* in the medieval world, see Carruthers (1990), 184-186.

> No dudes ni ayas verguença, lector,
> narrar lo lascivo, que aquí se te muestra:
> que siendo discreto verás ques la muestra
> por donde se vende la honesta lavor;
> De nuestra vil massa con tal lamedor
> consiente coxquillas de alto consejo
> con motes e trufas del tiempo más viejo:
> escriptas a bueltas le ponen sabor. (Rojas 343-344)
> [Don't hesitate or be ashamed, reader, to interpret the lasciviousness that this book puts on show for you. Use your wit to see it is but a taster to sell the product of honest labor, the sweet syrup cheap dough leavens bringing highly moral merriment, a tasty sauce not to your detriment spiced with age-old saws and maxims.]

In light of the ambiguous formulation of the verses Rojas's 'honesta lavor' [honest labor] takes on a wry character. Rojas equates the poet to a vendor, the nature of whose merchandise is dubious. By the end of the fifteenth-century, the book had become an object of merchandise. Rojas's *Celestina* attempts at capturing the sensuality of the gaze precisely at a time when the reading public was enlarging and the book was slowly coming into the hands of non-educated urban readers, whose interests and knowledge differed from those of the noble and bureaucrats of Isabel's court. Generally speaking, the beginning of modern literature can be traced back to the rise of a secular public that engaged with literature as a source of pleasure. The late European Middle Ages witnessed the gradual spread of literacy among the un-professional laity (Lawrence 1985, 79-80). By the fifteenth century, reading was no longer a means to an end, but an end in itself, a source of pleasure and enjoyment, a recreational activity. Furthermore, the aural transmission of literary texts developed into solitary and silent reading, in a movement from a public to a private space, which opened the possibilities of interpretation. In the fifteenth-century, silent reading by the aristocracy and the urban elites, according to Saenger, 'stimulated a revival of the antique genre of erotic art' (1997, 274), in both religious and secular texts. This movement towards interiority and eroticism is already perceivable in an incipient manner in the sentimental fiction. 'As he confesses to this kind of false advertisement,' notes Gaylord (1991, 23), 'the author begins to reveal his uncomfortably close resemblance with that other jaded peddler, the bawd herself, whose propaganda conceals destruction beneath the promise of sexual delight.'

Although he claims to prefer the safeguard of anonymity, Rojas leaves a not-so-covert remainder of himself in the acrostic verses that follow the epistle. Alonso de Proaza, probably in compliance with Rojas, later reveals this trick in his own verses. The acrostics, a trace of something secret, are a paradigmatic example of the dynamics of concealment and exposure that characterize Rojas's work and a testimony of his authorial conscience.

In his *Celestina*, Rojas puts an end to the process of adaption and reformulation, typical of ethical reading. Texts were for medieval writers communal and open artifacts. The ideal of collaboration was well implicit in the Latin word *textus,* which meant 'thing woven' or 'texture' (Carruthers 1990, 12). *Inventio* resided in a series of interactive and fluid reading practices in which readers were recognized as co-authors, called on to emendate, gloss and reshape the text in their hands. According to Dagenais (1994, 24-26), far from being a topos of the exordium or a simple *captatio benevolentiae*, the provocation to polish up and to improve the text was consubstantial to the reader-centered paradigm of the Middle Ages. Social authorship survived up to the fifteenth century, when *cancionero* poetry and sentimental romances became a group practice among aristocrats and men of letters (see Ana María Gómez Bravo 2013; Miguel-Prendes 2004). Regardless if its content is factual or imaginary, the epistle 'To a Friend of His' that opened the *Comedia de Calisto y Melibea* printed in Toledo in 1500 conveys an understanding of literature as collaboration and socialization. Through his continuation, the author of *Celestina* commemorates the memory of the *antiguo auctor*, whose name has been lost, but whose composition will live on in the collective imagination thanks to Rojas's work. Nonetheless, Rojas does not present himself as one more nexus in a fabric of readers; quite the opposite, he takes possession of the text. To be sure, through the optical manipulation of the letter, the acrostics provide one more example of the malleability of the letter. By virtue of the verses, Rojas places the emphasis not just on the social nature of literary invention, but also on the force and relevance of the author. *Celestina*, as it seems to have been envisioned by Rojas, is not the product of a synergic collaboration of minds, but of Rojas artful manipulation of the letter in order to provide enjoyment, *jouissance*. Ethics, sensuality and readership come together in *Celestina*'s paratextual materials, where Rojas gives expression to a new relation between the book and the reading subject, a desiring subject in constant change rather than a well-rounded, wholly formed spiritual being. In this manner, Rojas exposes the artificiality of a

single, universally sanctioned vanishing point with regards to signification and opens the text to multiple unrighteous meanings.

The morality of *Celestina*, which Bataillon (1961) attributed to the *antiguo auctor*, is deemed by Lawrance (1993b) an essential component of Rojas's plan of action given that it is repeatedly enhanced in the preliminary matter. Yet, Lawrance (1993b, 92) proposes that the work's moral is neither religious nor spiritual, but social, in line with the fifteenth-century developments of Terencian humanistic comedy.[63] Lawrance (1993b, 93) suggests that the struggle between charitable love and worldly passion, a trademark of medieval Castilian literature, is a red herring. 'Instead, the authors beg us over and over again to concentrate our moral concern on love as a social problem, love as a cause of civil "escándalos," criminal adultery, and prostitution, with all the concomitant threats to family, state, and public morals.' In fact, the nature of love became a topic of study and debate at the University of Salamanca, where the erotological treatises of Alonso Fernández de Madrigal, El Tostado, widely circulated (see Cátedra 1989). El Tostado's amorous casuistry condemns passionate love, *emaçión*, whose pursuit of pleasure is egotistical, and praises of friendship—*amiçiçia*—an altruistic and liberal affection. The *Breviloquio de amor y amiçiçia* (c. 1440), Fernández de Madigral's most significant work, displays a Platonic and Aristotelian line of reasoning that connects with medieval scholastic theories of love. On the whole, it draws for the most part from apocryphal sources and *florilegia* to sustain his argument against carnal love. Carnal love, as opposed to *amiçiçia*, distinguishes animals and of those individuals without a rational soul, whose amorous pursuits inevitably turn into violence and social disorder. The Spain of Fernando de Rojas was still immersed in the philosophical discussion of the attributes of love, a discussion that coincided with a wave of civic disorder in Salamanca, against which the manuscripts papers contained plenty of advices.

The circulation and study of Platonic amorous casuistry in late fifteenth-century Salamanca coincided with a wave of misbehavior among university students (Gilman 1972). As Marquez Villanueva (1993) and Lacarra (1990) recall, prostitution might have been unchecked in Salamanca due to the number of young men and the blooming of prostitution, promoted by the Catholic Queen. As it happens, 'la mentalidad medieval asentía de buena

[63] Notwithstanding that his conclusions with regard to authorship are difficult to believe, for a recent overview on *Celestina* and the humanistic comedy, see Canet (2011).

gana a la tesis de que la obligada melancolía de la vida de estudio requiriera como antídoto, una adehala de sobrealimentación amorosa que la tradición goliardesca se preciaba de glorificar sin ningún reparo,' [the medieval mentality willfully consented to the believe that the melancholic life of the student needed of an antidote, an amorous excess glorified by the Goliardic tradition], points Márquez Villanueva (1993, 125).The student's lifestyle called for a subsidiary population of prostitutes, servants, innkeepers, barmen, moneylenders and common felons. In effect, Pármeno describes Celestina among university students, informing Calisto in Act 1 that the go-between 'asaz era amiga de estudiantes y despenseros y mozos de abades. A éstos vendía aquella sangre inocente de las cuitadillas, la cual ligeramente aventuraban en esfuerzo de la restitución que ellas les prometía' (111) [she was friend to many students, and stewards, and servants and clerics, and to these she sold the innocent blood of the hapless young girls who foolishly took risks on the basis of the restitution she promised them]. This is the framework against which Rojas composed his epistle 'To a Friend.' Men and women like Celestina, who acted as mediators in daily romantic dealings, subverted the desires of the young men of the nation, misdirected towards the sexual pleasures of the flesh. The power of these immoral, mercenary servants lay, as Ovid already foresaw, in the verbal artifice they displayed, inescapably sensual and deceptive.[64]

In spite of his professed didacticism, Rojas was aware that the force of desire is unstoppable and so is the intellectual pursuit of enjoyment. The arguments of El Tostado are rehearsed by the old bawd, who subverts them. In Act 1, El Tostado's casuistry is distorted, placed against *Celestina*/ Celestina's, book and character, as in an anamorphic mirror. Celestina, in her usual fashion, brings the metaphysical discourse of love as developed in the works of El Tostado down to the earthly and pragmatic level in her conversation with Pármeno, where she gives voice to the power of *cupiditas*:

> Has de saber, Pármeno, que Calisto anda de amor quexoso. E no lo juzgues por eso por flaco, que el amor imperuio todas las cosas vence. E sabe, si no sabes, que dos conclusiones son verdaderas[2]. La primera, que es forçoso el hombre amar a la muger e la muger al hombre. La segunda, que el que verdaderamente ama es necessario que se turbe con la dulçura del soberano deleyte, que por el hazedor de las cosas fue puesto, porque el linaje de los hombres perpetuase, sin lo qual

[64] Rouhi (1999) gives a comprehensive account of the go-between in classical and medieval literature touching on the go-between's linguistic acumen. For the Semitic and Islamic antecedents of the go-between in the Iberian Peninsula, see Márquez Villanueva (1993).

> perescería. E no solo en la humana especie; mas en los pesces, en las bestias, en las aues, en las reptilias y en lo vegetatiuo,… (117-118) [You must know, Pármeno, that Calisto is suffering a pathetic love, but you must not for that judge him weak, for invincible love conquers all. And he knows, if you do not, that two conclusions may be drawn: the first, that it is inevitable that man will love woman, and woman, man. Second, that he who truly loves will necessarily be perturbed by the sweet taste of sovereign delight, which was put there by our Maker so that mankind be perpetuated, and without which it would vanish from the earth. And this is true, not only in the human species but also fish, birds and reptiles; and in the green kingdom…]

The old bawd distorts medieval notions of love through an assertion of the ubiquitous power of erotic desire, inherent to humans, animals and even plants. Celestina blatantly transgresses the previous transcendental epistemology in the face of a renewed awareness of the Other, that is to say, of the desiring and material nature of humankind, occluded in the discourses of Christianity and courtly love. Celestina's / *Celestina*'s main power is her perception of desire and her capacity to fulfil it. As she warns Pármeno in the lines that immediately precede the excerpt quoted here, what she does not hear or see or know, she still penetrates with her intellect: 'que no solo lo que veo, oyo e conozco; mas avn lo intrínsico con los intellectuales ojos penetro' (117) [not only what I see, hear and know, but what the eyes of my intellect I penetrate the intrinsic and the arcane]. Burke (2000) interprets this passage in view of the medieval theory of *species*, according to which sensory data, after having been processed by the intellectual faculties of the soul, transformed into a group of 'second intentions,' another way of referring to individual interpretation. 'The "second intentions" she [Celestina] develops paired against experience stored in memory allow her to understand perfectly the wants and needs of those who surround her and to shape these to her own purposes' (Burke 2000, 17). These wants amount, Burke notes, to a desire to procreate. As Celestina discerns, the arcane prelapsarian knowledge inscribed in humam hearts is not a knowledge of God, but a desire for union through sexual consummation. This desire cannot only be physically attained, but is also verbally ineffable.

Celestina's traffic in desire exhibits the fetishistic function of language, which due to the chasm between the word and its referent allows for the verbal representation of an imagined reality and, hence, for a fleeting moment of satisfaction. Disconnected from God, words have the power to constitute themselves as their own end. As a result, words act like

fetishes that allow for a fleeting moment of contentment. In *Celestina*, language is manipulated at will in order to attain the craved object of desire through the verbal expression of pleasure. The fetishistic and voyeuristic quality of language is a fundamental component of intellectual pleasure, as the penetrating go-between makes clear when she points out to Pármeno that:

> El deleyte es con los amigos en las cosas sensuales, y en especial en recontar las cosas de amores y comunicarlas. 'Esto hize, esto otro me dixo; tal donayre passamos, de tal manera la tomé, assí la besé, assí me mordió, assí la abracé, assí se allegó. ¡O qué habla, o qué gracia, o qué juegos, o qué besos! Vamos allá, bolvamos acá ande la música, pintemos los motes, cantemos canciones, invenciones, justemos; ¿qué cimera sacaremos o qué letra? Ya va ala missa, mañana saldrá, rondemos su calle, mira su carta, vamos de noche [etc.] (126)
> [Pleasure in sensual matters comes with friends, and especially in telling every detail: I did this, she told me that, we trifled like this, I took her in this way, this is how I kissed her, this is how she bit me, this is how I embraced her, this is how she yielded. What a talk! What a pleasure! What games! What kisses! Let us go there! Let us come back here, bring some music, let us make riddles, sing songs, make things up, joust. What crest will be our signal, what writing? She is on her way to mass, she will be out tomorrow, let us stroll down her street, look at her note, let's go at night, etc.]

Through the fetishistic diversion of language as a result of lubricious desire, *Celestina/* Celestina makes visible the artificiousness and performativity of traditional discourses of love. Rojas's bawd signals the vicarious pleasure attained through linguistic expression. Language, which has the capacity to generate as fiction attests to, stirs desire and momentarily satisfies it. It is here that the appeal of literature resides according to a hedonist like as Barthes (1975). 'Is not the most erotic portion of the body where the garment drapes?' wonders Barthes, who emphasizes the erogenous pleasure of the text in the intermittent appearance of what is primarily foreclosed (Barthes 1975, 10). The poetic function of language, as theorized by Roman Jakobson (see Waugh) is but the result of linguistic fetishism, that is, of the words' capacity to constitute themselves as their own end, disguising the ultimate unattainability of sexual gratification. 'Celestina's genius lies not only in her acute sensitivity to the desires of her fellow human beings,' notes Gaylord, 'but in her recognition of the fact that human desire—physical, sexual, metaphysical—is in large part a hunger for words, a hunger which seeks not only to express itself, but also to satisfy it

verbally' (1991, 7). In *Celestina*, as Gaylord (1991, 11) and Gerli (2011a, 87-90) observe, the word functions as a fetish whose protean nature allows for the transitory fulfillment of the human desire for completion through love and sexual consummation, the possibility of which is both contained in and denied by language.

The words of the corrupting male go-between were in classic and medieval literature analogous to that of the corrupting book, which brought about the damnation of Francesca and Paolo in Dante's *Inferno* 5 (93). As Francesca makes clear, faulty reading was the cause of hers and Paolo's fall, condemned because of their surrender to an interpretation of *Lancelot* in which passion triumphed over charity. 'Galeotto was the book and the one who wrote it,' states Francesca pointing to the effects of reading upon the lusty intellect of the two lovers. The story of Francesca and Paolo held a powerful sway in late medieval literature, where the go-between came to be associated—much under Ovidian influence—with the dangers of language and reading. Juan de Flores' rehearses the dramatic story of the Dantean lovers in his continuation of Boccaccio's *Elegia di Madonna Fiammetta*, in its turn, a direct descendant of Dante. In Juan de Flores' *Grimalte and Gradissa*, the courtly lady Gradissa, upon a reading of Fiammeta's diary given to her by Grimalte, rejects her male suitor asking him to embark on a quest to reunite Fiammetta and Panfilo. If in the Italian texts the book works as a panderer, Flores' *sentimental novel* is an anti-*galeotto* for the intervention of Grimalte reinstates linguistic purity putting an end to its material corruption (Brownlee 176-190). Contrary to Flores, Rojas—by all means a reader of sentimental fiction—articulates the subjective irreducibility of language.

To be sure, Rojas's *Celestina* is not a warning against the spiritual and social perils of love, neither does it alert readers about the dangers of literature. Rojas understands and captures the universal proneness to linguistic pleasure. *Celestina* represents the triumph of lust over courtly love. Therefore, in terms of reading, it stages the constant struggle between ethical ideals and intellectual lust. The Augustinian ideal of reading is dismantled given that charity cannnot defeat libido, which permeates the reader's intellect and memory. Due to the emergence of the subject and the displacement of God, memory is no longer a storage place of prelapsarian knowledge and ethical exempla, rather it becomes synonymous with human life and consciousness, according to Severin (1970). Thus, memory fails Pleberio (Act 21) and Melibea (Act 20), who cannot find in the readings stored in their memories examples to

enlighten their experience and alleviate their burdens. The struggle between the life, desire and the symbolic values that constitute society is mediated by a modern author who aims at capturing the gaze in order to appeal to his reader's suppressed fantasies. Rojas's distorts the world as if the medieval *topos* of *delectare et prodesse* were projected on a crooked mirror, and he dares the reader to observe the excluded aspects of the previous tradition, which in the end is an image of his/her own humanity. *Celestina* the book, much like Celestina the character, galvanizes the readers' imagination by providing it with the object of their own erotic desire, already inscribed in the text they peruse. The rhetorical ability of the old bawd to capitalize on the characters' desire is analogous to that of the text to the extent that, very soon after its first appearance, the go-between took permanent possession of the book's title. In this way, Rojas, the creator of the character and book, plays with the reader's desire.

In fact, it was the readers' desire to enjoy more of lovers' delight that led a seemingly reluctant Fernando de Rojas put pen to paper again after the first appearance of the *Comedia.* As he states in a newly added Prologue, moved by readers' contention upon the merits of his work as well as by their desire to see the romantic encounters between the two lovers enlarged, he revised and enlarged his work. [65] This disagreement, Rojas states, also prompted him to change the title from *Comedia* to *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea,* a title that results from his purported attempt to take the middle way: 'El primer autor quiso darle denominación del principio, que fue placer, y llamóla comedia. Yo viendo estas discordias, entre estos estremos partí agora por medio la porfía y llaméla tragicomedia' (81) [The first author name it in line with how the work began, that is amusingly, and called it a comedy. Seeing there was much discord, I decided to cut down the middle and call it a tragicomedy].[66] In doing so, observes Lawrance, Rojas gives birth to a 'dark comedy,' a calculated shattering of the molds that 'square[s] the circle by carrying the comic tone and diction into the hearth of darkness' (Lawrance 1993a, 90). Yet the *Tragicomedia* not only seeks to be generically ambivalent

[65] These revisions occurred before 1502. The date 1502 corresponds to the promulgation of the first royal enactment to regulate the activity of the printers, issued in Toledo on July 18th 1502. This decree set forth that every book should obtain a royal license to be committed to the press and to circulate so that printers began to forge the date of their impression imposing upon every new book the date 1502 in order to evade governmental control. See Rico's introduction to Lobera's edition (2000), LXXXIII-IV.

[66] See also Berndt Kelley (1985) for *Celestina*'s change of title.

(Lawrance 1993a, 92); what is more, it seeks to thwart any effort to fix or synthesize its meaning.

The *Tragicomedia* further enhances *Celestina*'s space of anamorphosis. In the five new acts it contains, the characters gain psychological depth as they further explore their interiority in relation to their position in the body politic in a climate of violence, remorse and lust that follows the murder of the go-between and the execution of her confederates. In the newly added Act 14, after on the morning after his first encounter with Melibea, Calisto utters a soliloquy marked by a profound grief and remorse. 'The release from amorous urgency has exposed an underlying ugliness,' notes Gilman (1956, 216). An ugliness that Gerli connects to the insatiable nature of desire in Calisto' monologue. This newly added speech, Gerli (2011a, 61) intimates, 'signal[s] to a fundamental meditation on the dissatisfaction that not only continued to push Calisto towards his end, but the one that obliquely reflected the urgency Rojas felt to flesh out further both his own and his audience's desire for more before reaching the climatic end.' In Calisto's words, as in the remaining additions to *Celestina,* transpire a heightened pessimism of amorous, social, political and religious roots. 'The second garden scene, the only part of the five-act addition that corresponds to the demand "se alargase en el proceso de su deleite de estos amantes," [to extend the period of the lovers' delight]' Deyermond (1993, 19) remarks, 'turns out to be largely concerned with sociopolitical criticism and—briefly but memorably—the question of repentance *in articulo mortis*.' Calisto's words and the ability of the proletarian society to regenerate and to provoke through its schemes death of the male lover reinforce the denial of cosmological order and fairness expressed in Pleberio's *planctus.* In these additions, Rojas lays bare through enhanced black irony, the desiring nature of humankind, blind to the hazards and frailty of sex, ambition and, of course, language. To be sure, the erotic content that his readers demanded and to which Rojas affirms to bend against his own conscience is one more stratagem to blur the alleged edifying intention first stated in the epistle and to let the Real of human life emerge in the form of an anamorphosis.

The ubiquity of chaos and violence in the universe is emphasized to a greater extent in the Prologue to the *Tragicomedia*. In the Prologue, Rojas imagines and relate as if it were an actual fact the engagement of the reading public with the *Comedia*. He gives an account, most likely factitious, of the way in which *Celestina* had been received and understood. In

his exposition, Rojas highlights the disagreement the book has caused among its readers and the latter's desire for more. The reception of the *Comedia* had already been imagined and staged in the third stanza of the prefatory verses, added to the edition of *Celestina* printed in Toledo in 1500 together with the above discussed *carta* [epistle]. In these lines, the slaughter of a newly winged ant serves as a metaphor for the pain that is to suffer the author of *Celestina*, slandered by all:

> Donde ésta gozar pensaba volando,
> o yo de screvir cobrar más honor,
> delo uno y del otro nació disfavor:
> ella es comida y a mí están cortando;
> reproches, revistas y tachas callando
> obstara, y los daños de envidia y murmuros;
> insisto remando, y los puertos seguros
> atrás quedan todos ya cuanto más ando.
>
> (Rojas 72)

[The ant wanted a stint with the high flyers, and I to write and add to my honors, neither one nor the other did us any favors: the ant has been eaten and I am meat for criticizers, envious people who their jibes report, though I keep quiet about such grimaces and row, making quick advances and leave behind many a safe port]

Besides a *captatio benevolentia,* the above lines point to Rojas's above introduced authorial conscience. Rojas reinforces his authorial persona in the *Tragicomedia,* where he confers upon his text two eminent literary fathers, Cota and Mena, who Rojas tacitly claims to be the fathers of Act 1. The opening stanzas of the *Comedia* already prefigure ubiquitous devastation in the universe, natural and human. Picking up the thread of the animalistic analogy between author and ant, the Prologue to the *Tragicomedia* opens with a reminiscence Heraclitus, in whose maxim the theme of struggle as the very essence of existence and creation is confirmed.

Heraclitus' aphorism is just the first recollection of the new Prologue, composed upon the imaginative gloss and application of a textual authority of the utmost importance: Francesco Petrarca. Through a series of hunting metaphors that gloss from Pliny's *Naturalis Historia* as in *De remediis*, the Prologue to the *Tragicomedia* reflects upon the fundamental

strife and disharmony that governs Creation.[67] It portrays through a series of images brutal universe, pervaded by cruelty instead of charity, in which beasts, humans and even the loftiest celestial and natural forces are ensnared in an annihilating and pervasive conflict, in which the traditional sites of power are manifestly upturned as disorder presides over the world. The strong and powerful elephant flees from the mere sight and sound of a dirty little mouse while a small fish as the *echeneis* is able to bring to a halt a sailing ship backed by the winds. Dominion no longer responds to strength and size, and even an act governed by love, conception, turns into a violent and deadly union, as illustrated by the breeding of the vipers, or angry snakes—'serpiente enconada.' The female viper, when she conceives, with the head of the male in her mouth, grips him so sweetly and tightly that she kills him only to be killed herself by her child as it bursts through her sides breaking her in two. The ekphrastic account of the mating of the vipers, which ultimately belongs to the bestiary (Deyermond 1978, 25), not only portends the ominous consummation of Calisto and Melibea's love, but the reception of the *Comedia.*

Rojas brings to mind a world in which death is a ubiquitous and capricious presence that terrorize even the strongest, mightiest and deathliest of beasts, which in the ecstasies of pleasure would come face to face with it. In this world, the threat of annihilation hides in every corner since the moment of conception, when death hampers the transcendental union of beings in the newly engendered creature, the book. If in the verses, the author portrays himself as a newly winged inoffensive creature devoured by birds of prey, power relations are undermined in the Prologue, where the most powerful one fears the small. This twist translates into a new relation between reader and author, who is not destroyed by the slanderer and envious readers, but by the force of his own work. To be sure, the organic strife of the animal kingdom evokes a universe ruled by chaos and mismatch, no longer metaphysically ordained. The incessant conflict and disharmony rendered in the Prologue from the highest cosmic elements to the lowest—the serpent, the fish—is analogous to the

[67] For the circulation and appropriation of Pliny in fifteenth and early sixteenth-century Castile and, in particular, at the university of Salamanca, see Baranda (2004), 57-66. See Deyermond (1961), 56-57, for the chain of reminiscences and citations from Petrarch's *De remediis* to Hernán Núñez's *Glosa* and to Rojas's *Celestina.*

human quest for knowledge and understanding, inextricably tied to the quest for power and authority.

The Prologue underscores the force of *auctorias*, only to repeatedly undermine it. Rojas's verification of Petrarch's dictum that 'sin lid y offesión ninguna cosa engendró natura, madre de todo' (77) [nature, mother of everything, did not gave birth anything without strife and offense] somehow reinstates authority, which is nonetheless constantly thwarted as a result of universal strife and of the malleability of the letter. The word of the wise man, states Rojas, is pregnant with meaning to the extent that 'desta se puede dezir que de muy hinchada quiere rebentar, echando de sí tan crescidos ramos y hojas, que del menor pimpollo se sacaría harto fruto entre personas discretas' (77) [one could say that this word is so full and swollen that is about to burst and throw out such strong branches and foliage that the smallest shoot would be fruit enough for discreet people]. In effect, books were considered personal sources of wisdom. 'Whenever you read a book and meet with any wholesome maxims by which you feel your soul stirred or enthralled,' Augustine advises Petrarch in the course of their imaginary conversation in the latter's *Secretum*, 'do not trust merely to the powers of your native abilities, but make a point of learning them by heart and making them quite familiar by meditating on them…so that whenever of where some urgent cases of illness arises, you have the remedy as though written in your mind' (In Carruthers 1990, 163).

As evoked in the medieval *accessus auctores* and rehearsed by Rojas in the epistle 'To a Friend of His,' the practice of meditative reading consisted on the removal of the kernels from the husk in seek of nourishment for the spirit. Beckoned by the elegant style and artifice of the fragment, which he compares to a weapon of mighty steel, the young jurist confesses in the epistle his compulsive need to reread the anonymous manuscript of Act 1 up to three or four times, each time uncovering new hidden meanings in the text. He relates how he works through the manuscript fragment, moving beyond his delight and enjoyment of the story in order to perceive and extract its teachings. In the prologue to the *Tragicomedia*, Rojas goes back to this meditative engagement with the text to describe *Celestina*'s ideal reader. Some of *Celestina*'s readers, intimates Rojas, only take pleasure in the narrative and nothing else, as if it were another common story that people tell when they travel for simple entertainment. Some others, although they spot the profitable wisdom it contains, do not take the time to make them useful to themselves through study. Contrary to these readers,

'aquellos para cuyo verdadero placer es todo, desechan el cuento de la historia que contar, coligen la suma para su provecho, ríen lo donoso, las sentencias y dichos de philósophos guardan en su memoria para transponer en lugares convenibles a sus autos y propósitos' (80) [Those who find everything amusing discount the heart of the story and tell it their way, select what they think is important, laugh at what is funny and memorize the saying and dicta of philosophers in order to repeat them at an opportune moment]. Nonetheless, as discussed in chapter 2, the utility of the teachings stored in philosophical commonplaces and proverbs is ambivalent and versatile for, as a product of language they are easy to exploit, misinterpret and misuse, put into the service of human desire.

At odds with the previous presentation of himself as a reader of Act 1, Rojas characterizes himself as the first type of reader when he playfully debases himself in an ironic *captatio benevolentia*. The simple and ignorant intellect that Rojas attributes to himself is one more indicator of his wry articulation of the force of the written letter to produce enjoyment, both as intellectual pleasure and *jouissance*. Furthermore, this stratagem casts a shadow over his interpretation of Petrarch and of Act 1, exposing one more time the malleability of meaning even as it springs from a consolidated authority. Rojas's awareness of the possibilities of language and linguistic abuse, even when authority seems to endorse meaning, is in fact the crux of *Celestina*'s rhetoric of reading and reception. Rojas's emphasis on exemplarity and didacticism soon surfaces as an excuse to introduce the plurality of language, which manifests at the moment of reading through a multitude of interpretations in which, in the main, a desire to attain enjoyment transpires.

From the images of pervasive discord in the animal kingdom, Rojas moves into an imaginary recollection of the *Comedia*'s reception. Rojas's discussion of Petrarch in the context of *Celestina*'s readership foregrounds the conflict between language and authority due, on the one hand, to the fetishism of language, and on the other, to the growing number of readers. The contention among *Celestina*'s readers reflects and surpasses the eternal dissension in the natural and heavenly regions given that the historical and cultural dimension of human life increases material desire, resulting in destruction and mutability:

> ¿Pues qué diremos entre los hombres a quien todo lo sobredicho es subjeto? ¿Quién explanará sus guerras, sus enemistades, sus embidias, sus aceleramientos y movimientos y descontentamientos? ¿Aquél mudar de trajes, aquel derribar y renovar edificios y otros muchos affectos diversos y variedades que esta nuestra

> flaca humanidad nos provienen? Y pues es antigua querella y visitada de largos tiempos, no quiero maravillarme si esta presente obra haya seýdo instrumento de lid o contienda a sus lectores para ponerlos en diferencias, dando cada uno una sentencia sobre ella a sabor de su voluntad. Unos dezían que era prolixa, otros breve, otros agradable, otros escura; de manera que cortarla a medida de tantas y tan differentes condiciones a solo Dios pertenesce. (80)
>
> [So, what can we say about men, who suffer from all recounted here? Who can explain their wars, enmities, envies, rages, quarrels and discontent? Such renting of clothes, destruction and rebuilding of houses and other diverse acts that derive from the weakness of mankind. And as this is a perennial lament, I would not be surprised of the present work has also been a source of strife and contention for its readers, who have each voiced their differences, each giving his opinions as he wished. Some said it was prolix, others short, some pleasant, some obscure, so that only God could cut it to the measure of so many different opinions]

The impossibility of securing lasting control over the word translates into a perpetual contention between the literary work, its author and its readers, a contention that otherwise is inherent to human existence. The peruse of *Celestina*, Rojas remarks, depends upon the reader's age for each stage of life entails a struggle of its own and a different linguistic and literary competence. Desire, the only historical invariable, embroils humans in an incessant conflict, whose utmost manifestation is sociopolitical and class struggle. In this sense, literary creation and reception emerges as one more site of social contention. 'Fernando de Rojas's dramatic representation of the struggle between competing interests in *La Celestina* is only one more striking literary example of similar writings that together constituted an emergent discourse of class,' intimates Mariscal (1991, 10). Rojas's understanding of literature as one more locus of a ceaseless strife for the power that comes with knowledge and understanding, reveals a renewed tension between invention, transmission and reception, all of it a time when the printing press begins to make texts available for an expanding body of readers.

