

**THE TRAGICOMEDIA DE CALISTO Y MELIBEA  
AND ITS 'MORALITIE'**

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Few aspects of the *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea* have caused more perplexity than its authors' statements about the play's didactic intention or *moralitie*, as medieval authors might have called it. We prefer to believe that no work of art worthy of the name can have so low a thing as a moral; yet there is no getting round the palpable design announced in the *Incipit*:

Síguese la Comedia o Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea, compuesta en reprehensión de los locos enamorados que, vencidos de su desordenado apetito, a sus amigas llaman y dizen ser su dios. Así mismo fecha en aviso de los engaños de las alcahuetas y malos y lisonjeros sirvientes.<sup>1</sup>

As Bataillon pointed out, this heading was the work of the *antiguo autor*, and strictly belongs only to his unfinished Auto I, the plot of which it summarizes.<sup>2</sup> Even so, we cannot clear Fernando de Rojas of the grave charge of didactic intent, for he too insisted on a moral to his book: not only in the dedicatory epistle *El autor a un su amigo* ('avisos y consejos contra lisonjeros y malos sirvientes y falsas mugeres hechizeras', 185) and in the acrostic verses (189-93) inserted

in the first version of 16 acts, but also in the final verses 'aplicando la obra al propósito por que la acabó' which he inserted at the end of the second version of 21 acts (609-10). And the *Título* summed up: 'avisos muy necesarios para mancebos, mostrándoles los engaños que están encerrados en sirvientes y alcahuetas' (181).

In his preliminaries Rojas claimed, not surprisingly, that the exemplary and didactic purpose was connected with the most astounding novelty of his *comœdia*, its tragic ending. He explicitly claimed this innovation in the acrostic verses, asserting in time-honoured didactic fashion that he made it because of his desire 'to mix a medicinal pill with the lascivious sugar' (190):

Este mi desseo cargado de antojos  
compuso tal fin que el principio desata.<sup>3</sup>

The special moral significance of the unexpected dénouement is underlined both here ('buscad bien *el fin* de aquesto que escribo, | o del principio leed su argumento'; cf. 'vinieron los amantes y los que les [los *CDMp*] ministraron en amargo y desastroso fin', *Argumento*, 208) and in the final verses (609):

Pues aquí vemos cuán mal fenescieron  
aquestos amantes, huygamos su dança.

Rojas wished to make it quite clear that his work, however far it had travelled from that of the *antiguo autor*, still had a moral, and that this moral was to be found in the warning *exemplum* of the deaths of the lovers (in these final verses he does not include the deaths of 'los que les ministraron') at the end.

Rojas's contemporaries did not always doubt the earnestness of these claims. Juan Luis Vives opined in his *De causis corruptarum artium*, II, 4 *De grammatica* (1531) that, with his radical innovation of the tragic ending, Rojas had outdone Terence, whose comic plots (*fabulae*) represented 'silly and vulgar things popular with the public', love-affairs, the tricks of harlots, lies of pimps, and boastful swearing of soldiers:

All this incitement to vice corrupted the morals of the  
commonwealth, especially as the authors of plays  
commonly gave a happy ending to all their flirting

and filth [...] In this regard the author of the Spanish tragicomedy of *Scelestina* acted more wisely, giving to the process of the affair and carnal delights of pleasure the bitterest of endings: the death and destruction of lovers, procuress, and pimps.

So too the humanist 'corrector de la impresión' Alonso de Proaza, when he added a stanza to his laudatory verses to explain *Cómo se debía la obra llamar tragicomedia y no comedia* (615), noted that its 'trágico fin', following hard on the lovers' triumph, offered a cautionary lesson on the false glammers of this traitorous world. Bataillon and Peter Russell have shown that such didactic readings of the *Tragicomedia* were to remain standard throughout the Golden Age, despite the rational suspicion of the censors (shared by Cervantes and the majority of the public) that the play's too human exuberance was, to borrow Sydney Smith's words, 'not teaching, but raising up splendid associations in favour of being hanged'.<sup>4</sup>

It seems, at any rate, that the promise of a didactic intention in the authors' blurb was meant to be noticed; and some readers professed to find the promise fulfilled. There remain, of course, various weapons in the arsenal of modern criticism for gutting these obnoxious facts of their import. We might, for example, reject *a priori* any notion that authors set out to improve their fellow men (and women), and take the statements as an elaborate hoax, mere *flatus uocis*. More subtly, we might argue that the *primer autor*, the older and less grown-up writer, said what he meant out of deference to medieval tradition, and meant what he said out of misguided naivety; Rojas, however, in his usual malicious way turned the claim into parody (there is some support for this latter view in Rojas's *Prólogo*, as I shall suggest below.) Some critics go further, and detect in the body of the play a significant absence of references to Christian morality--no rehearsal of the hair-raising torments of hell, none of the macabre topics of medieval preachers on *contemptus mundi*. In their view this absence of Christian teaching lends a profound and cynical irony to the illusory claims about 'avisos'.

