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DECLAMATION AND THE CELESTINA

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The authors of Celestina are prodigal with figures of contrast, broadly antitheses: there is scarcely a page of the Tragicomedia that does not have several of these. Here is a typical passage:

> Dexenme mis padres gozar del, si ellos quieren gozar de mi. No piensen en estas vanidades ni en estos casamientos: que mas vale ser buena amiga que mala casada. Dexenme gozar mi mocedad alegre si quieren gozar su vejez cansada & c.[1]

There is more in the same mode. Antitheses are as frequent in the first act as in the others. The first author gives us: "El intento de tus palabras ha seydo [como] de ingenio de tal hombre como tu, auer de salir para se perder en la virtud de tal muger como yo" (p. 24); "Dile que cierre la boca y comience abrir la bolsa" (p. 47); "pareceme que pensaua que le offrecia palabras por escusar galardon" (p. 48). Rojas within a few pages offers us: "en el seruicio del criado esta el galardon del señor" (p. 64); "puede mas contigo su voluntad que mi temor (p. 65); "Señor, mas quiero que ayrado me reprehendas, porque te do enojo, que arrepentido me condenes porque no te di consejo" (p. 66); "valiera mas solo que mal acompañado (p. 67). Samoná in his study of rhetoric in the Celestina calls attention to a form of antithesis, frequent in the work, which gives point and elegance to the sententia. He offers as an example: "Es menor yerro no condenar los malhechores que punir los innocentes."[2] Other instances are legion. Frequent also are antitheses that contrast unequals, with an a-fortiori sense, in the style of a comparatio: "esta puta vieja querria en vn dia, por tres passos, desechar todo el pelo malo, quanto en cincuenta años no ha podido medrar" (p. 113).

I stress the frequency with which figures of this type appear in our great text, because they are an index to a certain kind of taste, a taste, indeed, which is far from universal. Antithesis can be a sort of issue. Dryden without using the term worries the subject to death. Chaucer, he says, follows Nature more closely than does Ovid. The practical sense of this judgment is that the Roman's language is "conceited" as the English poet's is not. Narcissus in a passion unto death delivers an elegant paradox, "inopem me copia fecit"; Dryden takes no pleasure

in the phrase.[3] Lines later, after a paraphrase of Chaucer he asks:

> What would Ovid have done on this occasion? He would certainly have made Arcite witty on his deathbed: he had complained he was farther off from possession, by being so near, and a thousand such boyisms, which Chaucer rejected as below the dignity of the subject. They who think otherwise would, by the same reason, prefer Lucan and Ovid to Homer and Virgil, and Martial to all four of them.

We should note that Dryden here spoke more truly than he intended. The last sentence is supposed to be a reductio ad absurdum: people of taste do not relish conceit and wit, for if they did, they would rank Lucan over Homer, which is absurd. But, alas, whole generations of writers, not the least great of either, effectively do rank Lucan over Homer and Virgil: the latter pair may have pride of place, but as effective models, Lucan and his like have no competition. Silver Latin generally, it cannot be repeated too often, has an importance for medieval and modern literature which has few rivals: by simple measurement the wake of a Seneca or a Lucan may prove to be wider than that of any more classic author. The humanism of Celestina is within this current, and in a sense its wealth of antithesis and related figures -- its own tendency towards "conceit", in a word--tells us just that.

The Celestina is rhetorical. This proposition can mean many things; at times it can express approval, but more often it expresses the opposite. Conventionally, rhetoric means bombast, wasted words: more narrowly, rhetoric tends to mean the saying of the same thing over and over again in a continuous stretch of discourse. Consider generally the use of "rhetoric" and "rhetorical" in a typical older manual of Latin literature. After Virgil and Horace, as we read, something goes wrong: Roman poetry and prose gets rhetorical. "Rhetorical" in these contexts never seems to have a technical meaning: our attention is not directed especially to a figure or group of figures, not ordinarily to questions of compositio or to techniques of amplificatio. To the malicious reader what seems to be meant as much as anything is simply that Silver Latin is repetitious and that repetitiousness is bad. Menéndez y Pelayo in another setting plays on the same theme. Writing on Celestina he speaks not of rhetoric, but of the vices of its day. Of Rojas he says:

> ...en realidad amplifica y repite á cada momento: toda idea recibe en él cuatro ó cinco ó más formas, que no siempre mejora la primera. Esta superabundancia verbal se agrava considerablemente

> en la segunda forma de la tragicomedia, pero existía ya en la primitiva.[4]

Where does all this leave us?