In his paratexts, Rojas acts out, in step with his historical moment, the growing expansion of readers and of a market of printed texts. *Celestina* is presented as a social object, in whose creation even the printers, the new intermediaries between text and public, have pitched in. In the Prologue, Rojas complains that 'aun los impresores han dado sus punturas, poniendo rúbricas o sumarios al principio de cada auto, narrando en breve lo que dentro contenía; una cosa bien escusada según lo que los antiguos escriptores usaron' (81) [even the printers have added their points, have put explanations or summaries at the beginning of each

act, briefly stating what happens; something quite unnecessary if one considers how the ancient writers got by without them].[68] The extent of these changes is unknown, but their mention attests to a new form of textual transmission that radically changed the ideas around what literature is and how it works as it came into contact with a body of professional readers, namely printers and editors, as well as the actual consumers of literature. *Celestina* comes into being in a nascent printing culture, at the crossroads between orality, manuscripts, and print as alternative forms of literary entertainment. As Rojas notes, printed books appropriated some of the characteristics of codices, such as tables of contents, indexes, running heads or summaries, which facilitated the reader's access to the text (see Saenger 1997, 267; Lawrance 1985, 82-83). In *Celestina*'s paratexts, oral transmission and printed culture come together. Rojas describes in his Prologue an audience of listeners whose personalities are varied: 'Assí que quando diez personas se juntaren a oír esta comedia en quien quepa esta differencia de condiciones' (81) [So when ten people get together to listen to this comedy being read, who could imagine their very different conditions].

For Deyermond (2000, 32-33) the allusion to orality is a strange one since *Celestina* seems to have circulated primarily as a printed book, moreover, a book that sold many copies as its multiple editions certify. In Rojas's statement about the variety of *Celestina*'s readers, there resides an implicit silent reader as well, whose interpretation, developed in the solitude of the private room, depends upon his/her engagement with the book. Let's not forget that Rojas first describes himself in the act of silent, private reading of the anonymous manuscript of Act 1. Given the historical circumstances, Rojas is a writer composing, not only for an oral, *viva voce* delivery, but also for publication. This being so, *Celestina* was composed not only to be read aloud, but also to be privately and silently perused. Although the printing press did not put an end to reading aloud for an audience, as studied by Saenger (1997) and Bouza (2004), vernacular authors from the late fourteenth century, 'increasingly assumed that their audience was composed of readers, rather than of listeners' (Saenger, 1997, 273). Also, contrary to the folio editions of the romances of chivalry, which were designed for

[68] *Celestina*'s summaries or *argumentos* are, as Gilman (1956) seeks to demonstrate, the work of its printers. Nonetheless, argues Gilman (idem), there is a possibility that Rojas himself penned the *argumentos* of the later *Tragicomedia*. The decision to add these introductory summaries at the beginning of each act, also posits Gilman (idem), might have been influenced by the physical attributes of the printed editions of Plautus and Terence's comedies. These comedies might have also inspired *Celestina*'s woodcuts (see Berndt Kelley 1993; Cull 2010).

public readings (Eisenberg 1973, 1982), *Celestina*'s editions, small in size, ranging from the quarto to the sextodecimo in the late sixteenth century, presuppose a private and solitary engagement with the book. Whereas the listener's understanding is influenced by the performance of the teller, who was able to modify his presentation and modulate the voice in response to the audience's reactions and wishes, the reader's reception, who enjoys more freedom of interpretation, is to a certain extent conditioned by the physical support of the text.[69]

The book entailed a new form for accessing knowledge and entertainment. This shift is implicated in Sempronio's symbolic urge to his master to turn the page in order to access the previously repressed aspects of the courtly tradition.[70] 'Lee mas adelante, buelue la hoja' (133) [Read on, turn the page], Sempronio implores Calisto. In this context, the material aspects of the texts become particularly relevant. The printed editions of *Celestina* testify to the collective construction of its meaning in early modernity. Printers and editors are, one the one hand, among *Celestina*'s first readers and interpreters, and on the other, the agents that brought Rojas's novel-in-dialogue into the market, conferring upon it a particular material form. The physical aspects of *Celestina*'s editions attest to their editors' interpretation and, in a general sense, bear witness to a general public response to *Celestina*, given that the printed book, as a commodity, also shapes its market. Fradrique de Basilea, *Celestina*'s first printer, envisioned the popularity of the work and, ca. 1499, issued the first edition of *Celestina*, which was profusely illustrated. Fradrique, who must have invested a good deal of his capital in producing Rojas's work, created a market for it. In order to do so, I suggest, he furnished the book with what are, on the one hand, things that in dialogue with the work, and on the other, with its potential readers. Therefore, the careful examination of the material aspects of books as artifacts for commercial production and consumption provides valuable information on the uses to which books were put and on the kinds of readers they attracted.

Meaning is inseparable from what McGann (1991, 15) labeled the *textual condition*, 'that scene of complex dialogue and interchange, of testing and texting' that happens as a result of the material execution and transmission of ideas. On this account, the meaning of any given work cannot be separated from those who manipulate it. Among these, printers,

[69] See Ong (1982, 101-108) for the implications of textuality.
[70] See Shipley (1973-1974)

along with editors, illustrators, booksellers… had a central role because, on the one hand, they engaged in hermeneutical judgments and, on the other, they endowed the medium with meaning by 'exploiting textual redundancy' (McGann 1991, 14). As Ana Isabel Montero (2005, 43) argues, *Celestina*'s woodcuts 'need to be examined and understood not as ancillary mimetic renderings of the words that comprise the text, but as text in themselves, one that is capable of conveying meanings that are not necessarily explicit in the written discourse.' On the other hand, these illustrations accompany the reading, to a certain extent, determining it (see Rivera 1995). To be sure, the decisions made by its printers inscribed *Celestina* in the cultural system of symbolic productions against which communal and individual identity are shaped. This symbolic system takes a distinctive presence in the iconography of *Celestina*'s woodcuts, first imagined and developed in the workshop of Fadrique de Basilea.

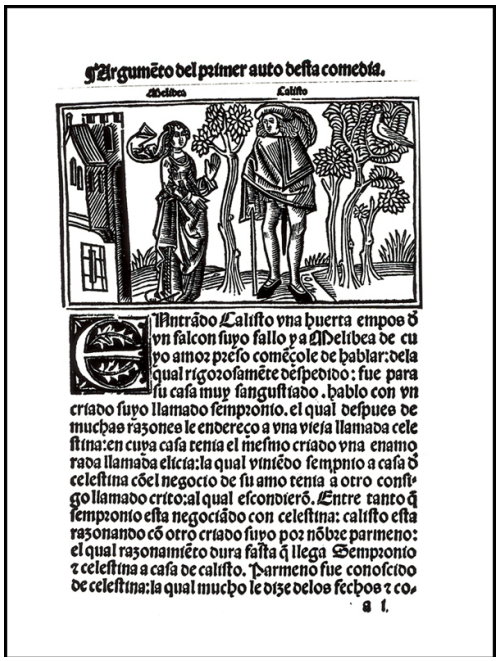

Figure 3.2. Auto I, fol. I r, *Comedia de Calisto y Melibea,* ca. 1499. Burgos, in the house of Fadrique de Basilea. Anonymous illustrator. New York, Hispanic Society of America.

Celestina's woodcuts, as the result of a hermeneutical exercise, tell a story in themselves, a story that is neither totally independent from Rojas's text nor ancillary to it. In the frontispiece that opens the first known edition of *Celestina* (reproduced above), courtly

symbolism connotes male and female genitalia and sexual intercourse.[71] As it is apparent, Calisto and Melibea stand in the idealized garden of the European medieval tradition. The garden accounts for an allegorical representation of the virginal female body, craved by the male lover. Melibea's garden, where Rojas situates the night meetings between the two lovers, engages in a long-established iconographic tradition that represents women corporality as a *hortus conclusus* [enclosed garden]. As an idyllic site of sensuality and sin, the garden mimics the Garden of Eden, the place where excessive desire brought about the Fall of humankind. The male lover, Calisto, is represented with the emblem of the high-born courtly lover, the hawk resting on the tree next to him, symbol of his prowess in the chase of love.[72] His sword ostensibly hangs between his legs as an additional reference to his sexuality, further reinforced by his cane. In her turn, Melibea is presented as if engaging in conversation and courtship, as she does in Act 1 (see Chapter 2). The courtly and erotic symbolism of the opening woodcuts is emphasized in the first of the arguments, which most likely was the work of a printer. [73] The argument, which opens with a courtly *double entendre,* reads 'Entrando Calisto a una huerta empos dun falcón suyo, halló y a Melibea, de cuyo amor preso comenzole a hablar' (85) [Entering Calisto a garden in pursuit of a falcon of his, there he found Melibea, of whose love a prisoner he began to speak to her]. These woodcuts are in dialogue with the text of *Celestina,* which rehearses the basic motives of courtly love in order to trespass and transgress them by allowing carnal desire to take central stage and to surpass romantic sublimation. The erotic dimension of courtly love materializes in Basilea's illustrations, where the force of the undesirable Other is conveyed through the representation of thresholds and space.

The negotiation and consummation of sexual desire is a central motif in the woodcuts of Basilea's edition, which portray the old bawd as a 'negotiator of thresholds' (Montero 2005, 42). Berndt Kelly (1993) attributes the ubiquitous presence of thresholds to a temporal

[71] This frontispiece is reproduced in the *Comedia* printed in Seville in 1501 by Stanislao Polono and with some alterations in most of the editions of the *Tragicomedia*, except in Zaragoza (1507), which was borrowed from the 1493 edition of *Cárcel de amor*.

[72] If it ever existed in the first place, the title-page of this inaugural edition is lost. See Di Camillo (2005) for a study of the material aspects of the Burgos edition.

[73] I agree with Gilman (1956, 212) that the inadequacy of the argument to Act 1, as well as those of the individual arguments, point to another authorial hand, different from Rojas's.

division between consecutive episodes. Nonetheless, the representation and function of thresholds and doorsteps in Basilea's edition is substantially different from that of other sixteenth-century texts, such as *Cárcel de Amor* (printed ca. 1492), in which the vignettes establish a spatial and temporal sequence closer to the function proposed by Berndt Kelly. As Montero rightfully observes, *Celestina*'s vignettes give expression to the surplus meaning of the text. Doorways and thresholds in Basilea's edition, argues Montero, 'constitute a figural aperture where meaning opens itself to different possibilities and where the figure of the hymen dwells, allegorizing the work of the ghostly and elusive *madre* Celestina as an absence' (Montero 2005, 43). In effect, Celestina is the character most identified with thresholds, walls and the enclosures of the house. Celestina's business as a go-between is implied in the atypical representation of doorways. Celestina consummates the latent, but foreclosed desire of those that inhabit the houses she enters, bringing corruption and destruction. This symbolic trespassing is pictorially represented in the crossing and penetration of thresholds, comparable to sexual penetration in Basilea's pictorial renderings. This analogy is reinforced by the symbolic equivalence in the medieval tradition between doorway and hymen, especially since the *Roman de la Rose* (Montero 2005, 43 and 50).[74] '*Celestina* offers a rich and complex image of the home, but if any one idea predominates, it is that a woman alone has the ability to create a *casa* [house] or an *hogar* [home], and only a woman can overcome the illusory sanctuaries that pass as homes in the book,' as proposed by Ellis (1981, 15). *Celestina*'s woodcuts, Montero concludes, express the ineffable, which amounts to what is left unsaid, repressed, in the text: the sexual penetration of female body (2005, 52). In other words, *Celestina*'s anamorphosis emerges in the text as the Other's desire and manifests itself through a voyeuristic redoubling that brings down spatial, social and gendered barriers.

[74] The representation of doors as hymens is part, as Montero (2005) notes, of the traditional allegorizing of female bodies as buildings and portals, either to Hell, as in the case of Dante's *Inferno*, or to Heaven, as in the case of the Virgin Mary.

Figure 3.3. Act 4, fol. 24 v, *Comedia de Calisto y Melibea*, ca. 1499. Burgos, in the house of Fadrique de Basilea. Anonymous illustrator. New York, Hispanic Society of America.

The anamorphic redoubling that distinguishes *Celestina* is conveyed in Basilea's woodcuts, which recreate *Celestina*'s unease, characterization, voyeurism, and space. Rojas's characters constantly wander from house to house, commanding each other to open and close doors and windows, behind which to hide in order to spy and eavesdrop. This is the case of Lucrecia in the woodcut from Act 4 reproduced above. As it happens, walls and thresholds are often personified as hearing entities: 'Callemos, que a la puerta estamos y como dicen, las paredes han oidos' (108) [Let's shut up, we are at the door and, as it is said, walls have ears], warns Sempronio to Celestina upon their arrival to Calisto's house in Act 1. The private and urban space of the woodcuts, like the ones verbally portrayed in *Celestina*'s text, represent a changing world in which the limits between domestic and public space disappear and, hence, are erased between between social classes, just as they create a sense of permeability and of being watched. Even the streets are sensitive to Celestina's trafficking, as Pármeno evokes:

> Si passa por los perros, aquello suena su ladrido; si está cerca de las aves, otra cosa no cantan; si cerca los ganados, balando lo pregonan; si cerca las bestias, rebuznando dicen: "¡Puta vieja!"; las ranas de los charcos otra cosa no suelen mentar. Si va entre los herreros, aquello dicen sus martillos; carpinteros y armeros y herradores, calderos y arcadores, todo officio de instrumento forma en el ayre su nombre… (108-109)

> [If she walks among dogs, they bark and howl; if she passes birds, they sign no other tune; if it is sheep, they proclaim it with their bleating; donkeys bray out, 'Old whore!; frogs in the pond know no other thing to call her. If she walks into a smithy, hammers ring out those words. Carpenters and armorers, farriers and tinkers, wool beaters, every trade with a tool sounds out her name…]

The street in the above woodcut contrasts with the private space of Melibea's room; nonetheless, the separation is not sharp. Streets are illustrated as a an open area through which characters freely perambulate, unaware, as Alisa in the one above, of the threatening commerce of material desire, implicated in the rosary she carries. In this woodcut, Celestina is presented holding in her hand the skein of thread she uses to gain access to Melibea's house to secure her girdle for Calisto; whereas, Alisa has in her hand a rosary. The rosary is both a device for prayer and also the instrument through which Celestina keeps track of, literally counts, the virgos she repairs and sells. In effect, Celestina is alternatively represented holding one of these two. This being so, the rosary, as the tools described by Pármeno, calls out Celestina's presence in the streets. Through voyeurism and reduplication, Basilea's woodcuts illustrate the rupture of the barriers between private and public spaces and social classes due to the ability of the margin, epitomized by Celestina, to monitor and penetrate the life of the city and all its inhabitants, more and more self-contained subjects.

Space in *Celestina* as in Basilea's illustrations is charged with epistemological and ideological implications.[75] According to Gerli, 'the depiction of space in *Celestina* marks a decisive development in the representation of the human subject in the late fifteenth-century texts: it becomes a depository of desires, the material field that stands as an emblem of the characters' identities and ambitions' (Gerli 1997, 75). In Basilea's woodcuts the private space of the houses, Celestina's and Pleberio's, combines with an urban environment in order to portray the emergence of independent, yet self-conscious and vigilant, subjects against a background of developing public spaces, in which different groups compete for power. On this account, space in *Celestina* is suffused with the possibility of conflict and destruction. Celestina's house, an extension of her person, provides a solid refuge for her low-life

[75] For a theoretical approach to the representation of space and its sociopolitical and ideological implications, see Henri Lefebvre's, *The Production of Space* (1991) and Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (1994). For space in *Celestina,* see Gilman (1956), Maravall (1968), Ellis (1981), Russell (1989) and Gerli (1997, 2011a).

confederates, who gather there in an atmosphere of confraternity, as portrayed in Basilea's woodcut of Act 9. Nonetheless, her house is also the scene of her murder, which Pármeno and Sempronio perpetrate in order to obtain the gold chain Calisto gave her. The murder of Celestina and the execution of her killers is not portrayed in Basilea's edition; however, it gains prominence and becomes preeminent in accompanying illustrations during the course of the sixteenth century.

Figure 3.4. Auto XIII, *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea,* ca. 1523. Sevilla, in the house of Jacob Cromberger. Anonymous illustrator. Madrid: Biblioteca Nacional.

After Celestina is killed in her home, death spreads to Pleberio's stately and secured home, which typifies the vulnerability of even the most private space at the threshold of modernity. 'When the fantasy of the garden is placed in the urban, materialistic environment of the early modern city, Pleberio's house together with his garden,' Gerli (1997, 73) notes, transforms into 'a space with other than aristocratic intimations: it is expressive of unease, suffused with apprehension, a house filled with vigilant, anxious inhabitants who startle at the slightest sound as they stand watch over its human capital, Melibea.' In effect, when before she committs suicide Melibea addresses her father to inform him of her sexual encounters with Calisto and her intention to kill herself, she refers to herself as her father's possession as much as her own being: 'Vencida de su amor, dile entrada en tu casa. Quebrantó con escalas las paredes de tu huerto; quebrantó mi propósito, perdí mi virginidad' (334)

[Vanquished by his love, I let him into your house. He overcame the walls of your garden with ladders; as he overcame my resistance, I lost my virginity]. By pointing to her father's ownership of the garden, a symbol or reflection of her own body, Melibea points to the patriarchal enclosure she has breached, while simultaneously claiming her freedom to choose and to act. Melibea's suicide was illustrated in the early Burgos edition. In this woodcut, Melibea's body lies on the ground, at her parents' feet against a background that represents a city. Soon after Basilea's edition, Melibea is portrayed in the act of throwing herself from the tower, in this way, emphasizing the violence and determination of her suicide. Melibea's suicide is, as everything in Celestina, essentially duplicitous. On the one hand, it is the epitome of sin since only God has the power to give and take life; hence, Melibea's refusal to live cancels out God's will and Christian values. On the other, it is the ultimate act of freedom of the will. The dramatic double quality of Melibea's suicide is conveyed in the sixteenth-century pictorial renderings, like the one below, which contrapose her desire to die to her progenitors' loss and desire to protect her, as she leaps over the crenellations of her father's fortified tower. Melibea's willful death, represents, as Calisto's accidental stumble, a fall from grace and a fall from Fortune, a recurrent *topos* in medieval and early modern art that most likely inspired *Celestina*'s woodcuts (see Fernández Rivera, 2001). The vignettes portraying the death of the characters convey through emotional redoubling the pervasiveness of violence and destruction in the world. This destruction parallels the chaotic macrocosm evoked in the paratextual materials, as they threaten to invalidate God's holy order. Furthermore, as envisioned by Rojas himself, *Celestina*'s woodcuts pictorially represent the readers' wants and anxieties, gazing at them, in the same manner as the text does, in order to stir their subjectivity with a remainder of their free and mortal nature.

Figure 3.5. Auto XXI, *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea,* ca. 1514. Valencia, in the house of Juan Joffré. Anonymous illustrator. London, British Library.

Celestina's sixteenth-century woodcuts are produced under the influence of Fadrique de Basilea. As the sixteenth century progresses, the vast number of *Celestina*'s editions, all of which are illustrated, also confirm the popularity of the work.[76] Celestina does not appear in a title-page until the second edition of Rojas's work, printed in Toledo in 1500. In this title-page, as in the ensuing ones, she is pushed to the side as a disruptive and secondary constituent of the story of the two lovers, knocking on the door that opens the feminine and corporeal garden of pleasure. In later editions, starting with the Valencia edition of 1514, the city takes on a more distinctive presence in *Celestina*'s title pages, which represent a rural, courtly arcadia, subsequently developed by Feliciano de Silva in his *Segunda Celestina* (Chapter 4). In these editions, woodcuts are simplified. Up until the first sexual encounter between the two lovers, arguments are accompanied by independent woodcuts of Rojas's characters. These woodcuts may or may not coincide with the characters who participate in the act, that is to say, there is no one to one correspondence between characters in the text and in the woodcuts. The rest of the work is illustrated by vignettes that, apart from the alterations mentioned above in the death scenes, resemble the ones in Fadrique de Basilea's

[76] See Montero (2015) for a study of *Celestina*'s woodcuts over time and across European borders.

first known edition. The editorial selection is evidence of the taste of *Celestina*'s readers who, as Rojas intuited, might have reveled in the eroticism and violence that is concealed in the text under the guise of didacticism. We then might conclude that the perspective of the printers and unknown illustrators of these woodcuts may be considered as marked by the gaze of the text, which introduces through redoubling and deformation the Other, both as a psychological category and as a sociopolitical, spritual and ideological threat. This threat is conveyed through the transformation, suggested by Rojas in his text, of the courtly garden into an urban environment in which thresholds allow for the penetration of the margin, from the streets, into the private life of wealthy families.

In sum, Rojas's heightened awareness of the essential materiality of human experience results in the misshaping of traditional notions of literature, author and reader, which are problematized and reappraised in light of an emergent subjectivity and literary marketplace. The world, as in Rojas's mind, is no longer God's book, but a material realm. On this account, *Celestina* evinces a new authorial consciousness and a novel form of engaging with the literary text. Rojas believes in the omnipotence of language to fulfill human longings and, much like the bawd he creates, panders the readers' desire. Rojas cultivation of an authorial persona is a trademark of his rhetoric and a hint of his modernity. In his paratexts, he vindicates the role of the author, in whose ability to peddle resides the force of the text; thus, adopting a modern posture with regards to authorship and readership. Rojas articulates a conscious exploration of the dynamics of reading on the threshold of modernity, when a spiritual and collaborative economy of the letter was being replaced by an individualistic and libidinal one. In this regard, Rojas's envisioned readers encapsulate a modern response to the text's meaning. As the paratexts convey, by the sixteenth century, readers enjoy more freedom not to assume the author's professed meaning, but to react, coming through subjectivization with their own meaning. Therefore, in his paratexts, Rojas accounts for a plurality of responses that are inseparable from the multiplicity of reading subjects and of their disposition.

In a landscape of competing ideologies and practices, the space of the text opened up to capture with a new force the nuances of experience, its contradictions and difficulties. Rojas knows that carnal desire, in all its intellectual and hegemonic ramifications, is the force that brings the conflicting agendas of the readers together, as conveyed in the Prologue.

Through anamorphic reduplication, Rojas creates a space suffused with violence and eroticism from where the text gazes into the reader prompting him/her into its subjectivization, in which resides the pleasure of reading. Rojas bent towards the sensual pleasure of reading is best articulated in *Celestina*'s paratexts. Concealed under a guise of didacticism and only perceivable through a glimpse, Rojas's account of *Celestina*'s composition and reception undermines the metaphysical and conceptual system of the Middle Ages as it attests to a conscious and constantly changing subject whose world is more and more disengaged from God. To be sure, *Celestina*'s paratexts try out the limits of interpretation, gazing into the reader from a negative space in which ethical values fade away in the presence of sensual and material enjoyment. The potential success of *Celestina* was envisioned by Fadrique de Basilea, who ca. 1499 printed a profusely illustrated edition of Rojas's work. Basilea's illustrations unconsciously convey *Celestina*'s space of anamorphosis, which is the key to the book's success.

Rojas does not seek to establish himself as an *auctoritas*, for in the secular and contending world he inhabits there are no longer guarantees in meaning; instead, he pictures himself as a *galeotto*, an accomplished go-between that traffics with the sensuality of the letter. The author of *Celestina* provides society at large with a glimpse into their common desire, a concept profoundly implicated in questions of transcendence, knowledge, power and rank. Disentangled from God, desire uncovers in *Celestina* as a non-transcendental force, whose ultimate end is the individualistic attainment of material enjoyment, a crave for pleasure that is analogous to the early modern subject yearning for autonomy. Rojas art is analogous to Celestina's for, through verbal manipulation, he provides the readers with the object of their desire, looking into them from the place where they desire. In this manner, Rojas creates a world of fiction over which he presides, not as an authority but as a verbal trafficker, a master of the rhetorical force of the letter to create and entrap.

4

THE RESURRECTION OF CELESTINA

At the beginning of the sixteenth-century, Iberian authors were immersed in the creation and renovation of prose fiction, thus giving rise to a profusion of styles and genres—chivalric, pastoral, picaresque, Moorish and Byzantine—that mutually shaped and infiltrated each other. This process of narrative experimentation was to a great extent determined and spurred on by a blooming printing industry, whose developments and contributions to *Celestina*'s early reception have been discussed in the previous chapter and which, since the last decade of the fifteenth century, continued to create a literary market for an expanding, more heterogenous body of readers avid to read entertaining imaginative prose. In this context, in which literary innovation coincided with the establishment of the printing press and with an unprecedented spread of literacy, *Celestina* became a touchstone for the exploration and renovation of narrative forms. Although the majority of prose works published in the first half of the sixteenth century may be categorized as moralizing, devotional and theological (Whinnom 1980, 190),[77] a significant number of them were also destined solely for amusement. Against this background, *Celestina* came to satisfy readers' desire for textual pleasure, resulting in one of the first early modern 'best-sellers.' To be sure, over the course of the sixteenth century, *Celestina* and, above all, its eponymous character entered the collective and literary imaginary, becoming a legendary character in early modern Spain, appearing frequently in moral treatises, burlesque verse, satirical works, miscellanies of proverbs, popular jokes and, most importantly, works of fiction. (Chevalier 1976)

Given its persistent popularity, *Celestina* prompted a substantial number of imitations and continuations. These works, widely rated as second-class by modern critical standards, nevertheless do possess a literary merit of their own, and offer a revealing look into the Renaissance imagination and insight into the different forms of early modern literary enjoyment and reception. In fact, Whinnom (1989) when dealing with best-selling works of literature, points out that literary mastery alone does not suffice to assess their value and virtues. As proposed in Chapter 1, humans feel a deep-seated desire for narrative and fiction,

[77] Fray Luis de Granada and Antonio de Guevara's disquisitions on Christian life outsold prose works, as studied by Whinnom (1980).

a desire that is connected to the constitution of the human psyche. Such a desire is both demonstrated and realized in the production and success of myths from early modernity until our time, when literature, cinema, television, and the internet fabricate stories and heroes that are prized and consumed. Much like ancient sagas and today's literary and filmic series, early modern 'best-selling' titles such as *Celestina* and *Amadís* came to satisfy a psychological need for entertainment and to provide an alternative world through which people could make sense of their own reality. *Celestina* as well as its best-selling courtly counterpart, *Amadís de Gaula,* were continuously reimagined according to their society's changing attitudes and values, providing the sixteenth-century author with solid ground for literary experimentation. Moreover, they offer the present-day scholar with a kind of time capsule with which to apprehend early modern reading tastes and habits.

Feliciano de Silva the most prominent author of chivalric sequels in the sixteenth century—whose public was formed chiefly by the upper and noble classes, wealthy members of the urban bourgeoisie, and the literati—, was also the author of the *Segunda Celestina*, the first work to continue Rojas's novel-in-dialogue. Silva's *Segunda Celestina* inaugurates the so-called *celestinesca* tradition, a series of narratives that comprise *Celestina*'s sequels. Feliciano de Silva literally brings the old procuress back to life after her death in Rojass' work, at a time in which the depraved and corrupted environment of *Celestina* might seem to have left the world of fiction to resemble more and more the experiences of actual daily life in Spain. Celestina, like the Biblical Lazarus—resurrected by Jesus (John xi, 1-5)—and years before *Lazarillo de Tormes*, is given a second a chance to redeem herself, a chance that she seemingly misspends. This being so, Silva's move is designed to criticize, in line with Juan Luis Vives on the practice of charity, and to articulate a project of social reform. By the early sixteenth century, Spain, much like its European neighbors, was wracked by poverty, a result of the drastic change in the living conditions that accompanied the transition from the feudalistic society of the Middle Ages to an incipient early modern capitalism.[78] The great urban development of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries had attracted masses of rural destitute people to the cities, where a growing mercantilist and industrial infrastructure burdened by a ceaseless rise in prices, heavy taxation and increasing inflation was unable to

[78] For a social history of early modern European society, see Kamen (2000). For a sociopolitical account of early modern Spain, see Kamen (1991, 2003) and Elliott (1963, 1989).

absorb them.[79] A stream of unemployed paupers flooded into the streets of Spanish cities creating a surplus urban population that could neither produce nor consume. The severe economic and sociopolitical crisis of the sixteenth century, which worsened during the reign of Philip II, denied the disenfranchised masses a productive way out, given the surfeit of labor and the scarcity of employment. On this account, the Church, the state and the intellectual elite were engaged in a debate about the efficacy of, and the best mechanism for, poor relief. Among the intelligentsia, Juan Luis Vives had been the first humanist to articulate the failure of Christian charity and to propose a secularized reform that would create opportunities for all employable workers. Against this background, Feliciano de Silva brings Celestina back to life in order to examine poverty and criminality through the representation of prostitution in literature. To be sure, by means of her resurrection, Silva offers his readers a screen on which to project social anxieties about the disenfranchised precisely at a time when poor relief was a burning issue of civic debate in the Spain of Emperor Charles V.