On the other hand--and this is the commoner stratagem--we may accept the authors' statements of an ethical intention at face value, but fall back upon contending that the actual moral, if there is one, transcends any such reductive formulae as those propounded in the preliminary and terminal pieces which frame the play. By this

account, the didactic message of the *Tragicomedia* was made ambiguous, blurred, or even subverted altogether by the vitality of its action and characterization; deliberately or not, the finished work burst free from the constraints of any intended homily. The upshot of this argument, a development of Wimsatt's familiar account of the intentional fallacy, is to relegate the rather insistent statements of intent by the two authors to a cabinet of amusing curiosities, and to get on with the business of interpreting the play without them.

My purpose in reopening the question of the moral of Rojas's play is not to deny the validity of approaches such as these. I do not defend or impugn the propriety of moralities in literature, and neither know nor care whether the *Tragicomedy* really has a moral message. We may accept with unruffled calm the proposition that the book's greatness has nothing to do with advice about how to deal with over-obsequious domestic staff or brothel-keepers with a sideline in the black arts. My concern is not with what the play means, but with the philological problem of what phrases such as 'avisos muy necesarios para mançebos' meant. What follows is thus offered as a postil to the *ingens opus* of Peter Russell's interpretative commentary.

The first thing is to clarify what the authors actually say about their moral. This is more peculiar than a first glance suggests. An understandable but superficial error, based on a phrase about 'defensivas armas para resistir sus fuegos [de Amor]' in the dedicatory epistle *El autor a un su amigo* (184) and several remarks about 'este fino arnés con que os defendáys [vosotros que amáys]' in the acrostic verses (192), is to suppose that the 'avisos y consejos' were meant to warn us against falling in love, or against courtly love, or against the perils of passion.

But this mundane message is never mentioned in the texts quoted in my first paragraph, which say something quite distinct; nor is it an idea which accords with the content of the play, whose plot seems designed from beginning to end to show that Calisto and Melibea, though at times they imitate the extravagant postures of the heroes and heroines of sentimental romance, are in the grip of a passion which is an irresistible madness, a sickness whose onset and pathology is governed by ineluctable fate (e.g. 'para comienço de lo qual dispuso el adversa Fortuna lugar oportuno', *Argumento*, 208; 'Pleb.: ¡O fortuna variable, ministra y mayordoma de los temporales bienes! [...] Pero ¿quién forçó a mi hija a morir, sino la fuerte fuerça

de amor?', Auto XXI, 597-602). The absurdity, or at least futility, of warning us to avoid the unavoidable would certainly not have been lost on the jurist Rojas; one might as well admonish people not to catch a common cold. The specific words about *sirvientes* and *alcahuetas* suggest that Rojas and his predecessor had in mind something much less anodyne than fatuous cautions on the vanity of fleshly things or the overmastering power of erotic mania.<sup>5</sup>

We must go beyond such jejune suppositions, therefore, and hold fast to the much more surprising thing which the text actually says: that is, that its *avisos* are not against the forces of natural instinct and passion, but against what Rojas calls the *vicios* of love (191, 192), and more specifically against the human agents of such vices, namely 'las alcahuetas e malos e lisonjeros sirvientes' (205), 'lisongeros y malos sirvientes y falsas mugeres hechizeras' (185), or 'los engaños que están encerrados en sirvientes y alcahuetas' (181), so that to 'gente buelta y mezclada en vicios de amor' the fate of Calisto and Melibea 'les pornán temor | a fiar de alcahueta ni de mal sirviente' (191).<sup>6</sup>