Menéndez y Pelayo's statements are accurate, of course. More than that, he has in these lines taken note of an essential and fundamental characteristic of his great text. Only the value judgment ("agrava") is misleading, his sense that repetitiousness is an accidental vice in what is otherwise a work of genius. And for all of their wooliness on their subject, the textbooks of Latin literature are only stating the obvious when they speak of the "rhetorical" qualities of Ovid and Lucan. Writers of the Silver Age indeed love to say the same thing in several ways, specifying, dividing, accumulating examples or simply repeating in different words. The case of Seneca's tragedies is notable, particularly if we compare them with their models. Most frequently the Senecan play begins with a long speech, often spoken by the main character, in which the audience is brought up to date on the action to follow. Opening speeches of this sort of course also occur in Greek tragedies: they are often long. but, unlike those of Seneca, are progressive, passing from one subject to another at short intervals. But Seneca's prologuists stick to the point. Thus Oedipus declares that the Fates have prepared the worst, and continues listing manifestations of the plague at Thebes for more than forty verses. These lines follow another stretch on the trials of kingship, worth twenty-three verses. Dryden, once again, berates Ovid in a passage we alluded to: "Would any man who is ready to die for love describe his passion like Narcissus? Would he think of <u>inopem me copia fecit</u>, and a dozen more of such expressions, poured on the neck of one another, and signifying all the same thing?" Professor Kenney in a fine essay on the style of the <u>Metamorphoses</u>[5] covers the same non-progressive style of discourse under the heading "theme and variations." The passage occurs, significantly, in a section of his paper on rhetoric in Ovid, and it is a pleasure to note that there is nothing whatever wooly or untechnical in his discussion of that awesome subject. The most naïve reader of the <u>Metamorphoses</u>, needless to say, would have not the least difficulty finding many cases of "theme and variations" in his text. Finally, Professor Williams takes us on a tour of the Silver Age, gathering up instances of "theme and variations" from all its great figures,[6] once again highlighting and calling attention to something any student might come upon by himself.

"Theme and variations," the non-progressive bit of discourse, is another prominent feature of <u>Celestina</u> which binds it to Silver Latin. Again we must insist that we are not seeking to isolate some unique factor in the <u>Tragicomedia</u> which sets it apart in Spanish literature, or

which tells us of the great independence of Rojas and his predecessor. The issue is taste. The two authors, both humanistically trained, were so formed as to respond to one kind of literary model and not another. And here, incidentally, we may safely speak of rhetoric and all its works. The non-progressive text is not a rhetorical figure, simply, but the area it represents is well covered by a number of devices, accumulatio, expolitio, divisio, certain figures of description, certain sorts of proof, the accumulation of arguments to prove a point, the induction, the collection of instances to establish a general principle. Celestina is in this sense genuinely rhetorical, and so also is much of Silver Latin. It is precisely a certain sort of rhetoric that binds the two together.

Celestina, like the texts of the early Principate, is prodigal. Neither our tragicomedy nor Lucan's Pharsalia are remarkable for spareness, nor sobriety. Consider Sempronio's long speech on liberality at the beginning of the second act. This harangue is a long procession of general propositions, well-turned, not one of them original with Rojas, swelling up a speech by Sempronio whose sense is very simple--that Calisto did well to pay the old woman handsomely. As we know, general propositions, equally unoriginal, invade a large proportion of the speeches in our drama. In other words, the Celestina's style is sententious: the text is full of sententiae--indeed it is prodigal in its use of them. The "Carta del auctor a un su amigo" expresses admiration of the first author for no other reason: the latter is praised for the wealth of "fontecicas de filosofia" which decorate his fragment. "Gran filosofo era," said of the first author may be translated, "the first act is sententious." All this is well-known. Equally well-known is that prodigality in the use of sententiae is a mark of the style of Silver authors of the most diverse literary personalities. The sententiousness of the literature of the early Principate is pure topic: it is entirely fitting to say that sententiousness is one of the most characteristic traits of Silver Latin.[7] And, once again, rhetoric is a link with Celestina, for sententia is a figure of diction.

Williams, once again, writing in general about the literature of the Silver Age has this to say: "Such expansiveness and the concomitant concentration on the single idea inevitably led to lack of interest in the strict coherence and movement of ideas and in the organization of the whole."[8] He is describing here the course Silver authors charted between the poles of wilful repetitiousness on one hand and sententia and epigram on the other, and is calling attention to the more or less informal disposition of longer portions of the text which was often the result. If we pass from Williams' large scale and global reference to the very small and local range represented by Celestina, we may find ourselves on similiar ground. The same

constraints are there, and the result is also much the same. I am thinking now not of the Tragicomedia as a whole, but of its basic unit, the single speech. Typically, almost universally, this stretch of text, if it is long enough, is simply a loosely organized collection of discrete bits, virtually interchangeable. Would the meaning be different, would we in any way lose the thread of thought, if we were to rearrange the pieces of Sempronio's speech on liberality or of his big "immutability" speech in Act III, or of any other of the long harangues in the play? The pattern is basic. We would add that in a sense it is hard to recognize. Although ordinary modern readers may find these Celestina speeches fulsome and excessive, their essential plan, the structure they share may go unnoticed because it is so common in expository prose nowadays. We have naturalized texts like these. For that very reason it is important to point out that this pattern, the sequence of bits whose order is not significant, is distinctive and is in no way normal: it is typical of Silver Latin and it is surely conspicuous in Rojas' Celestina.

