



Joan Roís de Corella's *Inventio* of Tragedy: A Valencian Writer's Dramatic Monologue of the Early Renaissance

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ABSTRACT:

In 1458 Joan Roís de Corella (1435-1497), a prominent exponent of Valencian-Catalan literature of the early Renaissance, authored *Tragèdia de Caldesa*, a short dramatic monologue presented from the exclusive perspective of the auctorial persona. Arguing in favor of the full-fledged theatricality of the monologue in question, I advance two radical propositions: 1) *Tragèdia de Caldesa* is a play; 2) it is, indeed, a tragedy. As I try to show, Corella employs the mnemonic techniques of ekphrasis and *imago agens* that stem from the rhetorical tradition, eminently represented by Cicero, Quintilian, and their illustrious followers in the Middle Ages. I proceed to explore three main aspects of Corella's creative enterprise: 1) the bold initiative of the female protagonist (Caldesa) in setting in operation her transgressive plot; 2) the speaker's melancholic reaction, which conditions the mutation of the plot into a vehicle of bitter, narcissistic expressionism; 3) the molding of the monologue into the format of a little-known dramatic genre (the so-called *auto de amores*).

KEY WORDS: *auto de amores*, *cancionero*, comparative analysis, dramatic monologue, ekphrasis, *imago agens*, intertextuality, *letteraturizzazione*, narrator-expositor, *novella*, tragedy.

RESUMEN:

En 1458 Joan Roís de Corella (1435-1497), destacada figura representativa de la literatura valenciano-catalana de principios del Renacimiento, redactó *Tragèdia de Caldesa*, monólogo dramático bastante corto, presentado por completo desde la perspectiva de la persona poética del autor. Al plantear un argumento a favor de una teatralidad plenamente alcanzada en el monólogo en cuestión, aquí se aducen dos proposiciones radicales: 1) *Tragèdia de Caldesa* es pieza dramática, apta para una representación escénica; 2) es, además, tragedia en pleno sentido del término. Lo que se intenta evidenciar es que Corella pone en juego las técnicas mnemónicas de la écfrasis e *imago agens* —las mismas que estriban en la tradición retórica, en la cual brillan Cicerón, Quintiliano y los ilustres sucesores de ambos que florecieron en la era medieval. Se exploran, paso seguido, tres aspectos principales de la empresa creativa de Corella: 1) la iniciativa atrevida de la protagonista (Caldesa) en poner en práctica su plan transgresivo; 2) el acondicionamiento de la trama como vehículo de un expresionismo amargado y narcisista de acuerdo con la reacción melancólica del hablante (narrador de primera persona); 3) el proyecto de amoldar el monólogo a la forma de un tipo de drama poco conocido, que algunos críticos han dado en llamar *auto de amores*.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *auto de amores*, *cancionero*, análisis comparativo, monólogo dramático, ekphrasis, *imago agens*, intertextualidad, *letteraturizzazione*, narrador-expositor, *novella*, tragedia.

A Josep Lluís Sirera *in memoriam*

Preliminary Considerations

The Valencian writer Joan Roís de Corella (1435-1497) is the author of a short composition, entitled *Tragèdia de Caldesa*, which has intrigued generations of scholars interested in the literature produced in the Catalan domain in the late Middle Ages or early Renaissance.¹ The crucial issue posited in Corella's masterpiece is perceptively spotlighted by the Italian Catalanist, Annamaria Annicchiario, who in the very title of an insightful essay asks the pointed question: «Perché tragedia» ('Why Tragedy')?

Before reflecting on the significance of Annicchiario's query, it is well to accord due consideration to the plot clearly configured in the literary text in question. For the purpose of a preliminary discussion a broad summary will suffice.² Said text consists of a protracted monologue, provoked by a shocking incident, which the auctorial persona recounts in painful after painful detail. The first-person speaker starts out with a fleeting reference to a period, much too short, alas, of sheer bliss in his relationship with his ladylove, the Caldesa of the title, whom he describes as a young woman of extraordinary beauty and unimpeachable reputation. Then, suddenly, the situation takes a turn that could not be more deplorable. The narrator reveals that on a recent afternoon he found himself confined by Caldesa within a dark room in her own house. The «íclita donzella» ('illustrious young lady') left him there under the pretext of having to attend to some urgent business with another person. She promised that she would return «sens tarda» ('without delay') but did not keep her promise. Abandoned to his languishment for a good part of the afternoon, the restless guest noticed a small window («poca finestra») that looked out on the adjacent courtyard. He peeped through that porthole of sorts and witnessed a scene that, from his own account, he will never be able to erase from his

1.– The precise dates of Corella's birth (September 28, 1435) and death (October 6, 1497) are provided by Cantavella («On the Sources of the Plot of Corella's *Tragèdia de Caldesa*» 75) and Martos («La revaluació crítica de Joan Roís de Corella. Notes» 1). See, also, Chiner, «Aportació a la biografia de Joan Roís de Corella». The essential orientation on Corella's life and works may be found in Riquer, *Història* 3: 254–320. Useful updates on the latest scholarship on Corella are available in Badia, «L'ascensió irresistible de l'astre literari de Joan Roís de Corella: cinc anys de bibliografia (1993-1997);» Martines, «Comentaris a la bibliografia sobre Joan Roís de Corella;» and Martos, «La revaluació crítica de Joan Roís de Corella». Particularly commendable are the following collections of essays: Hauf, *Joan Roís de Corella i el seu temps*; Martines, *Estudis sobre Joan Roís de Corella*; Martínez, «Lo gentil estil fa pus clara la sentència.» *De literatura i cultura a la València medieval*. (See Wittlin's review of these three collections.) For an overview of the intellectual life in the Valencia of the 1400s, see Fuster, «Poetes, moriscos i capellans». A useful orientation on the medieval history of Valencia in particular and the Catalan-speaking world in general is found in Delgado-Librero 7–13. Delgado-Librero complements her succinct, lucid account with extensive, up-to-date bibliographic references. For the text of *Tragèdia de Caldesa* see Gustà's edition in «Works Cited» below. See, also, the transcription by Romeu i Figueres, «*Tragèdia de Caldesa*, de Joan Roís de Corella: Una aproximació textual» 82-6.

2.– A complete summary is provided in Cantavella, «On the Sources of the Plot of Corella's *Tragèdia de Caldesa*» 76-9; Coccozzella, *Text, Translation, and Critical Interpretation of Joan Roís de Corella's Tragèdia de Caldesa* 17-21; Romeu i Figueres, «*Tragèdia de Caldesa*, de Joan Roís de Corella: Una aproximació textual» 87-92.

mind. He saw Caldesa engaged in a torrid embrace with another man. As he shifts back to the present tense of the monologue, the afflicted lover gives free vent, in profuse laments and maledictions, to the fury of his rage and resentment.

Let us pursue, for a moment, Annicchiarico's answer to her own «perché» question. For Annicchiarico and the other exponents of the prevailing trend of criticism on Corella, the all-important issue raised by the question may be dispatched in short order in a straightforward manner. The explanation that to this day critics at large have proffered runs as follows: Corella abides by a pattern held as sacrosanct doctrine throughout the Middle Ages and championed by none other than the author of the *Divine Comedy*. The pattern is based on a stark profile of the tragic mode defined in terms of a happy beginning and a very sad, often catastrophic ending. As Dante himself puts it in his *Epistola* to Cangrande della Scala, «tragedia in principio est admirabilis et quieta, in fine seu exitu est fetida et horribilis» (Dante 1390: *Epistola* 13.10).³ Is there any more to be said?⁴

I believe there is. In making this assertion I see no need —nor is it my intention— to call into question any pronouncement of the Florentine bard and other formidable *authoritates*. My entire discussion stems from the conviction that the unqualified application of Dante's «ipse dixit» to Corella's idea of tragedy connotes a literalist reading that does not do justice either to Corella's creative genius or to the momentous circumstances that inform his landmark contribution to the literature written in Catalan. In order to highlight Corella's outstanding achievement, I have included the word «inventio» in the title of my presentation. As is well known, the Latin term encompasses the semiotics of discovery and creativity all in one. Accordingly, it bears acknowledging that the ambivalent signifier points to a two-dimensional aspect of Corella's enterprise: in keeping with the spirit of the Renaissance, he discovers or re-discovers the tragic mode and, at the same time, re-fashions it by impressing upon it the brand of his own artistry.

Here I intend to show that the full impact of Corella's *inventio* is accessible not to a literalist reading but, rather, to an intertextual analysis, which, by its very nature, involves a comparative study. For the sake of clarity, I hasten to add, even at the risk of overstating the obvious, that intertextuality entails the juxtaposition of a number of kindred compositions. The juxtaposition, in turn, facilitates the overview of the points of parallelism, coincidence, analogy. In the process, the issues and motifs treated explicitly in some of the aforementioned compositions elucidate their counterparts that remain implicit in other works subjected to the same comparative scrutiny. As I hope to demonstrate, the

3.— Qtd. in Annicchiarico 59, n. 2. Hollander, who harbors no doubts as to the authorship of *Epistola* 13, presents a meticulously documented account of the controversy surrounding the attribution of that work to Dante. Remarkable in this context is the following statement by Riquer:

Respecte al títol, pot estranyar que aquesta breu prosa [Corella's *Tragèdia*] sigui qualificada de «tragedia», però és possible que Corella el triés en atenció a determinades idees preceptives del seu temps relacionades o derivades amb aquella tan coneguda definició de Dante, a la seva epístola a Cangrande della Scala, on diu que, en oposició a la «comèdia», la «tragedia» es caracteritza per un començament admirable i quiet i un final fastigós i horrible. (3: 294-5)

4.— For a general account of the various interpretive theories regarding the tragic mode, circulated throughout Europe during the Middle Ages, see Kelly, *Ideas and Forms of Tragedy from Aristotle to the Middle Ages*. For a discussion focused on the applicability of these theories to Corella's *Tragèdia*, see Romeu i Figueras, «*Tragèdia de Caldesa*, de Joan Roís de Corella: Una aproximació textual» 86-87, and Cocozzella, *Text, Translation, and Critical Interpretation of Joan Roís de Corella's Tragèdia de Caldesa*, 151-68.

intertextuality I have in mind brings to light latent or sub-textual aspects that may be integrated into a fresh interpretation of Corella's *Tragèdia*.

The high point of the comparative-intertextual study may well turn out to be the discovery of the full-fledged theatricality of *Tragèdia de Caldesa*. Indeed, a close study makes it clear that Caldesa conceives and sets in operation a stage-worthy plot, which calls attention to a most revealing, if hitherto denied or ignored, aspect of Corella's innovative approach to dramaturgy.⁵ To be specific, in my discussion I will focus on two salient topics: 1) Corella's characterization of the transgressive woman; 2) the dramatics and theatricality of the monologue. Each topic exhibits a level of complexity far higher than is apparent at first reading. To start with, I take into consideration the insights provided by a close look at two of Caldesa's counterparts that appear in *Tirant lo Blanc*, the great novel by Corella's illustrious contemporaries, the fellow Valencians Joanot Martorell and Martí Joan de Galba. As for the second topic I have just listed, I proceed with the analysis of both the structural and psychological dimensions of Corella's monologue. I propose to define the formal traits of *Tragèdia de Caldesa* in terms of the *auto de amores*, so called, the hitherto little-known dramatic genre, which various scholars have discovered in Catalan and Castilian literatures of the late Middle Ages or early Renaissance. The thrust of my argumentation stems from the intention to explore how the transgressive woman creates a plot, which, in turn, becomes the generating principle of psychodrama. Of special interest is the portrait of the male protagonist, who takes center stage in the role of narrator-expositor. Attendant upon this exploration is the phenomenology of what some scholars call *letteraturizzazione* — a neologism, which refers to the fashioning of a full-fledged theater at the last phase of a long evolution of some key principles of classical Roman rhetoric through various medieval adaptations. What I hope to show at the heart of Corella's notion of tragedy is the bleak mind-scape of a melancholic and narcissistic lover, who despite his privileged position as a firsthand observer, cannot come to grips with the reality of a woman of flesh and blood and, instead, escapes to the illusory world of his *idée fixe*: the image of a woman not as she is but as she should be.