Defined in this particular way, the authors' announcement of didactic intention can be recognized as a specific commonplace. It must not be confused with the general topics of moralizing intention to be found in most forms of medieval literature, but recognized for what it is: a distinct and deliberate allusion to the special decorum of the genre to which the *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea* aspired to belong. The words of the *Incipit* which specify an ethical aim ('compuesta en reprehensión de los locos enamorados [...] Así mismo fecha en aviso de los engaños de las alcahuetas y malos y lisonjeros sirvientes') recall the incipits of several humanist comedies, such as that of Leonardo Bruni's *Poliscena* (printed several times before the appearance of the *Tragicomedia*).<sup>7</sup> These in turn allude to the elegiac verses from the medieval *accessus*, *Epitaphium Terentii*, included in the preliminaries to manuscript and early printed copies of the *Comoediae*:

descripsi mores hominum iuuenumque senumque,  
 qualiter et serui decipiant dominos,  
 quid meretrix, quid leno dolis confingit auarus:  
 haec quicumque legit, sic puto, cautus erit.<sup>8</sup>

Terence was studied in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries primarily as a rhetorical text; and since, as Aristotle said, the highest aim of

oratory is to persuade us to virtue and dissuade us from vice, it was from this viewpoint that the humanists derived their moral definition of comedy.<sup>9</sup> The Donatan *Excerpta de comoedia* which figured at the head of most early editions of the *Comoediae* stated baldly:

comedy is a fictional tale about the various customs of public and private behaviour, which teach us what is useful in life and what is to be avoided.<sup>10</sup>

The approach suggested by this last phrase is exemplified on almost every page of Donatus's scholia. In *Eunuchus*, for example, he asserts that 'Terence delights us with wit, instructs us with useful *exempla*, and satirizes human vices'; in *Adelphoe* the portrayal of contrasting styles of life 'is designed *ad exemplum* to show us what to imitate and what to shun'.<sup>11</sup>

It was inevitable that the Renaissance humanist commentators and pedagogues who followed in the footsteps of Donatus should lay heavy and insistent stress on the moral *utilitas* of comedy. In a typical edition I have before me, for instance, the editor gives the following *Argumentum* to the second scene of Act I of the first of Terence's *Comoediae*, *Andria*, adding at the end a list of the ethical precepts to be extracted from it:

This scene shows that in civil life the conjectures of human wit and prudence are unable to discern the truth. It reveals the cleverness of a wily and experienced slave who considers and judges everything according to the capacity of his servile wit and mind, to avoid being caught napping; it also shows a father's excessive indulgence to his sons and neglect of their education. *Morals*. 1: Matrimony is a most useful remedy for lovers. 2: Bad examples at home are very pernicious. 3: Wicked servants make a rod for their own backs.<sup>12</sup>

Turning over a few pages we find the following *argumentum* to Act II, Sc. ii, which could as well stand at the head of both *Comedia* and *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea* as the present *Incipit*:

This scene describes the agile wit of slaves, their deceitful impudence and innate desire to circumvent

their masters, so that it is difficult to guard against them, and our slaves become so many enemies. It also shows the behaviour of lovers who to their utter shame allow themselves in the blindness of passion to be governed by the advice of a deceitful slave.<sup>13</sup>

Erasmus recommended the study of Roman comedy to schoolboys ('avisos muy neçessarios para mançebos') as a propaedeutic to more rigorous courses in ethical philosophy, while Melanchthon claimed that Terence was 'better for educating the judgment of the young on common morals than any philosopher' because he exposes the vices of 'brawlers, sycophants, meddlers and flatterers', and especially provides defences against 'courtesans'.

The ethical was, it is true, only one side of the ancient and humanist concept of the didactic function of comedy. The other is exemplified in a remark in Donatus' prologue to his commentary on the *Hecyra* which is, again, reminiscent of certain remarks in the preliminaries of the *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea*. Donatus praises the style of that play for 'its many *sententiae* and figures of speech', adding: 'therefore it profits as well as delights the spectators'.<sup>14</sup> The point was picked up by the humanist commentators; Melanchthon said of the *Andria*, for example, that as well as correcting our morals it 'enriches the style of our prose', while Josse Bade van Aaschen demonstrated the moral utility of the first scene of *Andria*, 'which has more moral doctrines than there are words in it', by selecting ten *sententiae* from the text, elaborating them with further citations of *auctoritates*, and commenting on the 'elegance and propriety of its language'. All this recalls the words of the *Título* ('la qual contiene demás de su agradable e dulce estilo muchas sentencias filosofales e avisos muy nescesarios para mancebos', 181), and also Rojas's words in the dedicatory epistle to his first version of the play (*El autor a un su amigo*, 185):

Vi no sólo ser dulce en su principal ystoria o ficción toda junta, pero aun de algunas sus particularidades salían delectables fonteçicas de filosofhía; de otras, agradables donaires; de otras, avisos y consejos contra lisongeros y malos sirvientes y falsas mugeres hechizeras [...] Es digno de recordable memoria por la sutil invención, por la gran copia de sentencias entrexeridas que so color de donayres tiene.