We could, if we wished, continue this discussion at pleasure, pointing out one after another trait of style that unites the Celestina to certain Imperial ancestors. We have certainly chosen the most basic of these characteristics.[9] We should note that each by itself, prominent in the Tragicomedia, is almost by convention recognized as an important trait in the literary style of our great period: it is no whim of mine that associates each with Silver Latin. And without claiming to explain fully this affinity of taste, certain facts make the parallel not seem accidental. Latin writings of the crucial period were certainly known to the authors of Celestina. Ovid and the younger Seneca figure large in the list of its sources: Lucan too is important and Persius is not absent.[10] Silver Latin influence also comes into the Tragicomedia indirectly. The Fiammetta, notorious for its echoes in the Spanish work, depends heavily on Ovid's Heroides and the tragic Seneca. The Humanistic Comedy also, all-important for an understanding of our play, in many instances parts company with its models Terence and Plautus in the same way as Celestina does: these plays have in them not a little Silver Latin. Finally, there is rhetoric itself, a formative influence on all fronts. But here we must be very much on the alert. By involving rhetoric as a cause in common we run the risk of explaining not too little, but too much. Rhetoric recommends everything and nothing. It can account for fulsome utterances and also for plain; it can explain artful diction, but it can also explain diction which is apparently artless. The qualities Dryden hates are not in any decent sense more rhetorical than the ones he tolerates. One way or another we have to narrow our field. One mode of rhetoric, however, could indeed count as a decisive influence in both Silver Latin literature and in Celestina.

This strain is present in the Tragicomedia, as I will try to show, and at the same time we can count on conventional views to tell us that the same current is important in the prose and poetry of the early Principate.[11] I am thinking of the teaching and practice associated with declamation. It is this very important common influence that will concern us for the rest of the present study.

The declamation we are speaking of is a species of display oratory which became a form of public entertainment from the early years of the Empire on. In those years, as we can imagine, people would flock to hear well-known speakers debate on certain subjects, sometimes in mock court trials, at others advising heroes of history and legend pro and con on certain moral dilemmas--should Agamemnon sacrifice his daughter? Should Alexander cross the sea? Most of the speakers-performers were professionals who built reputations on just this kind of oratory. Our best witness to this whole curious institution is, as we know, Seneca the Elder, whose Controversiae and Suasoriae are a collection of excerpts from the speeches of the great declaimers of his day, along with comments and summaries of his own. These texts do not, alas, reproduce whole orations. For each debating topic proposed he gives us first a set of excerpts, purple patches, attributed each to one of his declaimers, and then, in paraphrase, the properly argumentative part of the speeches. The prefaces of many of the books have survived, and these are full of invaluable information about the history and character of declamation. In the short run, at least, it is the collection of excerpta, which Seneca calls sententiae, which shed the most light on our problem. They are intended to be models of style, and are indeed a showcase of all the qualities which interest us. They vary in length from a single short sentence to more than a page. Some of the longer stretches are simply groups of brief utterances, but others are plainly meant to be continuous. Dryden, if he knew this material, must have disliked every phrase: more obstinately witty or "conceited" language is hard to find, or, in the case of the long bits, more mountainously repetitive. We are in any case quite obviously on the turf of Celestina. Sententiae in our sense, which Seneca calls loci communes or simply loci, are everywhere. He speaks of them explicitly, in fact, and describes their function. The brief excerpts we spoke of are almost invariably marked by some kind of ingenuity, an artful paradox, or play on words, or a brilliant antithesis. Thus, on the question of whether Alexander should sail the seas Marullus contributes this: "Maris sequimur, terras cui tradimus? orbem quem non novi quaero, quem vici relinquo." On Agamemnon's decision to sacrifice Iphigenia or not Cornelius Hispanus offers: "Infestae sunt...tempestates et saeviunt maria, neque adhuc patricidium feci. ista maria, si numine suo deus regeret, adulteris clauderentur." Should the Persian trophies be taken down to satisfy Xerxes?

Argentarius comments: "Non pudet vos? pluris tropaea vestra aestimat quam vos."[12] This turn, a comparison between unequals, is especially reminiscent of some of the antitheses of Celestina, of the sort we have pointed out. Figures of just this sort, antithesis and the rest, also invade the longer pieces in Seneca. In some cases they come at the end of a long tirade, and in others they pervade the whole excerpt. They are in any case omnipresent. "Theme and variations," finally, repetitious stretches of more or less interchangeable parts are also an important feature of Seneca's longer excerpts, as we will see presently.

The influence of declamation on the literature of the Silver Age is beyond doubt: the naked eye, so to speak, perceives the kinship, and history confirms the intuition. And on the other hand, everything moves us to connect declamation somehow with the Celestina: the parallels are obvious. Is a direct contact possible? Could the controversiae and suasoriae of Seneca actually figure in the list of the Tragicomedia's sources? Did the two authors in fact have this volume before them? It was available, surely; the work was much copied during the Middle Ages and early Renaissance. It was printed twice in the 1490's, and although the date is late, it is not impossible that Rojas might have seen it in this form. In any case, there is positive evidence that Seneca is indeed present in both parts of Celestina, the first act and the rest. Castro Guisasola in his list of sources does not mention him, but María Rosa de Malkiel does trace one sententia in the drama to his collection. Thus Castro cites Heroides X, "Morsque minus poenae quam mora mortis habet" (v. 62). This, according to him, yields a line from the fifth act in the mouth of an impatient Calisto: "es mas penoso al delinquente esperar la cruda y capital sentencia, que el acto de la ya sabida muerte."[13] But as Lida points out, the last sentence in Controversia III 5 would do equally well as a source: "crudelius est quam mori semper mortem timere."[14] She in fact pleads for both Ovid and Seneca on this point, as though Rojas had both texts before him. The case for the latter--stronger, to my mind--is that the expansion in the Tragicomedia reflects the content in the declamation: the speaker is literally being kept in suspense as to whether or not he is to die, and it is that situation which Calisto expresses in a figure. It is thus more than likely that Rojas knew Seneca. It is also possible that the author of the first act also did. Thus, the Controversia Book III tells of a father arrested for disturbing the peace as he weeps on seeing his son die in a fire. The accused says at the beginning of his defense: "misero si flere no licet, magis flendum est."[15] The line is a typical utterance for a declamation. It scores three times, as a general proposition or sententia, for the paradox, and for the etymological figure, flere-flendum. The last, as I think,

may have inspired the sustained adnominatio in Act I of the Tragicomedia on "llorar":