The Transgressive Woman, Conceiver of a Plot

It is instructive to adopt Francisco Rico's association of Caldesa with the type of literary personages, famous or infamous as the case may be, whom this critic calls «*otras perversas*» ('other perverse women').⁶ For an appropriate frame of intertextual reference the examples of Viuda Reposada and Princesa Ricomana in *Tirant lo Blanc* readily come to mind.⁷ Viuda

5.– Annicchiarico, for example, denies any inclination on the part of Corella for the *mise en scène* («la pur minima preoccupazione per l'elemento scenico e per il montaggio drammatico») (62).

6.– For the core episode illustrative of Caldesa's misdeed Rico suggests a wide context of analogous cases. These include reminiscences of unspecified works by Ovid, Sempronio's malicious innuendoes in Fernando de Rojas's *Celestina*, and a repulsive tale by Ubertino da Casale — not to mention, of course, Viuda Reposada's ruse, which we are about to look into.

7.– We could list here other personages, such as Medea in Corella's own homonymous «prosa mitològica», Melibea in Fernando de Rojas's *Celestina*, and Adela in García Lorca's *La casa de Bernarda Alba*. In this group, Medea is obviously «perversa»: she perverts the very natural law of motherhood. The others may be characterized as transgressive because of their «contrary» behavior. For the sake of conciseness I will limit my discussion to the cases of the aforementioned Reposada and Ricomana.

Reposada ('The Easygoing Widow')⁸ is a member of the entourage of Princess Carmesina, the ladylove of Tirant, the valiant knight, heroic protagonist of the novel that bears his name. The widow is considerably older than both Carmesina and Tirant. Her age and some of her mannerisms may be compared to those of the Nurse in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Poignantly Martí de Riquer calls her «intrigant dida de la Princesa» (qtd. in Aguilar i Montero 5). To a certain extent she may call to mind, also, Celestina, the go-between classically portrayed by Fernando de Rojas.⁹ The comparison, however, can be sustained only up to a point. Reposada does not aim to foment the relationship between the two lovers; on the contrary, she does her best (or worst) to thwart it. Her motives are quite selfish. She claims for herself the amorous attention of Tirant, with whom she is desperately in love. She goes as far as to devise a ruse that she is sure will arouse Tirant's jealousy and convince him that Carmesina is in love with another man. The wicked plan, ingeniously calculated, is implemented with impressive efficiency.¹⁰

One evening, under the pretext of engaging the princess in some lighthearted entertainment, the beldam persuades the young woman to step out to the garden and unburden herself of her cares and inhibitions in a healthy, therapeutic frolic with a supposed lustful lover. The lover is impersonated by Plaerdemavida ('Pleasure-of-my-life'), a damsel at the court, who, following the hag's instructions, dons a man's attire, disguising herself as the black gardener, called Lauseta. Needless to say, neither Carmesina nor Plaerdemavida has any idea of Viuda's malevolent intentions. What the two unwitting collaborators do not know is that Reposada has already stationed Tirant in a hidden lookout: the upper room of the cottage adjacent to the garden. There, at the appropriate time, she joins the unsuspecting hero. Through a «petita finestra» and by the aid of two enormous mirrors, strategically positioned, she allows the enamored youth to observe the apparently alarming but actually quite innocuous love game being played in the garden. The game fulfills all Viuda's expectations. Believing that Carmesina is deceiving him with the «hortolà,» Tirant collapses into the abyss of depression and, not unlike his counterpart in Corella's *Tragèdia*, vents his anguish in profuse lamentations.¹¹

Worth considering in this context is, also, the example of Princess Ricomana, whose headstrong intervention is recorded in two dramatic episodes, integrated, within the nar-

8.– For the Anglicized names of Viuda Reposada and Plaerdemavida I am indebted to David H. Rosenthal's translation of *Tirant lo Blanc*.

9.– Aguilar i Montero refers to her as «una autèntica Celestina» (5).

10.– Reposada's stratagem encompasses ch. 283 of *Tirant lo Blanc*. For a commentary on the widow's machinations, see Cocozzella, *Text, Translation, and Critical Interpretation of Joan Roís de Corella's Tragèdia de Caldesa* 136-45. A detailed analysis of the episode and a painstaking study of its sources and influences are provided by Aguilar i Montero and R. Beltrán.

11.– A striking demonstration of Tirant's mournful declamations is found throughout ch. 291 (ed. Riquer 2: 219-25), headed by the rubric «Lamentació que fa Tirant». In ch. 295 (ed. Riquer 2: 232-5) Tirant provides his own account of what he saw taking place in the garden. The following passage is particularly significant in view of its obvious similarity with Corella's text:

A la fi los meus adolorits ulls mereixqueren veure la tan estimada senyora, la qual de mi en aquell cas poc pensament tenia, ab lo Lauseta, negre hortolà. Primerament viu un deshonest besar, lo qual los meus ulls e los sentiments ofené, e maojorment après entrant en una cambra, ab gest e paraules d'infinida amor abraçats, mostraven aconseguit tot aquell plaer e delit que entre enamorats s'acostuma. (ed. Riquer 2: 233)

Worthy pondering is especially the reference to the «deshonest besar,» which parallels verbatim the expression in *Tragèdia de Caldesa*. For this passage see, also, Aguilar i Montero's commentary (27).

rative of *Tirant lo Blanc*, into the sequence of events that take place in the islands of Sicily and Rhodes.¹² Described by the narrator as «d'ineestimable bellea» and «donzella molt sabuda e de moltes virtuts complida» (110; 1: 307), Ricomana is the daughter of the king of Sicily. The *donzella* is greatly conflicted in her feelings toward her suitor, Felip, the youngest of the five children of the king of France (99; 1: 303). She acknowledges a certain attraction toward the prince («los meus ulls contents són de la vista d'ell» [100; 1: 309]) but harbors serious concerns as to whether he is worthy of being her husband. To Tirant, Felip's loyal friend and staunch defender, Ricomana feels the compulsion to confess:

lo meu cor se combat amb mi, e l'experiència me manifesta que és, aquell que jo contemple, d'ésser grosser e avar, les quals dos malalties són incurables. (110; 1: 390-10)

Something about Felip must have given the young lady a hunch about the less than stellar reputation that precedes him. In a casual observation that is hardly gratuitous, the narrator lets us know that the French prince «era un poc ignorant e tengut en possessió de molt grosser» (99; 1: 303).

Showing great resolve, Ricomana puts Felip to the test. She arranges a lavish banquet, in the course of which she plans to judge the nobility of his character by the etiquette of his table manners:

Totes les coses per la Infanta foren molt bé ordenades e devisades de moltes e diverses maneres de viandes per mostrar la sua gran discreció. E aquesta festa no fon ordenada per la Infanta per pus sinó per provar a Felip e veure en son menjar quin comport feia. (101; 1: 315)

Felip makes a spectacle of himself. Tirant can only watch in dismay when his witless cohort, in flagrant transgression of courtly custom, slices the loaf of bread even before the main course is served. The immediate reaction of the bystanders to the glaring faux pas is, not surprisingly, that elicited by a farce. First, the narrator informs us that the princess cannot refrain from laughing: «Com la Infanta véu tal entramès no es pogué detenir de riure» (101; 1: 316). Soon later, the queen confides wryly to Tirant: «Molt me plauria saber aquest entramès» (101; 1: 317). As we can see, the appropriate theatrical term «entramès» appears twice in reference to Felip's uncouth performance. It is up to Tirant to save the day; and that he does masterfully by an ingenious coup of tact and inventiveness. He gladly obliges the queen, the princess, the king, and the inquisitive guests by making up a story: Felip, he explains, has ceremoniously cut the bread in twelve slices in observance of a special devotion of long-standing in the French royal family to the revered apostles of Christ. With this clever invention the hero manages to assuage at least temporarily the Infanta's concerns.

But Felip, to use a slang expression, is not «off the hook» yet. Ricomana is still beset by doubts. In an effort to dispel them, she consults a *filòsof* from Calabria, a clairvoyant wizard, who no sooner lays eyes on the prince than pronounces an ambiguous and less than reassuring verdict:

12.— According to Riquer (*Història* 2: 667-77), this section of *Tirant lo Blanc*, chs. 98-114, may be considered part II of the great novel. In these chapters, as Riquer explains, «[l]a novel·la ha esdevingut finalment mediterrània, i es pot dir que ja no deixarà d'ésser-ho, amb la qual cosa va adquirint una nova fesonomia, de vegades més realista i més faceciosa» (*Història* 2: 667).

Senyora, lo galant que la senyoria vostra m'ha fet veure porta l'escrit en lo front de molt ignorant home e avar. E dar-vos ha a sentir moltes congoixes. Serà home animós e valentíssim de sa persona e molt venturós en armes e morrà rei. (110; 1: 352)

So, the enterprising maiden welcomes the serendipitous opportunity to examine Felip's behavior in yet another *entramès* of sorts. She jumps at the chance of confining her would-be husband in a chamber, in which two beds have been installed: one much older and considerably less attractive than the other, a splendid structure, complete with brocaded canopy, that is being readied for the eventual nuptials of the princess.

Once again, the resolution of a problematic issue as weighty as the doubt concerning the noble character befitting royalty is linked to the unintended performance of a farce. The farce —it bears underscoring— is in strict consequence to the arrangements made by a shrewd woman. The Infanta —«avisada senyora,» as Corella would put it (*Tragèdia de Caldesa* 26)— reserves for herself the privileged standpoint of a spectator watching on the sly.¹³ What she observes is how Felip dismantles the old, ugly bed in a flurry of gesticulations and other excited petty motions until, exhausted, he flops on the magnificent soft construction beneath the canopy.

For Ricomana the interpretation of the episode is as easy as «seeing is believing». Felip, she is convinced, has passed the test with flying colors. His «choice» of the correct bed is proof positive of his innate magnanimity. That notwithstanding, for the fully-informed spectator —namely, the reader of *Tirant lo Blanc*— the *entramès* clearly exhibits an ironic and, ultimately, comic twist. The joke is on the very person who presumes to be in absolute control of the situation. Ricomana has no way of knowing that there is no choice involved on Felip's part. His determination to dismantle the old bed and lie on the new one is motivated by his frantic rummaging in search of the needle and thread he has lost. He is in desperate need of these tools as he is about to mend a run in one of his stockings.

Now, let us take up the case of Caldesa and see how, in accordance with the intertextual-comparative analysis I propose, significant points of affinity come to light between the female protagonist of Corella's *Tragèdia* and the two women (Viuda Reposada and Ricomana) portrayed by the authors of *Tirant lo Blanc*. There can be little doubt that Caldesa shares with the other two personages various character traits, such as initiative, astuteness, decisiveness, determination, self-assurance, strong will. The aforementioned epithet of «avisada senyora» that the first-person narrator bestows upon her makes it quite apparent that she vies in shrewdness with any Reposada and Ricomana of this world.¹⁴ Needless to say, the factor of motivation is of paramount significance in Reposada's and Ricomana's schemes, and there is no denying that a similar degree of purposefulness is at play in Caldesa's course of action. There is, all the same, a big difference to be reckoned with. It is clear that Reposada acts out of jealousy or resentment and Ricomana is driven by the urgent need to pry into Felip's *modus operandi*. Not so obvious are, by contrast,

13.— Ricomana's conduct is described in some rather strong terms. The narrator refers to Tirant's awareness of her malicious intent: «E Tirant, coneixent la malícia de la Infanta...» (109; 1: 343). Also, the speech of the princess is characterized as mean-spirited: «Amb molta fellonia que ho dix» (110; 1: 353).