To be sure, Rojas's personal view of the utility of *sententiae* was ambivalent. That is why he picks up the point again, with a thinly-veiled allusion to the pompous Renaissance schoolmasters' habit of attending to the details rather than to the whole, in the *Prólogo* to his revised version (201):

Pero aquéllos para cuyo verdadero plazer es todo, desechan el cuento de la hystoria para contar, coligen la suma para su provecho, ríen lo donoso, las sentencias y dichos de philósophos guardan en su memoria para trasponer en lugares convenientes a sus autos y propósitos.

The surreptitious irony in this remark emerges later.<sup>15</sup> But the essential point is that these allusions to the humanist tradition of reading comedy for its ethical and rhetorical teaching, and Rojas's satire of that tradition in the last quotation, set the claims in a specific and readily recognizable context.

With the exception of Bataillon, critics have largely ignored the *Tragicomedia's* allusions to these ancient and Renaissance didactic commonplaces as empty formulae. But, of course, Bataillon was right; a moral dimension was evidently indispensable to comedy. The question remains: what sort of moral? This is the crux of my argument: a genre that had been read for its moral *avisos* at least from the time of Cicero, before the Christian era, and by pagan writers and grammarians for centuries afterwards, cannot have been didactic in a religious or theological, still less in a distinctively Christian, sense; and the examples adduced above demonstrate that the Christian followers of Donatus in the Renaissance did nothing whatever to change the terms of reference for moral analysis of Terentian comedy. To find significance in the absence from our play of any explicit Christian *moralitie* is to fall into an absurd irrelevance; to see in it the spiritual and theological conflict of 'buen amor de Dios v. loco amor del mundo', an approach powerfully and surreptitiously suggested to us by another work of medieval Spanish literature, is a pernicious red herring. Instead, the authors beg us over and over again to concentrate our moral concern on love as a social problem, love as a cause of civil 'escándalos', criminal adultery, and prostitution, with all the concomitant threats to family, state, and public morals.<sup>16</sup>



In fact, the attention of all the commentators was centred not merely on secular ethics, but on a strikingly restricted area within secular ethics: the tricks and lies of domestic slaves, the dangers of *malas mujeres*, the corruption of minors, and the perils of squandering the family patrimony and honour. One has only to read the commentaries to note their constant use of terms like 'civil' or 'public and private life', 'common morals', 'prudence', and 'utility'; it was taken for granted that the lessons of comedy concerned, not the deep dilemmas of guilt or cosmic evil, but familiar matters, civil morality, and social behaviour. This, according to medieval and Renaissance terminology, was *philosophia moralis*: not a branch of Christian dogma, but its pagan and secular counterpart. Aristotle, it was thought, had subdivided moral philosophy into the interconnected disciplines of *ethica* ('custom/character', conduct of the individual), *oeconomica* ('husbandry', the conduct of household and family), and *politica* ('policy', conduct of civil commonwealths); when a fifteenth or sixteenth-century writer talked of 'morals', therefore, he was thinking not so much of the salvation of souls as of the ethical, economical, and political *prudentia* of citizens in a well-regulated civil community.

It is in that sense, and that sense only, that the genre of humanist comedy to which the *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea* belongs might be said to have a moral message. The morality concerned owed its horizons and perspectives to the urban and civic mentality of Roman society and of its own times rather than to the otherworldly concerns of St Austin or St Benet. Seen in this light, the authors' claim to provide '*avisos y consejos contra lisongeros y malos sirvientes y falsas mugeres hechizeras*'--the claim, that is, that the morality of the book has to do not so much with the sinful (but natural) love of its young nobles as with the involvement in their affair of vulgar plebeian criminals--seems one which it is perfectly rational (though not obligatory) to take seriously. Note, for example, how the wages of debauchery and venal love are presented not in terms of psychological, spiritual, or eschatological abstractions (as they might be in sentimental romance, or sermons), but in a series of violent felonies--murder, seduction, rape, and suicide, the very images of civil disorder and criminal upheaval.