> Cel: Parmeno, ¿tu no vees que es necedad e simpleza llorar por lo que con llorar no se puede remediar?
>
> Par: Por esso lloro. Que si con llorar fuesse possible traer a mi amo el remedio, tan grande seria el plazer de la tal esperança, que de gozo no podria llorar. Pero assi, perdida ya [toda] la esperança, pierdo el alegria y lloro. (p. 50)

We have the same figure and virtually the same word. The sense of the two fragments is not wholly dissimilar. Seneca's character says that one should weep because weeping is forbidden, Pármeno because weeping is useless. Our ground thus seems to be well covered. Unless we can propose other sources for our two fragments, we are fairly safe in saying that both authors at some time had Seneca's text in their hands.

The reason above all why it seems to me worthwhile to include Seneca as part of the background of Celestina is that declamation may help us to understand one of the most conspicuous features of the play, the long argumentative speech. Generally, the extended utterances of the characters are of several kinds: some are affective or introspective, some narrative, some descriptive. One of the most important structurally, however, is the speech intended to persuade. Lida de Malkiel very characteristically speaks of the didactic speech:

> ...con gran acopio de sentencias, como en las consideraciones de Sempronio y Calisto sobre la honra, la liberalidad, la tristeza y el consuelo, y en las de Pleberio y Alisa sobre la mutabilidad de la vida, las ventajas de casar a la hija, y su ignorancia original.[16]

Gilman refers to this species generally, and more accurately, saying that argument is one of the basic modes of discourse in Celestina (along with sentiment).[17] For reasons that already may be obvious it seems plausible to me that the "sententiae", so called , recorded in Seneca, may be the primary model for this last form of speech. We must emphasize that argument in the dialogue is a prominent feature of the Tragicomedia way beyond the ordinary demands of drama, or indeed of belles-lettres generally: the characters argue more here than they do in the plays of Terence and Plautus for example, more even than in the humanistic plays which meet Celestina half way. The elegant, "witty, conceited" bits of declamation recorded by Seneca are, of course, nothing but argument, and are, as we have seen, loaded down with the traits of style normally

associated with Silver Latin. The coincidence is striking, and is surely not trivial: where else could the pattern in our play, argument-plus-figures come from?

We should stress that we are not dealing with impressions. As I have tried to show elsewhere, the forms of argument exploited by the speakers in Celestina are such in a fully technical sense.[18] Rational conviction can be produced in a listener mainly in two ways, by deduction from premises, or by induction from examples. Both procedures figure large in the utterances of Celestina, Sempronio and the rest. How else is one to characterize some of their mountainous speeches than as accumulations of examples, meant to prove a point? As for deduction the matter is even clearer. Commonplaces, sententiae in the speeches are common indeed, as we know very well, and wherever there is a commonplace there is a virtual syllogism or enthymeme. In Celestina notably, the universal proposition serves as the major of a syllogism: the special case is assimilated to a general rule. The old woman recommends herself saying "Aquel es rico que esta bien con Dios." By implication she is saying that she herself is at peace with God (minor), and that she is truly rich, against appearances (conclusion). Thus it is not enough to say that the Tragicomedia is sententious: if it is sententious, it is also argumentative. And beyond this, one could say that much of the logical apparatus of the orator is generally at the disposal of the speakers in the play.

The characters argue: they speak in suasoriae. More particularly, they argue with each other. As I have pointed out elsewhere,[19] at times in Celestina there are series of persuasive speeches disposed sandwich-wise, alternately pro and con some proposal. In Act II Calisto asks Sempronio to see the old woman home, and advances reasons why he should. The servant, reluctant, offers arguments to the contrary. Each speaker then has a second go, and so we have a respectable debate, with two speeches pro, two contra. Celestina urges Elicia to learn to repair virgos and Elicia refuses. The two women argue like lawyers. Celestina and Pármeno dispute monumentally in Act I on a variety of subjects, mainly on the boy's continued fidelity to his master. Most important of all, Calisto and Sempronio near the beginning of the play argue at length very formally whether the former should love Melibea. The pro and con, the well-designed arguments on both sides, duplicate exactly the state of things in declamation. Should the Spartans retreat from Thermopolae? Should Cicero destroy his writings? Some speak in favor, some against.