This chapter enquires into *Celestina*'s reception in sixteenth-century Spain by looking into its conscious reworkings, vestiges that testify to the ways in which the space of anamorphosis was perceived, imitated and transformed at a time of aesthetic and thematic experimentation in the search for new forms of expression in prose that could come closer to the representation of real life. With this purpose, I focus on Silva's *Segunda Celestina.* As I explore the reasons behind Silva's decision to resurrect Rojas's bawd against the ideological and cultural background that established *Celestina*'s horizon of expectations, I propose that Feliciano de Silva's resurrection of Celestina responds to a renewed awareness of the Other, both as foreclosed desire in the margins of the consciousness of early modern readers and, in sociological terms, as society's marginal people. In a society vexed by economic and political crisis, the position of the Other was rapidly filled by its marginal inhabitants, mostly, beggars, prostitutes—along with a plethora of crafty folk and professional women, like female healers—as well as Gypsies, *conversos* and *moriscos*, persecuted by the Church and the state because of their religious and ethnic origins. These peripheral beings, who in fact

[79] For a historical study on inflation in early modern Spain, see Hamilton (1977) and Elliot (1989), among others. For a brief summary of the historical and economic circumstances that might have contributed to the sixteenth-century socioeconomic crisis, see Cruz (1999), 40.

constituted the majority of the population[80] were the living embodiment of social volatility, a reminder of the precariousness of the self in a world that was constantly changing. Hanawalt explains that the margin is 'a place for thrills and titillation—a place to live dangerously—to have sex, to engage in petty crime, or to commit major fraud' (2007, 2), a space where respectable people, such as Calisto and Melibea, fall into when they go astray. In keeping with the symbolic values of Western society, the social underworld came to stand for the dangers of excessive desire. Along these lines, the dual nature of human desire is revealed to be analogous to the polarity of the social structure, in which the dominant cultural elite, that designates itself the representative and guardian of the sanctioned moral code, coexists with subjects of low social and economic status who are seen as symbolically transgressive, threatening, and monstrous.

In Rojas's *Celestina*, immoderate erotic and material want, a glimpse into the Real of human existence, emerge in anamorphic form alongside the idealizing and transcendental discourses of Christianity and courtly love in order to gaze into the reader. In this manner, *Celestina* exposes the power of desire to drive men and women toward their end in pursuit of the satisfaction of their socially forbidden pleasures and appetites. In *Celestina*'s urban center the criminal and the prostitute live side-by-side the wealthy and prosperous high and middle classes, whose tragic end is the inevitable result of their contact with alternative subjectivities, or the Other. *Celestina*'s surplus meaning as contained in its space of anamorphosis, I argue, serves in the century following its composition by Rojas to articulate a literary response to social and economic imbalances. To be sure, Rojas's *Celestina*, a work responsive to a broader spectrum of human nature and experience, erases the distinction of high and low, and shows how fundamentally both, barring a veneer of economic privilege, can be seen as really one. In his two-fold portrayal of transcendence and degradation, *Celestina* was a work that responded to the sociopolitical preoccupations of the sixteenth century human subject in Spain.

[80] 'By any objective standards, their [the marginalized floor of society] number, their tasks, and the economic weight were not peripheral at all. So approached, the very concept of marginality proved to be at once ironic and deceptive' (Maiorino 1996, xiii). For a study of 'otherness' and sameness, and the distress marginals caused to the Early Modern Spanish writer, see Lee (2016). For female 'others,' in particular, Gypsies and *moriscas*, see Cruz (2007).

Feliciano de Silva seems to have recognized in *Celestina* a space of anamorphosis that provided fertile ground on which to negotiate the clash between the Symbolic and the Real in a nascent modern society that found itself already in crisis. Silva, for whom it might have seemed that the world of Rojas's *Celestina* was becoming too real, fosters in his *Segunda Celestina* communal ties and humanistic values, rehearsing a displacement from the original's perversion into naiveté. Silva resurrects Rojas's old bawd in order to repress her and force her into a marginal position, becoming, as the procuresses who succeeds her in the business, a scapegoat. In his reworking of *Celestina*, Silva imagines a society which allows for the existence of an impoverished and criminal strata, but one that can be contained by marginalizing it. In this society, Celestina is transformed into an over pious woman who is reintegrated into the social center only to be expelled from it, from the Symbolic system of values where honor, loyalty, charity and the law must prevail. In a world without margin in which prostitutes and procuresses seems virtually impossible, Silva resurrects Celestina in order to stigmatize her and blame her for moral and civic disorder.

From the late Middle Ages up to the end of early modernity; prostitutes, female healers, mystics and other unconventional women were blamed for all kinds of social and spiritual ills. They became scapegoats, defined by René Girard (1986) as the unconscious victims of social violence. In his theory of scapegoating, in order to explain Western stereotypes of persecution Girard elaborates on ancient Biblical rituals, by means of which collective sins were cast upon a goat sacrificed to the gods. Scapegoats are bizarre and unorthodox from the viewpoint of dominant social standards, explains Girard, and they are the victims of a collective delusion that casts a monstrous nature upon them. By sacrificing the monster, the culprit of social disorder, regeneration and peace are believed to be achieved. On this account, scapegoats are of great symbolic importance for they are a screen upon which feelings of fear and guilt are projected and anxiety is released.

Silva transfigures Celestina into a questionably devout woman and grants her only a negligible intervention in the love affairs of Felides and Polandria; thus, allowing for romantic satisfaction, social harmony and moral salvation to emerge. Silva draws a clear distinction between two low class groups, the laborers, represented by the servants and the shepherd Filínides, and the criminals, Celestina and her underworld. Only Pandulfo moves between the two spheres, eventually giving up, contrary to Pármeno, a life of delinquency

and marrying Quincia, Polandria's common servant and his equal. As a result, corruption and chaos subside in *Segunda Celestina* and a vision of moderate love becomes the universal force that governs Silva's proletarian utopia, in which although prostitution is included as a social reality, it never represents the threat to universal order that it is in Rojas's original *Celestina*. Celestina and her world are not completely eradicated since that would have invalidated her symbolic value as a scapegoat. Although an ultimately longed-for social purging is not possible, the pernicious element is allowed to exist under strict confinement and serve to bolster public morality and a healthy body politic. Celestina then, as we shall see, becomes the anamorphic element of Silva's continuation, transformed as she is assigned a new social role at the margins of society. This view of Celestina is dismissed as something oblique by her estranged cousin, Barbanteso, a representative of the Symbolic center. Nonetheless, when looked at askance from a certain vantage point, Celestina continues to reveal the Real of the human condition. In this way, Silva gazes into the Other from a manipulated perspective in order to keep the Other marginal and, by doing so preserving the integrity of the center and offering a vision of a healthy body politic.

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The sixteenth-century is a time when literary imitations and sequels become not only customary, but part of the vogue, a consequence of the new market for books and an expanding public eager to read entertaining stories during time reserved for leisure. This was particularly true with regard to the romances of chivalry, to which new events and characters were constantly added either through interlacing (a return to earlier adventures) or through a projection into the future. As a result, new narratives developed, many times springing not just from the original object of imitation—*Amadís de Gaula* in the case of the Chivalric—, but from sequels of other kinds of fiction. *Celestina*, just as *Amadís*, was widely imitated, expanded and reimagined beyond Feliciano de Silva in the sixteenth century.[81] Besides its versified renderings,[82] among *Celestina*'s early imitations are Pedro Manuel Ximénez de

[81] An index containing mentions to *Celestina* together with its continuations and adaptions can be found in Snow (1997, 2001, 2002). For a detailed, yet circumstantial, account of *Celestina*'s ownership, reading testimonies, responses and commemorations, see Chapter 3, '"La Celestina" según sus lectores' in Chevalier (1976), 138-166.

[82] The *Romance de Calisto y Melibea* (ca. 1513) and Pedro Manuel Ximénez de Urrea's *Égloga de la tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea de prosa trobada en verso* (Logroño 1513).

Urrea's *Penitencia de amor* (Burgos 1514) plus three humanistic comedies published together in Valencia in 1521—*Comedia Thebaida, Comedia Serafina* and *Comedia Hipólita*. All of them leave out the character of the old bawd along with her minions of the urban underworld of treacherous and ambitious servants and prostitutes, to focus exclusively on the love story between a young man and woman of noble lineage in an idealized courtly environment in which the story reaches a happy conclusion.[83] As mentioned earlier in Feliciano de Silva's *Segunda comedia de Celestina*, or *Segunda Celestina*, the old bawd literally resurrects—comes back to life-- through a cunning alteration in Rojas's plot. In Act 7 of his continuation, Silva reveals that Celestina, who in the original had been violently killed by Sempronio and Pármeno, was only severely wounded and hurt by their blows, and that she sought refuge in the house of an archdeacon who owed her a "favor." Once she recuperated from her injuries and the disturbances brought about by the tragic deaths of Calisto's servants had settled, Celestina decided to go back to her old house and continue to practice her trade. She does so proclaiming in the streets that, due to the repentance for her previous sins, God has allowed her a miraculous resurrection in order to remedy both her life and the lives of others. While *Celestina*'s early imitations are in accord with the courtly idealizing tenor of the early editions, discussed in chapter 3, Silva's continuation coincides with Celestina's appropriation of the *Tragicomedia*'s title, a gesture whose first extant example appears in an edition printed in Sevilla around 1518 under the title of *Libro de Calixto y Melilbea y de la puta vieja Celestina.*

Two years after Silva's resuscitation of Celestina, Gaspar Gómez published his *Tercera parte de la tragicomedia de Celestina* (Medina del Campo 1536), in which the two lovers of Feliciano de Silva's novel, Felides and Polandria, who had married secretly, manage to formalize their relationship to properly and publicly wed with the help of the old bawd. At the end of Gaspar Gómez continuation of Silva's story, Celestina once again dies, this time falling down a flight of stairs when she rushes to collect remuneration for her services. As the century progressed, other works of fiction that continued the life and deeds of *Celestina*'s characters came into being, among them, the anonymous (although most likely

[83] In *De la comedia humanística al teatro representable* (2013), Jose Luis Canet Vallés offers a study, summary and edition of the above-mentioned comedies and Urrea's eclogue. For a study of the presence of *Celestina* in sixteenth-century drama, see Pérez Priego (2013).

composed by Sancho de Muñón) *Tragicomedia de Lisandro y Roselia llamada Elicia y por otro nombre cuarta obra y tercera Celestina* (Salamanca 1542); the also anonymous *Comedia Policiana* (Toledo, 1547); Juan Rodríguez Florián's *Comedia Florinea* (Medina del Campo 1554); Sebastian Fernández's *Tragedia Policiana* (Toledo 1547 and 1548); Alonso de Villegas Selvago's *Comedia Selvagia* (dates unknown); and the anonymous *Tragicomedia de Polidoro y Casandrina* (ca. 1560-1570). In the *Tragicomedia de Lisandro y Roselia,* likely composed by Muñón, Elicia now an old woman comes to substitute Celestina as master procuress and dies at the hands of the ruffian Brumandilón, her lover, while the two lovers of the title perish in an ambush planned by Roselia's brother. In need of a whore to promote, Sebastian Fernández's *Tragedia Policiana* goes back in time in order to recount a love story mediated by Claudina (said to be Pármeno's mother in the original *Celestina*), whose vicissitudes along with Celestina's are narrated. In turn, Villegas Selvago's comedy has as its protagonist Claudina's granddaughter, Dolsina, who embarks on a *vendetta* against her grandmother's killer, Teofilón, father of the young woman in whose seduction Claudina participated. The last of these continuations, the *Tragicomedia de Polidoro y Casandrina* distances itself even further from the characters and events of Rojas's work, which become a remote echo, as they will continue to be in the female picaresque (Chapter 5). In this anonymous work, the old bawd Corneja is yet another 'discípula de la maestra Celestina' (f. 37).[84]

The works described above have traditionally been grouped under the label of 'celestinesca,' a term that roughly designates a genre or cycle that developed first and foremost—but not exclusively—over the course of the sixteenth century and whose origin lies in Rojas's *Celestina*.[85] The *celestinesca* tradition is primarilly characterized by its materialistic and unsentimental tenor. *Celestina*'s continuations, composed also in dialogue, revolve around the lives and amorous adventures of, on the one hand, a young and noble

[84] The *Tragicomedia de Polidoro y Casandrina* is made available in digital format by the Biblioteca Real. Permanent link: https://realbiblioteca.patrimonionacional.es/cgi-bin/koha/opac-detail.pl?biblionumber=25019.

[85] In his *Orígenes de la novela* (Vol. IV), Menéndez Pelayo identifies for the first time the celestinesca tradition, 'género celestinesco,' as a legitimate subgenre of Golden Age prose. For a brief account of the literary and critical approaches to the so-called 'celestinesca' genre, see Heugas (1973) and Baranda (2017).

urban couple, and on the other, the servants and procuresses who make their love possible. These continuations also take on, if not always, *Celestina*'s style, its paratexts, its division into acts, its narrative techniques—such as the exclusive use of dialogue, asides, monologue and laughter—and its profusion of sayings, maxims and proverbs, that is, its 'delectables fontezicas de filosophía' (70) ['delightful founts of philosophy,'] as Rojas refers to them when speaking of the original single-act work he chose to expand. Sometimes these, as well as the most-well-remembered remarks, are copied verbatim from the original, nevertheless acquiring new meanings in a new context and against a different textual background. Despite these very broad common features, as introduced above, the celestinesca tradition is formed by sundry works of fiction, which relate to *Celestina* in varied ways. For Heugas (1973), *Celestina*'s continuations surpass any of its imitations in aesthetic merit. A continuation, according to Heugas, appropriates the model's subject matter, its characters and its plot lines so that a story that readers considered finished suddenly comes into being again, establishing a thematic, stylistic and ideological continuity:

> En fait, la différence entre ces deux notions [imitation and continuation] est implicite : le terme continuation limite dans le temps une manifestation de littérature cyclique, souvent propre à l'Espagne ; le terme imitation implique des degrés dans l'imitation et semble ouvrir un éventail temporel beaucoup plus large. Car il est de imitations partielles et précoces, il en est de tardives. Mais il n'en pas moins vrai que la continuation est la forme la plus parfaite, la plus totale de l'imitation. L'auteur que continue une œuvre s'approprie généralement son sujet, ses cadres, ses personnages et les rapports qu'ils on entre eux, son idéologie et parfois même son style. (Heugas 1973, 51)[86]

The works belonging to the celestinesca tradition would then be tied together by content and style. A continuation as well as an imitation are the result of an act of reading and interpretation, so that Heugas' preoccupation with distinguishing and situating one above another is really irrelevant beyond providing a tool for classification. In fact, a significant number of *Celestina*'s continuations imitate a previous sequel. Gilman (1972, 363) divides the celestinesque tradition into two blocks, 'those which exaggerate eroticism and crude humor (*La Thebayda, La Seraphina, La Loçana andaluza*) and those which attempt to

[86] Besides Heugas, see Lida de Malkiel (1970), 278-280, for an account of the different traits shared by works of celestinesque. Bataillon (1961), 76-107, argues that the common feature that join together the celestinesque genre is the use of asides and the abundance of maxims and proverbs.

compensate morally for their subject matter—either by concluding the love affair with marriage (*La Eufrosina*, *La Segunda Celestina, La Selvagia*) or by underlying the relationship between transgression and punishment (*La penitencia de amor* or *La tercera Celestina* in which the *alcahueta* falls to her death).' The aesthetic and ideological interests of comedies and tragedies greatly vary from one another for, whereas comedies—as noted by Gilman—aspire to counteract the force of the alien Other in the unfolding of events, tragedies dwell on and investigate *Celestina*'s glimpse into the terrifying Real. *Celestina*'s continuations negotiate the space of anamorphosis articulated by Rojas, as a space that acquires either a Christian, normative and utopian form; or an erotic, secular and deviant appearance. Ultimately, each of these continuations, primarily distinguished by their comic or tragic tones, amount to a dialectical response to Rojas's work and offer a way to approach and compare *Celestina*'s success against the prevailing sixteenth-century ethos and pulse of life.

In addition to the works mentioned above, the *celestinesca* tradition can easily encompass other works that, although not directly related to *Celestina,* are closely linked to it in several ways. Francisco Delicado's *Retrato de la Loçana andaluza*, published anonymously in Venice in 1528, shares with *Celestina* an interest in exploring the lives and modus vivendi of the lower levels of society, an interest that would later become associated with the picaresque genre. Delicado's *Retrato de la Loçana andaluza* is indebted not only to *Celestina*, but also more closely to the works of the Italian Humanist Pietro Aretino. Nonetheless, Aretino's influence is reciprocal since it is believed that Aretino was himself under the influence of Rojas's *Celestina*.[87] On this account, Scott (2017) situates Pietro Aretino's *La vita delle puttane*—the third day of its *Ragionamento* (Rome ca.1525)—and its Spanish translation by Fernán Xuárez, the *Coloquio de las damas* (ca. 1547), among *Celestina*'s sixteenth-century interlocutors. Contrary to Aretino's *Vita*, Xuárez's *Coloquio* contains a dogged moral warning against women's fallen nature and, more sternly, about prostitutes, who need to be contained for the sake of public welfare. In line with Cristóbal de Castillejo's *Diálogo de mujeres* (1544), a text that picks up threads of the medieval *querelle des femmes*, an on-going anti-feminist debate on the evils and virtues of women (Scott 2017, 137). In his translation Xuárez rehearses a moralizing interpretation of both his predecessors,

[87] See Vian Herrero (2003b) for the reciprocal influence between Rojas, Aretino and Xuárez.

Rojas and Aretino. In fact, given the similarities pointed out by Scott (2017), it seems likely that *Celestina*'s reception during the second half of the sixteenth-century was influenced by Xuárez's translation of Aretino's *Vita.*

Of these works, Feliciano de Silva's *Segunda* Celestina inaugurates what is called the *celestinesca* tradition. *Segunda Celestina* reintroduces the character of the procuress in Spanish literature, occluded by the idealizing current of the early years of the sixteenth-century, when *Celestina*'s imitations focused exclusively on the romantic affairs of two patrician lovers. As can be seen, the characters, together with the main plot lines of the works descend from Rojas's *Celestina*, which is imitated, recast and expanded. The authors of *Celestina*'s continuations not only draw inspiration from the original, but also from the immediately preceding continuation so that, when we look at the whole, the collection makes up a coherent grouping of works. In this regard, Keith Whinnom (1988) suggested that the mediation of Silva's *Segunda Celestina* offers cohesion to the continuations in a most powerful way, more so than Rojas's original. And, as a matter of fact, Gáspar Gómez (1536) acknowledges his debt to Silva in the paratextual materials to his *Tercera Celestina* as does Alonso de Villegas Selvago in the prologue to the *Comedia Selvagia*.

Feliciano de Silva was born in 1491 in Ciudad Rodrigo, where his father was an alderman, as his son would be after him.[88] Like Fernando de Rojas, he might have studied in Salamanca, although this remains unclear. As mentioned, Silva was a prolific writer of sequels, particularly romances of chivalry, and as such he enjoyed a vast popularity in sixteenth-century Spain, leaving a lasting imprint on Golden Age prose fiction. His first chivalric romance, a sequel of *Amadís de Gaula* titled *Lisurate de Grecia*,[89] was published in Seville in 1514 and was dedicated to Diego Deza, archbishop of Seville and later Grand Inquisitor of Castile. This first book of chivalric fiction was followed by several others, *Amadís de Grecia* (Cuenca 1530), *Don Florisel de Niquea* (Salamanca and Medina del Campo 1532) and *Don Rogel de Grecia* (Medina del Campo1535). Although his chivalric production was the target of criticism by humanists and moralists on the grounds of its mendacity and lack of verisimilitude--as is true of all the works pertaining to this genre--,

[88] For a historical account of Silva's life and works, see Baranda's (1988) 'Introduction' to *Segunda Celestina,* 30-33.
[89] Lisuarte is the nephew of Amadís.

Silva was widely admired and his works were eagerly sought after. Even López Pinciano in his *Philosophia antigua poética* refrained from criticizing Silva's *Amadís de Grecia*, stating 'no hablo de un *Amadís de Gaula*, ni aún del de Grecia y otros pocos, los quales tienen mucho de bueno.'[90] Cervantes also dedicated some affectionate, yet critical words to Silva in *Don Quijote*:

> Es, pues, de saber que este sobredicho hidalgo, los ratos que estaba ocioso, que eran los más del año, se daba a leer libros de caballerías, con tanta afición y gusto, que olvidó casi de todo punto el ejercicio de la caza, y aun la administración de su hacienda; y llegó a tanto su curiosidad y desatino en esto, que vendió muchas hanegas de tierra de sembradura para comprar libros de caballerías en que leer, y así, llevó a su casa todos cuantos pudo haber dellos; y de todos, ningunos le parecían tan bien como los que compuso el famoso Feliciano de Silva; porque la claridad de su prosa y aquellas entricadas razones suyas le parecían de perlas, y más cuando llegaba a leer aquellos requiebros y cartas de desafíos, donde en muchas partes hallaba escrito: 'La razón de la sinrazón que a mi razón se hace, de tal manera mi razón enflaquece, que con razón me quejo de la vuestra fermosura.' Y también cuando leía: '... los altos cielos que de vuestra divinidad divinamente con las estrellas os fortifican, y os hacen merecedora del merecimiento que merece la vuestra grandeza.'[91]
>
> Con estas razones perdía el pobre caballero el juicio, y desvelábase por entenderlas y desentrañarles el sentido, que no se lo sacara ni las entendiera el mesmo Aristóteles, si resucitara para sólo ello… (*Don Quijote*, Part I, Chapter 1; 2002, 34)

If Cervantes mocks Feliciano de Silva on aesthetic grounds and further reviles his prose in *Don Quijote* I.6 by condemning it all to the bonfire, there is little doubt that he also enjoyed reading Silvas' works. Admiration emerges in parody, suggests Fernando Arrabal (1988), who in his impassioned defense of Silva claims that 'Feliciano de Silva es el escritor más

[90] Quoted in Baranda (1988), 29 n.4.

[91] Márquez Villanueva (1973), and several other critics before him, have noted that these words were probably inspired in Felides' first monologue in *Segunda Celestina*: 'Oh amor, que no hay razón en que tu sinrazón no tenga mayor razón en sus contrarios! Y pues to me niegas con tus sinrazones lo que en razón de tus leyes prometes, con la razón que yo tengo para amar a mi señora Polandria, [etc.]' (Silva 1988, 114) [Oh, love, there is no reason why your unreason would not have more reason through its contraries! And since you deny me with your unreasons what you promise me by reason of your laws, with the reason that I have to love my lady Polandria….]. My gratitude goes to Anne Cruz for this translation.

citado y sin lugar a dudas el más y mejor leído de Cervantes' (1988, 13-14), a debt that has also been underscored out by Márquez Villanueva (1973).

In 1534, Felicano de Silva published his *Segunda comedia de la famosa Celestina, en la qual se trata de la resurreción de la dicha celestina, y de los amores de un caballero llamado Felidez; y de una donzella de clara sangre llamada Polandria*, at Medina del Campo by Pedro Tovans. It was reissued at least four times before 1559, when it was included in the Spanish 'Index of Prohibited Books,'[92] having been printed in Venice (1536), Salamanca (1536) and Antwerp (ca. 1540-1550). When Silva embarked on the composition of the *Segunda Celestina*, he was a mature and dedicated author who was no doubt very familiar with his models. *Segunda Celestina* incorporates into the celestinesca tradition the epistolary exchanges that characterize the earlier sentimental romances, as well as echoes of incipient pastoral fiction, a mode that Silva had inaugurated in *Lisuarte de Grecia*. He goes so far also to incorporate the dramatic use of social registers, typical of Torres Naharro and Lucas Fernández's theatrical pieces, where shepherds would speak in a comical rustic register (referred to as sayagüés) in line with their low social class.[93]

Segunda Celestina, which inaugurates *Celestina*'s cycle of sequels, is Silva's urban and anti-heroic counterpart of the romance of chivalry. Its action takes place in the same unknown city of *Celestina* in a period of time no much later than the events of Rojas's narrative. However, characters and events multiply. Love affairs proliferate and are marked by certain decorum: servants, who in contrast to *Celestina* are reliable and good-hearted, fall in love with other servants of their same status while prostitutes are involved with scoundrels—such as Centurio. Silva tells the love stories of no less than eleven couples, which range from masters to servants to African slaves, already introduced in the title-page to the edition of *Celestina* printed in Valencia in 1529. As in the case of *Celestina*, the love story between a high-ranking young man and woman is the axis around which the entire narration revolves, yet it is complicated by the lives and deeds of the peripheral characters. In *Segunda Celestina*, secondary plots are interwoven in such a way that the contrast between main and subsidiary love plots becomes irrelevant. Silva creates in his *Segunda Celestina* a

[92] The *Segunda Celestina* is the only one of *Celestina*'s continuations that entered the Index.

[93] Avalle-Arce (1959), 37-44, accounts for the inclusion of shepherds in chivalric romances starting from Feliciano de Silva.

plebeian arcadia in which the site of power continues to be, in contrast to what happens in Rojas's *Celestina*, the mansion. In the world of *Segunda Celestina*, there is Platonic love, represented by Filínides, a sheperd who spends his time in the gardens of Polandria's urban palace singing his love sorrows away and to whom the female lover turns in search of amorous advice. In Silva's proletarian arcadia, the sheperd Filínides is, as suggested by Empson in his *Some Versions of the Pastoral* (1950), a romanticized freeman that stands for the worker in a form that allows for the aristocracy to tolerate the painful reality of poverty.[94] Together with the shepherd, the lives of servants are glamorized in order to portray a world without guilt and violence, a world in which notwithstanding urban poverty, prostitution and vagrancy, the hieratic order and the glories of courtly love are never threatened. In effect, masters and servants, no matter if some of the latter are known pimps, coexist and help each other in an unprecedented spirit of camaraderie, a perfect state of concord, welfare, and wantonness. To be sure, Feliciano de Silva's *Segunda Celestina* articulates a literary sociology of love that projects a leveling and harmonizing effect. *Segunda Celestina* delineates a society that celebrates itself through love while mildly attesting to dizzying social change and some of its disastrous consequences. The oppressive social forces of Silva's contemporary society are implied in an idealistic and yet salacious manner, designed to provoke risqué amusement, and joy within a world ruled by civic lawfulness and unwavering social order.

Figure 4.1. Title-page. Fernando de Rojas, *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea.* Valencia in the house of Juan Viñao, 1529. London, British Library.

[94] In Avalle-Arce (1959), 19-20.

Given Silva's undertaking as well as the rates of literacy and the economic circumstances of readers in early sixteenth-century Spain, *Celestina*'s public most likely did not differ much from that of the romances of chivalry, whose thematic configuration would provide a starting point for understanding the literary tastes and practices of the period. Like *Celestina*, the chivalric genre enjoyed tremendous popularity in early modernity, marking an uninterrupted literary continuity with the late Middle Ages. The romances of chivalry, printed mostly in folio editions, exalt a dream-like world of farfetched heroism and piety that remained apart from the frightening social reality of sixteenth-century Spain, which will later surface in the figure of the *pícaro,* the anti-heroic counterpart of the knight. The romances of chivalry, as the courtly verse of *cancionero* poetry before them, came to compensate for a lost world of aristocratic ideals and honor at a time when the upper classes had begun to be displaced and even become redundant as a result of the development of a professional army which drove them off the battlefield, and the appearance of an educated body of clerks (*letrados*) who were in control of the chancery and the larger administrative bureaucracy.[95] In effect, the refined and metaphysical perception of love in prose—as it had before in verse—gained momentum when the decadent and politically dislocated aristocracy sought refuge in an intentionally archaic and hedonistic world of chivalric idealism, a reenactment of a glorious, mythic past. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Charles I was, as were many of the members of his court, himself an avid reader of chivalric romances, which were even dramatically transformed into courtly games and spectacles at court (Eisenberg 1973, 214).[96] The sixteenth-century Iberian romances of chivalry, in which astonishing military prowess, boldfaced expansionist aspirations, and crusading zeal combine (I am thinking of *Las sergas de Espandián* especially), led to a reaffirmation and institutionalization of

[95] Erich Auerbach (2013) notes that the world of courtly romance creates a background of fantasy where the aristocratic class found through refinement and adventure a justification of its mission and power. See Auerbach's 'The Knight sets forth' in *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (2013), 123-143. See also Boase (1978) for a canonical study of *cancionero* poetry in the context of fifteenth-century sociopolitical transformations. Furthermore, see Ana María Gómez-Bravo (2013), who connects the rise of *cancionero* poetry to an emerging body of bureaucrats at the age of the Catholic Monarchs.

[96] See as well George Irvin Dale's 'Games and Social Pastimes in the Spanish Drama of the Golden Age.' *Hispanic Review*, 8 (1940): 219-240.

chivalry, which in turn came to reflect and reinforce Habsburg imperial ambitions in the real world.

Following to a great extent Bartolome Bennassar's *Valladolid au Siècle d'Or* (1967), Maxime Chevalier (1976, 28-30) posits that the sixteenth-century reading public of the romances of chivalry likely encompassed clerics, nobles, *letrados*, a very few tradesmen and a handful of literate servants of noble families, who borrowed the books from their masters to be read aloud among their peers in the servant hall. Both Chevalier (1976) and Eisenberg (1973 and 1982) propose that only the upper classes, and maybe a few wealthy members of the urban bourgeoisie, would regularly have read the romances of chivalry. Chevalier goes even further to suggest that class interest and allegiance would have made the romances of chivalry unpopular among the growing middle and lower social strata, hence producing their eventual decay: 'Lo que impresiona, al concluir esta encuesta, es la correlación perfecta que manifiesta entre la afición de los caballeros a los *Amadises* y el éxito editorial de las novelas. Cuando la aristocracia deja de interesarse por estos libros, la venta decae en seguida y pronto cesan las reimpresiones. Al público de caballeros pudiera, teóricamente, sustituirle otro público. Pero no se dio el hecho' (95-96). Chevalier, as Menéndez Pelayo before him, ascribes the success of *Amadís* and its continuations to upper class nostalgia to escape back into more privileged and hence more glorious times. To be sure, on account of their militant idealizations, the romances of chivalry might have been consumed by the noble classes and wealthy members of the urban bourgeoisie, while the lower ranks of society and the peasantry would most likely have continued to cultivate the oral tradition or pursued ballads circulating in *pliegos sueltos* instead. On the other hand, Sara Nalle (1989), who aims to confront the low book ownership figures with other sorts of data, proposes that the lower classes, artisans and laborers alike, contrary to Chevalier's opinion, also benefited from the spread of literacy. Nalle looks into inquisitorial records that attest to reading knowledge and book ownership in order to provide evidence of literacy in a broader segment of the population. Due to the growing number of schools and to the availability of books, she concludes, more than 50% of the male population could read, an activity that was regarded as an extension of their religious life and that is confirmed by the number of sales of pious books (Nalle 1989, 86).