These, Rojas seems to say, are the effects, the *vicios*, of love: social problems rather than religious ones, malfunctions of public rather than inner morality. In his letter *A un su amigo* (184) he wrote

of 'la necesidad que nuestra común patria tiene de la presente obra, por la muchedumbre de galanes y enamorados mancebos que posee'. The claim must strike us as mere persiflage, if we forget that fornication was a matter of public concern, gravely discussed by political theorists and legislators, so that a *moralitie* about the ruin of a decent family by a criminal rabble of corrupt servants, prostitutes, pimps, and a procuress could indeed be described as 'necessary' to the civil community of the writer's *patria* (Toledo, Puebla de Montalbán?). Rojas's tongue may have been in his cheek, but his play undeniably addressed a subject which touched early modern sensibilities on the raw. The siege and overthrow of Pleberio's household held out in microcosm the hideous spectre of Disorder, the subversion of the God-enucleated commonwealth by vice, treachery, and violent death.

That both plot and theme are consistent with the authors' account of their didactic message is, perhaps, a rather facile point. It is in the detailed texture of individual episodes that the coherence becomes impressive. Take, for example, the speech which Melibea addresses to her father from the parapet of his tower (the household's defence) just before her suicide (XX, 586):

Bien vees y oyes este triste y doloroso sentimiento que toda la cibdad haze. Bien vees [oyes *Tragicom.*] este clamor de campanas, este alarido de gentes, este aullido de canes, este grande estrépito de armas. De todo esto fuy yo la causa. Yo cobrí de luto y xergas en este día quasi la mayor parte de la cibdadana cavallería.

The incorporated stage-directions and anaphoric demonstratives ('vees', 'oyes', 'este [...] este [...] este') indicate noisy alarms off-stage, beyond the *huerta* wall which symbolizes the integrity of Pleberio's house: wailing and keening intermingle with the tolling of the tocsin, the barking of guard-dogs, and the confused clatter of steel. The anonymous sixteenth-century commentator was struck by this description, which he explained as a reference to the old-fashioned Castilian funeral custom of smashing armour and shields 'en cada calle o encruzijada [...] en significación del gran dolor'.<sup>17</sup> Or we may imagine Calisto's kinsmen and *bando* arming themselves to avenge the violent death of one of their clan, in one of those street affrays which were a daily feature of late-medieval urban life.<sup>18</sup> At any rate, the

civil disturbance painted by the impetuous Melibea cannot be mere imagination: something is going on outside in the streets, or her invitation to 'look and listen' would be absurd.

The significant point of Melibea's vignette of civil disturbance is, however, the fact that Rojas included it at this pathetic and climactic moment of the action. It surprises us to learn that Calisto's accidental death is a matter of public import, which may even put paid to the whole charitable economy of 'pobres y vergonçantes' in the *ciudad* (586)--unless, that is, we have followed the authors' invitation to read the play from the beginning as a social morality. For such a passage seems designed on purpose to show how wrong Calisto and Melibea were (and us with them) to suppose that their affair could take place in a social vacuum.

The lovers' story is constantly interwoven into the social fabric of its setting by such effects of stagecraft; from the moment of their first encounter (according to the *antiguo autor* in a church, as Riquer deduced)<sup>19</sup> its theatrical space is made full, material, and circumstantiated. The noise and bustle of streets, palaces, squares, churches, and disreputable side-alleys, all the scenery of Celestina's town, are economically but vividly sketched in the comings and goings, asides, stage-business, and reminiscences of the characters. Pármeno's evocation of Celestina's merry presence in taverns and gaming-shops, 'en los combites, en las fiestas, en las bodas, en las cofradías, en los mortuorios, en todos los ayuntamientos de gentes', and her progress through the various guild-streets of the town, 'si va entre los herreros [...], carpinteros y armeros, herradores, caldereros, arcadores' (Auto I, 240), is the work of the *primer autor*; it was a hint not lost on Rojas, who, in keeping with his more sombre vision, gives us the obverse of these peopled scenes: vivid evocations of the same haunts by night, when the *alguazil* and the guard patrol the unlighted streets with torches, armed miscreants prowl, terrified servants crouch abjectly in the shadows, and the *saltaparedes* goes about his furtive business with his ladder (XII, 408, 418-21; XIV, 495); or in the twilight of dawn, when, in Sosia's vivid *adumbratio* (XIV, 504-05),

suelen levantarse [...] los ricos, los cobdiciosos de temporales bienes, los devotos de templos, monesterios y yglesias, los enamorados como nuestro amo, los trabajadores de los campos y labranças, y los

pastores que en este tiempo traen las ovejas a estos  
apriscos a ordeñar.