14.— Relevant to this context is the speaker's reference to Caldesa as «en avisament passant totes les altres» (*Tragèdia de Caldesa* 26).

the intentions behind Caldesa's determined and, by all appearances, defiant choice to do what she does and act as she pleases. If, while remaining within the legitimate limits of literary criticism, we probe into Caldesa's unspecified motives, we may well begin to realize that the nebulous tenor of her strategy stems not so much from her stealthy planning as from the myopic purview inherent in the monologue of the male protagonist. But more about this later (see, below, pp. 484-7).¹⁵

At this juncture, a moment of reflection will lead us to an insight into Corella's conception and our perception of the role of Caldesa. Scanty as they are, the details provided by Corella in the monologue's narrative warrant the deduction that Caldesa closely resembles Viuda and Ricomana in being the sole creator of a plot and in taking full charge of its implementation. To begin with, she locks the door of the dark room where her lover is confined, thus making sure that he will not leave the premises. Evidently, she capitalizes on the coincidence of two crucial events: the visit from her lover and the tryst with the latter's rival.¹⁶ A key feature in the execution of her precisely devised plan is the shocking effect of sound and sight: the brash resonance of the leave-taking («Adéu siau, manyeta» [*Tragèdia* 27]), accompanied by the «deshonest besar» [*Tragèdia* 27]), and, above all, the full exposure of the eroticized embrace, visible only within the limited range afforded by the «poca finestra» [*Tragèdia* 26]). Caldesa could have easily kept the provocative scene out of sight and mind of any likely unsuspecting observer. The fact that, even under the most precarious circumstances, she does not take the simplest precautionary measures to prevent her captive audience, the lover «imprisoned» in the dark room, from witnessing that extremely disturbing scene can only be taken as a sign that she calculates with utmost precision every move of her plot. Hence, her strategy spells out her intention to bring about deliberately the onlooker's predictable reaction of shock and bewilderment.

Further intertextual-comparative analysis discloses crucial aspects of an overarching analogy that rests on the following proposition: the plots set in motion by Caldesa, Ricomana, and Viuda Reposada exhibit the dynamics and configuration of a theatrical representation. The theatricality of the episodes engineered by either Ricomana or Viuda Reposada has been reviewed by a number of scholars: Aguilar i Montero, Coccozzella («Ausiàs March and Martorell's Egocentric and Historicist Modes»), Grilli, and Massip («Topography and Stagecraft in *Tirant lo Blanc*). There is no need to revisit the topic here. What we do need, however, is to show how the same factors evident in the *mise en scène* illustrated narratively in *Tirant lo Blanc* are operative in a particularly intensive and dramatic fashion in *Tragèdia de Caldesa*.

A word is in order about the equation of expansion and contraction, which occurs by virtue of the interaction between, respectively, Martorell and Galba on one side and Corella on the other. This esthetic of complementary amplification and intensification is highlighted by some easily identifiable traits and even identical lexical items shared by the three authors. There is plenty of evidence that identical or very similar passages

15.- The protagonist's flawed (narcissistic) perspective constitutes a serious impediment for a clear perception of the motivation behind Caldesa's behavior. See Coccozzella, *Text, Translation, and Critical Interpretation of Joan Roís de Corella's Tragèdia de Caldesa* 65-82.

16.- It may be argued that she actually arranges that coincidence. This point is argued at length in Coccozzella, *Text, Translation, and Critical Interpretation of Joan Roís de Corella's Tragèdia de Caldesa* 85-97.

of various length, in addition to strikingly parallel motifs and kindred details, appear in both Corella's works (including, of course, the *Tragèdia de Caldesa* and in *Tirant lo Blanc*).¹⁷ Understandably, for many critics this evidence raises the red flag of plagiarism. Take, for example, the «poca finestra» of *Tragèdia* (p. 26), which matches very closely the «petita finestra» in *Tirant* (283; 2: 203). In much the same vein, the designation «deshonest besar» in the former (p. 27) is repeated verbatim in the latter (295; 2: 233). Obviously, Caldesa's covert handiwork finds an expanded overt analogue in Reposada's elaborate staging of the malicious playacting, which we have described already.¹⁸

The doubt as to who plagiarized whom (Aguilar i Montero 23: «el dubte sobre qui va ser el qui va plagiar») has given rise to considerable controversy.¹⁹ Luckily, there is no need to get embroiled in the ins and outs of the discussion over the issue of plagiarism. Concerning the Corella-Martorell-Galba interaction the issue turns out to be of little or no consequence. From our comparatist perspective, what really matters is that each of the three writers manages to appropriate and integrate a number of textual items they all share into a creation of his own vintage.²⁰ This means that the analogous plots hatched by Caldesa, Viuda Reposada, and Ricomana attest to a high degree of assimilation of identical or analogous components into an organic composition, which commands an appreciative reading on its own merit.

To sum up: We have surveyed a field of creativity common to three writers (Joan Roís de Corella, Joanot Martorell, Martí Joan de Galba). A comparative analysis allows us to discover a bond of virtual collaboration among these authors. Some key texts by the Martorell-Galba duo concentrate on the well-rounded portrait of a strong-willed woman, characterized by personal motives and a self-serving agenda. The reader/spectator of *Tirant lo Blanc* gets to know firsthand Ricomana and Viuda Reposada. Ricomana flaunts

17.– See the passages, motifs, and features already mentioned in the course of this discussion. In the notes to his edition of Corella's *Medea*, Martos points to the same passages present in this *prosa mitològica* and in the text of Martorell/Galba.

18.– Appropriately, Aguilar i Montero perceives Viuda as a master deceiver «enginyant tota una funció teatral» (1). Elsewhere, I point out a striking coincidence in Caldesa's and Reposada's performances (*Text, Translation, and Critical Interpretation of Joan Roís de Corella's Tragèdia de Caldesa* 136-45). I call attention particularly to the following aspects of said coincidence: «a) a plot conceived and executed by a woman driven by *astutia*; b) a prominent scene which shocks the beholder (the unsuspecting lover) out of his wits and forebodes dire consequences; c) the lover's maudlin lamentations bristling with hyperbole» (*Text, Translation, and Critical Interpretation of Joan Roís de Corella's Tragèdia de Caldesa* 139-40).

19.– For a concise review of the controversy, see Aguilar i Montero 23-5. Garriga claims to provide an exhaustive list of unquestionable coincidences between *Tragèdia de Caldesa* and chs. 268-305 of *Tirant lo Blanc*. He adds that, among these passages, which he considers plagiarized by the authors of *Tirant*,

el més important és, evidentment, el del capítol 295. També és el més necessari. Tirant ha de saber que les seves sospites eren infundades, cosa que s'esdevé en el capítol 296, amb la rèplica de Plaerdemavida a la lamentació del protagonista. (26)

20.– My observation coincides with Annicchiarico's cogent argument concerning the very type of intertextuality I discuss here (See «'Voglia di pathos' e un'altra 'connexió': Fiammetta e Corella nel *Tirant lo Blanc*,» especially 25-7). In her painstaking analysis of the relationship between *Tragèdia de Caldesa* and *Tirant lo Blanc*, the Italian Catalanist focuses on Corella's and Martorell's distinctive elaboration on their common source: Boccaccio's *Elegia di Madonna Fiammetta*. Of particular interest is the following explanation of how Boccaccio influences Corella and how the latter, in turn, inspires the author (or authors) of *Tirant*:

[D]a un canto vi è il Boccaccio dell'*Elegia*, il quale, con suo antecedente immediato Ovidio, si offre a Corella come paradigma e fonte di occasioni tematiche e nutre il dittare del valenziano con «sublimità» di registri; dall'altro vi è un Corella, che, così fatto e costruito, piace a Martorell ed è per lui un breviario di formule concettuali ben confezionate, e di segmenti espressivi ben torniti. (See «'Voglia di pathos' e un'altra 'connexió': Fiammetta e Corella nel *Tirant lo Blanc*» 28.)

her rebellious temperament and does not hesitate to take matters in her own hands in unequivocal rejection of any paternal or paternalistic imposition in the arrangement of her marriage. Her speech reaches a climactic pitch nothing short of defiant:

Lo senyor Rei mon pare ha atorgat lo matrimoni als ambaixadors de França, e jo estic ab tan gran dubte de la grosseria de Felip que no es pot dir, i encara d'ésser avar, car si res de tot açò té no poria estar una hora ab ell gitada en un llit, ans deliberaria de fer-me monja e estar closa en un monestir, car jo he fet tot mon poder en conèixer-lo e veig que la sort no m'hi acompanya ab aquest traïdor de Tirant. Sí prec a Déu lo veja rostit e bollit e en ira de sa enamorada, que aquell dia de les llesques del pa ja l'haguera ben conegut sinó per causa sua. (109; 1: 342-3)²¹

And who can forget Viuda Reposada? Her conduct, as we have seen, aggravates transgression with the evils of perverseness and downright criminality. If, in the light of the evidence we have just examined, we turn our attention to Caldesa, we notice that she may well be considered a veritable soul mate of Ricomana, but her character has little or nothing in common with the viciousness of Reposada. To be sure, Caldesa bears comparing with the Viuda if only in the ability to conceive a plan of action and convert it into a plot. Like the Viuda, Caldesa executes her maneuvers with utmost ingeniousness and efficiency.

A Fundamental Question

There is a fundamental question to be asked concerning Corella's presentation of the female protagonist in *Tragèdia de Caldesa*. Why doesn't the author deal explicitly with the issue of the motivation of his «leading lady?» In an attempt to answer the question we need to take a close look at the overall structure of the composition. This consists of the auctorial persona's prolonged monologue, which exhibits two dimensions:

1. profuse lamentations;
2. a narrative in two phases:
 - a) the core episode (the scene of the erotic embrace, loud kiss, and boorish adieu);
 - b) the aftermath (the lady's hasty measures to regain composure, her deceptively calm return to the dark room, her apparent embarrassment and compunction when confronted with the lover's awareness of her treacherous deed).