In her study of sixteenth-century printers and publishers in Cuenca and Toledo,[97] Nalle (1989, 85) corroborates the popularity not only of devotional works but also of the romances of chivalry, which fell under the category of 'libros de entretenimiento.' In fact, 'the inquisitorial evidence shows that the seventeen citizens of Cuenca who owned chivalric novels were not hidalgos, but rather farmers, small-town merchants of Jewish descent and shopkeepers' (Nalle 1989, 88), attesting to an increase in the spread of lay literacy and book-ownership in the second half of the century. The romances of chivalry, as inquisitorial trials demonstrate, were mostly consumed by young and unmarried men and probably some women, who testify to have either read or listened to them fascinated by their fanciful adventures (Nalle 1989, 88-89). Also relying on inquisitorial testimonies, Fernando Bouza (2004, 51-52) further corroborates that the literary culture of early modernity was mainly aural for reading out loud was 'extremely widespread.' In addition, we know that in France the adventures of Renaud de Montauban entered the Bibliothèque Bleue, an early modern collection of chapbooks by means of which booksellers made available for a broader public literary works that had previously circulated only among the wealthy and learned (Chartier 1992, 53 and 55). That being so, Nalle (1989) argues for an 'aristocratization' of the middle and lower ranks of society, whose aspirations to lineage and nobility led to the consumption of literature with nobiliary themes or undertones.[98]

In Chapter 50 of *Don Quijote*'s Part I, the *hidalgo* from La Mancha, whose fondness for chivalric novels is proverbial, affirms that the romances of chivalry 'con gusto general son leídos y celebrados de los grandes y de los chicos, de los pobres y de los ricos, de los letrados e ignorantes, de los plebeyos y caballeros, finalmente, de todo género de personas de cualquier estado y condición que sean' (Cervantes 2002, 524). Besides, in the Prologue to *Don Quijote* Part I, and later in Chapter 48, both Cervantes' unnamed friend and the canon from Toledo ratify the *vulgo*'s liking for this genre as they relate the moral and ethical perils it entails for lower-class readers. The heightened imagination of the romances of chivalry

[97] Her study deals with Guillermo Remón, a Germán-Polish printer who operated in Cuenca between 1528 and 1544, Miguel Rodríguez and Juan de Ayala of Toledo, both of whom operated throughout most of the sixteenth century.

[98] In addition to Nalle, whose study continues to be a point of reference in terms of literacy in early modern Spain, Kagan (1974) and Lawrance (1985) were the first to undertake the investigation of reading and writing proficiency in fifteenth and sixteenth-century Castile.

preoccupied sixteenth-century theologians, moralists, and intellectuals, who deemed the adventures inscribed in them not just useless, but also pernicious as they led readers to mistake lies for truth (Vega 2013). Eisenberg (1973, 25) solves this apparent contradiction by pointing out that the word *vulgo*, did not refer to the peasantry, but to '"the uneducated, without reference to a particular social class:' 'The intelligentsia (of which the canon in *Don Quijote* would have formed part) was never the class that read the romances of chivalry; they were responsible for the Erasmian and moralists' complains against them. If, but only if, the word *vulgo* is understood without class implications, as merely meaning "todo aquel que no sabe," it is true that the romances were read by the vulgo' (Eisenberg 1973, 226). However, Eisenberg leaves unproven the basic premise of his argument, that the lower classes did not consume chivalric romances. 'One difficulty in Chevalier and Eisenberg's position is the assumption that only the upper classes could be interested in the feudal society depicted in these books' states Nalle (1989, 88), because 'such a view ignores the steady aristocratization of Spanish culture and values that was taking place during the sixteenth century.' Sixteenth-century Castilians aspired to ennoblement and to a certification of their pure linage. This being so, the popularity of chivalric romances coincided with a widespread, and not just high-class, fascination with aristocratic *modus vivendi* in which manners, power and spirituality harmonically unite. In this regard, Angus Mackay (1989) provides historical evidence of the uses and abuses of courtly ideals in the urban context of Loja, where in 1509 court proceedings record the sexual affairs of its citizens, including several 'licenciados,' aldermen, judges, the mayor, a vicar, an abbot, and the nephew of a bishop, besides of course their female lovers. Loja's proceedings revealed that a series of wife-swapping and homosexual encounters, sugar-coated and related in courtly terminology, were the cause of civic violence and, at the same time, they provide evidence of the cultivation of a courtly life style by a wide and socially diverse portion of the population. In this way, Mackay proves that the preoccupation shared by moralists, theologians and humanists about courtly literature's ability to plunge the world into chaos and social disorder was indeed not groundless.

Therefore, it is safe to conclude that the public of the chivalric romances was not solely limited to the nobility, the upper bourgeoisie and the 'intelligentsia,' who engaged with these fictions not only to condemn, but also to praise them—as Juan de Valdés praises

Amadís de Gaula in his *Diálogo de la lengua*—; it also encompassed, especially as the century progressed, a socially heterogeneous group of readers, who one way or another engaged with their stories in a search for hedonistic escapism and a handbook of courtly manners. Although initially conceived for noble audiences, the romances of chivalry very much like Baldassare Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano*, another editorial success of early modernity translated into Spanish by Juan de Boscán in 1534, took over the non-courtly market, bearing witness to the fluidity of social boundaries and, along with it, to a more diverse, aspirational reading public.[99]

The romances of chivalry and Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano* shared their popularity with Fernando de Rojas's *Celestina*. When read from a perspective that privileges the positive side of the text over the zero position (see Chapter 1), *Celestina* shared with the chivalric genre a courtly understanding of love and a transcendental vision of life. *Celestina* was both praised and condemned along with the chivalric romances and the sentimental novels by humanists such as Juan Luis Vives. Moreover, as shown in Chapter 3, *Celestina* was also interpreted by its printers as a courtly text often associated through its woodcuts with the chivalric and courtly environment of the sentimental novels, in which manners and linguistic self-fashioning are central, as demonstrated by Dulce M. García (1996).[100] In addition, Scott (2017) recognizes in *Celestina* the same preoccupation toward linguistic self-fashioning as in *Il Cortegiano*. According to Scott, *Celestina*'s characters appropriate the aristocratic language of self-fashioning, especially the urban patrician Calisto, who fabricates an image of himself as a courtly lover in order to realize his carnal desires. Calisto's actions, Scott observes, find a parallel in the historical lustful people of Loja, a fact that might suggest that 'in sixteenth-century Spain and Italy, Calisto and Melibea could easily have been interpreted as individuals seeking to adhere to the aristocratic conventions and discourses advised in works such as *Il Cortegiano*' (Scott 2017, 97). As Scott (2017, 97-98) remarks, 'they [the two lovers, Calisto and Melibea] may well have provided, an amusing example of how *not* to go about fashioning a "courtly" identity for oneself, showing instead how, like the real inhabitants of Loja, courtly self-fashioning could go wrong and thus supplementing the advice of Castiglione's text.' In light of all this, it seems reasonable to believe that, over the

[99] For the European early modern reception of *Il Cortegiano*, see Burke (1996).
[100] The notion of Renaissance self-fashioning was coined by Stephen Greenblatt (1980).

course of the sixteenth century, *Celestina* was most likely increasingly available to a diverse audience formed not only by a noble, clerical and bourgeois public, but also to some professionals, merchants and shopkeepers. That being so, Feliciano de Silva's *Segunda Celestina* was most likely read by the same public that enjoyed Rojas's *Celestina*, the romances of chivalry and Castiglione's *Cortegiano*. Relying on the success of these 'best-selling' literary models, and the proximity of the title of his own work to Roja's by now classic book, Silva envisioned a sentimental, and light-hearted text that moves in between the idealization of *Celestina*'s portrayal of everyday life in an early modern urban center.

Feliciano de Silva's *Segunda Celestina* imagines a life-sized community of characters, whose traits mimic but are far distant from the well-rounded marginal society of *Celestina,* the common scoundrels of the picaresque genre and, much later, of *Don Quijote*'s everyday heroes. Silva paints an urban, quotidian environment populated by a community of loyal servants, pimps, rogues and prostitutes, establishing both a continuity with Rojas and a burlesque genealogy built upon the fabrication of a common, at-times- mysterious past that links Celestina to the new characters he develops. As a paradigmatic example, in Act 13, it is revealed that Pandulfo, a comic character that closely resembles the honorable villain of Golden Age drama in his display of loyalty, cowardice and frequent braggadocios,[101] is the grandson of Mollejas 'el hortelano' (named in *Celestina*), and that Celestina and his mother, as the old bawd recounts, conducted some clandestine business similar to the one undertaken by her and Claudina, Pármeno's mother, in Rojas's work:

> CELESTINA. Pues hijo, como crees en Dios, cree lo que te tengo dicho; y no estés engañado en el amor que me tienes, que para el siglo que nos sostiene, que tu agüelo Mollejas el hortelano no tuvo mayor amiga que a mí; y a tu madre Garatusa y a tu padre Çurracas [el curtidor] ¡es verdad que poco conocimiento tuve con ellos, y que pocas vezes comí en su casa y ellos en la mía! Assí que, hijo, no me maravillo que del conocimiento passado se te engendrase el amor que me tienes y te tengo; y aún, por tu vida, que me acuerdo que fui tu comadre cuando te bautizaron. […] Pues por vida tuya y mía que eres mi ahijado; mira si tienes razón para me querer. Y aun si tiempo hubiera, yo te dixera cosas de grande importancia que entre tu madre que haya gloria y yo pasaron, y mí pasaron; más andar, quédese para otro día, que hay más días que longanizas. (Silva 1988, 240)

[101] For a study of the villain in Golden Age dramatic works, see Salomon (1985).

In this passage, which mimics Celestina's encounter with Pármeno in Rojas's *Celestina*, the old bawd links her past to Pandulfo's in a double way by implying, on the one hand, that she was chosen as his Christian godmother due to her friendship with Pandulfo's family and, on the other, that she was his mother's partner in crime. Celestina further establishes a similar relation between her and Felides as well as Polandria, a connection that is based mostly on religious and commercial grounds. This genealogy is based on memory, whose workings, Baranda notes (1988, 50-57), operates at two levels, an intradiegetic and extradiegetic one, and serves to articulate the experience of both characters and readers, who either have had access to the book or know about it through hearsay since it was part of the contemporary collective literary consciousness, probably circulating orally also.

Segunda Celestina opens with Felides, a noble young man in love with the equally patrician Polandria, complaining to his servant, Sigeril, about his amorous sufferings. Given the death of Celestina, Sigeril suggests entrusting the successful conclusion of his infatuation to Pandulfo, not only a domestic servant, but also a rogue who promotes the trafficking of sex in his capacity as Palana's pimp. Pandulfo comes to fill the void left by Celestina's death up until the moment of her reappearance, and even after, when Pandulfo becomes her competitor acting on his own in order to secure his master's success. Instead of engaging in business with Pandulfo, as she previously had done with Pármeno and Sempronio; Celestina, who publicly claims to have resurrected by virtue of a miracle effected by her desire to repent and amend evil deeds and trespasses against others, cautiously keeps her love dealings to herself. On this occasion, Celestina refuses to help Felides unless he seeks Christian advice in order to prevent him from harming himself, in addition to absolution for his wrongdoings.'Hijo," Celestina says to him, "si es mal de pena, yo holgaré de consolarle, porque Dios dizen los teólogos que es causa de los males de pena, y para esso son los buenos, y a esso vine al mundo, siendo apartada d'él; mas si es mal de culpa no es mi hábito ni de mi autoridad, porque en los tales no se halla Dios, y por la tal razón no se deven hallar sus siervos' (Rojas 242). Lovesickness, Celestina goes on to say, is the result of a guilty look, which results in madness: 'He, he, he; hijo, esse mal más propio es de culpa de mirar y otras ocasiones; que la pena antes es remedio en los tales, pues sabe que el loco dizen que por la pena es cuerdo' (Silva 243). On these grounds, she refuses, at first, to ease Felides' sorrows:

> Mi amor, no curo yo tales enfermedades, pues sabes un proverbio que dize, que quien de locura enfermó, que tarde o nunca sanó; y el consejo que para esso yo puedo dar es apartar tales vanidades. Ya passó, hijo, esse tiempo de liviandades, y antes es de hazer penitencia de lo passado que de perseverar en lo presente y por venir, pues sabes que de los hombres es el pecar, mas diabólico el perseverar. (Silva 1988, 243)

Celestina recommends Felides to live a life free from vanity, that is, free of carnal desire, instead of persevering in the sinful sexual behavior of men like Calisto who came before him. These words echo Act 1 of the original *Celestina*, in which Celestina addresses Pármeno in like manner: 'De los hombres es errar e bestial es la porfía. Por ende gózome, Pármeno, que ayas limpiado las turbias telas de tus ojos e respondido al reconoscimiento' (128). Not long after, Celestina agrees to meet with Felides in a monastery 'por más honestidad' (Silva 1988, 243).

Feliciano de Silva's Celestina modifies, but does not completely abandon, her old ways. Most notably, she renounces the use of black magic and behaves more like an overly pious prioress, infusing her speech with allusions to the New Testament and Christian values. *Celestina* presents a case of *philocaptio,* a love spell that arises in the victim, notwithstanding any previous feelings of contempt or affection, a frenzied passion for the love object, which amounts to an illness, love sickness, and to a form of madness whose only way out is death. Act 3 of Rojas's *Celestina*, in which Celestina conjures the Devil addressing him as 'triste Plutón, señor de la profundidad infernal [etc.]' (147), is the key moment upon which scholars have articulated their interpretation of the presence of magic in Rojas's work. They further support their conclusions with Pármeno's warning to Calisto in Act 1—'¿Quién te podría decir lo que esta vieja hazía? Y todo era burla y mentira' (113)—, seen as a sign both of fear, by those scholars who believe in Celestina's arts, and of disbelief, by those who do not. The function and efficacy of magic in *Celestina* has been a topic of much critical debate. The scholarship is divided between those who think that Celestina's success is due to the intervention of magic and those that, attribute it to her rhetorical ability. For Russell (1978a), as for many critics after him,[102] magic has a crucial impact in the development of the plot given that, as Russell notes, because of Celestina's *philocaptio* Melibea's surrenders to

[102] De Armas (1971), Rico (1975), Deyermond (1977), Severin (1995) and Vian Herrero (1990, 1997), among many others.

Calisto's love request, precipitating the tragic ending of their love story. Instead, Snow (1999) argues that Celestina's main faculty is not her knowledge of magic, but her persuasive skill and psychological manipulation, which she skillfully operates on all the characters' weaknesses. Gerli (2011) puts into question Celestina's faith in the power of supernatural forces and calls the attention to the presence of competing epistemologies in Rojas's work and towards the construction of characters as thinking, feeling and autonomous subjects, who continuously alter the manner in which they perceive the world and hence act. Gerli (2011b) situates Celestina's loud, theatrical and haughty invocation of the Devil in its dramatic context and concludes that it constitutes Celestina's answer to Sempronio's fear of failure, expressed immediately before; in other words, it constitutes an intentionally vocal attempt to uphold her reputation. Celestina's braggadocio, Gerli maintains (2011b, 163), is betrayed in her ensuing soliloquy, pronounced on her way to Pleberio's house at the beginning of Act 4 in which she reasonably weighs the risks and benefits of her enterprise, evincing her lack of confidence in the Devil and her need to exercise cold reason and logic instead of relying on the supernatural. In other terms, Américo Castro (1965; 74, 118-119 144) has interpreted the invocation of Pluto as a parody of Christian prayers. Notwithstanding the validity of the numerous scholarly interpretations of it, magic is one of the crucial elements of anamorphosis in Rojas's *Celestina* precisely because of its multifaceted polysemous representation, which cannot be reduced to any single perspective. Magic stands for a world of uncertainties, contingencies, and incongruities in a world that vacillates between faith—either in God or the Devil—and logical reasoning. In Feliciano de Silva's *Segunda Celestina,* the old bawd abandons her use of witchcraft and necromancy, relying instead on logic and on the teachings of the Christian faith, which she has corroborated during her fictitious death, when she claims to have visited, depending on the situation, Heaven or Hell.

After her resurrection, Celestina returns to her old house where she finds Elicia, impoverished as a result of her detachment from the "profession." Celestina questions Elicia on the whereabouts of Calisto's golden chain and coins. Elicia, who has extravagantly spent Celestina's legacy to her and attempts to make Celestina believe that all her wealth is safely hidden. However, relying solely on her logical powers Celestina unravels Elicia's lie:

> CELESTINA.- Yo lo tengo, hija, bien conoscido. Yo todo lo que al presente para comenzar nuestro trato me dieres, créeme que saldrá a logro del caudal. Porque más thesoros enterrados traygo sabidos que años tengo a cuestas; de todas tres

> serán sabidos y de todas será la ganancia, que no tengo ya necessidad de invocaciones a Plutón porque de allá traygo sabidos todos sus secretos. Y al presente, porque no sientan que tenemos tanta riqueza, los thesoros estarán bien guardados donde están, que yos certifico que nadie nos los hurte hasta que vamos por ellos; y si lo sienten, luego el rey se metería en querer su quinto, y no faltarían embidiosos, por donde se pusiesse en peligro nuestra vida perderse tras el caudal. Assí que conviene al presente, en esto como en lo demás, gran secreto y disimulación, que el tiempo adelante nos dirá lo que havemos de hazer. [Etc.] (Silva 1988, 194-195)

In Feliciano de Silva's *Segunda Celestina* the power of magic is undercut and replaced, not by logic as was the case of *Celestina* (Gerli 2011), but by Christian doctrine, another kind of preternatural belief. Silva moves away from a nihilistic and preternatural perception of the universe toward a Christian one precisely at a time when witchcraft had taken central stage in early modern culture. Building on the historical investigations of Lynn Thorndike (1905) and Caro Baroja (1964), Peter Russell (1978a, 246) notes that the accusations of witchcraft in late-fifteenth and sixteenth-century Spain are numerous and that these allegations, which came both from theologians and lay moralists, are rooted on a stern belief in the efficacy of magic and other demoniacal practices.[103] In early modern Europe, magic was deemed real and, of course, heretical, for it implied a pact with the devil through sorcery and necromancy. Spain, which saw widespread accusations of witchcraft and condemnations of sorcery, prosecuted them with the help of the Church and of the secular intelligentsia. The majority of the women put on trial for sorcery were, as studied by Mary Elizabeth Perry (1990, 20-32), actually female healers. These women were the unrecognized physicians and nurses of the early modernity, eventually replaced by male professionals, who deemed their practices magic and superstitious and proscribed them in books in order to regulate them. Perry (1990, 20-21) finds documentary evidence, for example, that 'the women of Seville performed a great part of the work of healing in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, despite the clash between popular and official cultures and the growing determination of men who dominated

[103] Russell (1978a, 246-254) provides a historical and cultural account of magic in the Iberian Peninsula from the Middle Ages up to early modernity. See also, Pedro Cátedra (1989) for a study of magic at the University of Salamanca during the age of the Catholic Monarchs, and the works of Maria Tausiet, especially *Urban Magic in Early Modern Spain: Abracadabra Omnipotens* (2014), for witchcraft in early modern Spain.

official culture to control the women working within a popular tradition.' Female healers were discredited and punished by the Inquisition as witches and sorcerers and were often denounced by some of their very clients who resented their fees or who feared their power (Perry 1990, 30). Conflicting with this widespread belief in the occult, Pedro Ciruelo—a Salamanca theologian and mathematician—published ca. 1530 his *Reprobación de supersticiones y hechicerías*, in which he concludes that 'all superstition…is based either on the desire for illicit knowledge or material gain' (Gerli 2011b, 164). The publication of the *Reprobación de supersticiones y hechicerías* was most likely concurrent with the composition of *Segunda Celestina*, a work that cancels out illicit and excessive desire, both sexual and material, in the face of a more measured vision of love and Christian charity.

To be sure, the belief in dark supernatural forces amounts to a realization of the urgency of human desire. Witchcraft was inseparable from lust, and hence, from women, who since classical antiquity were associated with carnality and held responsible for male sexual excesses. In the misogynistic discourse of the Middle Ages and early modernity (see Chapter 1), women, as descendants of Eve, were believed to be more susceptible to the temptations of the devil. In the most popular handbook for which hunters, Heinrich Kramer and James Sprenger's *Malleus Malleficarum* (ca. 1484), witches are inextricably linked to sexual desire and identified as 'adulterous drabs and whores' who want to undermine the sacrament of matrimony and, alongside it, the Church and the patriarchal system of values (Gossy 1989, 45). In order to do so, they were accused of facilitating and performing unlawful sex and provoking impotence in married men (Gossy 1989, 45). To a significant extent, Celestina is portrayed in Rojas's original as a prototypical sorcerer given that she is characterized as a lusty woman, a healer, an apothecary, and a sexual enabler. Celestina is a character that transgresses established norms, boundaries, and hierarchies to such an extent that, as Gossy (1989, 34) remarks, 'through her willingness to encourage sexual intercourse outside matrimony—[she avoids] the legitimizing and controlling power of the Church and the economic influence of the patriarchal family.' Celestina, a charlatan and a contrived practitioner of *philocaptio*, provides an outlet for humankind's forbidden pleasures and desires. In consequence, as she smooths the path for the kind of behavior deemed immoral by the dominant culture, she and those of her kind—prostitutes, female healers and other

'free' women—are blamed for society's disorder and every evil.[104] They are society's scapegoats.

González Echevarría observes that Rojas's Celestina is a *pharmakos*—or both the remedy and poison and a scapegoat-- because 'she is slain to purify the city' (1993, 34). I would add, too, that she is that because her death brings a certain sense of social and moral cleansing.[105] Celestina, he maintains, stands for the Logos. She incarnates the word in its negative aspects, in all its corruptible arbitrariness (González Echevarría 1993, 26 and 30). Building upon Derrida's expositions on the Western distrust of written language in his *Dissemination* (1981), and more precisely on his chapter 'La pharmacie de Platon,' Celestina unveils as the negative opposite of Socrates, who is referred to as *pharmakeus* (the magician of words and counter force to the death of souls) in Plato's *Phaedrus.* In this regard the remedies she offers incarnate the *pharmakon*, the poison that cures, except as its negative counterpart. Hence, Celestina's words ultimately bring only death and devastation (1993, 26 and 34). As 'the *pharmakeus-pharmakon* Celestina incarnates a supplementarity by which language, logic, reason, and logos are made to rehearse their demonic, condemned being, one that brings out all that is illogical, unreasonable, unlawful and for which it is denied or persecuted' (1993, 34). Celestina as a sexual enabler is the dismantler of social order, in effect, her dealing would inevitably lead to the death of the lovers and to widespread social unrest, as conveyed in Melibea's very words to Pleberio: 'Bien ves y oyes este triste y doloroso sentimiento que toda la cibdad haze. Bien oyes este clamor de campanas, este alarido de gentes, este aullido de canes, este grande strépito de armas. De todo fui yo la causa' (333). But Melibea's sexual transgression is not the primary cause of the disorder, the primary cause is Celestina's pandering and lies, and her corruption of language. Therefore, Celestina must inevitably suffer the consequences of her linguistic trespass: 'she will be physically rent apart, penetrated, split, like the metaphors through which language has

[104] See Dangler (2001) for an account and analysis of medicine and female healers in medieval and early modern Iberia as in the works of Roig, Rojas and Delicado. According to Dangler, Celestina, as a female healer and *medianera*, is designed to disparage the labor of women as doctors right at a time when the Catholic Monarchs had begun to persecute with the help of the recently stablished Inquisition Tribunal unconventional women.

[105] The function of Celestina as scapegoat has been noted and studied by Herrero (1984), Gossy (1989) and Echevarría (1993), in the main.

stripped away its figurative layers and impeded the process by which desire and language would lead to a general sharing' (Echevarría 1993, 26). Celestina's hymen mending and sexual mediation, Gossy (1989) maintains in her 'Hymen and Text in *La Celestina*,' foreground the arbitrariness and conventional nature of language and of patriarchal values, bringing about social chaos by exposing the cover-up. In this manner, Rojas anamorphically highlights the threat posed by Celestina's 'otherness,' textually embodied as well in all of society's 'others,' who stand the same as women for phallus as the main signifier of castration.

In an attempt to make up for Rojas's glimpse into the Real, in his reception of *Celestina* Silva lessens the 'others' ability to subvert the social order. In Silva's *Segunda Celestina*, the underworld of servants, rogues and prostitutes takes on the central role and remains a central presence while the old bawd, together with her supernatural arts and powers gradually recede. Celestina trades in subversion and destruction, and it is the social chaos that the go-between embodies that Silva suppresses and contains. Through the resurrection of the go-between and her seemingly disingenuous conversion into a pious woman, *Segunda Celestina* seems to attempt to advocate and create a community based on Christian humanitarian ideals. In this new society language not only has the power to destroy, but to create, as the fruitful exchange of letters between the two lovers demonstrates. By invalidating magic and allowing for a productive way-out of the impasse of inordinate desire through secret marriage, Silva counterbalances the subversion of social hierarchies carried out in Rojas's *Celestina* and imposes a new order upon a sexually unruly world. Celestina, as scapegoat or *pharmakos*, is hence resurrected to be singled out and alienated, cast aside, as are her minions Elicia and Areúsa, Celestina's direct successors in the business of pandering and prostitution. In this regard, it is significant that in the banquet scene that replicates Act 9 of *Celestina* (Act 13 in *Segunda Celestina*), Areúsa does not express jealousy of Melibea's refined, aristocratic beauty, but rather of Palana's, the prostitute Pandulfo sponsors and who works in a public brothel. Several acts later (Act 22), Palana is obliged to defend herself against the verbal and physical attacks of Celestina, Areúsa and Elicia, who accuse her of being filthy, slovenly, and drunken. To their abusive remarks, Palana replies addressing Elicia: 'Vos sois la ramera y la establera, que yo limpiamente y público vivo de mi oficio, y no ganando dineros secretos como vos. Yo soy tan buena como vos y mejor'

(Silva 1988, 346). This shift in the object of jealousy together with Palana's condemnation of Elicia and Areúsa introduces a fundamental change as it degrades Areúsa and demotes her from being an upholder of freedom and inborn dignity of every individual down to the level of an unexceptional whore, hence pushing her further to the margin. The banquet, which functions as a celebration of the lower classes and as the locus where patriarchal values are dismantled in an simulacrum of social insurgency, is dismissed in *Segunda Celestina* as a meaningless bacchanal suddenly that is contraposed to blissful scenes of letter reading.[106] Despite Celestina's intercession, the union between the two young lovers is to a greater extent mediated and achieved through the intercession of their servants, first and foremost, by Pandulfo and Poncia, Polandria's principal female servant. It is in fact Poncia, whose characterization is closer to the female servants in chivalric fictions than to Lucrecia in Rojas's *Celestina*, and who insists upon and eventually performs the secret marriage between the two lovers in Act 31.

Magic reappears in the tragedies and tragicomedies of the celestinesque tradition, specifically in Sancho Muñón's *Tragicomedia de Lisandro y Roselia* (1542), the anonymous *Tragedia Policiana* (1542) and the mysterious *Tragicomedia de Poliodoro y Casandrina* (c. 1564).[107] In these works, in which *Celestina*'s space of anamorphosis takes the shape of a raw eroticism and materialism which opens the path for the development of the female picaresque, a belief in demonic forces is combined with an emphasis on reason and logical thought. In the worldly universe of these works, procuresses die violently, as does Rojas's Celestina, in pursuit of monetary rewards. Through the violent death of the go-between, tragedies and tragicomedies rehearse the sacrificial death of the scapegoat, pictorially represented in the title page of Gaspar Gómez's *Tercera parte de la tragicomedia de Celestina*. Gaspar Gómez provides a happy and lawful conclusion to the secret marriages of *Segunda Celestina*, here celebrated in a church ceremony, after which Celestina accidentally falls to her death down a set of stairs. This title page anticipates a change in tone that is realized in Sancho de Muñón's *Tragicomedia de Lisandro y Roselia llamada Elicia y por*

[106] For a recent and comprehensive study of *Celestina*'s banquet, see Gerli (2011).

[107] The role played by magic is not the same in every continuation of *Celestina*, in fact, the treatment of the supernatural varies greatly from comedies to tragedies and tragicomedies. See Vian Herrero (1997) for a study of magic in the celestinesque from a critical point of view that departs from Russell's (1978a) premises on magic in *Celestina.*

otro nombre cuarta obra y tercera Celestina (Salamanca 1542), in which Elicia—Celestina's professional heir—is burnt at the stake. The punitive undertones are further emphasized through an anamorphic visual trick that makes the Roman numerals under the title read *MDrrrir* (Morir), 'to die.' This metonymy was first noted by Matthew Bentley (2006) who discovered the clever visual equivalency between the attestation of time in the Roman numeral date and the anamorphic verbal presence of death in the title page to the edition of *Qüestion de amor* printed in Zaragoza in 1539. According to Bentley (2006, 47), the optical illusion is both methodical and deliberate.

Figure 4.2. Title-page. Gaspar Gómez, *Tercera parte de la tragicomedia de Celestina*: *va p[er]siguiendo en los amores de Felides y Poladria : concluyense sus desseados desposorios y la muerte y desdichado fin que ella vuo* [Third Part of Celestina's Tragicomedy: Which Continues the Love Affair Between Felides and Polandria: Ending with Their Wedding and the Death and Tragic End That Occurs]. Toledo in the house of Hernando de Santa Catalina, 1539. Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España.