The function of such passages, as of the evocation of the 'escándalo público' in the monologue of Melibea, is to keep before our eyes the fact that the action acquires its true dimension only as part of a definite social context.

This social context is not only present in the strongly-realized physical urban space of the play; it is also brought alive in the web of human relationships. Elicia is Areúsa's cousin; Celestina is Pármeno's mother's *comadre*; Pármeno, through his relationship with Areúsa, acquires Celestina as a sort of *consuegra*, and becomes the companion of Sempronio, Elicia's lover. In the Pleberio household, Alisa remembers Celestina as a *vecina* and *comadre*; the *criada* Lucrecia, from her different estate and for different reasons, knows the old woman too. It is even revealed, in the same surprising passage of Melibea's monologue already quoted, that Pleberio is an old friend of Calisto's family (587, with Russell's note *ad loc.*). In other words all the characters are bound to all the others by one or other of the various complex species of affinity which cemented medieval society; the cast is itself a microcosm of the links and obligations of kith and kin, *crianza*, and *compadrazgo*. And the purpose of the *Tragicomedia* is to show these relationships in a terminal state of malfunction, or, in a favourite metaphor of the time, to reveal a cancer in the body politic.<sup>20</sup>

A passage which permits us vividly to sense that cancer is to be found is the speech at the end of Auto XIII in which the impractical dreamer Calisto, until then torn out of social space by the symptoms of his clinical madness, is jolted back into remembering his proper position in society by Sosia's spine-chilling account of the public execution of his two servants. Calisto's first thought is for his *honra*, his duty to maintain the reputation of his estate (493):

Pues yo bien siento mi honrra [...] ¡O mi triste nombre y fama, cómo andas al tablero, de boca en boca! ¡O mis secretos más secretos, cuán públicos andarés por las plazas y mercados! [...] ¡O día de congoxa! ¡O fuerte tribulación! ¡Y en que anda mi hazienda de mano en mano y mi nombre de lengua en lengua! Todo será público quanto con ella y con

ellos hablava, quanto de mí sabían, el negocio en que andavan. No osaré salir ante gentes.

But this thought is soon pushed aside by his obsession with the enchanted pleasures of Melibea's garden and the threat to his hopes of possessing her person, 'que es lo que más en este caso desastrado sientto' (*ibid.*). Calisto decides to sacrifice social responsibility for the spurious duties of the devoted adulterer ('no dexaré de complir el mandado de aquélla por quien todo esto se ha causado', 494), a course he hypocritically justifies with this politic epitaph on the servants who suborned him, and whom he suborned (494-95):

Ellos eran sobrados y esforçados; agora o en otro tiempo de pagar havían. La vieja era mala y falsa, según parece que hazía trato con ellos, y assí que riñieron sobre la capa del justo. Permisión fue divina que assí acabasse, en pago de muchos adulterios que por su intercessión o causa son cometidos.

The young knight's judgment is impeccable; he aligns himself with the forces of law and 'good policy' in the civil commonwealth of which he is inescapably a part. But, typically, he fails to see the relevance of the social doctrine to himself--except insofar as the dishonour may require temporary exile or feigned madness, and a consequent suspension of hostilities against Melibea's maidenhead. Calisto's support for the forces of civil order reveals itself in decidedly machiavellian colours.

It is surely significant that Calisto is made to return to the theme of the abuse and corruption of civic responsibility one act later, in one of the most notable additions in the interpolated acts of the 1502 version. He does so in a monologue occasioned by the natural lassitude (*Omne animal post coitum triste est*) which follows copulation (Auto XIV, 506-15)--a lassitude which, as every schoolboy knew, moralists had for centuries held up as a physical type of the debilitating and vicious effects of erotic love.<sup>21</sup> Representing as it does the second thoughts of Rojas, this speech, which at ten pages is one of the longest in the play, cannot fail to impress us, once again, with the ubiquity of the play's concern for the political (in the Renaissance sense). For Calisto rejects the standard explanation for his paradoxical melancholy in this crowning moment of his triumph (doctors of the day would have diagnosed it as the abrupt cooling of

vital humours brought about by ejaculation). It seems to him no medical thing, but an effect of 'el dolor de mi deshonrra' (506):

¡Ay, ay! que esto es. Esta herida es la que siento agora que se ha resfriado, agora que está elada la sangre que ayer ['last night'] hervía, agora que veo la mengua de mi casa, la falta de mi servicio, la perdición de mi patrimonio, la infamia que tiene mi persona.