The most important factor in the esthetic of Corella's *Tragèdia* is the distinctive function of the core episode we have just listed. In that quintessential component of the plot Corella recognizes and exploits to a full extent the pivotal role of the so-called *imago agens*, the all-important mnemonic technique that ultimately stems from the pseudo-Ciceronian *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (Miguel-Prendes, «Reimagining Diego de San Pedro's Readers at Work» 14-25). As Sol Miguel-Prendes explains, the term is indicative of one of those «shocking, active images, with a theatrical quality to trigger recollection» («Reimagin-

21.— We have already mentioned the *malícia* and *fellonia* attributed to Ricomana. At another moment of her vexing preoccupation ('fort pensament') the princess typically exclaims: «E més estime ésser monja o muller de sabater que haver aquest per marit, encara que fos rei de França» (110; 1: 352).

ing...» 15). By the end of the fifteenth century the *imago agens* had taken secure holding throughout the Spanish domain in the methodology of both preaching and devotional writing that inspired private, prayerful meditation and contemplation focused primarily on the passion of Christ. The modes of meditation or, to use Miguel-Prendes's term, «the rhetorical craft of contemplation» that thrived in the Spanish monastic (especially Franciscan) communities eventually came to bear on the composition of *Cárcel de amor*, Diego de San Pedro's prototypical *novela sentimental*, and on the layout of the numerous altar pieces (*retablos*).²² Miguel-Prendes aptly describes this momentous shift from religious to secular literature in the following terms:

Vernacular humanists practiced contemplation, the craft associated with literary composition, as a recollective journey through other texts or places stored in memory to retrieve subjects and to create original compositions (the two meanings of the word *inventio* [Latin *invenire*: to find and to invent]). («Reimagining ...» 15)²³

As specific examples of her broad description, Miguel-Prendes adduces Enrique de Villena's translation/*glosa* of the *Aeneid* and the *Sátira de infelice e felice vida* by Don Pedro, Condestable de Portugal («Reimagining... 15-6».²⁴

To the examples put forth by Miguel-Prendes, now we may add Corella's *Tragèdia*. By capitalizing on the function of the *imago agens* in the core episode identified above, Corella presents his own adaptation of the esthetic of contemplation, eminently illustrated in Diego de San Pedro's portrait of Leriano, the protagonist of *Cárcel de amor*. As I have tried to show elsewhere (*Text, Translation, and Critical Interpretation of Joan Roís de Corella's Tragèdia de Caldesa* 6, 115-20), Corella, not unlike San Pedro, employs to remarkable effect the rhetorical device called ekphrasis, which Stephen G. Nichols succinctly defines as «the description of a visual art work» (134).²⁵ This is how Miguel-Prendes explains the evolution of ekphrasis out of the description of the castle's tower («una torre de altura tan grande que parecía llegar al cielo» [84]), in which the incarcerated Leriano languishes:

San Pedro paints the prison building and expands the ekphrasis into his own interpretation, or literary creation, by making the prisoner Leriano explain the meaning of its components and the shocking images located in it —the *imagines agentes* —to the apprehensive narrator. (21)²⁶

22.– Miguel-Prendes refers to the proliferation of *retablos* during the age of the Catholic Monarchs and offers a broad description of the kind of scenes depicted in these magnificent structures, veritable showcases of paintings and sculptures.

23.– The term «vernacular humanists» is borrowed from Jeremy Lawrance, who coined it, as Miguel-Prendes puts it, «for the translations of the classics that became so popular in the Iberian Peninsula during the fifteenth century» («Reimagining...» 9).

24.– An up-to-date account of the Condestable's life and works may be found in Hawkins 1-74. As for Villena's career and literary production, see Torres-Alcalá.

25.– See, also, the informative article by Ryan Welsh. An outstanding example of ekphrasis is found in *La noche* by Francesc Moner: see Cocozzella, «Ekphrasis and the Mirrored Image: The Allegory of Despair in *La noche* by Francesc Moner, a Catalan Writer of the Late Fifteenth Century».

26.– For the text of Leriano's explication, see San Pedro 88–9. Miguel-Prendes perceptively points out the parallelism between the exegetical method employed in this passage and St. Jerome's «spiritual interpretation on Ezekiel's heavenly city (mentioned in Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought* 33–34)» (21, n. 32). For another useful explication of San Pedro's accomplished use of the ekphrasis, see Kurtz 127–8.

Following is my own commentary in which I highlight Corella's rendition of the same phenomenology displayed in San Pedro's passage:

Strictly speaking, in *Tragèdia de Caldesa* there is no «visual art work» as such. There is, nevertheless, a fit substitute for that artifact in the lurid scene..., which exposes what the speaker, in his jaundiced mind-set, interprets as Caldesa's disgraceful act of transgression and infidelity. The speaker's quite graphic description of that act attests to the healthy survival of an age-old ekphrastic tradition. Actually, in his exemplary adherence to the mechanics of the ekphrasis, Corella reaches beyond the level of circumscribed spatiality, enhanced localization, condensed action attained by San Pedro and the authors of the outstanding specimens of the *infierno de los enamorados*. (*Text, Translation, and Critical Interpretation of Joan Roís de Corella's Tragèdia de Caldesa* 6)²⁷

In short, in Corella's and San Pedro's respective masterwork, the protagonist mulls over, masochistically, the excruciating visual details that provoke his mental torture and unending nightmare.

Evidently, Corella shares with other writers the ekphrastic approach to the *imago agens* or its equivalent. The reaction to that approach reverberates through the experience that the lover (Leriano, Tirant, Corella's poetic persona) endures in a dark place. The physical enclosure (the room, say, or a castle's tower) turns into a psychological phase when projected, symbolically, onto the utter isolation and desolation of a troubled mind and obsessive self-consciousness. The radical difference between the theatricalized *Tragèdia* by Corella and the para-theatrical narratives we have considered so far resides in the function performed by the perspective or point of view of a particular observer.

Let us review, briefly, that function in the narratives we have referred to. In the passage of *Cárcel de amor* we have commented upon, the reader is afforded an insight into the lover's plight through, respectively, the *auctor's* primary and the protagonist's secondary mediacy. In other words, the reader relies on the *auctor*, who, in turn, relies on the protagonist (Leriano). In *Tirant lo Blanc* there is a total coincidence between the omniscient narrator's range of vision and that of the reader/spectator. As readers/spectators, we rely upon the narrator for a clear understanding of the motives, intentions, and viewpoints of the most influential personages. Thus, we have no doubt as to Reposada's malevolent schemes, Ricomana's mistaken interpretation of Felip's behavior, Tirant skewed perception of the actions and circumstances that cause and aggravate his great affliction and practically drive him out of his mind.²⁸

In diametric contrast to *Cárcel de amor* and *Tirant lo Blanc*, *Tragèdia de Caldesa* stands out for the absolute dominance of the male lover, who plays the dual role of first-person narrator and protagonist all in one. Naturally, this redounds in the telling of the story from the exclusive purview of one overbearing and prejudiced personage. It bears point-

27.- In his *Medieval Spanish Allegory*, Chandler R. Post classifies the *infiernos* under the general heading of «erotic Hell» (75-102). A broad discussion on these compositions is found in Cocozzella, *Text, Translation, and Critical Interpretation of Joan Roís de Corella's Tragèdia de Caldesa* 21-40. For a recent bibliography on the subject see: Deyermond, «Santillana's Love Allegories;» Pérez Priego; Recio; Rohland de Langbehn.

28.- The perspectivism in the Ricomana episode is addressed, in its various nuances, in Cocozzella, «Ausiàs March's and Martorell's Egocentric and Historicist Modes» 30-42.

ing out that the process of ekphrastic contemplation we have discussed above makes the account of the protagonist in question anything but dispassionate and impartial. In fact, what Corella reveals to us with impressive insight is the point of view of a narcissistic individual, blindfolded by his own obsession, incapable of perceiving anything with equanimity, let alone fathoming the motives of the woman he claims has dealt him irreparable injury.²⁹

In short, Corella reveals to us the amalgamation of various textual factors, compacted into a single short composition: ekphrastic contemplation of an *imago agens*, protracted lamentations, exclusivistic perspectivism, fixation on actions perceived as highly injurious. These components are integrated masterfully into an absolute monologue, which keeps asserting itself as an icon of monopolized speech. In view of Corella's multifaceted and highly complex textuality, it is fair to reach the following threefold conclusion: 1) Corella commits himself and his readers to gaze at the plot of *Tragèdia de Caldesa* exclusively through the mediacy of the myopic vision and self-centered consciousness of the protagonist; 2) the protagonist's hermetic perspective makes no allowance for a direct perception of Caldesa's motivation and intention; 3) the only way of probing objectively and impartially into Caldesa's conduct is the tangential evidence we have discussed in terms of the lady's resolute disposition and the limited vision afforded by the small window.

With this conclusion in mind, we will have no problem answering the fundamental question we have posed above. The very nature of the dramatic monologue fashioned by Corella rules out the possibility of stepping out of the protagonist's inner world in order to get a direct look at Caldesa's motives. That notwithstanding, Corella, as I have tried to show, provides, in the monologue itself, intriguing bits of evidence that prompt us to probe into those motives and allow us to get a glimpse of some general if not specific reasons as to why Caldesa acts the way she does. We may deduce that, even after considerable analysis, the perspective of the male protagonist in *Tragèdia de Caldesa* is quite explicit, while that of the female counterpart remains implicit. Concurrently, as will become apparent in the course of this discussion, the enigma that unavoidably surrounds Caldesa's behavior turns out to be a crucial aspect of Corella's vision of the tragic condition.

Auto de amores

After a moment of reflection we cannot but be intrigued by a remarkable corollary of sorts that jumps to our attention. What appears to be a syndrome of plagiarism turns out to be an index of complementary creativity. Whether purposefully or not, Corella, Martorell, and Galba are engaged in a collaborative effort —that of producing analogous versions of kindred plots. Each of these exhibits one of two literary modalities (either narrative or theatrical). Some probing into the de-facto concerted endeavor of these three authors brings to light another dimension of the aforementioned corollary. Let us take another look at the counterbalancing of amplification by a narrative (the passages of *Tirant lo Blanc* we have analyzed already) with intensification by stage-worthy action

29.— The issue of the lover's narcissism in *Tragèdia de Caldesa* is discussed in Cocozzella, «From the Perspective of a Narcissistic Lover: Joan Roís de Corella's *Tragèdia de Caldesa*».

(*Tragèdia de Caldesa*). This reexamination of the narrative/theater interaction discloses in front of our very eyes the phenomenology that comes to bear upon the gestation of the so-called *auto de amores*, a little known dramatic genre that may be documented within the domains of Castilian and Catalan in the fifteenth century.³⁰ The *auto*, which in recent years has garnered the interest of a number of critics, is very much in tune with the esthetic of the post-troubadour lyricism of the countless *cancioneros*.

It would be out of place on this occasion to embark on an extensive review of the recent scholarship on the *auto*. For a general orientation I will simply refer to the following observation I proffer in a previous essay:

On the basis of the information derived from the text of *Triste deleytación*, a work which Michael Gerli, one of its first editors, classifies as a «sentimental romance» (Gerli viii), Fernando Lázaro Carreter recaptures both the name and the essential characteristics of a genre exemplified by *Querella ante el Dios de Amor*, a composition by El Comendador Escrivá (Lázaro Carreter 70). In a handful of articles published in the wake of Lázaro Carreter's groundbreaking commentary, I myself have argued that the categorization of «auto de amor» may be expanded to include such pieces as Francesc Moner's *La noche*, and Rodrigo Cota's *Diálogo entre el Amor y un viejo*, and, probably, Francesc Carrós Pardo de la Casta's *Regoneixença e moral consideració* (Coccozella, «Fray Francisco Moner's *Auto de Amores*» and «Fray Francisco Moner's Dramatic Text»). All the while, I have explored a possible connection, or at least some points of affinity, between these paragons of the *auto de amores* and *Celestina* («From Lyricism to Drama»). It is appropriate to acknowledge here the contribution of Josep Lluís Sirera, who calls attention to the anonymous *Diálogo del viejo, el Amor y la hermosa*, a full-fledged theatrical composition patterned after Cota's *Diálogo*, and explores the stage-worthy qualities of two poems: Fernán Sánchez Calavera's *desir* («Ffuy a ver este otro dia» [Dutton 1663]), listed as no. 537 in the *Cancionero de Baena*, and Pedro Cartagena's «Si algun dios de amor auia» (Dutton 0903), collected in the *Cancionero general* («Diálogo de cancionero y teatralidad»). In effect, Sirera posits the possibility of extending the list of the *auto de amores* by the inclusion of the compositions he discusses. In another pioneering study Sirera conducts a thorough textual analysis of Escrivá's *Querella* and substantiates its classification as an *auto de amores* («Una quexa ante el Dios de Amor... del Comendador Escrivá como ejemplo posible de los autos de amores»). (Coccozella, «The Theatrics of the *Auto de amores*» 74-5)