As expressed in the title, *Segunda comedia de Celestina*, an optimistic vision of existence prevails over the skeptical nihilism of Rojas's *Celestina,* and over the harsh conditions of everyday life that, by the early decades of the sixteenth century, were beginning to devastate the lower sectors of society in Spanish urban centers. Following Rojas's example, *Segunda Celestina*'s *carta proemial* emphasizes the moral aspects of the work,

which are conveyed under a cloak of humor for, as Silva intimates, 'como ya los hombres tengan el gusto tan dañado para recebir las virtudes, trae mucho aparejo traer cubierto de oro de burlas apazibles el azíbar que todos resciben en la verdad, en las cosas de que se puede sacar provecho' (Silva 1988, 105). Silva thus declares that his *Segunda Celestina* is to contain and convey the truth under the cloak of comedy. Among his literary models, he states, are Juvenal, who in the guise of satire reprehended vice in order to lay bare the path toward virtue, and Seneca, whose tragedies on the fall of princes serve as an admonition to guard oneself against the blows of Fortune. Silva also declares to have modelled his *Segunda Celestina* on Plautus and Terence, both of them representative of the so-called humanistic comedy, which staged the treachery of servants and the perfidy of love, and which scholars such as Lida de Malkiel (1970) and Canet Vallés (2011) have claimed provide the ultimate literary origins of Rojas's *Celestina.* This way, Silva, a reader of *Celestina*, recognizes *Celestina*'s literary forebears and claims to have brought them together once again in his work. Silva's foreword is followed by a series of celebratory stanzas by Pedro de Mercado, 'corrector' of Silva's work. In his verses addressing the reader, Mercado, emulating the role of Alonso de Proaza in Rojas's *Celestina,* praises Silva's style and the joviality of his work, concluding by calling attention, as Rojas had done in his prefatory materials, to the abundance of maxims, and to the noble warrior's need for knowledge:

> Y mira, letor, con gran diligencia,
> no passes liviano por esta gran obra,
> pues lo que falta de grande le sobra
> así en el estilo y en buena sentencia;
> y aliende de ver su gran excelencia,
> vieras el refrán complido y entero:
> no embota el saber la lança del guerrero
> donde es la nobleza llena de ciencia. (Silva 1988, 110-111)

In light of the above, the prefatory materials to *Segunda Celestina* imply a cultivated reader who is a member of the higher echelons of society, a man of arms and letters, probably the same reader that Chevalier and Eisenberg proposed for the romances of chivalry. The title-page of *Segunda Celestina* includes the woodcuts from Pedro Tovans' Zamora, 1530 edition of *Celestina* illustrating the first love encounter between Calisto and Melibea in Act 14, and the former's death. Nonetheless, Calisto's death is completely absent from Silva's *Segunda Celestina* so that Tovans' moralistic illustration in his edition of the *Segunda Celestina*

conveys more about the representation of Rojas's *Celestina* in the collective imaginary than Silva's own continuation. To be sure, Feliciano de Silva patterns his work on defining features of Rojas's *Celestina*; hence, adopting the use of dominant formal elements, such as, asides, laughter and maxims, which are inextricably interwoven in the text. Yet with regard to its thematic and ideological composition, *Segunda Celestina* produces an anamorphic redoubling modelled on Rojas's *Celestina* that produces a Christian, normative and utopian perspective. In the urban setting of *Segunda Celestina*, communal ties are fostered among social groups, whereas Celestina together with the underworld of prostitution and criminality she inhabits become marginalized by a society in which she is looked upon as redundant. Celestina, who stands for the negative side of language and the force of the Other to lead humankind to the margins of society and eventually to the abyss of death, is transformed by Silva into a God-fearing woman, whose faith, although at times unreliable and erratic, prevents her from wreaking further destruction.

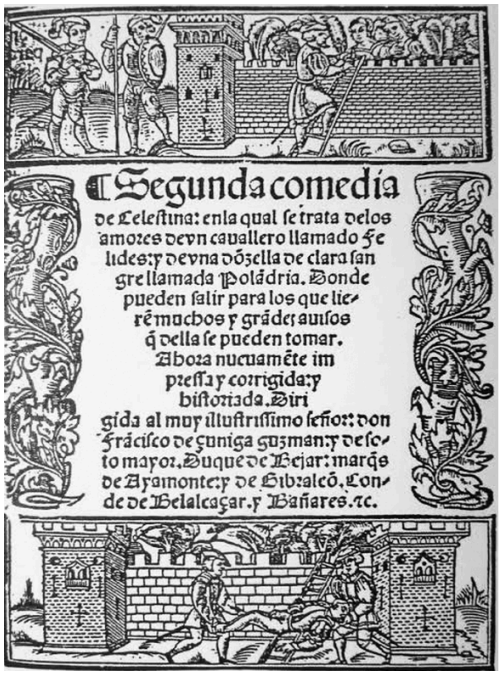
Segunda comedia
de Celestina: enla qual se trata delos amores devn cauallero llamado Felides: y devna dõzella de clara sangre llamada Poládria. Donde pueden salir para los que lierẽ muchos y grãdes auisos q̃ della se pueden tomar. Aboza nuevamẽte impressa y corrigida: y bistoriada. Diri
gida al muy illustrissimo señor: don Frãcisco de Çuniga Guzman: y de seto mayor. Duque de Bejar: marqs de Ayamonte: y de Gibraleõ. Conde de Belalcaçar. y Bañares. ꝛc.

Figure 4.3. Title-page. Feliciano de Silva, *Segunda comedia de Celestina* [Second Comedy of Celestina]. Medina del Campo, 1534. Copy from the reproduction in Silva (1988).

The publication of *Segunda Celestina* takes places against a backdrop of increased theological, ethical, and ideological concern about the conditions of the poor. Since the beginning of the sixteenth century, complex socioeconomic, political and spiritual

transformations propelled a dramatic increase in Spain in the number of marginal and impoverished groups. Society suddenly felt itself undermined by the appearance of large numbers of vagrants, delinquents, prostitutes, and black slaves, a by-product of Iberian colonization and seafaring voyages. The definitive rupture of the feudal system and the subsequent urban development together with the emergence of capitalism, food shortages, price increases and intermittent plagues left a wide range of individuals completely destitute and wholly disenfranchised. Despite the gold coming from the Americas, royal policies failed to secure any real profit. The disastrous economy of the country led to a relentless and out-of-control proliferation of beggars, vagrants and criminals that populated the Spanish developing urban centers with an underworld of delinquency and roguery. The disenfranchised and the impoverished streamed into the streets of Spanish cities, giving rise to a widespread debate on poverty and delinquency. In this context, the awareness regarding the conditions of the dispossessed grew significantly. The humanists in particular, for whom poverty was an extremely disconcerting and widespread social disease, became responsive to the pulse and hardships of daily life and looked for a remedy to alleviate the sufferings of the poor through organized activity.[108]

The earliest proposal for a solution to these social ills, the *Forma subventionis pauperum*, was issued at Ypres in the West of Flanders in 1525. It was followed by a series of reformist projects proposed by the most renowned humanists of the early sixteenth century: Erasmus of Rotterdam, Thomas Moore, and the Spanish *converso* exile Juan Luis Vives, whose treatise *De subventione pauperum*, printed in 1526, exerted a determining influence in the Iberian Peninsula.[109] Based on religious grounds and under the influence of Moore's *Utopia*, Vives condemned private property and advocated for a redistribution of natural resources and wealth. According to Vives, God has bestowed everything in nature as a common endowment to all (Herrero 1979). 'Nothing in fact belongs to anybody' claimed Vives and hence 'he who does not share with the poor all that he has beyond the essential requirements of nature is a thief:' 'A thief is, I say, a thief and a swindler, he who gambles his wealth away, keeps it in his chests, squanders it into banquets or games, on excessively

[108] See Maravall (1986) for detailed study of this social background, which critics agree eventually led to the emergence of the picaresque.
[109] For a comprehensive collection of studies on Vives' life and works, see Fantazzi (2008).

pompous apparel or baubles loaded with gold and silver' (*De subventione pauperum*).[110] This way Vives 'clearly implies that the true thieves are the judges who apply the laws, the generals who command the armies, and the powerful who own the wealth and hold the ultimate political power' (Herrero 1979, 878). The ultimate source of the problem was, according to Vives in his indignation, political absolutism, a colossal form of oppression that allowed for the powerful few to amass great fortunes while the masses, who are the real victims—exploited, tortured and starved—, are blamed for the sociopolitical disaster. This way, Vives' utopian communism proposes that the city should take up the pauper's welfare and rehabilitation by providing the destitute with education and work, while blaming the wealthy for their destitution.

When *Segunda Celestina* was published Rojas's *Celestina* was already a 'best-selling' and a widely known and quoted work, as Snow corroborates in the first of his bibliographical catalogues (1997). As introduced above, in the years preceding Silva's sequel, the old bawd had begun to take on a more prominent position in the printed editions of the *Tragicomedia*, as became apparent in the edition printed in Seville ca. 1518, whose title reads *Libro de Calixto y Melibea y de la puta vieja Celestina*, and had also been recuperated by Francisco Delicado in his *Retrato de la Loçana andaluza, el qual Retrato demuestra que en Roma passaua y contiene munchas mas cosas que la Celestina* (1528). In effect, Rojas's work already constituted a *tour de force* for the early modern person of letters.

In his *Diálogo de la lengua* (1535), Valdés praises *Celestina* and its authors' wit, although he expresses some doubts about its morality and the motivations behind the characters' actions. When his imaginary interlocutor, Marcio, asks Valdés fictional *alter ego* his opinion on *Celestina*—'¿Qué decís de Celestina? Pues vos mucho su amigo soléis ser' (Valdés 2004, n.p.)—, Valdés praises *Celestina*'s decorum and the character of the bawd, but laments Melibea's weaknesses in giving herself so soon to the pleasures of carnal love:

> VALDÉS.- *Celestina* me contenta el ingenio del autor que la comenzó, y no tanto el del que la acabó; el juicio de todos dos me satisface mucho, porque exprimieron a mi ver muy bien y con mucha destreza las naturales condiciones

[110] In Herrero (1979), 877. Before the publication of the article quoted here, Javier Herrero translated *De subventione pauperum* (1942), Valencia: Universidad de Valencia. For the original Latin text, see Vives (2002).

de las personas que introdujeron en su tragicomedia, guardando el decoro de ellas desde el principio hasta la fin.

MARCIO.- ¿Cuáles personas os parecen que están mejor exprimidas?
VALDÉS.- La de Celestina está a mi ver perfectísima en todo cuanto pertenece a una fina alcahueta, y las de Sempronio y Pármeno; la de Calisto no está mal, y la de Melibea pudiera estar mejor.
MARCIO.- ¿Adónde?
VALDÉS.- Adonde se deja muy presto vencer, no solamente a amar, pero a gozar del deshonesto fruto del amor. (Valdés 2004, n.p.)

Valdés, as many of his contemporaries, metonymically equates the book with the character of Celestina, as it becomes apparent in Marcio's formulation of his question. He reveals himself as an admirer of *Celestina*'s style and artistry, directing his critique toward its female noble protagonist's sexual appetite and moral frailty, and towards its excess of Latinisms. 'Corregidas estas dos cosas en *Celestina*,' remarks Valdés, 'soy de opinión que ningún libro hay escrito en castellano donde la lengua esté más natural, más propia ni más elegante' (Valdés 2004, n.p.). Mary Gossy (1989, 24) calls attention to the identification of the bawd with the book itself in Valdes' commentary and concludes that the axis of *Celestina*'s reception is Calisto's desire to possess sexually Melibea. The effect of Calisto's desire on the reader would lead to a narcissistic objectification of the text; on this basis, Gossy equates the literary text with the woman, or the feminine. Gossy's perception ultimately refers to Lacan's Other and the textual space of anamorphosis posited in Chapter 1.

Before Valdés, Juan Luis Vives, equally concerned with the conditions of the poor and the morality of women, also identifies Celestina with the text and condemns her as *nequitiarum parens*. In his *De institutione feminae christianae* (1523), Vives censured *Celestina* as just another mendacious and erotic story, together with the romances of chivalry, the sentimental novel and lubricious popular songs. After a warning against the 'licentious and filthy songs in the mouths of the rabble' (Vives 2007, 74) and an appeal to condemn them by means of the law, he continues:

> They [the magistrates] should also concern themselves with pernicious books like those popular in Spain: *Amadís, Esplandián, Florisando, Tirant, Tristán*, books filled with endless absurdities. New ones appear every day: Celestina, the brothelkeeper, begetter of wickedness [*nequitiarum parens*], the *Prison of*

> *Love*…All these books were written by idle, unoccupied, ignorant men, the slaves of vice and filth. I wonder what is that delight us in these books unless it be that we are attracted by indecency…32. What madness is to be drawn and fascinated by these tales! There is nothing clever here except for some words taken from the secret archives of Venus that are spoken at the propitious moment to impress and arouse the woman you love if she fells some resistance. If they are read for that reason, it would be better to write books on the art of whoring. (Vives 2007, 74-76)

Vives thus calls for keeping Rojas's work out of the hands of young women, vulnerable to seduction by its words. Vives's opinion on women was analogous to his vision of the poor given that, for him, the two groups were equally marginal and unprivileged, the poor in terms of their socioeconomic status and women, because of their deficient moral and physical qualities determined by gender. They were both victims of their conditions in life and not inherently wicked and immoral. In *De subventione*, Vives further addresses prostitution and procuring in the following terms: 'una vez cerrada la generosidad de muchos, al no tener de que alimentarse… las mujeres que tienen buena edad, dejada la vergüenza, no pueden mantener la honestidad, vendiéndola en todas partes por muy poco y no pudiéndose librar de esa pésima costumbre, las viejas inmediatamente se agarran a la alcahuetería y a los hechizos, unidos estréchamente a ella' (Vives 2004, 131-136). Broader socioeconomical, moral and ideological questions converged both in the figure of the prostitute and of the poor, who became a rhetorical channel to explore economic exploitation by the upper classes and the inescapability of their corruption due to social injustice.

Vives's paternalistic approach to conditions of the poor have an echo in *Segunda Celestina*, where the bawd frequently complains about the living circumstances of poor women, who deprived of livelihood are forced into prostitution. As Celestina explains to Grajales, Elicia's lover, although she would prefer Elicia to remain without a male friend, making a living solely from sewing and embroidering in order to preserve her virtue, their needs force the latter to engage in sexual commerce:

> CELESTINA.- Hijo Grajales, tú seas bienvenido y conoscido por hijo, que por buena fe, que con las entrañas que siempre tuve a Elicia y a su prima Areúsa te recibiré yo y recibo en mi casa. Y a la verdad, hijo, hablando contigo como con tal persona, yo más quisiera que mi sobrina, aunque, mal pecado, suffría harta lazería y necessidad, que por su castidad se estuviera sola con su rueca y su huso; por esta negra honrra, hijo, como sabes, que, mal pecado, carga es que sin trabajo no se

> lleva, contradiziendo siempre la voluntad del que la quiere tener, porque no en el honrrado está, como mejor sabes, sino en los que nos han de honrrar. Y como esta negra fama sea tan delicada, como digo, quisiera a mi sobrina sola; mas ya que havía de hazer algo para suplir sus necessidades, yo huelgo mucho que sea antes contigo que con otro, porque sé que eres persona honrrada y tendrás secreto y suplirás sus necessidades, porque éstas hazen hazer a las mugeres, mal pecado, hijo, muchas vezes, lo que no querrían, como agora mi sobrina haze. Mas ya sabes, que es proverbio antiguo, que con mal está el huso quando la barba no anda de suso; y por esto me plaze que haya tomado, ya que lo havía de tomar como dixe, hombre de barba, que tal me pareces tú a mí, en verdad. (Silva 1988, 416-417)

Echoes of Vives and Valdés are noticeable in Silva's *Segunda Celestina*. Neither Vives' nor Valdés' censures are directed toward Calisto, but toward Rojas's female characters. While Valdés censures Melibea's moral and fleshly weakness, although not Celestina's, Vives condemns the old bawd as a maker of fictions and trafficker in virginity. In his *Segunda Celestina*, Silva negotiates several views on prostitution, both acknowledging the need of poor women for a source of income and condemning prostitution itself, more particularly the kind of illegal prostitution practiced by Celestina, Elicia and Areúsa. Through Celestina's newly found concern for modesty and reputation, Silva seems to suggest that regeneration for these women is indeed possible. Nonetheless, Celestina's conversion is never fully accomplished for her good intentions are continually damaged by her constant recidivism back into procuring, as Barbanteso points out.

Barbanteso, introduced in Act 38 as Celestina's cousin who rarely visits her more than once a year, establishes the moral high ground and the standard for righteous Christian behavior. Barbanteso's authority is implied in his name, a derivate of 'barba,' traditionally a symbol of wisdom, prowess and rectitude. Right before the ending of the work, which concludes with Felides and Polandria's secret wedding, Barbanteso visits Celestina in order to rebuke her for continuing with her reprehensible business even after her resurrection and, most especially, for her dealings with clerics and gentlemen, all of which ruins the honor of reputed families. He reproaches Celestina for not having learned how to behave virtuously, especially after having died and come back to life, and in spite of her old age:

> BARBANTESO.- Dizes que venías a hazer penitencia de lo passado, y parésceme que hazes nuevo libro de lo olvidado, para hazer hábito con lo presente en lo que está por venir; ni las canas en esta vida te avisaron de *la muerte*, ni la vejez del cercano tiempo della para emendarte; ni en la mocedad dexaste las hechas, ni la

> mayor edad con la experiencia te las quitó; ni la muerte te puso castigo; ni la resurreción escarmiento… (Silva 1988, 547; emphasis mine)

Barbanteso points toward the unredemptive nature of Celestina's death, while placing emphasis on a Christian eschatological message. While in Rojas's *Celestina*, Eros and Thanatos are joined as the two sides of human experience in a profoundly un-transcendental world, Silva's *Segunda Celestina* insists on a religious and orthodox understanding of death and salvation. Celestina replies to Barbanteso's rebuke by emphasizing the disenfranchisement and necessity of the poor at the same time she advises him to direct his preoccupations towards his own home:

> CELESTINA.- 'Señor Barbanteso, aquí limpiamente bivimos y de honestidades nos preciamos, con pobreza nos contentamos, más queremos el poco interés de nuestros husos y ruecas con honra, que la abundancia de la riqueza con lo contrario; entiende en tus duelos y en los de tus hijas y nietas, y dexa los de mi casa y no harás poco si no quieres pagar los sueldos…Cada uno mire cómo vive en su casa y dexe las vidas agenas, pues que sabe más el necio en su casa que el cuerdo en la agena. ¡Dios, que esso es lo que acá estamos rezando!, lazerando y sufriendo de hambre y sed, cansancio y lazeria y pobreza y pobreza, malos días y peores noches, trabajando como perras y velando como grúas salteadas del sueño para sostener la honra, y que tras buen servicio mal galardón.' (Silva 1988, 548)

Barbanteso, shocked by Celestina's answer and unable to provoke in her the desired feeling of shame, warns her not just about the moral but also about the legal risks of her trade and the danger of ending 'trasquiliada' (fleeced) by the Council of Justice. Notwithstanding Barbanteso's words, Celestina does not give in and blames the prostitutes' misfortunes on the thoughtlessness and violent ways of men, who take advantage of the necessity of poor women to abuse them. At the same time, she once again lays stress on the neediness of poor women, who would prefer to remain virtuous making a living exclusively out of their craft: 'Señor Barbanteso, aquí limpiamente bivimos y de honestidad nos preciamos, con pobreza nos contentamos, más queremos el poco interés de nuestros husos y ruecas con honra, que la abundancia de la riqueza con lo contrario; [etc.]'(Silva 1988, 547). In fact, Barbanteso seems to forget that Celestina's trade depends upon the sexual appetites of her clients and that, if they did not turn to her for sexual procurement outside the limits of socially licit behavior, Celestina would not have any business at all. Celestina does not deny her culpability, but incriminates Barbanteso in order to denounce hypocrisy.

That said, Celestina encourages Barbanteso one more time to redirect his critique against himself in a way that evokes Christ's Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 7:1-5) in which He preaches 'do not judge, or you too will be judged:'

> Mete, mete, primo la mano en tu seno, y por mi vida, que no la saques sin lepra, y límpiate della y no harás poco, y dexa los duelos ajenos; limpia, limpia tu barba y dexa de mirar si hay paja en las ajenas. Mira tus hijas las mangas que hizieron,[111] y no vendrás a cercenar nuestras faldas, pues no hay qué cercenar; que por mi vida, que al pasar del vado, que no he menester que nadie me venga a regacear, qu'el escarmiento me tiene bien avisada. (Silva 1988, 549)

Celestina urges Barbanteso to look for leprosy on his own body, more precisely on his chest, were the soul symbolically resides together with the heart. Leprosy, a widely contagious illness, was in the medieval and early modern period one of the markers of marginality, heresy and collective guilt. Therefore, leprosy was implicated in religious and sociopolitical questions having to do with questions of orthodoxy and heterodoxy, between the social nucleus and its outcasts. [112] The leper's sores were interpreted as the external manifestation of his or her sins so that leprosy was, beyond a physical illness, a moral infirmity. However, as a pariah and outcast, the leper was also a Christological figure. 'The leper signifies sinners, and the leprosy the sins…the great damnable sins, such as fornication, adultery, usury, robbery, theft, gluttony, drunkenness, and all those sins by which a man is damned…Through leprosy a man is cut off from the company of people, and through deadly sins a man is cut off from the company of God' (Brody 1974, 136). In the sixteenth century, remarks Cruz (1999), the poor came to fulfill the role of the medieval leper, subjected to the same hostilities.[113] Leprosy is also the bodily mark of Lazarus, the patron saint of the lepers, prototype of human misery and the archetypical pauper (Herrero 1979, 879). Lazarus would later become associated with the paradigmatic Spanish pauper, the *pícaro* Lázaro de Tormes, who tries to better himself in life—that is to say, to grant himself a second chance—by coming nearer to the 'good people,' only to find more corruption among there.

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[111] 'Hacer mangas' means to prostitute oneself covertly and illegally (Silva 1988, 549, n. 6).

[112] See Robert Ian Moore's *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Power and Deviance in Western Europe* (1986); Saul Nataniel Brody's *The Disease of the Soul: Leprosy in Medieval Literature* (1974); Linda Martz's *Poverty and Welfare in Hapsburg Spain: The Example of Toledo* (1983).

[113] See Cruz (1999), Chapters 1 and 2. For an account of the changing concept of poverty, charity and work, and for the Poor Laws that resulted from this change of mentality, also Maravall (1986), 'Parte primera,' 21-244.

In the above fragment, Celestina, who stands for the leper and the poor, advises Barbanteso, the upholder of Christian ethical behavior, against judging her relying on the same arguments he habitually uses, especially those taken from Holy Scripture. Like Barbanteso, in *De subventionem paureprum* Vives (1781, 53) had urged the poor to take advantage of their condition, which provided the opportunity to avoid sin and exercise virtue: 'No se contenten con haber dado gracias de palabra por los beneficios que recibieron, sino conserven un espíritu agradecido, esto es, que se acuerden del beneficio; no malgasten pródiga y torpemente lo que les han dado, ni lo guarden sucia y ruinmente, que no se lo han de llevar a la otra vida' [Do not be happy with expressing your gratitude verbally for the goods you received; keep a grateful spirit, that is, remember the benfit; do not waste prodigally and stupidly what has been given to you, do not let it turn unclean and despicable while in your possession, for you have to take it with you to the afterlife]. Similarly, Celestina blames Barbanteso for not being as spiritually upright as he claims, pointing to his hypocrisy based on his religious views on poverty. In this way, Silva calls attention to the lack of moral standards among the aristocracy and the upper bourgeoisie. These arrogant citizens who publicly boast about their Christian values and defend the practice of charity over a secular program of poor relief, behind closed doors are as damned as the poor on the streets. As Cruz (1999, 41 et al.) intimates, assistance through charity came to be equated with aristocratic values and with a perception of poverty as an established fact, whereas financial assistance based on a state organized system of donations became the trademark of the social reformers, such as Vives, who envisioned a free and productive body of laborers. Barbanteso comes to represent the general feeling of the upper and middle-class citizens, religious writers and economists, all of whom sought to blame the paupers for their passivity. These citizens, most likely Silva's principal readers, accused the disfranchised of being idle and morally corrupt, preferring to make a living from vagrancy rather than hard work.[114]

As the conversation moves forward, Barbanteso, offended by Celestina's words, defends the honor of his daughters and accuses the old bawd of telling lies, the same lies, replies Celestina, that are said about her and the others of her kind. At this point, Celestina gives Barbanteso one more piece of advice: to refrain from giving guidance and instead to try to flatter, a suggestion that is abhorrent to Barbanteso. Flattery, observes Barbanteso, is

[114] See Cruz (1991) 41 for a brief account of the upper-class's view on the poor.

not for friends, given that friends must be honest with one another. If Celestina is of the opinion that one should live according to the circumstances of the moment—'la sabiduría es vivir conforme al tiempo' (Silva 1988, 551)—, which encourage adulation over ethical condemnation; Barbanteso advocates goodness on grounds that virtuous values are timeless. That being so, Barbanteso proceeds to warn Celestina against the perils of overwhelming desire in their present time and advises her too live outwardly, towards society, and not inwardly, towards oneself. At this point, Barbanteso observes, 'la sabiduría es de todos aborrecida, pues los hombres no viven conforme a ser hombres, mas a dexar de ser hombres para contentar a los hombres' (Silva 1988, 552). Thus, Barbanteso advocates a closed system of social values over a more pragmatic and secular approach towards social relations, an approach closer to Vives' proposal for poor relief.

Seeing that they could never agree, Celestina and Barbanteso decide to part ways amicably and not try to change each other anymore. Hence forward, they also promise not to slander each other's families. Only time, concludes Celestina, will reveal who was right and who was wrong, but until that day in which the truth is unveiled each one should be the judge of his actions, without suffering the punishment of the law or the burden of social infamy. Once Barbanteso is gone, in her last speech, Celestina articulates a joyful *carpe diem* that invites humans to drink, to eat and to enjoy the pleasures of the world before death comes, a final exhortation that radically contrasts with Pleberio's lament. She concludes these last words counseling moderation, and instructing Elicia on how to behave in the future with her lover Barrada:

> Pues el caso es que entre col y col, lechuga; quiero dezir que ni seas con Barrada tan brava, ni seas tan mansa que dañes la conversación y te tenga en poco, sino que entre dos duras, una madura; hasta que le hayas dado parte de ti entera no le des esperança del todo, para sostenelle y alargalle la esperança, para ponelle más deseo y acrescentalle más amor. Y el rato que estés con él mosalle tanto amor que piense que sólo es él en el mundo amado, y contino en sus offrecimientos traelle a la memoria que obras son amores, que no buenas razones. Y mira que no sienta que es fingido lo que le dizes, porque no sea contigo, como dizen, a un traydor, dos alevosos; mas que seamos yo y tigo con él al contrario, pues no me parece nada traydor, y pues no lo es, sábele traer la mano por el çerro, y echalle el albarda y cinchalle de manera que trayga a cargas el bastimento para el real; y no dexes de contino avisarme de los que passa, porque a nuevas necessidades, nuevos consejos; y bueno será que lo tomemos para nos yr a reposar, que es hora. (Silva 1998, 553)

Celestina's last words signal the capacity of the underworld of prostitution and roguery for regeneration and survival, an ability noted by Deyermond (1993, 18) in his analysis of female societies in Rojas's *Celestina*. In *Segunda Celestina,* the old bawd not only returns to the world of the living, but also articulates the key for her successors in business to endure. Silva, who purposefully brings back Celestina to the society she had previously destroyed, in essence effects her confinement. By separating her from the mainstream, Silva confers Celestina value as scapegoat, a function that, although characteristic of her gender and profession, she did not have in Rojas novel-in-dialogue. Celestina is condemned as a cancerous social cell, but kept alive in order to allow for social order. As they unfold in *Segunda Celestina*, procurement, prostitution and criminality are a fact that cannot be avoided; nonetheless, through the same kind of pact forged between Barbanteso and Celestina, they can be kept at a distance, safely away. Silva's solution is to push the old bawd completely to the margin, from which she cannot hurt righteous, honorable people.

Silva recognized in Rojas's work a semblance of the social misfortunes of his time, when the dangers of the margin were perceived as immediate and unremitting. *Celestina* looks into Silva from its space of anamorphosis, in which the sixteenth-century author perceives his own anxieties about the forces of excessive desire. *Celestina*'s original space of anamorphosis is then transformed. Celestina becomes the anamorphic element of the picture, a semblance of the Other qua Real, against a background of social order and harmony. From its anamorphic position, Celestina works as a reminder of the dangers of the margin and as evidence of the hypocrisy of the Church and of the privileged classes. Through the resurrection of Celestina, Silva denounces the lack of efficacy of institutionalized administrative and religious practices that considered the poor both a social disease and a spiritual agent. At the same time, he envisions a society in which—as imagined by Vives—all employable workers have a means of living and the cancerous, deviant element is alienated, punished and remains at a safe distance.

Segunda Celestina entered the 1559 Index of Prohibited Books, promulgated by the General Inquisitor, Fernando de Valdés, as a tool of social control intended to prevent ideological subversion. The renewed force of the Inquisition in these years is symptomatic of an increasing fear of subaltern groups, considered deleterious for the social and moral well-being of the kingdom. In this atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust, Celestina's capacity

for survival in an urban world in which prostitution is not eradicated and love circulates freely was most likely regarded as immoral. Of *Celestina*'s many continuations, only Feliciano de Silva's *Segunda Celestina* entered the registry of the Index.[115] In light of the above discussion, the Inquisitorial condemnation of Silva's *Segunda Celestina* cannot be attributed exclusively to its licentiousness, because if that were the case, also *Celestina* along with the rest of its continuations should have been included in Valdes' *Index. Segunda Celestina*, as *Lazarillo de Tormes*—like Silva's work printed in Medina del Campo—, took part in the debates on poverty, making some exemplary economic and social claims that were doubtless the cause for its inclusion in the Index.

In sum, the resurrection of Rojas's old bawd is a cunning literary artifice that allows Feliciano de Silva to reintroduce and explore the function of the procuress, as a trafficker of sex and language, in the Spain of his time. In a country in which Vives' dream of a mercantilist society in which the employable workforce was always needed had proven unfeasible due to the scarcity of employment, Silva imagines a proletarian utopia in which the most disturbing social groups, those responsible for criminality and immorality, are pushed to the side, allowing for salvation and social regeneration in the center. *Celestina*'s space of anamorphosis, whose ultimate shape is a reminder of the Real, became in the sixteenth-century horizon of expectations inextricably tied to an increasing awareness of the Other due to rampant poverty, criminality and unemployment. In this context, Silva resurrects Rojas's bawd to introduce the necessary scapegoat that would allow for social regeneration. On this account, Celestina—as will be the case of Lázaro de Tormes several years later—becomes the anamorphic element in Silva's *Segunda Celestina*, both a reminder and a remainder of desire and social corruption.