The thought leads Calisto back to his own social responsibilities as a *caballero* ('¿Cómo me pude soffrir, que no me mostré luego presente como hombre injuriado, vengador, sobervio y acelerado de la manifiesta injusticia que me fue hecha?', 507); and thence to a lengthy philippic on the judge, on justice and the law ('eres público delinquente y mataste a los que son privados'), on the feudal bonds and mutual obligations of companionship ('amigos y criados antiguos, parientes y allegados'), and on the civil fabric of clienthood, patronage, and commensality ('¡Y qué mal pago me has dado del pan que de mi padre comiste! [...] en servir a mis passados y a mí érades compañeros', 508-09).

As Peter Russell has noted (*Temas*, 334-38), Calisto's speech is a mare's nest of contradictions and special pleading, a masterpiece of legal pettifoggery; it is duly abandoned for more delightful erotic contemplations ('¡Oh mi señora y mi vida!', 512). The dramatic purpose of the monologue's inclusion in the revised version of the *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea* is therefore, once again, to suggest how far Calisto is from realizing or fulfilling the social obligations which he himself analyses at such length. But that in turn serves to underline the existence of those obligations, and to remind the reader that it is their transgression which forms the real *vicio* of Calisto's infatuation, the real threat to public morals, the real corruption of youth.

These examples of references to the social or political theme in the *Tragicomedia* have been chosen to show that the promise of salutary 'avisos' on the moral health of the *patria* made in the preliminaries of both authors finds its echo in the text. We are now in a position to return to the *Argumento general* with new understanding of the stress which it lays on the social estate of each of the protagonists, and in Melibea's case (according to the mentalities

of her time wholly dependent on male relatives for her place in social space) on the citizen whose most important chattel she was (207):

Calisto fue de noble linaje, de claro ingenio, de gentil disposición, de linda criança, dotado de muchas gracias, de estado mediano. Fue preso en el amor de Melibea, muger moça muy generosa, de alta y sereníssima sangre, sublimada en próspero estado, una sola heredera a su padre Pleberio, y de su madre Alisa muy amada.<sup>22</sup>

What we are being invited to do in these phrases, and all the other remarks in the preliminaries which I have examined, is to contemplate the workings of 'desordenado apetito'--the adjective is as much political as medical--as causes, and violent death as a symptom, of a socially transmitted disease which attacks the tranquil bastion of a respectable noble family;<sup>23</sup> socially transmitted, that is, because although Love is a necessary cause of contagion, the efficient cause is the intervention of that 'mala y astuta mujer' Celestina. In this perspective, Celestina's shabby and disreputable bordello represents the spatial antithesis of the *hortus conclusus* of Pleberio's *solar*; the 'madre' and her grubby clan of whores and pimps are a grotesque inversion of the patriarchal Renaissance household; their sordid couplings form the shocking counterpart to the illicit courtship of Calisto and Melibea. A pestilential corruption spawned in the criminal underworld of the stews is thus shown to spread like a virus through the limbs of the body politic, suborning 'con el anzuelo de cobdicia y de deleyte' (208) the loyalty of *criados*--the ancient Hispanic term well captures the feudal resonance of reciprocal trusts and sureties which bound lord and servant--until finally and fatally infecting the noble head. It is a telling point, not often noticed by modern commentators, that in his revision of the last strophe of the acrostic verses Rojas took pains to specify that the endangered head was composed not only of 'los que amáis', but of all the representatives of respectable married and marriageable citizenry (his own and his patron's class, that is): 'O damas matronas, mancebos, casados, ¡ notad bien la vida que aquestos hizieron'.<sup>24</sup>

This social pathology, which throws the burden of criminal culpability upon the Third Estate, has caused some unease. It serves to remind us that the authors' social norms were, inescapably, those of their historical period. The ideas of the *Tragicomedia de Calisto y*