30.— Elsewhere I point out that, by virtue of its epitomizing quality, the *auto* «offers a compendium of love-centered literature and, thus, reflects, in microcosmic focus and macrocosmic scope, the mainstream of the autochthonous, late Medieval tradition that comes to a head in *Celestina*» (Coccozella, «The Theatrics of the *Auto de amores* in the *Tragicomedia* called *Celestina*» 75). Pertinent to this context is, also, the following definition I propose in another essay:

El auto de amores es una composición de intensidad compendiosa, enfoque subjetivista e intención dramático-teatral. La calidad congénita del compendio le confiere a ese tipo de composición —especialmente en la etapa evolutiva que adquiere su forma cabal— la característica de icono de la literatura amatoria en boga en el dominio del catalán y del castellano durante la segunda mitad del siglo xv. (Coccozella «Fra Francesc Moner y el auto de amores en el dominio del catalán y del castellano a finales del siglo xv» 76)

Also, in its compact form, the *auto de amores* recaptures the pathos, psychological conflict, and other distinctive characteristics of the genre known as *novela sentimental* ('sentimental romance').³¹

A brief excursion to the field of the genetics of the *auto de amores* will suffice, I believe, to clinch the argument I adduce here. For a start I will hark back to the pioneering work of Fernando Lázaro Carreter, who highlights the key nomenclature in the opening paragraph of *Triste deleytación*.³² What interests us in particular are the striking declarations of the first-person narrator, who describes the circumstances of how he became an author:

[V]enido a conocimiento mío, aunque por vía indirecta, un *auto de amores* de una muy garrida e más virtuosa doncella y de hun gentil hombre, de mí como de sí mismo amigo, en el tiempo de cinqüenta y ocho, concorriendo en el auto mismo hotro gentil hombre y duenya madrastra de aquélla, yo, consideradas las demasiadas penas y afanes que ellos hobedeciendo amor procurado le avía, quise pora siempre en scrito pareçiera. (*Triste deleytación* 1; underlining mine)

Clearly, Lázaro Carreter points to the indissoluble kinship between two literary modalities:

Fijémonos... en que el autor desea evitar el olvido de los amores contados por aquella hipotética pieza, haciendo que aparezcan *en scrito*. (69)

The *auto de amores* («aquella hipotética pieza»), which the narrator confesses to have chanced upon («venido a conocimiento mío»), is, in effect, a compendium of a full-fledged literary composition —the love story («las demasiadas penas y afanes») that the author wishes to embody in a permanent text («quise pora siempre en scrito pareçiesen»). In other words, the *auto* is a condensed form of the *novela* proper.³³ By the same token, it is safe to deduce that the *auto de amores* subsists as a crystallization in dramatic form of its natural counterpart: a full-blown narrative much like the one redacted by the author's persona that introduces himself at the beginning of *Triste deleytación*. In the context of the present discussion, Lázaro Carreter's and Sirera's comments on Escrivá's *Querella* war-

31.— Vast and hard to manage is the bibliography on the *cancioneros*, the large anthologies of Spanish poetry of the fifteenth century. A good introduction to the study of the *cancioneros* is provided by Beltrán, Boase, and Whinnom (see, respectively, *La canción de amor en el otoño de la Edad Media*, *The Troubadour Revival*, and *La poesía amorosa cancioneril en la época de los Reyes Católicos*). Deyermond's *Tradiciones y puntos de vista en la ficción sentimental* is indispensable for a general orientation on the sentimental romance.

32.— Riquer dates the novel between 1458 and 1467 (*Història* 3: 112-4). Marfany Simó agrees with Gómez Fargas in dating the novel around 1470 (Marfany Simó 282). For a detailed summary of *Triste deleytación*, see Gerli x-xiii. Gerli proffers the overview of the distinctive traits —the introspective penchant, intertextual makeup, multiple sources, ingenious composition, integration of the Catalan-Castilian background, among others— that make of the anonymous *Triste deleytación* one of the outstanding examples, in its own right, of the *novela sentimental*. In her seminal articles on the *auto de amores*, Vicenta Blay Manzanera provides abundant data about the origins of the genre (see bibliography below).

33.— Lázaro Carreter intuits a dynamic of intensification, analogous to the one that Bruce Wardropper perceives as primary determinant of San Pedro's *Cárcel de amor* in particular and the sentimental romance in general. For Wardropper «[l]a *Cárcel de amor* es una novela de caballerías en pequeño, con supresión de las aventuras, hechos de armas y episodios mágicos». (184). In much the same vein, Blay Manzanera adopts J. L. Varela's theory about the high degree of synthesis evinced in the «ficción sentimental,» which exhibits a close kinship with the «experiencia dramática» (95). Of particular interest is the following passage borrowed directly from Varela:

Frente a lo propiamente novelístico —que es el análisis, el flotar a salvo entre lo obvio, la libre disposición de tiempo y de espacio— la novela sentimental aprieta en síntesis sus formas... [L]a novela sentimental ve y realiza en síntesis dramática lo que nació para el análisis novelístico y psicológico de las pasiones» (Blay Manzanera, «Las cualidades dramáticas de *Triste deleytación*» 95; qtd. from Varela 36-7).

rant the following deduction: just as the author of *Triste deleytación* develops his composition by an amplification of the nucleus encapsulated in the seminal *auto*, Escrivá, through an inverse process, fashions his own *auto* by means of a compendium —that is, by dramatizing the epitome of the amatory literature (especially the *novela sentimental*) he has inherited from his own cultural background.

If we pursue our comparative study a step further, we begin to realize that the dramatics operative in the *Querella* —the subjectivistic introspection, the rhetoric of the monologue, the compressed action molded into a spectacle, the compelling power of the ladylove as the initiator of the plot— come into play as well in Corella's *Tragèdia*. We bear in mind, all the while, that the dramatics in question are conceived in a correlative bond with a narrative counterpart. It follows, then, that, not unlike the *Querella*, the *Tragèdia de Caldesa* is a leading exponent of the *auto de amores*.

Letteraturizzazione

The dramatic qualities of the monologue in Corella's *Tragèdia* bear further investigation. Particularly pertinent to our discussion is Jody Enders's trailblazing study of the *imagines agentes*, and kindred *imagines peregrinae*, *visiones* or *phantasmatae*, defined and illustrated by the leading rhetoricians of Roman antiquity and their medieval successors: the pseudo-Cicero of *Ad Herennium*, Cicero himself, Quintilian, Geoffrey of Vinsauf, John of Salisbury, to name the authors specifically mentioned by Enders.³⁴ Enders contextualizes the functions of the various *imagines* within the phenomenology of what she calls «letteraturizzazione» or «aestheticization» (*Rhetoric and the Origins of Medieval Drama* 5).³⁵ The technical terminology designates the mutation of rhetoric into drama, an evolutionary process, which, as we shall see, finds remarkable resonance in the realm of Corella's creativity.

In her «revitalized understanding of how the mnemonic image was translated into the linguistic and performative patterns of delivery» (*Rhetoric and the Origins of Medieval Drama* 54), Enders comes to grips with two functions of drama, which happen to foreshadow corresponding key aspects of Corella's own coup of *inventio*: 1) the gestation of proto-drama, which eventually develops into psychodrama; 2) the various phases of the process of impersonation. Enders appeals to Frances Yates's lofty description of «the magic of celestial proportion [flowing] from his [the orator's] world of memory into the mag-

34.— Enders identifies *Ad Herennium* 3.37, Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* 6.2.29, Vinsauf's *Poetria Nova* 2022 for, respectively, *imagines agentes*, *visiones* or *phantasmatae*, and *imagines peregrinae* and complements her commentary by adducing Cicero's and John of Salisbury's respective meditation on the visualization of thought (*De Oratore* 2.357-8) and the effective blending of visualizing and hearing (*Metalogicon* 200) (see Enders, «Memory and the Psychology of the Interior Monologue» 10-3.)

35.— Enders borrows «letteraturizzazione» from George Kennedy, who defines the term as a shift of rhetorical focus «from persuasion to narration, from civic to personal contexts, and from discourse to literature, including poetry» (Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* 5; qtd. in Enders, *Rhetoric and the Origins of Medieval Drama* 5). She adds the following side note to the general discussion of *letteraturizzazione*: «I use the term here as a synonym for the process that is not necessarily limited to written literature (as is often implicit in both *letteraturizzazione* and «fictionalization»). Nor is that process limited to drama, as is implicit in 'theatricalization'» (*Rhetoric and the Origins of Medieval Drama* 5, n. 9).

ical words of his oratory and poetry» (Yates 172) and concludes that «the orator might thus have called upon the mnemonic image of the morphology not only of the physical stage but of drama itself; not only for the conceptualization of theatrical space but also for the actual production of an inchoate psychodrama» (*Rhetoric and the Origins of Medieval Drama* 46). In keeping with these shrewd observations, we may well see reflected in Corella's text a late-stage evolution of a process of *letteraturizzazione*, which Enders goes on to explain as follows:

Each time classical and medieval orators used their voices to mediate between their mnemonic mental pictures and their audiences, they created a protodrama that was no longer latent within the memory but actualized in language and action before spectators. They discovered in the *ars memorandi* a cognitive process that constituted an early form of literary invention. (*Rhetoric and the Origins of Medieval Drama* 51).

Let the quotations adduced here suffice for an overall illustration of the proto-drama, the first function I have just listed. As for the process of impersonation, the second item included in the same list, I will concentrate on the essential characteristics that Enders anatomizes within the mechanics of the interior monologue —specifically, the kind of monologue features in Chrétien de Troyes's *roman* of *Cligés* («Memory and the Psychology of the Interior Monologue in Chrétien's 'Cligés'»). Enders's solid argumentation proceeds from the notion of «*actio*,» that is to say, the *vis dramatica* or fully activated force that determines the plot and ultimately comes to bear on the gestation of the genre. Delving into this primordial factor of drama and theatricality, Enders observes:

As a significant conduit between rhetoric and literature, law and drama, orality and literacy, *actio* offers paradigms for performance which restore the lost dynamism of early performative discourses wherever they may have appeared. At the same time, however, its attendant dramatic orality highlights a more general fluidity of medieval genres as apparently varied as the morality play and the fool's play; the dialogue, the *tenso*, and the interior monologue; the *sermon joyeux*, the dialogic sermon and liturgical troping... (*Rhetoric and the Origins of Medieval Drama* 9-10)

As we focus on the interior monologue, one of the various examples of the embryonic genres Enders refers to, we realize that the creative enterprise dealing with the phenomenon of impersonation unfolds in accordance with three mimetic dimensions: those pertaining to, respectively, the poetic self (the auctorial persona), the narrator/expositor, and the contentious or problematic «other» (the ladylove in the case of Corella's *Tragèdia*).