Segunda Celestina, printed at one of the main mercantilist centers of the Iberian Peninsula, Medina del Campo, the city where the great commercial fairs were held, is about the proletarian forces that sustain plutocratic noble power and the upper middle class, all of whom were Silva's readers. Furthermore, Silva's articulation of an urban and proletarian utopia seems to be in line with Vives's condemnation of charity and his secular program.

[115] Gagliardi (2007) gathers together Inquisitorial arguments and lettered accusations against Silva's *Segunda Celestina*.

Contrary to *Celestina*, a profoundly skeptical, violent and unidealistic narrative, *Segunda Celestina* is a sentimental, optimistic and light-hearted text that moves between idealization and everyday life, where society's criminal 'others' are relegated to the margins in order to allow for the celebration of the peaceful coexistence between the upper and the lower socio-economic strata of sixteenth-century Spanish society. In its literary evocation of a proletarian utopia responsive to sociohistorical changes and developments, *Segunda Celestina* relies on the triumph of carefully reasoned love that ends in matrimony, eschewing the excesses of desire at all levels of society. In Silva's imaginative world love is an equalizing force that brings together masters and servants in a celebration of a common life. Against an Erasmian background, Silva envisions an idealized urban society in which a fair system of exchange subtends the association between the elite and the lower-classes, creating an imaginary world presided over by equity and fairness and where the margins of society fail to pose a threat. In this manner, *Segunda Celestina* cancels out *Celestina*'s dark vision, granting its readers some distance from the radical spiritual and social changes that daily transformed Spain. As will later be the case with the *pícaro* (Cruz 1999, xiv-xv), the non-courtly characters of *Segunda Celestina*, are reduced to a harmless, marginal position. Silva, a conscientious reader of *Celestina*, is aware that Rojas's book with all its erotic and transgressive subterfuges looks into the reader from a space of desire and transgressivity, a place that is at the margins of human consciousness and at the margins of the dominant culture. In his *Segunda Celestina*, Silva resurrects the old procuress, who stands for the force of the Other, in order to alienate and contain her. This way Celestina assumes the role of scapegoat, taking down with her an underworld of 'others,' who have no place in Silva's urban arcadia.

By the mid-sixteenth century, political and religious dissent among the different sectors of the intelligentsia gained a renewed force in response to the increasing challenges posed by poverty and criminality. The Poor Laws passed between 1520 and 1540 in the Spanish urban centers had failed to stop the number of vagabonds wandering from city to city as well as the upsurge in racketeering; as a result, the population had begun to look more and more at the jobless beggars as social parasites that refused to work, preferring to live from stealing and deceiving. In this atmosphere, the traditional Christian understanding of charity came under attack and the poor ceased to be regarded in Christological terms and as a necessary blight for the spiritual welfare of the community. They became a social cancer.

The polemics culminated in the Poor Law of 1540, a decree that, through the prohibition of unlicensed vagrancy, aimed at the expulsion of vagabonds from the cities. After the Poor Law of 1540, beggars needed to obtain a license certifying their condition from their parish in order to be able to beg on the streets of their hometown, and only of their hometown, for vagrancy outside the place of one's origin was banned. Given that most of the poor came from rural and not urban areas, the immediate consequence of this law was the starvation of hundreds of poor people in the cities (Herrero 1979, 878-879). The Poor Laws of 1540 resulted in the dispute between two of the most prominent theologians of the century, the Dominican Fray Domingo de Soto and the Benedictine Fray Juan de Robles, also known as 'de Medina.' Soto insisted on the paupers' right to beg and on the moral and Christian obligation of the wealthy to provide them with relief. For Soto, poverty was needed as a means to exercise the cardinal virtue of charity. Quite the opposite, Juan de Robles was of the opinion that alms should be contingent upon the moral behavior of the recipients and upon their attempts to find employment. Robles, who shared with Vives a more secular stand, maintained that only the true poor deserved to be helped while the fraudulent, idle indigent were to be persecuted with all the force of the law. Robles advanced a system of organized donations to consistently take care of the poor, a system that would replace individual contributions.[116] After the abdication of Charles I in 1556, religious dissent led to further

[116] Herrero (1979) and, more in detail, Cruz (1999) discuss the main tenets of the dispute between Soto and Robles.

discontentment and disputes. From this time up until the end of the seventeenth century, the impoverished strata of society along with Protestants, *moriscos, conversos,* gypsies and other marginalized 'others' were further blamed for the ills of the kingdom and stigmatized.

During the reign of Philip II, a champion of the doctrines forwarded by the Counter-Reformation, additional measures for the confinement of poor criminals, whose perceived abandonment of the work ethic was abhorred by Spanish citizens, and *arbitristas*, were taken. At the same time the right to beg freely within the limits of the urban centers was restored; thus, allowing for individual acts of charity. Debates around poor relief, justice and the confinement of impoverished rogues continued, staged most significantly by Miguel de Giginta and Cristóbal Pérez de Herrera. While male wrongdoers were incarcerated and sent to the galleys, reformatory workhouses for women—known as 'galleys,' due to the analogies with this form of punishment reserved for men, or Magdalen houses, after the most significant repentant prostitute of the Bible—were opened in order to enclose prostitutes and other deviant women. In effect, in Counter-Reformation Spain, prostitution was less and less tolerated, no longer considered an evil necessary for the social welfare and the protection of respectable women. Philip II himself sponsored the construction of the Galera de Santa Isabel in Madrid, built under the supervision of Madre Magdalena de San Jerónimo. Madre Magdalena, who was responsible for the construction of female galleys all across Spain, took her religious name after her mission. This nun came to envision female asylums as a prison for 'loose' women, as she made clear in her *memorial* addressed to Philip III in 1608. Madre Magdalena de San Jerónimo blamed deviant recalcitrant women for all sorts of Spanish evils and called for the institutional control of rebellious lost women, who were forced in these facilities into penitence through disciplinary measures that came close to being forms of torture.[117] The paternalistic legal measures adopted by Counter-Reformation Spain in order to guard the 'good' poor and to punish and incarcerate impoverished and idle wrongdoers, who did not observe social regulation, are representative of a closed system of values that propounded a return to God's holy order. In Counter-Reformation Spain, in which unity and homogeneity were institutionally craved, God once again displaced the individual self and

[117] For a comprehensive overview and study on Counter-Reformation views on poverty, see Chapter two in Cruz (1999). For female galleys and the particulars of Madre Magdalena de San Jerónimo's measures, see Cruz (1999, 142-144) and Chapter 6 in Perry (1990).

became the fundamental notion that structured the realm of the Symbolic. This climate of repression and control over marginalized 'others' eventually led to the expulsion of the *moriscos* in 1609.

In light of this historical panorama, Javier Herrero (1979) concludes that the composition of the first of the picaresque novels, *Lazarillo de Tormes*, was ideologically linked to the problems of poverty and vagrancy vexing all levels of the Spanish population. The social, intellectual and religious arguments that had been the fuel of the sixteenth-century debates on charity were rehearsed by the anonymous author of *La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes y de sus fortunas y adversidades*, published in 1554 in three main centers of commerce of the of the Habsburg Empire: Medina del Campo, Burgos and Antwerp. Picaresque literature came closer to everyday life, where traditional values were seemingly disintegrating in the face of rampant poverty and delinquency. The picaresque genre moves towards a representation of historical living conditions and, more precisely, of the marginalized base of society, dismissed as an uncontainable social ill in an urban world governed by trade, lineage and blood purity. With the emergence of the picaresque, the ignoble rogue became the literary protagonist. The *pícaro,* a poor rascal, rehearses the mid-sixteenth-century social view of the disenfranchised as idle and unethical in order to investigate it. 'The birth of the *pícaro*, in his perceived degeneration from impoverished to immoral,' explains Cruz, 'may be understood in part as a symbolic means of satisfying the social need for a new mythical figure incarnating the major ills that afflicted sixteenth-century Spain' (Cruz 1999, xiv).

The *pícaro* is the literary epitome of the early modern concern for the disenfranchisement of the poor and, as such, serves to raise fundamental questions about the efficacy of private and institutionalized measures to counteract poverty, vagrancy and delinquency. Furthermore, as society's 'other,' the *pícaro* stands for the fallen nature of humankind, which enslaved by its base impulses and its desire to socially and financially advance itself moves towards the margin in search of satisfaction. In a society that did not tolerate difference, the disenfranchised poor were no longer a holy symbol, but a scapegoat, a sign of the dangers that the impurity of the 'other' presented to the national welfare. *Lazarillo de Tormes* entered Fernando de Valdés' Index of Prohibited Books (1559) along with *Segunda Celestina*, a work that also participates in the debates on the poor. Since this

date until the publication in 1599 of the first part of Mateo Aleman's *Guzmán de Alfarache*, a work that virtually reverses *Lazarillos*'s structure and focal point, the picaresque virtually disappeared from the Spanish printing presses.[118]

Conversely, *Celestina* continued to enjoy great popularity during the sixteenth century, being regularly published in the Peninsula as well as Antwerp. Although it was widely condemned, *Celestina* did not enter the Index until 1632, when it was mildly expurgated.[119] According to Gagliardi (2007), this was so because it was not considered to interfere with Christian dogma. It is not until the seventeenth century that lascivious stories were banned for interfering with the moral teachings of the Christian faith and, even then, it seems that the excisions made upon Rojas's book were but the result of individual accusations by over suspicious men (Gagliardi 2007, 73-77). In fact, as Gagliardi (2007, 76) documents, when it entered the Index, *Celestina* was no longer a 'best-selling' book, but one that was difficult to find and purchase.

Looking at the testimonies of sixteenth-century religious and lay intellectuals, it becomes evident that by the mid-century *Celestina* was read from two very different perspectives. Vives, after having condemned *Celestina* in his *De institutione feminae christianae*, emphasized in his *De disciplinis* the moral teachings contained in Rojas's work (Gagliardi 2007, 62). As the example of Vives demonstrates, *Celestina*'s two facets, the result of its anamorphic constitution, could be easily perceived by the same reader. In effect, Gagliardi (2007, 62) suggests that *Celestina*'s merits as a moral and cautionary tale were indeed perceived by the religious and secular intelligentsia who, nonetheless, feared that the common reader would not be able to benefit from its morality or, worse yet, would take pleasure in its voluptuousness. On this account, religious men of letters such as Juan de

[118] The reasons behind the prohibition are not explicitly stated, but it can be safely assumed that this prohibition was due to *Lazarillo*'s crude social satire and incisive anticlericalism. While Castro (1957) attributed *Lazarill*o's ban to its criticism of Christian Church, Márquez Villanueva (1968) did so to its underlying Erasmism ideals. Most recently Coll (2010) has posited that the reason was political and is to be found in Lazarillo's sequel, *Segunda parte de Lazarillo de Tormes (*Antwerp, ca. 1555), in which there is an explicit criticism of the Spanish court, a criticism that might have called the attention of the authorities toward the original. See also Márquez (1980) for a study of literary censorship in sixteenth-century Spain.

[119] See Chevalier 1976, 154-155, and Gagliardi 2007 for sixteenth-century arguments against *Celestina.*

Mariana, Fray Luis de León and Francisco de Osuna continued to insist upon the prohibition of *Celestina*, Montemayor's *Diana* and chivalric novels, which they considered to be useless books filled with lies and licentiousness (Gagliardi 2007, 61-71).[120] As Vega (2013) reminds us, the lust of the intellect or of the imagination, incited by the written word, was regarded as dreadful a sin as the sinful act itself. The lower classes, traditionally associated with the body and the lack of high moral standards, and young men would be more susceptible to attain amorous delectation from the written word. In his *Diálogo de la agricultura cristiana* (1589), Juan de Pineda attests to the juvenile predilection for *Celestina* and to a general understanding of *Celestina*'s anamorphosis when he recalls the answer young men used to give him in response to his imprecations not to read *Celestina*:

> muchas veces he tenido reyertas con otros mancebos que veo cargados de *Celestinas* y leerlas hasta las saber de coro, y, reprehendidos de mí por ello, se piensan descartar con decir que allí se enseñan a huir de malas mujeres y a reconocer sus embustes, y que, viendo pintadas allí como al natural las carnalidades de los malos hombres y mujeres darán más en el rostro y se apartarán de ellas mejor, [etc.] (Juan de Pineda, *Diálogo de la agricultura Cristiana,* 1589)[121]
>
> [many times I have had quarrels with young men that I see full of books of *Celestina*, which they read until they know it by heart, and rebuked by me for this, they think they would get away by arguing that it teaches to run away from bad women and to recognize their deceits, and that, seeing there painted in all its natural realism the carnalities of bad men and women, they would be able to unmistakably recognize them in order to flee from them]

To be sure, *Celestina*'s readers undoubtedly perceived its twofold nature in which a moralistc undertone aligns with nihilism and lewdness. *Celestina* was reckoned both as an admonitory tale against fornication and as a perverse manual for gallant courtship. It would depend on the reader to draw a lesson in self-restraint or a bad example of amorous conduct. The same aesthetics of anamorphosis, by virtue of which a text encapsulates both a normative view and its non-sanctioned equivalent, which in its deformation returns to the observer an image of the foreclosed Real, is indeed a distinctive trait of the picaresque novel. Textual ambivalence runs parallel to a socioeconomic and ethical polarization that brings about a clash between

[120] In these pages Gagliardi offers a representative number of arguments against *Celestina.*
[121] In Gagliardi 2007, 65-66.

transcendence and degradation in the structure of the picaresque novel (Reed 1981, 35). This polarization corresponds to the dissimilitude of the aesthetics of anamorphosis, first imagined by Rojas in *Celestina*. *Celestina* was printed assiduously until 1601, only two years after the publication of the first part of Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache.*[122] After this date, it was only issued four more times in Spain, published in Pamplona for the last time in 1633[123] It is worth noting that its last two editions, printed Pamplona in 1632 and 1633, followed the publication of Lope de Vega's *Dorotea*, first printed in Madrid in 1632; nonetheless, a relation of causality between these two events cannot be established as the reasons behind the edition of Pamplona, which are impossible to determine. After this date, Rojas's *Celestina* was published only abroad, at Rouen, where it was issued three times in a bilingual Spanish-French edition.

This chapter explores *Celestina*'s early modern success and its editorial decline in connection to its aesthetic links with the picaresque genre. In present-day studies of the picaresque genre, *Celestina* has become thematically connected to picaresque narratives on the basis of its portrayal of the margins of society in a contemporary urban world where delinquency and sexual promiscuity are unrestrained. Rojas and the early modern writer share an existential despair and an acute sense of alienation, which translate into a desire to communicate with the Other, both a remnant to the Real and a semblance of the symbolic system of values and principles. This Other, external to the self, manifest themselves both in *Celestina* and in the picaresque as an anamorphosis.

Drawing on Castillo's (2001) analysis of picaresque novels and of Cervantes' texts as anamorphic art, I propose that *Celestina*'s anamorphic structure lies behind the reason of its success throughout the sixteenth century. From this critical point of view, which looks into the aesthetic of anamorphosis as the aesthetic trend that led to the rise of the novel in early modern Spain, *Celestina*'s success emerges as the result of its partaking in a general anxiety about the self and its place in the world. To be sure, the characters of *Celestina* and the sixteenth-century *pícaros* and *pícaras* look for their place in a society that excludes them,

[122] For a recent list of *Celestina*'s known editions, see Rico (2000), 355-360.
[123] It was issued in 1607 in Zaragoza (Carlos de Labayen y Juan Larumbe); in Madrid in 1619 (Juan de la Cuesta) and 1632, and finally in Pamplona in 1633 (Carlos Labayen).

not allowing for their innermost longings and aspirations to be fulfilled. Nonetheless, there is a crucial difference that separates the origins of the picaresque from *Celestina. Celestina* and the picaresque share a concern about religious and private morals, public order and class; nevertheless, whereas the picaresque arises from a heightened social preoccupation with poverty and social dislocation, *Celestina* reflects an acute metaphysical and ontological preoccupation around the medieval discourses of Christianity and love and, more precisely, on the force of desire and its ability to overcome charitable humanitarian love in midst of the reign of Isabel I, as developed in Chapter 2. Rojas's already envisioned and developed in his *Celestina* the poetics that were to identify the picaresque genre, but such a specific identification does not imply the picaresque's direct derivation from *Celestina*. Before the birth of the *pícaro*, Feliciano de Silva had brought the old bawd back to life in order to reduce her to the category of scapegoat, a position that would later be occupied by male rogues and female *pícaras*, explicitly identified by their authors as *Celestina*'s descendants. In sum, Rojas, Silva and the authors of picaresque novels shared a system of codes and conventions as well as a sociopolitical and cultural anxiety, all of which translate in the text into an anamorphic textual structure that brings their works together.

In addition, I suggest that *Celestina* is displaced from the editorial market when a moralizing and restrictive perspective triumphs over a skeptical relativistic conception of the world, which had emphasized individual consciousness and self-determination. This ethical shift is consolidated in Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache*, deeply under the influence of the baroque aesthetics of *desengaño* [disillusionment]. The term *desengaño* 'implies a moral stance of detachment and distance, not necessarily a desire to withdraw from the world, but rather a desire to view it in the correct perspective' (Robbins 1998, 17). Contrary to *Lazarillo* and to Rojas's *Celestina*, picaresque works since *Guzmán de Alfarache* provided their readers with a way of purging their sociopolitical anxieties, returning to themselves ideologically assured and emotionally cleansed by the reading. Beginning with the publication of *Guzmán de Alfarache*, the *pícaro* becomes a scapegoat who is demoted from its ambivalent position to the level of social aberration and grotesque clown. Authors since Mateo Alemán, with the exception of Cervantes, feel a need to control the *pícaro*, who is silenced by the voice of an-Other. In the picaresque works produced in Counter-Reformation Spain the low character's urge to craft his or her own place in the world is thwarted by the accusatory gaze of the Other,

which comes to stand for the institutionalized commanding system of values and beliefs. In these works, in which the Law of the Father inevitably triumphs over the individuality of the self, a moralistic interpretation is privileged over a relativistic perception of the world and the force of desire. Against this cultural and ideological background, I posit that *Celestina* is a work in which characters who act freely in pursuit of self-satisfaction, no longer had a place.

Concurrently with *Guzmán*'s editorial success, an unprecedented form of literary consumerism came into being along with a more heterogeneous public. In the seventeenth-century literary market, in which the reader—or spectator, in the case of theater—is deemed more than ever before an arbiter of meaning, new forms of entertainment emerged in order to supply for the people's need of literary enjoyment. During these years, Cervantes' developed a new aesthetics of anamorphosis that in *Don Quijote* came closer to the readers' quotidian experience. Simultaneously, the always-popular spectacle of violence had become an open attraction and a source of comic relief in Lope de Vega's plays, Cervantes's works and in the picaresque novels, especially since *Guzmán de Alfarache.* In this market, *Celestina,* already occluded by *Guzmán,* was further displaced.

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A case has been made that *Celestina* is a precursor of the picaresque genre owing to the fact that it shares with the latter an urban setting together with characters that inhabit an underworld of criminality and prostitution. In this regard, Severin (1989, 2 and 48), affirms that Rojas's *Celestina* stages the 'clash of two literary worlds, that of the self-styled courtly lover (the fool) and the prototype picaresque world of the Spanish Bawd and her minions (the rogues),' therefore paving the way for the picaresque genre. Moreover, Severin (1999) considers Pármeno the first example of a literary rogue. Her argument is two-fold. First, Pármeno's misadventures begin at a young age, when he serves multiple masters. Second, he morally demeans himself in pursuit of sexual and financial satisfaction. In addition to Severin, Fraker (1990) connects the development of the picaresque to *Celestina*, in particular, to Rojas's ability to create indecorous characters, that is, characters who, like Areúsa, use a register unsuitable to their social status. This form of expression, in which a high and low register coalesce, would become the trademark of the sixteenth-century *pícaro* (1990, 65-

66).[124] Most recently, Maiorino (1996b, 5) has noted the picaresque indebtedness to Rojas, remarking that 'before the emergence of the picaresque, *La Celestina* gave tragicomic form to the concept of life as mere doing.' *Celestina* and *Celestina*'s continuations, states Maiorino (1996b, 5), anticipate the picaresque in their pessimistic vision of human life). In effect, *Celestina* offers a pessimistic and skeptical vision of life; however, such a vision—as we shall see—is not always shared and valued by the early modern Spanish writer, whose values fall more into line with an Erasmian vision of life. *Celestina* and the later picaresque come together in Silva's *Segunda Celestina*, in which Rojas's work is read against a reformist ideological framework. *Segunda Celestina* points to the possible thematic and aesthetic links between *Celestina* and the picaresque, while it lays bare the different ideological horizon in which both came to exist. To be sure, events in *Celestina* take place against a social background of criminality, concupiscence, hypocrisy and suspicion that is not strange to the picaresque genre; however, the arguments that situate *Celestina* at the origins of the picaresque are unconvincing, mainly, on account of the distinctive target and ideological framework of the latter's socioeconomic and religious criticism, a distinguishing trait that is missing from Rojas's narration.[125]

Celestina has been linked to a great extent to the development of female picaresque novels. These novels tell the story of a *pícara*, a young woman from low family origins who uses her beauty to make a living out of seducing and robbing her suitors. As a promiscuous woman and unconstrained wanderer, who like Celestina willingly moves between social boundaries while performing a sexualized role, the *pícara* is invariably introduced as a distant descendant of Rojas's bawd. In effect, Celestina occupies a prominent role in the title-page of the first edition of López de Úbeda's *La pícara Justina* (Medina del Campo 1605,

[124] The scholars who have linked Rojas' *Celestina* to the picaresque are numerous. For a brief summary of scholarly views on the genealogical relations between *Celestina* and the picaresque, see Bergman (2017).

[125] For Márquez Villanueva (1969) as for Herrero (1979) and Maravall (1986), Lazarillo's most poignant concern is centered on poverty and the exercise of Christian charity as a way to denounce the lack of solidarity in early modern Spain. Also, 'the *Guzmán de Alfarache* should be read at least in part as the author's response to his authentic concern for social justice' (Cruz 1999, 106). The picaresque novels comprise a religious and ethical concern in which the social crisis of sixteenth-century Spain manifest.

anonymous), which inaugurated the composition of female picaresque.[126] *Justina*'s title-page woodcut represents picaresque life as a ship that navigates the 'rio del olvido' [river of forgetfulness] heading towards the port of 'desengaño' [disillusionment], where death is waiting for them with a mirror in her hand. In this journey, Justina, Lázaro and Guzmán are accompanied by Celestina, who together with Bacchus and two allegorical figures—time and idleness—escort the picaresque characters. Cruz translates this genealogical connection to the textual origins of the genre. 'If, by parodying the exploits of knights-errant, the picaresque novels invert the image of the archetypal heroes into the amoral *pícaro*, the female picaresque models its literary anti-heroines on the already debased female characters of the *Celestina*' remarks Cruz (1999, 136).[127] The picaresque novel, notes Cruz, establishes an analogy between the *pícara*, a sexual trickster and a swindler, and the prostitute, like her a marginal woman who exploits her body in pursuit of economic profit. Moreover, Cruz (1999, 146) who reads *Celestina* in an ethical key, affirms that 'the *Celestina*'s moral point', which she attributes to Melibea's fall due to her unprotected intermingling with immoral women, 'is well taken by female picaresque novels, which measure their heroines' downfall by the physical freedom the novels allow them, yet which are careful to restrict the *pícara* to her own social milieu.' For Cruz (135, 138 et seq.), the female picaresque is structured to exercise patriarchal jurisdiction over women's corporeality, a form of castigation and confinement that connect with Foucault's intimations on 'anatomo-' and 'bio-politics,' the control of the body and of the processes of life, further developed in relation to women by Bartky. [128]

[126] I consider *La pícara Justina* and not Delicado's *Retrato de la Loçana andaluza* the inaugural novel of the so-called female picaresque for the same reasons that I rule out Rojas's *Celestina* from the origins of the picaresque novel. To be specific, Delicado's *Loçana* does not display the sociopolitical, ideological and ethical concerns of the late female picaresque novel, a seventeenth-century literary phenomenon (see below). Among the works pertaining to the female picaresque I count Alonso Jerónimo de Salas Barbadillo's *La hija de Celestina* (1614) and the novels of Alonso de Castillo Solórzano, *La niña de los embustes, Teresa de Manzanares* (1632) and *La Garduña de Sevilla y anzuelo de las bolsas* (1642).

[127] See also Kaler (1991, 24-26) for a study of *Celestina* as a direct antecedent of the female picaresque.

[128] Bartky, Sandra Lee. 1988. 'Foucault, Femininity, and Patriarchal Power.' In *Feminism and Foucault: Reflections on Resistance,* edited by Irene Diamond and Lee Quinby. Boston: Northeastern UP.

Unlike Rojas's *Celestina*, the female picaresque presses for legal control over women's bodies in order to avoid the dangers of female sexuality. In line with the early modern patriarchal discourse of castigation and confinement of deviants, these novels contain a severe critique of women's corporeality, a condemnation that is missing in *Celestina*, in which the prostitute incarnates the ideal of individual freedom. Cruz, as well as Friedman, on whose distinction between male and female picaresque she draws, overlooks the fact that the picaresque novel since *Guzmán de Alfarache* also subdues the powers of speech of the male rogue.[129] In addition, although both *Celestina* and the female picaresque exhibit antifeminist ideas, Rojas' female characters and the *pícara* convey the early modern fear of the Other. As Nina Cox Davis (1996) points out, Justina the *pícara* exposes—as does Celestina before her—the precariousness of virginity and the threat it poses to the patriarchal system. The female picaresque's entrenched anti-feminist overtones are connected to the medieval and early, early modern debates on the question of women as rehearsed in the sentimental fictions, in Castillejo's *Diálogo de las mujeres* [The Dialogue of Women] (1544), in manuals of conduct for Christian women such as Fray Luis' de León *La perfecta casada* (1584) ['The Perfect Married Woman'] and in a work closely related to *Celestina*, Xuárez's *Coloquio de las damas* (1547). Nonetheless, the female picaresque in all its entrenched anti-feminism partakes in the sociopolitical critique that distinguishes the picaresque genre as a whole.

The female picaresque draws from *Celestina*'s underworld of bawds and prostitutes; yet, contrary to Rojas' work, the former is characterized by its stern moralism. Despite its close ties to *Celestina*, the female picaresque does not share the ideological, thematic and aesthetic framework of Rojas's work. The female picaresque, like *Guzmán de Alfarache*, on whose image it develops, is rooted in the experience of *desengaño*, which leads to the superimposition of a dogged ethical perspective onto the narration of the young *pícaro.* On this account, contrary to Cruz (1999), Hanrahan (1967) and Sieber (1977), I locate the textual

[129] According to Friedman (1987, 71-72), whereas the male pícaro questions the conflict between man and society from an autonomous narrative position; the voice of the female pícara is silenced by the male author, not allowing for her moral atonement nor for empathy on the side of the reader. Friedman, for whom the first picaresque novel is Delicado's *Retrato de la Loçana andaluza,* holds that the female picaresque is determined by the gender of their protagonists, whose place in society and in the text is under the severe supervision of the male authorial voice.

origins of the female picaresque in its male counterpart, which merges with the celestinesca to give rise to a new genre. In effect, the female picaresque is closer to the celestinesca tradition than it is to Rojas' original. Like the female picaresque, Sancho Muñón's *Tragicomedia de Lisandro y Roselia* (1542), the anonymous *Tragedia Policiana* (1542) and the mysterious *Tragicomedia de Poliodoro y Casandrina* (c. 1564), whose plot is remarkably similar to that of Salas Barbadillo's *La hija de Celestina*, seek punishment as an answer to transgression. Like the female picaresque, the above cited works of celestinesca convey women's sexuality as a lure to the male reader, implicitly advocating the enclosure and control of women. This being so, the female picaresque is the result of the amalgamation of two literary traditions, the celestinesca—inaugurated by Feliciano de Silva—and the picaresque novel as in *Guzmán de Alfarache.* I believe that seventeenth-century authors recuperated the celestinesca, which stopped being produced by the mid-sixteenth century, on account of, on the one hand, on *Guzmán*'s literary success and, on the other, of an increasing anxiety over 'otherness' and sameness, traditionally mediated through gender and the body, which is a symbolic site where power is arbitrated (see Chapter 2).

Figure 5.1. Title Page, Francisco López de Úbeda's *Libro de entretenimiento de la picara Iustina: en el qual debaxo de graciosos discursos se encierran prouechosos auisos*. Medina del Campo, in the house of Cristóbal Laso de Vaca, 1605. Woodcut by Juan Bautista Morales.

At odds with those who argue for a direct textual link between Rojas' *Celestina* and the picaresque, I suggest that the apparent affiliation between *Celestina* and the picaresque, either male or female, resides in their common engagement in an aesthetics of anamorphosis, and hence their similarities. *Celestina* and the picaresque novel developed independently but shared this common ground, which ultimately manifests itself as a pronounced ambivalence that results from the deformed—anamorphic—redoubling of perspective intended to offer an oblique glance into the Other. The first scholar to note the anamorphic structure of picaresque novels was David Castillo. In his *(A)wry Views* (2001), Castillo connects the development of the picaresque and of Cervantes' works to the aesthetics of anamorphosis. All these works, Castillo (2001, 2) asserts, 'challenge well-established beliefs about the world in much the same way that certain forms of perspective anamorphosis reveal the arbitrariness and incompleteness of any total view.' Castillo (2001, 5) examines the ways in which the anonymous *Lazarillo de Tormes,* Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache*, Francisco López de Úbeda's *La pícara Justina* and Cervantes' texts expose the dark side of the notion of honor in Golden Age Spain through their marginal protagonists.