What does a suasoria or a controversia actually look like? How is it disposed, at large or in detail? Again, one would have to remark that certain of them are very much like speeches in Celestina: they are sententious, full of

antitheses, and repetitious. I quote, without prior comment, Seneca's selection from a suasoria by Albucius Silus, urging Alexander the Great not to cross the seas:

> Terrae quoque suum finem habent, at ipsius mundi aliquis occasus est; nihil infinitum est; modum [tu] magnitudini facere debes, quoniam Fortuna non facit. Magni pectoris est inter secunda moderatio. Eundem Fortuna victoriae tuae quem naturae finem facit: imperium tuum cludit Oceanus. O quantum magnitudo tua rerum quoque naturam supergressa est! Alexander orbi magnus est, Alexandro orbis angusbus est. Aliquis etiam magnitudini modus est; non procedit ultra spatia sua caelum maria intra terminos suos agitantur. Quidquid ad summum pervenit, incremento non relinquit locum. Non magis quicquam ultra Alexandrum novimus quam ultra Oceanum.[20]

This speech, all on one subject, could just possibly be transplanted into Celestina without arousing suspicion. The series of examples, the sententiae--"nihil infinitum est," "magni pectoris" &c--, the antitheses--paradoxes, even the exclamation that breaks up the series of declarative sentences is characteristic: this could be one of Celestina's quietly persuasive utterances. Even more remarkable in this sense is the long harangue by Fuscus the Elder urging the Spartans not to abandon Thermopolae. This handsome mixed media event, obstinately non-progressive, is surely Celestinesque. It begins:

> At, puto, rudis lecta aetas et animus qui frangeretur metu, insuetaque arma non passurae manus hebetataque senio aut vulneribus corpora. Quid dicam? potissimos Graeciae? an Lacedaemonios? an electos? An repetam tot acies patrum totque excidia urbium, tot victarum gentium spolia? et nunc produntur condita sine moenibus templa? Pudet consilii nostri, pudet, etiamsi non fugimus, deliberasse talia.[21]

The sarcasm (illusio), the anaphora, the series of rhetorical questions, indeed the variety itself, and the heavy load of affect recall some of the old bawd's speeches, Sempronio's grand piece on mutability, many others. Selections of this sort are very common in Seneca's collection, especially among the suasoriae: those of the "Asiatic" Fuscus are especially brilliant and emotional. The uninterrupted sequence of commonplaces on one theme, so characteristic of the Tragicomedia, can also be found among Seneca's examples. Publius Aspenax has: "Fortunae lex est praestare quae exegeris. Miserere: mutabilis est casus; dederunt victis terga victores et quos provexerat fortuna destituit."[22] Porcius Latro has: "fragilis et caduca felicitas est, et onmis blandientis fortunae speciosus cum

periculo nitor: et sine causa saepe fovit et sine ratione destituit."[23] Fabianus offers us:

> Noli pecuniam concupiscere. Quid tibi dicam? Haec est quae auget discordiam urbis et terrarum orbem in bellum agitst, humanum genus cognatum natura in fraudes et scelera et mutuum odium instigat, haec est quae senes corrumpit. Quidam summum bonum dixerunt voluptatem et omnia ad corpus rettulerunt.[24]

Sometimes the string of sententiae is longer. Fuscus the Elder has a splendid parade of loci on death:

> ...si cadendum est, erratis si metuendam creditis mortem. Nulli natura in aeternum spiritum dedit, statque nascentibus in finem vitae dies. Ex inbecilla enim nos materia deus orsus est; quippe minimis succidunt corpora. Indenuntiata sorte rapimur; sub eodem pueritia fato est, eadem iuventus causa cadit. Optamus quoque plerumque mortem; adeo in securam quietem recessus ex vita est. At gloriae nullus finis est proximique deos sic ageses agunt; feminis quoque frequens hoc in mortem pro gloria iter est.[25]

Seneca himself in the preface to Book I of the Controversiae has a fine piece on the corruption of his time:

> Torpent ecce ingenia desidiosae iuventutis nec in unius honestae rei labore vigilatur; somnus languorque ac somno et languore turpior malarum rerum industria invasit animos: cantandi saltandique obscena studia effeminatos tenent, [et] capillum frangere et ad muliebres blanditia extenuare vocem, mollitia corporis certare cum feminis et inmundissimis se excolere munditiis nostrorum adulescentium specimen est. Quis aequalium vestrorum quid dicam satis ingeniosus, satis studiosus, immo quis satis vir est? Emolliti enervesque quod nati sunt in vita manent, expugnatores alienae pudicitiae, neglegentes suae.[26]

Sometimes Seneca reports in the third person passages like these. We get Fabianus' argument:

> At rationem aliam primam fecit: modum inponendum esse rebus secundis. Hic dixit sententiam: illa demum est magna felicitas quae arbitrio suo constitit. Dixit deinde locum de varietate fortunae et, cum descripsisset nihil esse stabile, omnia fluitare et incertis motibus modo attolli, modo deprimi, absorberi terras et maria siccari, montes subsidere...[27]

All of these passages are plainly the same sort of discourse as Sempronio's great speech on liberality, or as dozens of others. Also typical of Celestina is the sententia or group of sententiae followed by supporting examples. In at least one instance the latter are one of Rojas' additions of the early 1500's: his hand is visible as he shapes his text deliberately along these lines.[28] Here is Triarius quoted by Seneca:

> Non ex formula natura respondet nec ad praescriptum casus obsequitur; semper expectari fortuna mavult quam regi. Aliubi effunditur inprovisa segetum maturitas, alubi sera magno fenore moram redimit. Licet lex dies finiat, natura non recipit.[29]