Enders envisages the full-fledged portrait of the poetic self as an icon of the self-knowledge or, as we may infer, the self-consciousness concomitant to the role of an author. The perception of that role occurs as a reflection on the various factors (*imagines agentes, personae, memoria, mimesis*) that, in their fertile interaction, trigger the creation of an organic, artistic composition: Chrétien's *Cligés*, say, or, we may add, Corella's *Tragèdia*. It is well to ponder one of Enders's particularly suggestive comments on this complex meta-textual operation:

At the hands of an author like Chrétien, mnemonic *imagines agentes*, came to be employed, less as symbols of the rhetorician's proof and more as exemplary literary *personae*. In the interior monologues of *Cligés*, the focus of *memoria* shifts from persuasion to *mimesis* as that art becomes a way of knowing and, in particular, a way of knowing one's authorial self. («Memory and the Psychology of the Interior Monologue in Chrétien's 'Cligés'» 12)

As readers and potential spectators, we readily recognize the obvious parallelism between Chrétien's and Corella's respective handling of the monologue. In both texts we see firsthand how the speaker's introspective meditation engenders the workings of psychodrama. For the sake of comparison we may take into account a crucial episode in Chrétien's *roman*: the lovers Fénice and Cligés have been forced to part. In her explication Enders reveals how Chrétien transforms the reaction to a very painful situation into a wondrous literary rendition:

As Fénice attempts to understand her feelings, Chrétien prefaces her monologue with explicit references to the key features of memory theory: we see her retrieving and inscribing the image of Cligés within a memory *locus*; we see her replaying in the «secret places» of her mind the visual and auditory features of their sad parting; and, finally, we witness the whole delightful process engendering the literary speech of her monologue. As Fénice transforms the two sides of her psyche into the *imagines agentes* of her own internal debate, Chrétien simultaneously transforms her into an *exemplum* of a creative process that is both generative and iterative. («Memory and the Psychology of the Interior Monologue in Chrétien's 'Cligés'» 16)³⁶

It goes without saying that there are points of substantial difference between Fénice's psychological status and that of the auctorial persona in Corella's *Tragèdia*. In the latter there is no sign of the «delightful process» that can be attributed to the former. Nor are two conflicting sides easily recognizable in the psyche of Corella's personage. This notwithstanding, there can be no doubt that, all differences aside, the French and the Valencia writer champion the same creative process prompted by the fundamental mnemonic devices they both share. All in all, Corella abides by the paradigm already established by Chrétien: the *imagines agentes* stemming, in Corella's case, from a shocking spectacle (Caldesa locked in a passionate embrace with the «other man») are stored in a «memory *locus*» within some «secret places» in the speaker's mind. Corella follows the paradigm to its climactic point: the obsessive reminiscence of the *imagines* in the speaker's imagination plays out to a full extent through the stage-worthy verbalization of Corella's *valenciana prosa*.

In sum, the *imago agens* inherent in the perception of a highly disturbing event, irrupts with disastrous impact into the precincts of the lover's psyche. To illustrate my point I shall use the metaphor of the camera obscura I bring up elsewhere in reference to a paradigm of internalization (the dynamic of an inward trajectory), for which we see, by now, clear evidence in both Chrétien's and Corella's psychodrama:

36.— The metaphor of the «secret places» is borrowed from Geoffrey of Vinsauf's notion of «circinus interior mentis» (see Enders, «Memory and the Psychology of the Interior Monologue in Chrétien's 'Cligés'» 6, n. 4).

The aforementioned *poca finestra* constitutes the aperture that allows the lover to direct his glance outward just as, by an inverse trajectory, the observable reality in the outside realm can encroach on the observer's private space. Here, by the optics of the camera obscura, Corella foreshadows, one may suggest, a psychological analogue —namely, the phenomenology of passionate love. In keeping with the optical analogy, Caldesa's liaison with the extra lover first is encapsulated in the torrid embrace depicted in glaring, nightmarish vivaciousness; secondly, it is epitomized in the offensive image that, through the small opening (the «*poca finestra*»), penetrates into the lightless room; thirdly, the image is projected with devastating impact into the consciousness of a highly sensitive, vulnerable observer.

Of major significance in the *Tragèdia de Caldesa* is, then, the window, which allows not only the beholder's glance to reach outward to the offensive image but also, concomitantly, the image to creep back and haunt the beholder. In effect, Corella treats the window perspective, which begets the unwholesome bond between the protagonist and the vicious image, as the primary determinant of a circuitous experience of relentless grief. (*Text, Translation, and Critical Interpretation of Joan Roís de Corella's Tragèdia de Caldesa* 144-5)

What remains to be acknowledged is Enders's discovery of a full-scale dialectic, which complements the camera-obscura esthetic I revisit here. Enders invokes the authority of Kenneth Burke, who «distinguished... between the 'confessional' function of the image which 'internalized the external'; and the 'incantatory' function which 'externalized the internal' (Burke, *The Philosophy of Literary Form* 116; qtd. in Enders, «Memory and the Psychology of the Interior Monologue in Chrétien's 'Cligés'» 23). Enders's elaboration upon Burke's insight is worth quoting in full because it sheds further light on the affinity we have already pointed out between Chrétien's and Corella's creativity:

Cligés constitutes a fascinating testimonial to both [functions]: in the interior monologues, Soredamors, Alexandre, and Fénice internalize external events by consigning them to mnemonic imagery which, in turn, assists them in 'confessing' their love (both to themselves and to the objects of their affection). At the same time, however, Chrétien himself externalizes their internal imagery in his conception of his own literary project: he «translates» preserved, memory visions into literary speech («Memory and the Psychology of the Interior Monologue in Chrétien's 'Cligés'» 23).

It is fair, then, to state that Corella's *Tragèdia* is an exponent of the mutation of the rhetoric and concomitant performance from the field of oratory and law to the realm of literary expression in drama and theater. Enders demonstrates that the phenomenology of that mutation demarcates the course of a tradition of long standing that harks back to Cicero's lifetime and evolves throughout the Middle Ages until the early Renaissance. We have seen a clear sign of Corella's own «aestheticization» of rhetoric in his fashioning of an interior monologue that finds an unmistakable antecedent in a trademark masterpiece by none other than Chrétien de Troyes. We must not overlook, all the while, the distinctive qualities of Corella's tour de force. In order to appreciate fully the innovative aspects of Corella's *inventio*, let us bear in mind the three mimetic dimensions mentioned

above. Specifically, we will investigate how in Corella's *Tragèdia* the auctorial persona takes on the exclusive role of narrator-expositor.

One highly significant revelation resulting from our investigation is the adaptability of Burke's dialectic to Corella's composition. First, the so-called «confessional function» is mirrored in the way the auctorial persona internalizes his perception of the *imago agens*, the shocking incident that takes place in the courtyard. Secondly, the «incantatory function,» to continue with Burke's terminology, consists of the epiphany of the creative process per se: the auctorial persona shows forth («externalizes,» as Burke would have it) precisely his faculty qua author and translates the trauma of a woebegone lover into a work of art (a literary text).

We are now ready to profile what may be described as the last or climactic phase of Corella's process of *letteraturizzazione*. Corella's creativity reaches the highest level of ingeniousness by exposing a double perspective, one objective, the other subjective, in the role of the speaker, who, as we have observed, functions, also, as narrator-expositor. There is no denial that this key personage is capable of seeing objectively the essential details that make up his circumstance. Thus, there are certain elements of his narrative that are factual. Following are some notable examples: his general and specific account of his relationship with Caldesa, his description of the distressful afternoon he spent in the dark room in her house, the emotionally charged depiction of the scene, so outrageous in his view, that caused him so much grief and ruined his life.

There are, however, certain moments, in which the speaker is wrapped up in his afflictions to such an extreme extent that he can only provide a subjective reaction to his situation rather than a factual account of it. Corella relegates these moments to the two versified portions of his text. The forty-two unrhymed decasyllables are distributed, evenly, into three stanzas. The first two resonate with an apocalyptic overtone. The speaker associates his morbid desire for self-annihilation and unswerving determination to forswear his service to his lady with horrid visions of Doomsday: the Northern Star dislodged from its fixed position, the moon spattered with blood, the darkened sun, the Earth fallen into the abyss, and so forth. As if this were not enough, the auctorial persona levels blood-curdling curses at himself:

e lo meu cos, del prim cabell fins l'ungla,
mirant-ho vós, sia partit en peces,
e, tornat pols, no prenga sepultura,
ni reba el món tan celerada cendra...

(*Tragèdia de Caldesa i altres proses* 28)

We should add, incidentally, that the animosity that pervades these verses is abated somewhat by the conditional nature of the curses. The ominous oaths forebode catastrophic consequences on a cosmic scale; but these consequences, after all, are contingent upon the unlikely resumption of the relationship with Caldesa: «ans que jamás de mi siau servida...;» «si Déu permet mos ulls vos puguen veure...;» «E, si és ver vos digui mai 'Senyora' ...». (*Tragèdia de Caldesa i altres proses* 28).

The third stanza is preceded by a short passage in prose, which describes Caldesa's compunction («ab moltes llàgremes, sospirs e sanglots») once she becomes aware that

her offended lover is on to her reprehensible deed. The stanza, which matches the elevated rhetoric but not the impetuosity of the male protagonist, spells out, supposedly in Caldesa's own voice, her regret accompanied by the desire to expiate her hideous sin («abominable culpa»). The penance she envisages for herself is harsh («o, si voleu, coberta de celici / iré pel món peregrinant romera») and grisly («En vós està que prengau de mi venja: / si us par que hi bast, per vostres mans espire»). She ends up portraying herself as a veritable Mary Magdalen («mas, si esperau esmena de mon viure, / jo la fare, seguint la Magdalena, / los vostres peus llavant ab semblant aigua»³⁷).

A word is in order about the overall effect of the crucial shift from prose to verse in Corella's composition. The versified passages, which, as we have observed, mark the high point of Corella's *letteraturizzazione*, considerably intensify the emotionalism already very much at play in the main body of the composition, the large portion, that is, spoken in prose. In the three stanzas Corella plumbs the depths of the psychodrama by illustrating the protagonist's retreat from factual perception to the inner world of obsessive meditation. With morbid single-mindedness, the protagonist prolongs his introspective journey into the quagmire of resentment and bitterness. Then, unexpectedly, he comes upon an escape route to the vast expanses of the imaginary. It may be argued that in the scene of Caldesa's contrition, encapsulated, as we have seen, in the third stanza, the writer depicts, within the gloomy desert of the protagonist's mind-scape, a refreshing oasis of a reality not as it is but as it should or could be.

These nuanced manifestations of the real are as good a start as any for a commentary on Corella's equally nuanced portrait of Caldesa. What informs this portrait is the esthetic that Corella shares with Martorell and Galba. In fact, the representation of Caldesa in Corella's *Tragèdia* evokes two modes of creativity that find fitting analogues in *Tirant lo Blanc*. These modes pertain, respectively, to the peculiar notion of «fiction» (Catalan 'ficció'), entertained by writers like Martorell and Galba, and to the special duality that turns out to be the trademark of their narrative. The semantics of the «fiction» in question differs radically from the meaning of the English term. The common English usage entails a plot that consists of invented or fabricated events, whereas the plot conceived by Martorell, Galba, and company³⁸ presupposes the substantiality (or verisimilitude) of a historical account like the one provided by the fourteenth-century *cronista*, Ramon Muntaner. To put it succinctly in Lola Badia's words, «els escriptors que per a nosaltres són novel·listes... es presenten com a historiadors de la 'vera veritat' muntaneriana» («El Tirant ten la tardor medieval catalana 38, n. 9»). The duality, the second esthetic modality mentioned above, has to do with the bond that Dámaso Alonso, in his seminal study on *Tirant*, detects between what he calls «el espíritu unitario caballeresco» (502) and «la naturalidad cotidiana» (515). Simply put, in his reading of *Tirant* Alonso unveils, in stark contraposition, the exciting idealism of the heroic romances of chivalry versus the humdrum pragmatism of the workaday world.³⁹ In much the same vein, Badia incorporates

37.– For the quotations in this paragraph see *Tragèdia de Caldesa i altres proses* 29.

38.– We may add here the anonymous author of *Curial e Guelfa*, the other outstanding exponent of the Catalan *novel·la cavalleresca* of the fifteenth century (see Riquer, *Història* 2: 602-31).