In a secular urban world in which the position of men and women in the social body is no longer predetermined and whose status has become analogous to profit, *Lazarillo de Tormes* rehearses a journey of self-making in pursuit of riches and social recognition. Whereas Lázaro symbolically stands for the Other as a remainder of the Real; his addressee, the mysterious 'Vuesa Merced' [Your Mercy], epitomizes the Other as representative of the Symbolic order. This being so, Lazaro's first-person narration serves to unveil the violence, injustice and arbitrariness of the system of authority. Lázaro, as well as his masters, rightly observes Castillo, is characterized by what he lacks and, hence, desires. 'This procedure of negativization,' explains Castillo (2001, 26), 'is the anamorphic effect by means of which Lázaro's self-consciousness projects itself into the narrative.' Castillo (2001, 33) concludes that Lázaro, society's 'other,' is the oblique element that, against a background of privilege, allows for a critique of the discourses of authority through negativity or incompleteness. Due

to this incompleteness, *Lazarillo de Tormes* forces the reader to look at things from the position of the poor so that 'the reader's desire and his or her biases are also caught in this anamorphic web.'

Lazarillo de Tormes, *Guzmán de Alfarache* and *La pícara Justina* provide through anamorphic redoubling a look into the deceptive nature of appearances in a context of worldly dissimulation. Nonetheless, whereas in *Lazarillo*—as well as in *Celestina*, I shall add—the destabilizing view of society's 'others' is presented anamorphically against a background of apparent order and authority, in *Guzmán de Alfarache* and *La pícara Justina*, the morally correct perspective is presented anamorphically against a picaresque background of corruption and vice. Therefore, *Guzmán de Alfarache* and *La pícara Justina* privilege a morally correct perspective that highlights the vigilant presence of authority in the Symbolic. If *Celestina* and *Lazarillo*'s anamorphosis aimed at capturing the gaze of the Other *qua* Real; the vantage point of *Guzmán de Alfarache* and *La pícara Justina*'s anamorphosis is a reminder of God's holy order and of ethical conduct. This crucial shift, I suggest, was one of the main causes for *Celestina*'s editorial decline.

Like the anamorphic skull in Holbein's *Ambassadors*, Mateo Alemán's Guzmán de Alfarache takes on the sermonizing mission of reminding humankind about the dangers of vanity and of world pleasures. Castillo (2001, 35) connects Maiorino's (1996b) theorization of a center-periphery dialogics in the picaresque with anamorphic redoubling and posits that 'Alemán stages a confrontation between two different (and ultimately opposed) perspectives in his drive to expose the deceptions of the world and to warn individuals against a life of disorderly freedom.' These two superimposed perspectives are represented by the *pícaro* before and after the moment of his repentance and conversion, when he becomes a non-subjective watchover of human life, 'atalaya de la vida humana,' correcting his former self's spiritual blindness. On the whole, *Guzmán*'s narrative voice privileges the perspective of the repentant rogue over that of the young *pícaro*, who foregrounds the unfairness, hypocrisy and corruption of the system of beliefs. In Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán*, the story of the *pícaro* is retold from the perspective of 'an-Other,' a later version of himself. The Other here stands for internalized system of social values and norms, becoming like *Lazarillo*'s 'Vuesa Merced,' an accusatory presence that constantly reminds the *pícaro* of his sins. Rooted in the experience of *desengaño*, Castillo suggests, the vantage point of *Guzmán*'s anamorphosis

reveals an image of the rogue as a cancerous social being. 'The reader is thus called upon to complete the picture of Guzman's life under the supervision of the watchover's gaze' (Castillo 2001, 36).

Like *Guzmán*, *El libro de entretenimiento de la pícara Justina* (ca. 1605) appears as an eminently moralistic work. Nonetheless, contrary to Guzmán and more in the way of Lázaro de Tormes, Justina does not embrace the social and Christian values that the system dictates, remaining loyal to her picaresque understanding of life. López de Úbeda directly introduces the morally corrected view at the beginning and at the end of each episode through a brief moral lesson, labelled as *aprovechamiento* [profit]. These lessons are reinforced through authorial interventions filtered in Justina's parliament as well as through the character of Perlícaro, Justina's relentless moral detractor.[130] The correct viewpoint, a reflection of the author's moralistic stand, is encapsulated in the work's closing admonition, in which he permanently silences Justina's voice, her most dangerous quality. Up until this point, Castillo points out, the author shows no intention to purge Justina's discourse, for the very design of his discourse against the frailty of free women needs of the incorporation of the perspective of the *pícara.*

To be sure, as it is rightly noted by Castillo, these texts manifest through anamorphic redoubling other ways of seeing and, hence, force the reader to realize that what he or she sees depends upon his position as subject. In these works, the point of view is not homogeneous; on the contrary, they emphasize perspectivism. Therefore, they have a destabilizing effect on the readers who, like the spectator of a visual anamorphosis, are prompted to reconsider their worldview, losing the certainty that they had enjoyed until then. Yet while *Lazarillo*, as *Celestina* before it, interrogates and eventually negates traditional beliefs through a reversal in perspective; *Guzmán de Alfarache* reverses this anamorphic structure in order to return the image of a closed system of ethical principles. If the point of anamorphosis in *Lazarillo* was a reminder of foreclosed desire and of life in the margins, *Guzmán*'s anamorphosis is a reminder of Christian values. In both cases the space of anamorphosis is a semblance of the Other; however, while in *Lazarillo* this Other is

[130] Márquez Villanueva (1984) identifies Perlícaro with Mateo Alemán, whereas Bataillon does so with Quevedo (1969).

inextricably linked to the Lacanian Real, in Alemán's *Guzman,* the Other translates as a realization of the Symbolic values that articulate human life.

'While the nation-building practices of imperial Spain create the myth of "an always already Christian" and produced fantastic scapegoats—the Jew, the moor, the *pícaro*—to cover up the incongruities of the social order, the hysterical discourses of Lázaro and Justina return the blame to the master and his faulty laws and values' (Castillo 2001, 136). The discourse of the hysterical, Castillo points out, is in psychoanalytical terms the discourse of subjectivity. This subjectivity, which had dominated most of the sixteenth century, became difficult to bear by the end of the century. As a result, contrary to the case of Silva's Celestina, López de Úbeda's Justina, like Guzmán de Alfarache, became silenced by her male author. In the seventeenth-century literary universe, populated by scapegoats manufactured with distinctive indoctrinating purposes, *Celestina* could no longer enjoy its previous success. The aesthetics of anamorphosis that articulates Rojas' *Celestina* and *Lazarillo de Tormes,* nonetheless, did not disappear, but remained vibrant in the works of Cervantes, according to Castillo (2001, 136), an author who strives to reveal through perspective the arbitrary and incongruent nature of official values and practices, that is, the Real behind the Symbolic order.

Anamorphosis arises in Cervantes' works to foreground the impossibility of a homogeneous and holistic view, the result of both the arbitrariness of the common systems of belief and of the problematic nature of representation. Through the superimposition of high and low culture alongside humor and irony, *Don Quixote* challenges the reader to look at the world with different eyes and to realize that reality is subject to continuous interpretation. This way, *Don Quixote* emphasizes interpretation as a matter of will, as I maintain Rojas had done before him (see Chapter 3). As Castillo (2001, 87) observes, 'Cervantes's novel would thus function as an anamorphic mirror that constructs oblique images of society's ideals, especially those dependent upon chivalric and pastoral utopias.' Like *Don Quixote*, *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda* offers a 'counterutopian narrative…that is, an anamorphic mirror that inverts or, at the very least, distorts the symbols of Counter-Reformation culture' (Castillo 2001, 94-95). In Cervantes' *Persiles,* conventional epistemologies—Christianity, Platonism, Petrarchism—are looked at obliquely in order to emphasize the violent and sexual impulses of mankind; therefore, distorting the ideals and

myths that supported Counter-Reformation Spain. Against these ideals, the true nature and force of human desire is anamorphically unveiled. The notion of honor and *limpieza de sangre* ('purity of blood') are the target of Cervantes's theater, which very much like his narrative works produces an awry view of the system of law and of the place of women in society.

Through an aesthetic of anamorphosis, concludes Castillo (2001, 132), Cervantes aims explicitly at incorporating the reader into the text; hence, the pronounced scopic structure of his works. Cervantes makes the most of the critical potential of the aesthetics of anamorphosis in order to invite the reader to look at Counter-Reformation culture and beliefs with different eyes. Like Rojas's characters, Cervantes's look at the world obliquely, exposing the frailty of the symbolic system. In fact, Cervantes was a great admirer of Rojas' *Celestina*, to which he refers as 'divine,' to subsequently clarify 'si encubriera más lo humano,' that is, if only it would conceal human frailty more carefully:

DEL DONOSO, POETA ENTREVERADO, A SANCHO PANZA Y ROCINANTE.

Soy Sancho Panza, escude-
del manchego don Quijo-;
puse pies en polvoro-
por vivir a lo discre-;
que el tácito Villadie-
toda su razón de esta-
cifró en una retira-
según siente *Celesti*-,
libro, en mi opinión, divi-
si encubriera más lo huma-.

Miguel de Cervantes 2002, 26-27.

In this arguably anamorphic poem, which deliberately omits a syllable at the end of each verse in order to produce an incomplete frontal view, Cervantes establishes his debt to *Celestina.* This introductory poem to *Don Quijote* dwells on *Celestina* anamorphic nature, encapsulated in the opposition 'divino' [divine], but 'humano,' as a reference to the fallibility of the mortal flesh, the reminder of the Real that Rojas anamorphically conveys. Cervantes, more than the anonymous author of *Lazarillo de Tormes* and more than any author of any of the works of celestinesca, is Rojas's most direct successor, with whom he shares an interest in the literary exploration of the existential predicaments and tribulations of humankind with

a demystifying purpose.[131] Cervantes's texts aim to capture the gaze of the Other, which appears neither as a threatening semblance of the Real, as in Rojas, nor as a judging vision from the watchtower, as in the seventeenth-century picaresque works. The Other in Cervantes' anamorphosis is the space of subjectivity from which the characters as well as the reader is free to realize and to choose its own identity. Like Rojas before him, Cervantes seeks to include the reader right within the text, as pointed out by Castillo (2001, 132), but he removes from the textual equation Rojas' nihilism and abjection. As it happens, Cervantes brings literature closer to the quotidian experience of his readers, whose subjectivity he explores through *Don Quijote*'s characters. According to Gilbert-Santamaría, Cervantes is moved by a desire to engage an expanding reading public. This desire to cater for everyone is expressed in the Prologue to *Don Quijote* I where Cervantes reflects on the means to offer a form of entertainment for everyone.

From Rojas to Cervantes, Spanish writers and intellectuals felt a growing necessity to explore the self in relation to the Other, symbolized in the cultural and social 'others' that are prostitutes, criminals, paupers, gypsies, *conversos* and, maybe to a lesser extent *moriscos*, all of them marginalized by the dominant culture. In this context, Fernando de Rojas was the first modern writer to attempt to capture the gaze of the Other upon the self. He did so through a love story in which the courtly and Christian ideals prevailing in the symbolic are dislocated by lust, anomy and narcissism or, in other terms, by a nonconformist impulse towards freedom, pleasure and joy (see chapter 2). In Renaissance texts, an acute desire for social freedom, self-knowledge and self-determination emerges and transpires, a desire that was in accord with the fifteenth and sixteenth-century spirit of 'individualism,' as Maravall refers to it both in *El mundo social de* La Celestina (1972) and in *La literatura picaresca desde la historia social* (1986). Both *Celestina* and *Lazarillo de Tormes* come forth hand in hand with this emergent individualism, which results in the pronounced perspectivism, discussed by Rico (2000). The picaresque novel, Rico argues, foregrounds the provisional character of perception. As they focus on the individual experience of the young *pícaro*, picaresque novels call attention to the position of the subject with regards to his or her own perception of the world. Through its pseudo autobiographical narrative structure, the picaresque novel puts forward a secular attitude towards the universe, which unveils as something which is

[131] Snow (2008) for the latent presence of Rojas's *Celestina* in Cervantes' works.

contingent upon individual experience. 'Al contar Lázaro y Guzmán su propia vida, y al contarla en términos acordes con lo que ésta ha sido y es, resulta que por primera vez en la historia europea del relato en prosa se nos ofrece un esfuerzo sostenido por imaginar *desde dentro* a unos individuos de ínfima condición social' [The fact is that when Lázaro and Guzmán tell the story of their lives, and tell it in terms consistent with what those lives have been and are now, we are presented for the first time in the history of European prose narrative with a sustained attempt to conceive individuals of lowly social rank *from within*' (Rico 2000, 161; translation by Sieber 1984, 92).[132] Such an emphasis on the personal experience of marginalized others is in fact distinctive of Rojas' *Celestina*, which nonetheless, and given its dialogic form, is not considered by Rico among these first narrative experiments in the picaresque.

To be sure, *Celestina* presents a polyphonic narrative in which a multitude of viewpoints—ranging from the highest to the lowest social strata, formed by prostitutes and ruffians—combine and are psychologically complex to the same extent. On this account, *Celestina*'s dialogue gives rise to a sharp feeling of perceptual and existential uncertainty that, as in the case of the first-person narration of the picaresque novel, is the result of this change towards the 'perspective of consciousness,' in Blackburn's (1979) terms. 'In Apuleius, mankind gains the quality of metamorphosis that Ovid had applied to gods, but no one before Rojas viewed human transformational power as the essential revelation of individual character relentlessly acting and interacting with a world in which all meanings and values were disintegrating—in which the flux of mutual consciousness was that society' (12). Rojas' novel-in-dialogue constitutes the first Spanish work to aim at the same perspective relativism undertaken several decades later by the picaresque novel. The 'perspective of consciousness,' which problematizes reality by denying any possibility of holistic truth, brings together Rojas' *Celestina* and the picaresque, both of them an attempt at communicating with the Other. The Lacanian Other, the vital and cultural force alien to

[132] Paul Julian Smith (1988, 80) strongly criticizes Rico, accusing him of 'pictorialism,' which comes to stand for an apparent teleological approach that identifies the *pícaro*'s perspective with a unified and coherent authorial intention. Smith, instead, proposes what he refers to as a 'rhetoric of representation,' which vindicates the marginal voice of the *pícaro* as a framing device (85).

the subject and foreclosed by the conscious mind, is captured by the Renaissance artist through this aesthetics of anamorphosis.

As it should be clear by now, 'Renaissance texts are important for what they *leave out as much as for what they present*,' Maiorino remarks (1996a, xiii; emphasis mine). The component that these texts anamorphically conceal and disclose is a glimpse into the Other, the periphery of human experience occluded and foreclosed in chronologically previous narratives. As in *Celestina,* sexual representation is also anamorphically occluded in *Lazarillo de Tormes* and *La pícara Justina.* This aesthetic and semantic system that characterizes *Celestina* and the picaresque was part of the sixteenth-century readers shared cultural and literary horizon. In one of the shortest episodes of its pseudo-autobiographical account, the book's fourth treatise, Lazaro obliquely alludes to his sexual initiation and abjection. It happened when Lazarillo was serving the nefarious Mercedarian friar, who was, moreover, a womanizer, a procurer, and homosexual, activities not unlike those typical of the other members of his order according to popular culture (Shipley 1996, 48).[133] The young Lazarillo's first sexual encounter is signified in the pair of shoes that his Mercedarian master offers him so that the boy can follow his steps. As Shipley (1996, 49) explains, 'romper zapatos' [to wear down shoes] stands for having sexual intercourse: 'his is the foot, and they [women and men] are his shoes; the friction he generates is sufficient to wear holes in their soles, one pair after another.' Homosexual pedophilia is further implicated in the boy's allusion to his master's trot, which wore him down in less than eight days, as well as in the final remarks of the boy: 'Y por esto y otras cosillas que no digo, salí dél' [And for this reason and because of other things I am not going to say, I left him] (Shipley 1996, 50; Shipley's translation). These final words which could be more accurately translated as 'I got out of him,' thus encapsulate a marked sexual innuendo that points towards the friar's homosexual affairs with the young boy, which are nonetheless shut out from the positive, explicit narration of Lazarillo's misadventures.

The need for the Other *qua* Real to remain silent in *Lazarillo* comes in hand with Lázaro's aspirations to prosper and achieve a good social reputation, which he seems to have attained by profiting from his own wife's sexual abjection and availability to the Archpriest

[133] Shipley, as Sieber (1978) before him, discusses the unspoken subtext of *Lazarillo de Tormes*.

of San Salvador. This anamorphic technique is evoked in Justina's six Ps, which society has given her. Of these Ps, Justina only mentions five, excluding the direct mention of what can only be assumed is 'prostitute,' which the reader nonetheless cannot help but add in order to fill the gap, hence falling into the trap of the Other's desire (Castillo 2001, 68). Most likely this kind of sexual innuendo was of common use (as it is today); therefore, sixteenth-century readers might have had their eyes and ears trained for this kind of sexual connotation. Without much doubt, early modern readers enjoyed these sorts of oblique glances into the forbidden and were able to decipher the reading clues that pointed towards the hidden components of the text. The textual gaze of the disreputable Other, which takes the form of an underlying eroticism, enticed the readers, who took pleasure in filling the anamorphic gap that represents the missing information. The elusive and titillating nature of interpretation is represented by El Greco in his painting of *A Boy Blowing on an Ember to Light a Candle.* In this scene a young man blows on burning embers while he is observed by an ape, traditionally a symbol of lust, as well as by an older man who looks mischievously at the fire. Through this mysterious representation El Greco points towards what is absent from our perception of reality as he dares the observer to look from the place from where he or she desires. After being recovered, the true form of the anamorphic space, goes dark again; thus, trapping the observer, whose subjectivity is already included in the representation, in an endless search for meaning in which a frontal, positive, view leads towards and oblique glance and vice versa.

Figure 5.2. El Greco, 'A Boy Blowing on an Ember to Light a Candle with Man and Monkey,' ca. 1580, oil on canvas, 50.5 cm. x 63.6 cm. Also known as *A Fable*.[134] Madrid: Museo del Prado.

On account of this textual and semantic system of veiled allusions, Shipley (1996, 43) rightfully points out that 'readers might be engaged in transplanting sexual innuendoes from their minds into the text' and that this possibility 'can help us refine our understanding of the unusual way, the possibly corrupting way, that this text provides readers some of the *agrado* ("pleasure") that the narrator in his prologue promises.' 'Readers with nasty minds' (idem), Shipley adds, might even get more enjoyment. The Real, as the perverse underside of cultural codes, lurks in the unconscious of every reader; nonetheless, depending on his or her ingenuity or salaciousness as well as on his or her reading competence, a series of different textual levels might unveil or remain occluded. These sexual innuendos lie in the text as much as in the eye of the reader. The presence of the Other in textual gaps prevents the readers from situating themselves in a detached, objective position, producing the active engagement of the readers, who have to work to recover and to make up for what is missing. The occluded sexual innuendo produces amusement at the same time that, due to its implications in questions of power, rank, spirituality and gender, it brings about an awareness of the social system. Given the anamorphic structure of the picaresque narratives, they demand the active engagement of the reader, whose desires and anxieties, as in Rojas's *Celestina*, are inscribed deep in the text.

The role of the historical reader in the picaresque novel has been widely analyzed. Among the critics who have approached the genre from the point of view of reception and reader-response theories are Reed (1984), Ife (1985) and Cruz (1999), among others. The basic premise that structure these studies is the fragmented, double nature of the discourse of the rogue, marked by the disparity between the *pícaro*'s professed high moral standards and his behavior. Such a dichotomy, reinforced since *Guzmán de Alfarache* through the alternation of picaresque adventures and moral digression, is designed to control the readers'

[134] This is a later scene of a young man blowing on burning embers developed by El Greco in Italy. The monkey and the old man are not present in this first version.

interpretation of the text. Given the articulation of the picaresque novel, Helen Reed (1984) also locates the historical reader already inscribed in the text. Reed's (1984, 13) departing hypothesis is that 'a writer fictionalizes an audience in his imagination while in the process of writing, and that this hypothetical reader or readers are manifest in the text itself.' For Reed, picaresque authors are writing for are implied reader in the works' prologues, such as the one cited above, in which the author indicates the appropriate way to interpret his creation. This is due, she notes, to the emergence of a written culture that displaces the oral conveyance of literary texts. In this regard, the picaresque novels inaugurate a new way to relate to the reader, who gains a direct knowledge of the *pícaro*'s problematic intimacy in the private space of his room in an exercise of solitary reading; therefore, their reactions and interpretation can be no longer controlled by the author or performer. According to Reed, the authors of the *Lazarillo* and *Guzmán* reveal a heightened concern about their readers' reaction precisely at a time when literacy was spreading and the reading public of prose fiction was significantly expanding. This is the reason why, according to Reed (1984, 18), picaresque authors address both a discreet reader and the *vulgo*, both of whom are readers-in-the text that determine the actual readers' interpretation. The reader in the text, explains Reed (1984, 104), invites the actual reader to interpret in accord with their own character, but also points him or her towards the appropriate way of reading. 'Each author establishes strategies whereby the reader's response to the *pícaro*-protagonist will vary and he will alternatively see himself as better than, not better than, or inferior to the *pícaro*. The narrations mirror the reader's own propensity for folly and periodically remind him of this' (Reed 1984, 110). In sum, the fictitious or hypothetical reader-in-the picaresque text is designed to structure the reader's engagement with the text, establishing the right way to decipher its message. Nonetheless, the correct message contained in the text could still be betrayed by the reader's individual disposition.

Also in the context of the spread of silent reading due to the printed book, Ife (1985) articulates the early modern writer's rejection of a Platonic notion of the moral and metaphysical nature of imaginative literature through the reader's inclusion in the text. Platonism, Ife contends, provided directly or indirectly the philosophical base for the censors' banishment of fiction, whose power to move and convince its audience was widely feared. In a context in which fiction was highly distrusted by the religious and secular moral

authorities, Ife (1985, 3) holds that early modern and Golden Age Spanish writers aimed with their works at a 'practical defense of reading.' More in line with an Aristotelian ideal, the authors of the picaresque vindicated the psychological benefits of the imagination. According to Ife, the reader is inscribed in the text in order to reinforce his or her awareness of the story as an entity other than to himself or herself, bringing about an ethical profit. The authors of the picaresque novels, Ife notes, manipulate their readers understanding at whim in order to force them to realize their own position with regard to the text in front of them. Such a fleeting recognition would be achieved through *admiratio* and *conceptismo*, that is, through wonder and through the alienating effect of language, which requires of the reader's active participation to decipher the message of the text. Authors of picaresque fiction 'seek to make the reader's relationship to the text dynamic rather than static; they all give the reader an active part to play, casting him in roles and making him adopt positions that are often shown to be untenable; they all refuse the reader a consistent viewpoint by which to make sense of the fictional world, making him question the veracity of what he is told and the plausibility of what the thinks and feels in response' (Ife 1985, 91). Ife, as Reed before him, considers picaresque narratives as essentially guiding artifacts that lead to the reader's moral awakening; thus, dismantling the Platonic criticism of literature as believable lies. But such a critique of Platonism is not the only feature that characterizes the picaresque. These works, he concludes, aim at stirring through rapture the imagination of the readers and to provoking self-awareness, a conscious intellectual and artistic pleasure.

As a result of the blooming of recreational literature destined for private reading and of the growing availability of texts thanks to an expanding printing industry, Renaissance texts are deeply aware of their effects on their readers. The reader facing a picaresque text might laugh at the *pícaro*, rejoice in his adventures, or feel sympathy or disgust for him. This ambiguity, which is provoked by the dissonance between the voice of the author and the voice of the *pícaro*, takes in *Guzmán de Alfarache* an edifying turn. In an analogous manner, the story of the *pícara* is suppressed by a narrative voice that warns the readers inscribed in the text against their own desire, sexual, material or social. The female picaresque confronts the reader with an ambiguous tale of virginity and seduction that contains a strong condemnation and a dogged warning against the perfidy of women, which manifests itself

first and foremost in the women's manipulation of discourse.[135] Like *Celestina,* female picaresque fictions project the widespread fear of the Other *qua* Real in the words of unconventional women, who possess the linguistic prowess to define themselves and the world around them.

In *La pícara Justina*, the *pícara*'s discourse is the anamorphic space from which the text gazes into the reader and captivates its attention through veiled pornography, forcing the readers to confront their own desire. In these novels, the marketing of the *pícara*'s body is never revealed, but ceaselessly displaced through language—as in the case of Lazarillo's sexual initiation. 'The *pícara*'s [Justina's] discourse, we quickly find, is the real locus of the text's seduction of readers, for the language of her self-portraiture not only discloses prurient details about her person that readers may hope to find, it wages a campaign of playful aggression against their very expectations in so signifying,' notes Davis (1996, 140). Whereas for Cruz (1999, 55) *La pícara Justina* is an antifeminist work, Davis (1996, 142 and 151) argues that Justina serves to question the identity and social power of dominant men and of the system of cultural meanings that subtends their power. In this context, Perlícaro would come to stay for the position of the male reader, constantly castrated by the female *pícara* (Davis 1996, 142). Davis further suggests that 'the *pícara*'s true impact as subject of the fictive autobiography" lies precisely in the deconstruction of her primacy by means of this dissonant discourse, for the dissolution of her own image in the novel impels the readers to examine the social economy that unsuccessfully defies it' (1996, 151). Either as an antifeminist character or as a vehicle for the censure of the social system, the *pícara* as an 'Other,' as a reminder of the force of desire and of the obsessive sexual separation in the Symbolic, serves to destabilize authoritative discourses. Thus, Cruz and Davis offer two approaches to the same quality of the woman as Other. Like *Celestina*, Justina serves to articulate what Gossy refers to as the 'untold story,' the female, marginal point of view of the symbolic system (Davis 142). The *pícara* as Celestina stages the confrontation between the Real and the Symbolic, desire and the material nature of the body, and a closed system

[135] For the connection between women and rhetoric, see Bloch (1987).

of values.[136] Nonetheless, as opposed to *Celestina*, as Castillo points out, the morally corrected view of the author triumphs over the deviant discourse of the *pícara*. In the end, as the author takes over her discourse, the *pícara*, a screen for male anxieties and desires, is denied her autonomous selfhood and discursive upper-hand.

Justina's anamorphic lean towards the Other qua Symbolic becomes plainly moralistic in Salas Barbadillo's *La hija de Celestina* (Zaragoza and Lerida, 1612).[137] This picaresque novel is a tale about the hazards of unconstrained female freedom, which destroys the social order attained through marriage. Elena, the daughter of a Moorish slave who like Celestina lived out of mending hymens and practicing sorcery, consciously thwarts the happy ending of Don Sancho's marriage to a decent woman of his own social class through deception. Elena's scam is possible due to her ravishing, almost demonic, beauty, which allows her to pass for a respectable and virtuous woman and to capture male desire. Don Sancho, a dissolute young nobleman, at first chases after Elena, but eventually comes to realize his mistake and returns to his wife repentant of his error. The moral of the story, which lies in Don Sancho's new moral awareness, is reinforced by the unhappy marriage and death of the *pícara.* Elena finds herself unable to free herself from her violent lover and pimp, Montúfar, who she is forced to marry. Montúfar then panders Elena to wealthy men and, when she refuses to be intimate with a street bully, he ruthlessly beats her. In revenge, she serves him poisoned cherries, which results in Montúfar's threat to kill her only to be killed himself by the bully, who stabs him through the heart. As a consequence, he is hanged and she is garroted and thrown into the river in a wooden barrel. In her business affairs, Elena counts with the help of Méndez, an old *dueña* who, like Celestina to Elicia, works as Elena's protector and mentor. As an old rogue, Méndez is also punished for her crimes and dies after being condemned to four hundred lashes. *La hija de Celestina* articulates a strong condemnation of male desire, which is introduced as the main cause of social destabilization. Contrary to its predecessors, this story of female trickery is told by a third person narrator, a stern proselytizer who alternates moral digressions with the narration of the plot. The point

[136] The character of Justina has been read as a criticism or ridicule of the attempts of *converso* courtiers and courtiers at forging their status of *limpieza de sangre* ['blood purity']. See Damiani (1982) and Bataillon (1969).

[137] Also published as *La ingeniosa Elena* in Madrid in 1614.

of view of the story only turns to the first-person voice of Elena when she relates her celestinesque family origins. Salas Barbadillo, a prolific writer of fiction, expresses a clear distinction of social groups through a strict behavioral code and, hence, a warning against the 'Other,' represented by the *pícara*.

As it should be clear by now, the distinction between groups of readers with regard to their ethical principles and social background is a main concern of picaresque novels since *Guzmán de Alfarache.* Male and female picaresque novels after *Lazarillo de Tormes* are salacious books, the fulfillment of whose potential for moral edification would have largely depended upon the disposition of the reader, which in its turn is usually associated to the reader's position in the social hierarchy. The desired ethical reading expressed by Mateo Alemán in his prologue to the *discreto lector* [the discreet reader] seems to have been frequently betrayed by the kind of reading that Alemán ascribes to the 'enemigo' *vulgo*, which is moved towards defamation, jealousy and greed:

> Bien cierto estoy que no te ha de corregir la protección que traigo ni lo que a su calificada nobleza debes, ni que en su confianza me sujete a tus prisiones; pues despreciada toda buena consideración y respeto, atrevidamente has mordido a tan ilustres varones, graduando a los unos de graciosos, a otros acusando de lascivos y a otros infamando de mentirosos. Eres ratón campestre, comes la dura corteza del melón, amarga y desabrida, y en llegando a lo dulces te empalagas. Imitas a la moxca importuna, pesada y enfadosa que, no reparando en oloroso, huye de jardines y florestas para seguir los muladares y partes asquerosas.
>
> No miras ni repararas en altas moralidades de tan divinos ingenios y sólo te contentas de lo que dijo el perro y respondió la zorra. Esto se te pega y como lo leíste se te queda… (Mateo Alemán 2012, 109)

> [I am very sure that the protection that I carry with me will not correct you nor will you give them the respect you owe to their noble quality, nor their confidence will free me from your prisons; for, despised all good consideration and respect, you have daringly bitten so many illustrious men, branding some of them as funny, accusing some others as lascivious and slandering some others as liars. You are like the country mouse, you eat the hard, bitter, tasteless rind of the melon and, when you arrive to the sweet meat, its sweetness palls on you. You imitate the annoying and irritating fly, who, notwithstanding smell, runs away from yards and flower garden to look for garbage dumps. You do not pay attention to the lofty moralities arising from divine wits and just take pleasure on what the dog said and the vixen answered. That sticks with you and as you read it you interpret it…]

Very much in line with a view characteristic of Inquisitorial censors, Mateo Alemán accuses the common reader of yielding to the risible anecdotes of the plot, overlooking the novel's moral lesson. On the contrary, he implies that the careful and judicious seventeenth-century reader would have been able to recognize a concealed didactic message. The distinction between these two groups of readers, each of which exemplify an aspect of the medieval topos of *delectare et prodesse*, is customary in Golden Age prefaces. It points to a long-standing dichotomy between authorial intention and readers' interpretation at a time when the breach between authors and consumers was widening and the literary public becoming more demographically heterogeneous.