The strong alliance between argument and fine phrases, essential to declamation and prominent in Celestina, is to my mind distinctive. This tie up is above all what might convince us that our two authors were influenced by Seneca's collections. Further evidence, less powerful, perhaps, is the palpable similarity, line by line, by look and feel of a suasoria or controversia to certain speeches in the Tragicomedia. Here obviously we are on less certain ground. If declamation influenced other literary species and shares with them certain traits of style, how can we tell whether our Spanish text inherited them from one or the other? Indeed, literary texts other than declamatory are present in Celestina, and it would be foolish to assert that those had no part in shaping its personality. In fact, the case for a direct Senecan influence is twofold. In the first place it is plausible. The collections of controversiae and suasoriae are textbooks. They indeed do not teach by precept, but they do by example. For a fifteenth century student or man of letters they would be in a class with works like the Margarita poetica of Eyb, in Rojas' library at his death.[30] This is a complete rhetoric made up entirely of examples: under "exordium" we get not the rules for composing this part of a speech, but a string of model exordia, under narratio, ditto, and so on. It is in the order of things likely that a work of this sort exerts an influence precisely if it is meant to. The texts are put before the reader for no other reason than that they be imitated, and if students and others do imitate them, one is hardly surprised. One would in principle, other things being equal, expect that models of this sort would outscore others in influence, and if the text was prestigious enough, one could reasonably look for traces of it everywhere. It is thus not wholly senseless to think of Seneca's texts as shaping in distinctive ways the design of Celestina.

In the second place we might simply observe, look down our noses. It is a plain fact that there are not many Silver Age texts that resemble declamations as much as do some of the speeches in Celestina. The broader traits of

style are of course shared by non-declamatory writings, but in a curious way the utterances of Pármeno, Sempronio and the rest are often closer to the declamatory mode than comparable bits by Lucan, Statius and their like. Thus, one of the prime candidates for presumed declamatory influence is the great debate over the arms of Achilles in Book XIII of the Metamorphoses.[31] But it takes no fine critical eye to see that the speeches of Ulysses and Ajax are not much like the harangues in the Tragicomedia. Or to take a case we have already mentioned, the soliloquy of Narcissus which so aroused Dryden's ire. Repetitive, assuredly. But Ovid, supreme and exquisite poet, covers his tracks: the impression is not at all of something static, but on the contrary mobile and nervous, expressing the changing moods of the desperate boy. Ovid's art effectively hides the fact that he is crisscrossing the same bit of territory over dozens of verses. There is nothing in Celestina like this: repetition is there, undisguised, without apologies.

We conclude this study by raising one difficulty. The following is a typically sententious speech from the Tragicomedia:

> ...como Seneca dixo, los peregrinos tienen muchas posadas y pocas amistades, porque en breue tiempo con ninguno pueden firmar amistad. Y el que esta en muchos cabos, esta en ninguno. Ni puede aprouechar el manjar a los cuerpos que en comiendo se lança, ni ay cosa que mas la sanidad impida que la diuersidad y mudança y variacion de los manjares. Y nunca la llaga viene a cicatrizar en la qual muchas medicinas se tientan, ni conualesce la planta que muchas vezes es traspuesta. Y no ay cosa tan prouechosa, que en llegando aproueche. (pp. 52-3)

The "Seneca" in this case is, of course, not the Elder, but the Younger, and the passage is a textual quotation from the second epistle to Lucillus.[32] I may seem to be subverting my whole argument. Precisely the sort of speech that can most easily be connected to declamation turns out in this case to be an identifiable fragment by a non-declaimer. Hundreds of passages in the letters to Lucillus are of just this kind. And in fact, the writings of the philosopher Seneca might do nearly as well as those of his father as models for Celestina's declamatory style. Why prefer one to the other? Several observations could be made. The first is an obvious one: the younger Seneca's texts are declamatory. They are so both structurally, and in genesis. One would scarcely want to deny an influence of father on son. Anecdote aside, it is the case that philosophical and moral topics were for years classic subjects for declamatory debate,--"is the world governed by Providence?" or "should a man marry?" There plainly must have been some prior disposition on the part of Celestina's authors that would

attract them to texts organized like those of the great Stoic sage. These served handily both as source and as models because their rhetorical characteristics were the ones Rojas and his predecessors thought elegant and appropriate. Then too, one could raise the question of why these texts of Seneca best known to Rojas and his contemporaries should become models for speeches in a drama. The answer is unclear, but it might be safe to say that the authors of Celestina were not the only ones to get the idea: in a sense Seneca himself might have set the example. But the same question asked about the speeches quoted in the Elder Seneca suggests a much more obvious answer: declamations are in many ways patently dramatic. They were addressed to someone, a fictitious judge, Agamemnon, Cicero, or the Athenians threatened by Xerxes. What is more, they are at least potentially part of a dialogue. The speaker who counsels Cicero not to compromise with Antony can expect to be answered by one who urges the opposite. As we have seen, there are bits of dialogue in Celestina which simulate very closely this sort of exchange. The style, then, of our great tragicomedy assuredly does not come from one source, but declamation comes perhaps as close as anything to providing the bones and sinews of some of its most characteristic parts.[33]

—*Tragedia Policiana* [Medina del Campo, Pedro de Castro], 1547.