39.– In «Roques and Pageantry: *Artifici* as a Function of Joanot Martorell's Dramatic Text,» I identify some outstanding analogues of the duality both Alonso and Badia perceive in *Tirant*. Specifically, I point out the radical contraposition

Alonso's insights into her own analysis of the Martorell-Galba narrative and demonstrates how its idealistic strain is inspired by «els grans plans apostòlics lullians» («El Tirant en la tardor medieval catalana» 46), the project, that is, that Ramon Llull lays out in his *Llibre de l'orde de cavalleria* in accordance with his visionary intentions of evangelizing the entire Muslim world. Badia does not lose sight of the big picture that illustrates the wondrous verisimilitude of the *ficció* at hand, kindred to Muntaner's historical discourse. Such verisimilitude must be seen, of course, thorough the optics of the duality we have been discussing. There is a bold contrast that may be displayed as a leitmotif of sorts: reality as it is (the fall of Constantinople into the Ottoman domain on May 29, 1453); reality as it should be (the resounding victory of the Christians over the Turks as recounted in the latter chapters of *Tirant lo Blanc*).⁴⁰

Badia extends her analysis to the level of the characterization of the individual and dwells on the aforementioned esthetic of duality in full operation in the portrayal of Tirant himself both as «immutable cavaller de l'ideal» and as «vulnerable home de carn i ossos» («El Tirant ten la tardor medieval catalana» 50). Badia's shift to a microcosmic scope paves the way for a rewarding insight into an extraordinary passage of *Tragèdia de Caldesa*. The focus on the individual substantiates the analogy in Corella's stereoscopic conflation of two different bodies, one beautiful, the other ugly, in the representation of the *belle dame*:

E fóra més alegre, aquesta bella senyora en parts de singular partida, la sua gentil persona ab tan subtil enteniment fos la part mia; e la sua falla e moble voluntat, de falsa estima guiada, cercàs un cos lleig e diforme, en part d'aquell qui indignament l'havia tractada! (29)

Again, what emerges to our awareness is a version, this time particularly ingenious, of the dual pattern that should be familiar to us by now:

1. Reality as it is (beautiful body [*bella senyora*], endowed with good qualities [*gentil persona ab tan subtil enteniment*] and bad ones [*falla e moble voluntat, de falsa estima guiada*])
2. Reality as it should be (the beautiful body, graced with virtues, remains the incarnation of the auctorial persona's ladylove, while an ugly body would be created just for the purpose of concretizing the vicious side of Caldesa, destined to «the other man» that has treated her so indecently.)

that Antonio Prieto and E. C. Riley discern, respectively, between the «caso normativo» and «caso concreto» in Juan Rodríguez del Padrón's *Siervo libre de amor* and between the «rarefied region of poetry» and «earthly historical existence» in Cervantes's *Quijote*.

40.— See, especially, chs. 446-9 in *Tirant lo Blanc* 2: 502-11. Riquer summarizes the salient traits of the Catalan *ficció* in the following terms:

En moments en què tota la cristiandat plora la caiguda de Constantinoble i que es fan projectes de croada per tal d'alliberar-la —entre altres, ho intentà Alfons el Magnànim— Joanot Martorell fa que l'imperi bizantí sigui eficaçment defensat pel seu porotagonista, no s'està de presentar una visió alegre, divertida i vodevilesca de la cort de Constantinoble, i al final de la novel·la, el perill turc completament esvait, se'ns dóna compte del bon regiment de l'emperador Hipòlit... (*Història* 2: 696)

We notice that the special brand of *ficcio* in this passage consists of the wistful creation (*inventio*) of the ugly body, the imaginary entity, existential correlative of the speaker's *imago agens* of a vitiated Caldesa of flesh and blood.⁴¹

In order to round out my *explication de texte*, I will point out that this bipolarity of sorts that the speaker of the monologue superimposes upon Caldesa's holistic presence as a concrete person occurs as the speaker's immediate afterthought in reaction to her speech couched in the third stanza analyzed above. There is something unsettling in the very immediacy of the speaker's response. Why doesn't Caldesa's edifying change of behavior, as demonstrated in her recent emphatic expressions of contrition, produce any change in her interlocutor's atrabilious mood? If they have any effect at all, Caldesa's words («humils paraules») exacerbate, rather than assuage, the male protagonist's inner conflict («los contrastes que ma dolorosa pensa combatien») (29). The intricate context I have attempted to unravel here indicates that Corella conveys the image of the iconically repentant Caldesa not as an observed phenomenon but, rather, as an idealized abstraction. Her split-personality representation is a reflection of a man's pathological double vision. Her canonization as a Mary Magdalen is, indeed, in the bard's words, «a consummation devoutly to be wished». It constitutes yet another exemplum of the recurrent motif: reality not as it actually is but as it is wishfully envisioned to be.

The imaginary tenor of Caldesa's representation in the third stanza of Corella's *Tragèdia* is well in accord with the function of the presenter, identified as the speaker of the monologue. A close look at the role of that speaker as narrator-expositor reveals a special connection with the various kindred exponents of the role, reviewed in two crucial studies: one by James T. Monroe, the other by Max Harris.⁴² The data adduced by these scholars hark back to a poem known as «El zéjel de los juglares» by Ibn Quzmān, renowned author who lived in Córdoba in the twelfth century. The extraordinary *zéjel* attests to the creativity of a multi-talented artist, whom Monroe describes as follows: «a very busy *impresario* who directs his musicians, singers, dancers, actors, and trained animals, while seeing to the comfort of his audience to whom he interprets the action being performed onstage by commenting on it» (94). Both Monroe and Harris call attention to some very significant avatars of Quzmān's *impresario* in distinctive masterpieces of Spanish literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. To point out but a few spectacular examples, we may mention here the following: a) the Shepherd, the Shepherdess, and the Sibyl, who dramatize the plot of Diego Sánchez de Badajoz's *Farsa del juego de cañas espiritual*; b) some character studies vividly depicted by Cervantes, such as the boy who performs as announcer and interpreter in Maese Pedro's puppet show (*Don Quijote* pt. 2, chs. 25-26) and the three rogues (two men and a woman), who create out of nothing the action of *El*

41.– In her commentary on this very passage, Cantavella rightfully associates the hypothetical ugly body with the nasty side of Caldesa («Aspectes argumentals de la *Tragèdia de Caldesa*» 303). Not so felicitous, in my judgment, is Cantavella's interpretation of «en part d'aquell qui indignament l'havia tractada». In my opinion, the reference here is not, to quote directly from Cantavella, «aquell gentil cos que la dama té de fet» but to the man that had treated her indecently. Corella's entire sentence sets up a clear contrast between «la part mia,» the claimant of the beautiful embodiment of a virtuous person, and «en part d'aquell,» the designated hypothetical recipient of the imaginary ugly and perverse Caldesa.

42.– See the bibliography below.

retablo de las maravillas.⁴³ There is another scholar — namely, Erich Auerbach— who in his landmark study entitled *Mimesis* reminds us of another prominent narrator-expositor in Cervantes's great novel. Auerbach shines the spotlight on none other than Sancho Panza, who, in *Don Quijote* pt. 2, ch. 10, challenges the imagination of his bewildered master to witness the metamorphosis of an ordinary peasant woman into the sublime Dulcinea. In his extensive commentary on this suggestive scene Auerbach poignantly observes that Sancho «adapts himself to the position of puppet-master with as much gusto and elasticity as he later will to the position of governor of an island» (308).⁴⁴

Puppet-master, indeed! Sancho vies with the other expositors we have just mentioned in the uncanny ability to create an illusion that produces a profound theatrical effect with far-reaching consequences. Let us review, in brief, the four salient manifestations we have just listed of this theater of the imagination: 1) the Sibyl and her associates conjure up a full-scale epic battle between virtues and vices on a stage that remains empty all the while; 2) Maese Pedro's assistant, while pointing to the action of the puppet show, relates in vivid detail a love story told in an age-old ballad and, at a critical juncture when the two lovers are pressed by their enemies into fierce combat, that assistant's excited declamation provokes Quijote to give free rein to the irresistible compulsion to intervene in the fray; 3) the three masters of deception capitalize on a figment of their imagination, *El retablo de las maravillas* in question, and, by a clever ruse, oblige their spectators to admit that they are watching, spellbound, an inexistent puppet show and are hearing a fascinating, though inaudible, musical accompaniment; 4) Sancho, the illusion maker par excellence, tops the list as he puts into effect the metamorphosis referred to above.

As we return to the main subject of our analysis we begin to see that Corella's artistic alter ego, the speaker of the monologue in *Tragedia de Caldesa*, not only, as we have seen, shares with his contemporary Valencians, Martorell and Galba, an esthetic of *ficció* and duality but also foreshadows the dialectic that first-rate writers of subsequent generations will espouse with regard to the existential interaction between the sphere of the ideal and that of concrete everyday experience. It follows that the obsession with the beautiful body, the icon of the virtuous lady which Corella turns into a salient trait of his male protagonist, anticipates Quijote's *idée fixe*, fomented by that «puppet-master» Sancho Panza. In fact, Corella's protagonist combines a dual role: he is the narrator-expositor that evokes, as does Sancho, the image of the ideal woman; at the same time, he is the excitable, suggestible individual, a quixotic figure *avant la lettre* bewitched by that image.

43.— Harris provides an excellent description of the Maese Pedro episode and of the *Retablo* (129-32). For these two pieces see, also, Monroe 97-8. For an insightful critique of the impressive dramaturgy of Badajoz's *Farsa*, see Harris 153-9. Monroe finds other intriguing versions of theatrical narrative in works by the famous playwright, Tirso de Molina (1584?-1648), in a narrative ballad (written in 1690) by a certain Francisco Antonio de Bances y Candamo, and in a short passage of the *Cancionero de 1628* (100-05).

44.— Particularly worthy of mention is the role of narrator-expositor that Shakespeare assigns to the personage named Chorus in *Henry V* (see Prologue 1-18). Chorus describes the stage in rather unflattering terms: «unworthy scaffold,» «this cockpit,» «this wooden O,» and other similar expressions. At the same time, he invites each spectator to conjure up «within the girdle of these walls» visions of battles of an epic scale that take place in the «vasty fields of France». Reminiscent of the role of Shakespeare's Chorus is that of the two unnamed «scientists» (*la pareja de investigadores*), identified simply as «Ella» and «Él,» in Antonio Buero Vallejo's *El tragaluz*. These personages help the audience understand certain peculiarities of the staging that the playwright presents as an experiment.

Conclusion

The evidence brought forth and analyzed in this study indicates that, especially as shown in *Tragèdia de Caldesa*, Corella's creativity covers a multifarious field of topics, motifs, literary modes and techniques.⁴⁵ To do justice to Corella's outstanding enterprise is not a simple question of abiding by the guidelines provided by the venerable authority of Dante Alighieri. I have attempted to show that Corella's *inventio* operates by virtue of integrating masterfully into one composition a variety of factors: some derived directly from the autochthonous, whether Hispanic or strictly Catalan, tradition (the *cancioneros*, Ausiàs March's lyricism, the *novela sentimental*, the narrative of the Catalan type of the chivalresque romance); others adapted from ultra-Pyrenean models (Chrétien de Troyes's *Cligés*, for example). As we have seen, it is of paramount importance to bear in mind the little-known *auto de amores* as a veritable emblem of Corella's distinctive esthetic of integration and intensification. Demonstrably, in its compactness, dramatic tension and overall theatrical qualities, Corella's *Tragèdia* may well prove to be the *auto de amores* par excellence.