Little can be known about the precise sociological identity of the historical Readership of the picaresque novels, which might have been composed by aristocrats, intellectuals, courtiers and other civil servants, the urban bourgeoisie, clergy, students, some tradesmen and maybe even subjects of the peasantry. Given its moral and ideological framework as well as its *conceptista* witticism, the ideal reader of the picaresque might have pertained to the aristocracy or to the upper middle class. These readers might be identified with Alemán's *discreto lector,* textually characterized in terms of his intellectual competence and religious principles. Nonetheless, some copies were certainly obtained by lower segments of society such as literate tradesmen and manufacturers, and other lettered professionals, all of whom formed a new reading urban bourgeoisie. These groups, who aspired to lineage and nobility, shared the aristocratic values of the upper classes. In all certainty the genre was not consumed by real-life *pícaros* and *pícaras*, the ones who could have profited from the didactic function of the text, for, as Ife (1985, 128) notes, 'the cautionary aspect of the story [in Ife's *Guzmán de Alfarache*] will only succeed if the reader is given the chance to experience what it is he is being cautioned against.' In this regard, Reed (1984, 18) states that 'the early picaresque novel might be described as a new genre in search of a readership, or a genre in the process of formation that created its own readership.' Independently of their social origins, Gilbert-Santamaría (2005, 92) rightly observes that 'Alemán's characterization of the *vulgo* may be read as a deliberate attempt to impose his will over the reception of his text…any reader who casts aspersions on his narrative is beset a priori with the dubious level *vulgo*, while any reader who accepts the text in terms of its moralizing premise escapes such a disparaging designation.' The *vulgo*, observes Gilbert-

Santamaría (2005, 36-37) in the context of Lope de Vega's 'Arte nuevo,' is 'a role in an economic transaction.'[138] The collapse of the distinction between the discreet reader and the *vulgo* would entail a potential collapse of meaning and, along with it, of the symbolic system that establishes social hierarchy; hence, Alemán's ostensible fear of the common reader.[139] 'The anxiety that permeates Alemán's representation of the violent potential of the *vulgo* in his prologue refers back not only to the uncomfortable possibility that the reader will overlook his moral meaning, but also to the even more troubling suggestion that the violence of the picaresque might undermine the very ideological foundations of the established social order' (Gilbert-Santamaría 2005, 128). In fact, the difficult combination in the picaresque novel of moralism and realism most likely produced in seventeenth-century readers the effect Alemán's deems undesirable.

Although in picaresque novels from *Guzmán* forward there seems to be an attempt at controlling the reader's interpretation, the author's intention was most likely betrayed to readers by the maliciousness and crudity of the *pícaro*'s misadventures. As Cruz (1999, 113) explains, 'although the picaresque speaks to the concerns of an otherwise alienated silent minority, its consumption by the dominant hierarchy and by the *vulgo* results in the displacement of its antiheroes from their historical alliances to the marginal, risible category of literary clowns.' The picaresque readership almost in all certainty could not identify itself with the *pícaro*, from whom they distanced themselves by virtue of humor. The *pícaro* was then reduced to the category of a clown as a result of its reception by the consumerist mass, formed by both educated and uneducated citizens, both of which delighted in aristocratic values. The scatological and debasing humor of picaresque novels since *Guzmán*, explains Cruz (1999), would have provided a form of insulation from the sociopolitical crisis that was wrecking Spain. As the *pícaro* stands for the various evils that isolate Spain, its reduction to a risible category would have brought about in the reader a feeling of ideological reassurance (Cruz 1999, 106). Whereas in *Celestina* and *Lazarillo* low-life characters function as a proper *pharmakos*, that is to say as public enemies who as a result of their supplementary nature

[138] Therefore, *vulgo* becomes equated with the public of the *corrales de comedias* [comedy theaters], 'a microcosm of society…encompassing a social and economic range from labourers, tradesmen and artisans, through young bucks, scribes, academics, priests, prelates and nobles, to the king himself' (McKendrick 2001, 11).

[139] For violence as the result of the collapse of social difference, see Girard (1979).

bring out the inherent instability of the symbolic system, the *pícaro* since Guzmán is downgraded to comic entertainer while a moral authority speaks over him modulating his discourse.[140] As it happens, Mateo Alemán's attempt at moral edification through a portrayal of behavior to avoid in order to live a virtuous life, most likely led to the debasement of the *pícaro* to his comical aspects and, therefore, to the kind of interpretation deemed by moralists as destructive. The *pícaro*'s misadventures, even when they were just directed at mere survival, were most likely read as grotesque jokes. The readers would have laughed at the *pícaro*'s attempts to better himself as well as at his physical sufferings and humiliation. As the picaresque world of *Guzmán* oscillates between moralization and the depravity of the margin, the degradation of the *pícaro* was possibly the source of entertainment and the most significant factor in in the picaresque novel's extraordinary commercial success.

In spite of its reformist basis, the picaresque seems to have become in seventeenth-century Spain, above all, a form of literary pastime. In fact, Cruz (1999, 5) remarks that already *Lazarillo de Tormes*' popularity confirms that 'the contemporary public delighted in reading about what it took pains to avoids in the streets.' In this line, Scott (2017, 103) proposes that *Celestina*'s 'sixteenth-century popularity may well be due to its portrayal of life on the margins filled with insalubrious characters that were both feared and desired, a portrayal that evidently coalesced with contemporary interest.' By the end of the sixteenth century, the picaresque novel came to provide a more and more heterogeneous body of readers with a violent and scatological display of the urban demimonde. The unrestricted mutilation of *pícaros* and *pícaras* was most likely for the seventeenth-century reader a source of voyeuristic pleasure. 'In particular, the prurient interest generated by the violent treatment of others derives its force, as will become graphically clear, from the reader's apprehension of his own vulnerability to similar forces,' Gilbert-Santamaría explains (2005, 122). 'The reader is attracted to the spectacle of violence practiced on characters in the novel because, as Guzmán's own analysis suggests, that objectified violence serves as a distraction from the reader's own susceptibility to suffering' (idem). Through violence, early seventeenth-century literature came to satisfy the public's desire for cathartic entertainment. That the spectacle of violence was a public demand becomes evident in the plays of Lope de Vega, in which brutality and sadism become equalizing forces that nurtured the psychological needs of the

[140] See Johnson (1996).

audience, from aristocrats to low-class spectators. Although not directly for the sake of justice and social harmony, but for entertainment; violence in Lope's plays always concludes in a return to social harmony and reintegration. The happy ending of plays such as *Fuenteovejuna* efface the trauma of violence. In the same way, violence in the picaresque and in Cervantes' fiction serve to introduce a relief, which arises from observing violence against others.[141]

If *Celestina*'s lean towards black humor and physical violence had been an attraction to the late fifteenth and sixteenth-century public, by the turn of the century Rojas' sheer material approach to corporal brutality was no longer liked and consumed. Whereas violence for its own sake is in seventeenth-century works of fiction and drama a source of pleasure and a way of restoring peace and the status quo; physical violence in *Celestina* is the traumatic result of the characters move into the margin in order to satisfy their desire, and hence, of their transgression of the established norms of social life. This movement brings the collapse of social difference feared by Alemán. As Calisto and Melibea, who are seemingly integrated into the social fabric, transgress the social values inherent to their position in search of pleasure, chaos erupts. As Sutherland (2003) notes, mimetic desire is the fundamental cause of the loss of difference in *Celestina*, which entails brutal destruction of the characters' bodies and, with them, of the body politic. In Rojas' cynical vision of life and love, corporeality is irremediably linked to death. As a result of the annihilating and non-transcendental force of violence, there is no room for comic relief and catharsis in Rojas' work, or if there is death lurks immediately behind it. Violence in *Celestina* disintegrates social order, leaving no chance for the restitution of everyday harmony, as it becomes evident in Pleberio's *planctus.* Death in Rojas's *Celestina* signals the senselessness of life. As Gerli notes (2011a, 216), 'the very physicality of the material tearing and shattering of bodies in the work speaks to a greater, fundamentally worldly and temporal fragmentation: to the process of the amoral transformation of souls, the putative spiritual essences of human life, into inert, lifeless stuff.' To be sure, in the face of existential anguish, absurdity and mortal nothingness, emotional relief becomes impossible. Violence in *Celestina* is synonymous with un-redemptive suffering, abjection and desperation. Contrary to Lope's plays, in *Celestina*'s

[141] For a discussion of violence in Lope, Alemán and Cervantes as a source of cathartic relief see Gilbert-Santamaría (2005).

topsy-turvy universe there is no ultimate power, neither God's nor the monarchs', to bring reconciliation and prevent the descent into chaos.

Rojas's pessimistic and disquieting brutality was possibly no longer attractive to a public that took pleasure in happy endings, aristocratic values and religious principles. Contrary to *Guzmán de Alfarache*, *Celestina*'s professed didactic purpose is betrayed by the intellectual pleasure that the text arouses through the reminder of the Real of human passion contained in it. *Celestina*, in a form closer to *Lazarillo de Tormes,* is designed to provoke the reader's subjectification in such a way that, consequently, he or she is faced by a repressed undercurrent of obscene and perverse implications, a glimpse into the Real through anamorphic distortion. *Celestina* and *Lazarillo* look into the reader arousing feelings of desire, guilt and suspicion in him or her, precipitating a questioning of established signifying processes and meanings. On the other hand, in picaresque works since Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache,* the surplus of meaning contained in the space of anamorphosis takes on a very different shape. In these cases, the picaresque text looks into the reader from an anamorphic space whose vantage point is a reminder of the presence of law and order in the Symbolic realm. As Castillo (2001) intimates, the space of anamorphosis in prose fictions such as *Guzmán de Alfarache* and *La pícara Justina* contains a cue to Christian values and a divinely ordained social hierarchy. On this account, whereas a sixteenth-century reader would have shared Rojas' code, as the century came to its end, significant changes in the aesthetic and ideological systems gave raise to authors and readers who possessed a different attitude towards imaginative literature. The new attitude is characterized by marked moral edification, which goes hand in hand with the Baroque's *desengaño*. The realignment of perspective entailed a change in the space of anamorphosis, which no longer offered a glimpse into the Other *qua* Real, but reminder of God's holy order. The transformation in the aesthetics of anamorphosis, first observed by Castillo (2001), resulted in new forms of engagement with the text. Seventeenth-century readers' approach to picaresque fiction was distinguished by its detachment. As Ife (1985, 131) explains with regard to *Guzmán de Alfarache*, this detachment 'springs…both from the intercutting of a naïve, sinful life and a more morally mature, retrospective view of that life, and from a recreation of that past life in terms of the warring factors which were at work in Guzmán's personality.' As the radical

nihilism of Rojas' *Celestina* did not allow for a morally corrected view or any sort of peaceful restitution of order, it ceased to be liked and, hence, consumed and produced.

Figure 5.3. Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, 'The Young Cock- Breeder' [El joven gallero], ca. 1655-1660, oil on canvas, 54 x 40.4 cm. Colección Abelló, Madrid, Spain.

The different quality of anamorphosis in the picaresque novel from Counter-Reformation Spain manifests in Murillo's pictorial representations of life in the streets of seventeenth-century Seville. In Murillo's paintings—such as 'Two Women at a Window' [Dos mujeres en la Ventana], 'Urchin Mocking an Old Woman Eating Polenta' [Pícaro riéndose de una vieja comiendo gachas] and 'The Young Cock- Breeder' [El joven gallero]—the human figures portrayed there are not the passive object of the viewer's look. The *pícaros* and *pícaras* in the pictorial compositions of Murillo aggressively confront the viewers, laughing at them or, as in the case of young prostitutes, seducing them. As Tomlinson and Wells (1996) remark, Murillo emphasizes the function of the beholder or spectator. In Murillo's paintings, the Real is widely displayed in the combination of destitution and mockery. Facing Murillo's male and female rogues, the looker becomes a surveilling presence. The combination of poverty and impropriety takes central stage in 'Four Figures on a Step' [Cuatro figuras en un escalón], in which this polarity seems to be designed to arouse in the onlooker a feeling of contempt. Tomlinson and Wells (1996) interpret 'Four Figures' in light of *Lazarillo de Tormes.* On this account, they compare the sleeping boy to

the young Lazarillo, whose proselytization is implied in his uncovered posterior, in sharp contrast with his shoe soles. The elder boy and the girl next to him would represent Lázaro's fallacious marriage. In fact, the girl's *toca* [veil] point towards a missing element and, hence, towards the revelation of a secret, perhaps her status of prostitute. [142]

Figure 5.4. Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, 'Four Figures on a Step' [Cuatro figuras en un escalón], ca. 1655-1660, oil on canvas, 109.9 x 143.5 cm. Kimbell Art Museum, Forth Worth, Texas.

It is no longer possible to believe she is the innocent sweetheart of the boy on whose shoulder she places her hand, much like Lazaro's wife. Finally, they associate the old woman holding the boy's head to a *dueña,* a generic Celestina. Notwithstanding these connections, the underlying structure of *Lazarillo de Tormes* and that of Murillo's 'Four Figures on a Step' differ greatly. Whereas the first introduces an image of the Other against a background of apparent lawfulness intended to question the Symbolic system; 'Four figures,' more in line with the seventeenth-century picaresque aesthetics, undermines any feelings of guilt and

[142] The veil or *toca* was deemed as deceptive since honest women and prostitutes both wore it. In effect, a series of ineffectual regulations were issued in order to control its use. See Perry (1990), 17, for polemics around the use of the *toca,* veil.

discomfort in the viewer through the self-deprecation of the young couple of scoundrels, who as they challenge the onlooker reveal their own baseness. 'Four figures' anamorphically bring together a somber reminder of the sufferings of poverty, represented by the introspective dueña and the boy resting on her lap, and an image of roguery and delinquency that counterbalances the compassion and remorse that the two figures on the right might have elicited. 'Four Figures' is designed to entice the spectator's sight through the inclusion of the beholder's look, which is first directed towards the old woman's glasses, which are the focal point. The highlighted black glasses, as Tomlinson and Wells (1996, 77) suggest, 'imply the difference between a look that is a mere glance, and one that pierces beneath surface appearances, forcing recognition and understanding:' in this manner, compelling the spectator into the position of a moralizing overseer. The mirrored image of poverty and prostitution both aims at capturing the gaze of the Other and at undermining it through with a cue of the 'others' depravity. As the Other qua Real directly faces the onlooker with a cunning look, the spectator is forced into an analysis, symbolized in the woman's glasses. Contrary to El Greco's challenge to look and to interpret through a projection of foreclosed desire, the viewer's scrutiny would then result in the deprecation of society's 'others.' The spectator then would return to himself or herself reassured.

As discussed in previous chapters, Rojas is one of the first Spanish writers who purposefully aimed at captivating his readers attention. Under the guise of morality, but without privileging a moralistic approach to imaginative literature, *Celestina* erases the barriers between text and audience. One of Rojas greatest achievements was to conceive literature as a collaborative exercise in which the reader forms a crucial communicative piece. At a moment when authorial control was dissipating, Rojas' ability was to anticipate and to encapsulate his readers' emotions, fantasies and anxieties. Like the authors of the picaresque, Rojas writes for a modern reader, who he anamorphically inscribed in the text. This fact is key to understanding the success of *Celestina* up until the seventeenth century. Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán*, not only introduced a new form of anamorphosis more in line with the didactic spirit of his time, but it also coincided with a flourishing of literary production destined for an expanding body of consumers, who turned to literature in search of entertainment and catharsis. By the end of the sixteenth-century, the consolidation of a reading public was accompanied by a new literary consumerism (Gilbert-Santamaría, 2005).

Literary production was more and more destined for a heterogeneous cultural market. As Lope de Vega's 'Arte nuevo de hacer comedias en este tiempo' (1609) expresses in a display of pragmatism, the fickle and lowly taste of the vulgo had come to be regarded as imperative in articulating timeless poetic ideals inherited from Aristotle, Plauto or Terence. In this market-driven culture, the public becomes one more literary arbiter, voicing its preferences loud and clear in the *corrales de comedias* [public theaters]. In this context, Golden Age Spanish writers purposefully catered to the average public, whose taste and interpretative propensity for humor and vulgarity they nonetheless recognized and despised.

That being so, *Celestina* was further displaced by new forms of entertainment that satisfied a wider public demand. Against the seventeenth-century ideological and cultural background, the reformist and moralist man of letters might have deemed *Celestina* excessively ambiguous with regards to its edifying intention and feared its erotic and heterodox undertones. This reader, by the seventeenth-century, would have turned to the picaresque novel in search of consolation. The discreet reader and the common reader alike revel in Lope's plays, where peasants, servants and other low-class characters played major roles, showing the same courage and determination as aristocratic characters. Lope caters to both a socially inferior and an aristocratic public, whose psychological needs he is capable of understanding. Lope's plays appeal and give a sense of empowering to every class equally, appealing to the public in all its heterogeneity. He conveys a sense of freedom and social harmony, of sympathy between the powerful ruling classes and the peasantry. As Lope's, Cervantes's characters projected themselves into the popular imagination, no matter their class affiliations. Cervantes envisions a form of literary subjectivity closer to the seventeenth-century worldview. His characters are conferred an unprecedented degree of autonomy and self-determination, for which they nonetheless need to fight in a society moved by economic rationalism and Machiavellian purposes.[143] In Cervantes's *Don Quijote,* experience and underlying unconscious forces align with a renewed mastery so that its characters seemingly come to life.

Last but not least, the female picaresque in the works of Alonso de Castillo Solórzano moves toward frivolity that further evinces the distancing of the readership of the seventeenth-century from *Celestina*'s nihilistic skepticism. In his *La niña de los embustes,*

[143] See Johnson (1990, 2000) and, later, Quint (2003).

Teresa de Manzanares (Barcelona, 1632) and *La Garduña de Sevilla y Anzuelo de las bolsas* (1642), his two most famous female picaresque novels, Castillo Solórzano focuses on the amorous adventures of the *pícaras* and on the intrigue that their tricks and frauds create. In these works, the female *pícara* is transformed into a mere stereotype. In these fictions *Celestina*'s aesthetics of anamorphosis capitulates to frivolous love stories. Dunn (1952, 129), who blames Castillo Solórzano for the aesthetic downturn of the Spanish novel up until the nineteenth century, describes Castillo Solórzano's fiction as mechanical and stereotypical. Castillo Solórzano's novels focus on the ups and downs of the characters' romantic adventures in a world of glamourous and aristocratic triviality. On this account, the protagonists fail to face an intense internal challenges and conflicts, so that there is no ethical balance and, hence, no anamorphic space. There is no desire to account for the Other's viewpoint through subjective redoubling; therefore, male authority and dominance in the patriarchal system are safeguarded. This is so to the extent that even the professed didacticism is difficult to discern.[144] Whereas in *La hija de Celestina* Elena and Montúfar are the victims of their own wickedness, 'in the works of Castillo, however, the only punishment is that which the predatory *pícaro* or *pícara* lets loose on the victim. The only fault which deserves punishment, apparently, is credulity' (Dunn 1952, 124). Castillo Solórzano, as Salas Barbadillo, was a very prolific writer who belonged to Lope de Vega's literary circle. That being so, he wrote for a broad spectrum of readers, who consumed his inexpensive novels in search of romance at a time when *Celestina*'s aesthetics had been totally displaced by a consumerist market and new literary tastes. It is in this context that Lope de Vega in his *La Dorotea* tried his hand at a last continuation of *Celestina*, just to produce an aristocratic and Neo-Platonic love narrative more in line with Silva's *Segunda Celestina*.

In sum, Celestina's success in the early-sixteenth century was doubtless due to the original's anamorphic potential. *Celestina*'s aesthetics of anamorphosis, which it shares with the picaresque, accounts for its editorial success and decline. Picaresque fictions, like *Celestina*, look at the reader from the position of the Other captivating his or her attention. Whereas in *Celestina* and *Lazarillo de Tormes*, the anamorphic space takes the form of the Lacanian Real, in Counter-Reformation Spain, as the picaresque novel privileges a moral stand which fears the possible subversive meaning of the text, the vantage point of textual

[144] See 'Castillo Solórzano as a Moralist' and 'The picaresque,' in Dunn (1952).

anamorphosis becomes a reminder of the Other as the ethics and symbolic values of the dominant culture. At the end of the sixteenth century, Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache* came to satisfy a need for textual voyeurism and violence searched for before in *Celestina.* Contrary to Rojas' characters, Alemán's *pícaro* allowed for the cathartic relief of the reader by means of comedy. The picaresque novel seems to have attracted a wide spectrum of readers from almost all literate strata, displacing *Celestina* as a result. Furthermore, it also supplied the kind of entertainment that seventeenth-century consumers craved. That being so, *Celestina* was no longer an active force in the literary marketplace. In an emerging mass culture, a new kind of reading public was the literary agent that decided the fate of works. Supply and demand became the two main mechanisms for the production of literature, which purposefully now looked to satisfy its consumers and secure its place as a cultural commodity. In this context, *Celestina* ceased to be liked, consumed and printed.

AFTERWORD

Anamorphosis entails a heuristic exercise in which the observer's look is challenged by a geometrically manipulated distortion, whose shape and message are a remainder of the subject's alienation from the Other. Anamorphosis is the underside of geometric and mathematical perspective, developed in Italy during the Renaissance. Soon after Leon Battista Alberti devised a method to measure the relative position of objects in order to create the illusion of perspective, the Renaissance artist realized that pictorial perspective is deceptive. For perspective to work, the viewer needs to situate him/herself in an absolute frontal position with regards to the object of watching. Nonetheless, the human mind assumes perspective and its conditionings as the only possible and most consummate approach to observation. Produced by geometrically enlarging an image, anamorphosis calls the attention towards the artificiality and untruthfulness of representation and, hence, towards the underlying side of cognition. Anamorphosis implies that what is depicted is not all that is to be observed because there is a phantasmatic truth that remains unrecognized by the senses. The occluded side of representation is linked by Lacan to the Other, a concept in which the Real and the Symbolic merge in order to convey the human feeling of senselessness, overcome through spiritual and ideological mechanisms that, built upon language, try to bridge the gap between the subject and a higher order. Only through union of the Other, upon which want is predicated, the subject can attain a fleeting moment of contentment. Anamorphosis, Lacan elucidates, captures the gaze, in other words, the look of the Other. In the point or space of anamorphosis, the Other gazes into the subject igniting recognition, suspicion and a desire to know what is beyond his/her understanding in order to reach the unfathomable essence of life. By breaking the illusion of perspective through a distortion, anamorphosis brings into the picture or narrative a surplus of meaning. This excess produces unease and wariness in the onlooker, who is forced into a re-examination of his way of looking and, along with it, of his set of values and ideals, Žižek intimates. The polymorphous and oblique character of anamorphosis represents an aberration that forces the subject to realize its cognitive limitations in the face of an apparent unknown form. The more the subject is entrapped in the anamorphic deformation, the more threatening it appears, a menace that transposes into the subject's experience of life.

In his *Celestina*, Fernando de Rojas attempts at capturing the gaze. *Celestina* gives expression to the disintegration of the medieval transcendental discourses of courtly love and Christianity. The collapse of ontological epistemological certainties results in the failure of language and the breakdown of the horizon of meaning. As intimated by a vast number of scholars, among them, Brownlee, Gaylord and Gerli, the word gains in *Celestina* solipsistic and fetishistic force. The word gives expression not to God's eternal, humanitarian ideals, but to the desire of the self. The foundering of language is expressed through the anamorphic redoubling of patriarchal norms and meaning. *Celestina* brings down the voyeuristic barriers of medieval literature, built upon the narcissistic appetite of the aristocratic male and the unconquerable separation between him and the female object of his desire, which is an inhuman partner, a figment of his imagination. Much of *Celestina* is about women's sexuality, one aspect of a female yearning for freedom to live and to love. Women are 'others' to the patriarchal construct. Therefore, women come to stand for the Other within the medieval understanding of the self and love, that is to say, for the force of material desire to lead the subject into the margin, bringing down a divinely ordained stratification and system of values in order to attain a fleeting moment of satisfaction. The presence of the Other is perceived in the subject's yearning for self-determination, which takes a distinctive expression in the speech of society's outcasts, either in terms of gender, class or believes. All of *Celestina*'s characters are marginal, even the patrician lovers, who moved by their humanity transgress the ethics associated to their class and gender. The Other within these characters surfaces as a point of anamorphosis in their verbal expression and is further communicated through an awry specular projection into the speeches of lower-life characters.

Celestina's anamorphosis is recognizable in every uncanny detail in the courtly expression of love. Anamorphosis takes a distinctive presence in asides, laughter and in an expected literality of language, which brings down the linguistic pact, first noticed by Augustine and according to which meaning is expressed figuratively. By virtue of voyeuristic, gendered and linguistic redoubling, Rojas' *Celestina* creates a space of verbal anamorphosis in which the Other to medieval transcendental discourses is communicated as an expression of the subject's desire for sexual union, money and rank. In the textual space of anamorphosis, the arbitrariness and performativity of love, religion and power is evinced. All of this happens in an age an age in which the human subject was in search of itself due

to the possibilities offered by the rise the middle man, an autonomous and self-contained being that educated himself at the university to pursue a carrier in public service. Together with the ascend of middle-class men and like him as a result of a radical epistemological and scientific swift, society's 'others' became more and more perceptible, testifying to the repressed side of cultural, cognitive and ideological discourses. In the Iberian Peninsula, a female underdog, Isabel I, has seized power through political maneuvering and propaganda; hence, exhibiting the relativity of the symbolic system. During the reign of the Catholic Queen, the borders between classes blurred due to learning, economic growing and exploration. At the same time, the presence of the margin was felt, both, in the violent repression of ethnic and religious 'others,' and in the rise of poverty. These two factors are crucial to understanding the reception of *Celestina* in the sixteenth century.

Fernando de Rojas is aware that every subject approaches the text from where he/she is, desires and ideologically stands. *Celestina* attempts at kindling the reader's unconscious mind and desires, which take the form of an anamorphosis. The double-edged structure of anamorphosis, in which sanctioned discourses and views are confronted by their underside, is analogous to the psychological split of the late medieval and early modern subject. Therefore, under a veneer of didacticism, *Celestina* challenges the reader to confront and reappraise his/her mindset. In this process of unveiling, resides textual enjoyment, that is, the pleasure of reading as an aspect of Lacanian *jouissance. Celestina*'s paratexts reveal Rojas as an author sensible of the conventional and fetishistic quality of language, which shapes our understanding of the world as much as it creates external reality. *Celestina*'s paratexts present the text as a dialogue between the self and the discourses that structure his/her experience of the world, which are challenged and overturned. Furthermore, as an author composing in the rise of a printed market of texts and a spreading literacy, Rojas was mindful of the dialogic nature of texts. Whereas in the Middle Ages, texts were conceived of as a collaboration; *Celestina*'s introductory and concluding materials present reception and meaning creation as a conflictive interchange between author, readers and printers, who have added their own 'punturas' [points] to his creation. The literary text is a social artifact; therefore, as *Celestina*'s prologues communicate, the creation of meaning depends on the individual mind as much as on the community. Accordingly, Rojas claimed to have set himself to re-write the *Comedia*, upon which he conferred a more anamorphic quality, which

transpires in Calisto's soliloquy and death, and in the enhanced agency of *Celestina*'s female societies after the death of the bawd. The twenty-one act *Tragicomedia* seem to have been designed not to put the readers' contention at ease, but to further thwart a didactic, unified reading and, hence, to arouse allurement and temptation. In effect, the *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea* was edited and reissued numerous times in the sixteenth-century. It also fostered many adaptations and continuations, giving rise to its own genre, the so-called *celestinesca*. The success of Rojas' *Celestina* lasted a century, in which the gaze of Rojas' bawd and text is vividly discernable in its editions, its offspring and in the ongoing debates about its morality. When the sermonizing gaze of Guzmán de Alfarache, 'atalaya de la vida humana' [watchover of human life], takes over the space of anamorphosis; *Celestina* ceases to be read, further displaced by a rising literary consumerism.

Anamorphosis is one specific aspect of the Renaissance literary work in which text, subject and life converge. The success of *Celestina* lies in the reading subject's recognition of his/her desire, which is demystified in the face of the eroticism and violence, contained in its space of anamorphosis. Rojas' text captures the late medieval preoccupation with the constitution of the subject and the materiality of human existence through anamorphosis, in which the foreclosed aspects of the previous tradition emerge through a dynamic of projection and distortion. This dissertation moves from the text to its reception through a combination of medieval and postmodern theories, whose axis is anamorphosis. Due to this space of anamorphosis, which betrays any attempt to impose an authoritative view, it is impossible to attribute a single intention—comic, didactic, parodic—to Rojas' work. *Celestina*'s interpretative openness engenders a variety of perspectives, both canonical and nonconformist, demonstrating how marginal voices have the potential to infiltrate narratives of aristocratic undertones, such as the romances of chivalry, and to develop into others that bring to the fore their destabilizing effect. To be sure, *Celestina* makes sense form a multitude of viewpoints. Due to its anamorphosis, it generates different meanings; hence, the endless scholarly debate about its intention. A dominant majority of *Celestina*'s critics, states Smith (1989, 273) in tune what has come to be an overriding concern, 'cannot tolerate the possibility that identity is provisional, writing intertextual, and meaning undecidable.' On this account, a majority of *Celestina'*s scholarship is caught up in questions of authority, whether in connection to authorship, genre, sources or textual filiation. As Brocato (1995) observes, the

same as Eliza Doolittle, domesticated by the Professor in order to move her away from the shadows of marginality into a lofty standard of normativity, *Celestina*'s critics have attempted to regulate the meaning and uses of the text, seeking to impose their authority over the transgressive body of the text. By focusing on the gaze and the space of anamorphosis it creates, my critical approach to *Celestina* in the sixteenth-century imagination accounts for the contradictory character of Rojas' text, which has generated since the time of its composition until the present day a wide variety of responses. Anamorphosis testifies to the openness of reading *Celestina*, which moves from the space where the reader is included to the collective construction of its meaning.

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