NOTES

[1]<u>Tragicomedia de Calixto y Melibea, libro también llamado La Celestina</u>, ed. M. Criado del Val y G. D. Trotter (Madrid: C.S.I.C., 1958), 258. Page references to <u>Celestina</u> will henceforth be from this edition.

[2]Carmelo Samonà, <u>Aspetti del retoricismo nella 'Celestina'</u> (Roma, Studi di letteratura spagnola, Facoltà di magisterio dell 'Università di Roma, 1953), 60.

[3]John Dryden, <u>An Essay on Dramatic Poetry and Other Critical Writings</u>, ed. John L. Mahoney (Indianapolis-New York: Bobbs Merrill, 1965), 103; all of our quotations from Dryden are from this page.

[4]M. Menéndez y Pelayo, <u>Orígenes de la novela</u> (Buenos Aires: G.L.E.M., 1944), XIII, 192.

[5]E. J. Kenney, "The Style of the <u>Metamorphoses</u>" in <u>Ovid</u>, ed. J. W. Binns (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), 132-5.

[6]Gordon Williams, <u>Change and Decline</u> (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978), 213-218. On repetitiousness in Lucan as a Silver trait see also J. F. D'Alton, <u>Roman Literary Theory and Criticism</u> (New York: Russell and Russell, 1962), 459.

[7]Williams, 207ff. Anticipating my argument I refer also to S. Bonner, <u>Roman Declamation</u> (Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 1949) in which he associates certain rhetorical devices in Silver authors with the influence of declamation. He speaks of <u>loci</u> in general on pp. 60ff, in declamation on p. 79, in <u>sententiae</u> in Ovid on p. 144 and on p. 151, in Livy on p. 157, in Velleius Paterculus, p. 159, in Seneca's tragedies, 160ff., in his prose, p. 165. The multitude of <u>sententiae</u> in Silver Latin is one of its traits which he traces to the influence of declamation. J. F. D'Alton (see n. 6), speaks of the effects public recitation had on poetry in the Silver Age, "the employment of devices already found effective in the schools of declamation, the forced conceit, the balanced antithesis, the flashing epigram" &c. (p. 458, emphasis mine). He speaks of the "profusion of epigrams in the tragedies of Seneca" (p. 460), of the moral maxims there (p. 461), and speaks of epigram as "a favorite device in the prose of the Silver Age" (p. 213).

[8]G. Williams, 215.

[9]Anticipating my own argument once again I cite Bonner's work on declamation (see n. 7), 68ff. He lists and discusses the traits of style and the rhetorical figures of preference in declamatory texts. His list is longer than mine. Although his book is not primarily about belles-lettres, he does devote a chapter to the influence of declamation on other literary genres (Ch. 8, pp. 149-167) and so in speaking of Silver Latin he does allude to his own list of figures and devices.

[10]F. Castro Guisasola, Observaciones sobre las fuentes de la 'Celestina' [1924] (Madrid: C.S.I.C., 1973) for Ovid, pp. 66ff, Persius, 79-80, Seneca the Younger, 94 ff, Juvenal, 48, Lucan, 49.

[11]See Note 9; Bonner's propositions about the influence of declamation are not unique.

[12]The Elder Seneca, Declamations, ed. and trans. M. Winterbottom, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, and London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1974); the line from Marullus is on p. 482, from Cornelius Hispanus, 636, and from Argentarius, p. 554, all from Vol. II.

[13]Castro Guisasola, p. 69; the line from Celestina is in our text at p. 108.

[14]María Rosa Lida de Malkiel, La originalidad artística de la "Celestina" (Buenos Aires: EUDEBA, 1962), p. 341; the quotation from Seneca is in I, 408.

[15]Seneca, I, 404.

[16]Lida de Malkiel, 108-9.

[17]Stephen Gilman, The Art of the 'Celestina' (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1956), 25.

[18]Charles F. Fraker, "Rhetoric in the Celestina: Another Look," Aureum Saeculum Hispanum in honor of Hans Flasche (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1982) 81-90, and "Argument in the Celestina and in its Predecessors" in Homenaje a Stephen Gilman (Revista de estudios hispánicos, 1982) pp. 81-86.

[19]"Argument," p. 83.

[20]Seneca the Elder, II, 488.

[21]Seneca the Elder, II, 506, 508.

[22]Seneca the Elder, I, 30.

[23]Seneca the Elder, I, 204.

[24]Seneca the Elder, I, 346.

[25]Seneca the Elder, II, 508, 510.

[26]Seneca the Elder, I, 8.

[27]Seneca the Elder, II, 496.

[28]Areúsa's speech beginning on p. 173.

[29]Seneca the Elder I, 326.