In the light of the argument I put forth here, particularly worth remembering are the traits of the age-old rhetorical tradition that Corella puts into effect in his masterpiece. Outstanding among these traits is one that receives particularly ingenious handling from Corella: the repercussions of the strong impact produced by the *imago agens*. We have noticed that Corella elaborates a radical dialectic of physical action and psychic reaction: the dialectic, that is, between Caldesa's bold initiative and the auctorial persona's morbid propensity to obsessive reflection on a shocking incident. Thus, the ladylove triggers the *imago* in question, while the male protagonist, by virtue of his ekphrastic operation upon the *imago*, converts it into the texture of the dramatic monologue.

The profile of Corella's notion of tragedy emerges from a close look at the interaction of one leading personage with the other; and that profile discloses a path toward further discussion. I propose to raise for the first time the issue of Corella's highly innovative achievement: the focus on the primordial male-female conflict that informs what we may call the gendered battleground. Corella exploits that conflict, which compels Caldesa, the iconic ladylove, to translate her life experience, conditioned by her own circumstance, into motivation for provocative action. Opposite Caldesa, on the other side of the spectrum, Corella's quintessential dramatics mirrors the male protagonist's verbalization of bewilderment and deep-seated resentment. Corella, then, regales us with his own configuration of the spatiality of the ultimate agon: the decisiveness of the woman's course of action shown at loggerheads with the man's insecure posturing. What with the unavoidably

45.— In the complexity of its makeup, *Tragèdia de Caldesa* shows notable affinity with one of its main sources: Boccaccio's *Elegia di Madonna Fiammetta*. Corella may well have been inspired by Boccaccio's art of assimilation, which Annicchiarico defines in the following terms:

[È] opportuno qui ricordare che la *Fiammetta*, se è un concentrato di situazioni tematiche e immagini risonanti soprattutto a Ovidio e Seneca, non è soltanto questo: invero essa è un prezioso, «alessandrino» si ebbe a dire un tempo, «sapiantissimo lavoro compositivo che si esercita su un ventaglio amplissimo di modelli, a volte imprevedibili, antichi e medievali». (Annicchiarico, «Voglia di pathos' e un'altra 'connexio': Fiammetta e Corella nel *Tirant lo Blanch*» 28)

The quotation is from Delcorno's edition of *Fiammetta* (see bibliography below).

stealthy nature of her conduct, the woman plays on the advantage of initiating the plot; the man, by contrast, has definitely the upper hand in interpreting that plot even though his judgement is severely hampered by his myopic perspective. The precarious indeterminacy of this female-male interaction —obligatory silence on one side, unrestrained verbosity on the other— enhances the sense of tragedy, pervasive throughout Corella's *inventio*. In short, Corella intuits a paradoxical turn in the very matrix of tragic drama: the woman is denied speech but will not be deprived of the opportunity to take action; the man has no will to act but feels free to monopolize speech in his relentless monologue. For readers of our day and age, the paradox may well bring to mind the luminous intensity of Jorge Luis Borges's short narratives. We may add that, in the final analysis, what Corella intuits is the high tension born of a compact composition endowed with an iridescence of signification.

In short, here we have been able to contemplate some patent signs of Corella's highly innovative creativity. We may readily acknowledge that Corella, in composing his «tragedy,» does not feel bound by sacrosanct definitions, even if proposed by the likes of Dante Alighieri. We have noticed that the theatrical term «*entramès*» is used by the narrator of *Tirant lo Blanc* to designate para-theatrical episodes analogous to those that constitute *Tragèdia de Caldesa*. It is fair to say, specifically, that Corella actualizes the theatrical potential inherent in the *Viuda Reposada* episode. We may deduce that Corella enhances the theatrical qualities of the *entramès* by compacting them into the formal attributes of the *auto de amores*. There can be little doubt, then, that *Tragèdia de Caldesa* is a play. It is, also, a tragedy in view of the conflict we have just outlined with regard to gender roles.

By his rediscovery of tragedy, Corella works out a brand new, unconventional theatrical form and, thus, is one of the earliest authors of the Renaissance, if not the earliest, to do so. One aspect of his genius that immediately strikes our attention is the ability to actualize in a concrete composition the potential of a genre that is still in a gestational phase. A reading of *Tragèdia de Caldesa* would contribute, we may be sure, an insight or two to the discussion that E. S. Eliot broaches on Elizabethan theater. Corella attests to an area of determinacy in an otherwise indeterminate field that Eliot, apropos of that theater, describes as follows: «the forms of drama are so various that few critics are able to hold more than one or two in mind in pronouncing judgment of 'dramatic' and 'undramatic'» (16). We fully agree with the judgment of that celebrated critic and poet, who attributes to the Elizabethans a type of dramatics that defies traditional, ready-made categorization. Eliot cogently points out that «the classification of tragedy and comedy, while it may be sufficient to mark the distinction in a dramatic literature of more rigid form and temperament —it may distinguish Aristophanes from Euripides— is not adequate to a drama of such variations as the Elizabethans'» (68). In fact, Corella's dramaturgy easily fits within the criterion of the variations that Eliot alludes to. There is no denying that the Valencian author anticipates some signal literary achievements of writers of subsequent generations. It follows that Corella deserves the recognition as an authentic pioneer.

We need not hesitate in acknowledging Corella's role as a precursor in more ways than one. Take, for instance, *Caldesa's* perverseness, which, as we have pointed out, closely resembles the self-willed attitude that *Ricomana*, on her part, adopts on the issue of marriage. Enhanced by its affinity with *Ricomana's* characterization, *Caldesa's* enigmatic transgressiveness foreshadows *Melibeia's* unfathomable misogamy («No quiero marido».)

in Fernando de Rojas's *Tragicomedia* (548)⁴⁶ and Adela's strident defiance («¡Yo hago con mi cuerpo lo que me parece!») in García Lorca's *La casa de Bernarda Alba* (1389).

Corella's pioneering enterprise bodes well for the admirable labor of adaptation—that is, refurbishment, restoration, assemblage—that a great number of professionals of our day and age (playwrights, stage directors, theater historians) fashion on the basis of pre-modern texts, written either in Castilian or Catalan, transforming them into impressive spectacles. It would be hardly feasible to reproduce the ample listing of names and titles that Josep Lluís Sirera provides in his excellent review of these spectacular transformations of medieval or early-Renaissance prose narratives, poems, sermons, treatises. Just to mention a token number of examples among the many adduced in that review, we may call attention to the memorable montages that Ana Zamora fashions out of Christological motifs borrowed from said texts⁴⁷ and Sirera himself undertakes with great success by culling passages representative of various genres in Castilian and Catalan-Valencian literature of the fifteenth and sixteenth century.⁴⁸

It is clear that in his study Sirera is concerned mainly with theatrical representations created out of a collection and assimilation of miscellaneous texts. At the same time it is no less evident that, as he reflects on his topic, he postulates some «principios constructivos» that inform the esthetic of a special kind of theatricality. One of these *principios* is, in my judgment, of particularly far-reaching consequences because it pertains to a process of modernization (*actualización*) understood in accordance with the disposition or expectation of a spectator of our day and age. Sirera insists on the merits of a project aimed at «la dramaturgia por/para los espectadores actuales, lo que obliga a una reflexión en profundidad de qué hay que representar, por qué y para quiénes» («El Cancionero General, entre nosotros» 628). In the final analysis, he is fully cognizant of the feasibility of using said *principios* as guidelines (*estrategias*) for the *mise en scène* of not only «la teatralidad inherente a una parte de la poesía del Cancionero General» («El Cancionero General, entre nosotros» 628) but also the *Querella ante el Dios de Amor*, the aforementioned masterpiece by El Comendador Escrivá (see, above p. 488-90). He asks, «¿Es posible plantear estas estrategias en una obra tan compleja como la *Quexa* [read «Querella»] del Comendador Escrivá?» And the immediate answer is a resounding «Por supuesto» («El Cancionero General, entre nosotros» 629). The query followed by such an unhesitating reply constitutes a firm endorsement of not only the montages staged by Zamora and cohorts but also that emblematic «obra tan compleja». Sirera, to be sure, does not make any men-

46.— For a commentary on Melibea's perplexing attitude, see Cocozzella, «Misogamy as Self-Fashioning: The Transgressive Melibea in the Spanish *Tragicomedia* Better Known as *Celestina*,» and «Traces of Aristotle's *Poetics* in the *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea*.» Ironically enough, as shown in Rojas's *Tragicomedia*, Act XVI, Melibea, who, after considerable effort at gaining self-sufficiency, takes full advantage of unrestrained speech and becomes quite accomplished in the use of rhetoric, does not shed any light on the motivation behind her transgression: her refusal to marry and callous disregard for the solicitous speculations of her parents regarding the prospects of her marriage. In the context of the dramatics of tragedy, Melibea's brash protestation and flamboyant, if sophomoric, oratory is not any easier to comprehend than is Caldesa's speechless behavior.

47.— Specifically mentioned and commented upon are Ana Zamora's *El auto de los Reyes Magos* and *Misterio del Cristo de los gascones* (Sirera «El Cancionero General, entre nosotros» 626-7).

48.— The description pertains to the play entitled *Per Sant Lluc* (premiered in 2007). Sirera makes reference to his notable contribution not only as a playwright but also as a director and scholar deeply committed to the promotion of medieval theater («El Cancionero General, entre nosotros» 628, n. 26).

tion of *Tragèdia de Caldesa*. That notwithstanding there is no doubt that he would consider Corella's *auto de amores* no less suited to a fully modernized staging than is Escrivá's iconic rendition of that little-known genre.

In closing, let us contemplate once more Corella's distinctive and distinguished position as a champion of modernity vis-à-vis two strains of a theatrical tradition that, extending beyond national boundaries, has persisted through a long-term evolution from Corella's lifetime to the turn of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century. Those strains have to do with a) the gestation and development of the dramatic monologue and b) the rebirth of tragedy. In my presentation I have attempted to show that Corella, flourishing in a cultural ambiance of fermenting creativity, bold experimentation, energetic cultural activism, maps out for us the start of a journey through the subsequent centuries, a journey the latest stretch of which is made memorable by such events as the production of Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues* and Will Eno's *Thom Pain (Based on Nothing)*, and Nilaja Sun's *No child...*⁴⁹

Corella's *auto de amores* shares with that of Escrivá a flair for experimentalism regarding not only the use of the dramatic monologue but also the staging of the tragic mode. In their strong commitment to the *inventio* of tragedy, both Corella and Escrivá prove to be hargingers of a particularly suggestive and fertile phenomenology of the *mise en scène*. Broadly speaking, this theatrical phenomenology is no different from the one that, as shown in a recent issue of *PMLA* devoted to the special topic of tragedy, is awakening at present a surge of interest among critics and professionals of the theater. I will end with two quotations from Helene P. Foley's and Jean E. Howard's introductory essay featured in that issue. The first statement addresses tragedy's mutable form: «twenty-century playwrights torque the structure and conventions of tragedy to invent new configurations of it» (Foley and Howard 619). The second passage adds to mutability the complementary notion of adaptability to the characteristics of a particular epoch: «tragedy is not dead. Old forms of it are repurposed for new occasions, and new forms of it are constantly invented under the pressure of historical circumstance» (Foley and Howard 619). These astute observations, eminently applicable to the tenor of Corella's *inventio*, provide an appropriate perspective on the type of a theater of tragedy I have been trying to profile in the present essay.

49.- The premiere of Ensler's theatrical «happening» was in New York in 1996; that of Eno's monologue took place in Edinburgh in 2004. Nilaja Sun's tour de force opened on July 16, 2006, in New York at The Barrow Street Theater. For the production history and the essential information about these three works, each an outstanding latter-day showcase of the dramatic monologue, see, respectively: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Vagina_Monologues> and <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thom_Pain_\(based_on_nothing\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thom_Pain_(based_on_nothing))>, and Cloteal L. Horne's informative critique. For the pertinent texts see bibliography below.

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