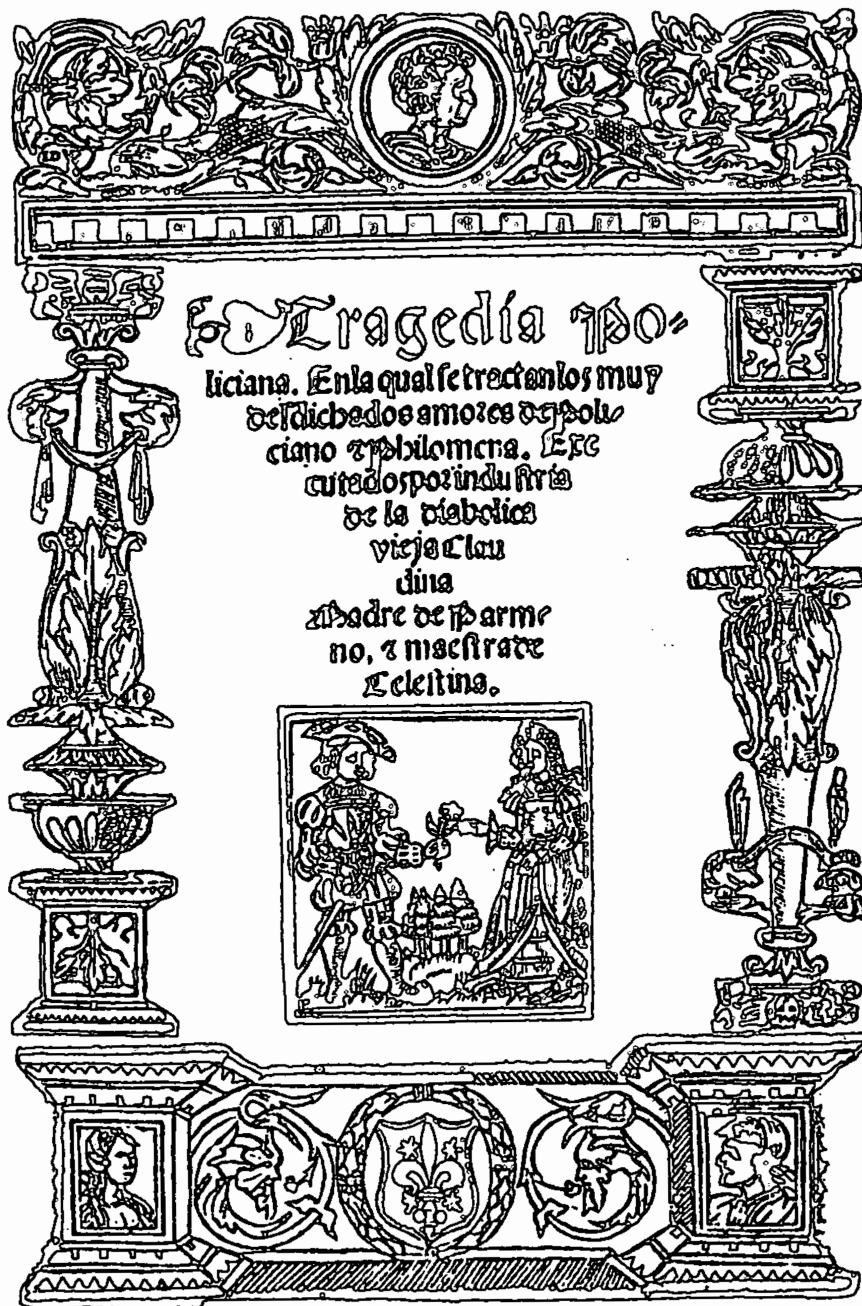
[30]Stephen Gilman, The Spain of Fernando de Rojas (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 324.

[31]Bonner, 151.

[32]Castro Guisasola, 94.

[33]I add as a final note some further difficulties that could challenge the argument I have presented here. The actual words of the Elder Seneca, for example, might give the impression that good declamation was hostile to the traits I have thought were common to controversiae and suasoriae and Celestina. Seneca is a man of Attic taste, and deplores the bombast and repetitiousness of certain declaimers. He cautions against excessive use of loci/sententiae. He leaves the impression that since declamation is mock debate, the argumentative side of some of the speeches is not very strong. On the first two issues I comment in two ways. First, the examples speak for themselves. Some, indeed many, of the ones which recall Celestina are repetitious and sententious. Second, in the light of Seneca's own examples and practice, his warnings against excesses can hardly be considered prohibitions. On the third issue I would remark simply that debates are debates. A speaker in a mock debate may be more admired for his fine phrases than for his convincing arguments, but in some guise or another he is trying to prove something. And once again, Seneca's examples tell us what we need to know: they do sound argumentative. Another potential challenge to my views is found in an article by T. F. Higham, "Ovid and Rhetoric" [in Ovidiana, ed. N. I. Herescu (Paris: "Les belles lettres," 1958), pp. 30-48]. In this paper Higham, on the basis of both Ovid's texts and of Seneca's remarks about him, tries to dissociate Ovid from declamation. I will not attempt to paraphrase his argument in detail or to pass judgment on what appears to be a declaration of nonconformity. Higham cites Seneca's remark that Ovid preferred suasoriae to controversiae because argument there counted for less. This for us counts as a case against the suasoria as argument. But once again, the proof of the

pudding is in the eating: the pieces of suasoriae Seneca quotes look argumentative. Higham also argues that "theme and variations" is not an inheritance from declamation. Without pretending any professionalism here, I would observe that themes and variations, though not necessarily a monopoly of declamation, are prominent there, and become prominent in other literary genres shortly after the time it starts to become a craze.



Tragedia Po-
liciana. En la qual se tractan los muy
desdichados amores de Poli-
ciano y Philomena. Exe
cutados por industria
de la diabolica
vieja Clau
dina
Madre de Parme
no, y maestra de
Celestina.

Tragedia Policiana [Medina del Campo, Pedro de Castro], 1547.