*Melibea* on society--on civil order and the polity, on class and criminality, on the situation of women, on family honour--were the conventional ideas of its day. But we may defend Rojas, at least, from the charge of class-hatred. That the play was read as a tract on prostitution there seems no doubt (the direction taken by the Celestinesque imitations, and above all by *La lozana andaluza*, is ample evidence); it is therefore worth recording that Rojas's view of this institution was not conventional. In early modern Europe prostitution was not considered by legislators and moralists as a social evil; on the contrary, in most cities the brothels, bagnios, and *casas públicas* were not merely tolerated, but actually managed by the municipal and ecclesiastical authorities, who justified the practice with the canonists' utilitarian argument that prostitutes provided an outlet for 'apetitos desordenados' (given the Church's stringent rules about intercourse within matrimony, this meant both in and out of wedlock), thus protecting the honour and safety of respectable citizens.<sup>25</sup>

A striking example is the *cédula* granted to the Salamancan municipal authorities by the city's overlord Prince Juan, and confirmed by the Catholic Monarchs, to construct a new brothel or *mancebía para las muxeres públicas* in 1498, the profits of which were farmed out to the *regidor* Juan Arias Maldonado, a principal citizen, at an annual rent of 10,000 *maravedís*.<sup>26</sup> The same permissive attitude was not shown, however, to freelance prostitutes, whose unlicensed activities posed a threat not only to morals, but also, perhaps more importantly, to the revenues of official brothels. It is against the latter kind of prostitution that the *Tragicomedia* takes, or claims to take, its moral (in the Renaissance political sense) stand. What is novel in Rojas's presentation, however, is his clear implication that the evils of this trade are to be blamed as much on its clients as its suppliers.

It is not my intention, however, to discuss the historical background to the claimed *moralitie* of our play, nor to speculate on the authors' sincerity in claiming it, but simply to establish the nature and meaning of the claims themselves. I close with two topics of Rojan scholarship on which I believe a proper understanding of the social nature of that *moralitie*, if I have interpreted it aright, may throw some light. The first is the old question, so often posed by critics, of why neither Calisto nor Melibea consider marriage as a possible solution to their problem. Actually this is not quite true: the *primer autor*, in what Nicholas Round called the 'jolly erotic farce' of



his unfinished first act,<sup>27</sup> envisaged the marriage of Calisto and Melibea as the fitting end to his play. A clue to his intention is given by Calisto's first speech after his encounter with Melibea, when he prays that the *exemplum* of Seleucus's pity for his love-sick son may inspire like pity 'en el plebérico corazón' (214-15); this remark must surely mean 'induce Melibea's father to let me marry his daughter', as the anonymous sixteenth-century commentator noted.<sup>28</sup>

By entitling his work *Comedia* the original author signalled his certain intention of developing this hint, and of concluding his play with the standard wedding of Terentian comedy. But Rojas rejected the happy ending in accordance with his tragicomic vision of the story, and went to extraordinary lengths, including the addition of a whole act (XVI), to show that, once Celestina and the lying servants became entangled in the plot, decent Christian and civil marriage ceased to be an option. The coy maiden of Act I, so conscious of her social standing and reputation, is portrayed in this additional act as a girl who despite her careful upbringing by Alisa does not hesitate to deceive her parents, who cannot bear to hear them discussing her marriage in order to 'quitarla [...] de lenguas del vulgo' because 'no hay cosa con que mejor se conserve la limpia fama en las vírgenes que con temprano casamiento' (533). Pleberio and Alisa see marriage, with all their contemporaries, as the only conceivable slot in society for their daughter; according to Melibea herself they have been discussing the problem of marrying her off for over a month. The servant Lucrecia's ironical aside reveals the *aviso* of this telling scene (534):

¡Aun si bien lo supieses, rebentarías! ¡Ya, ya,  
perdido es lo mejor! ¡Mal año se os apareja a la vejez!  
Lo mejor Calisto lo lleva. No hay quien ponga virgos,  
que ya es muerta Celestina. ¡Tarde acordáys! ¡Más  
avíades de madrugar!

The condemnation of the parents' lack of prudence is cutting. Nevertheless, their vain project provokes a notable moment of remorse in Melibea, who pronounces a little diatribe rejecting the sacrament of marriage altogether (535-38). This called forth a comment from Lida de Malkiel about the disconcerting and unhistorical incongruity of the girl's sentiment.<sup>29</sup> But her explanation, that Melibea's antipathy to the social norms of her day is another sign of the tyranny of her 'pasión avasalladora', a quixotic dream of heroic

or courtly love which refuses to recognize the conventions of custom and canon law, does not go far enough. What Melibea says is this (535-36):

Calisto es mi ánima, mi vida, mi señor, en quien yo tengo toda mi esperança. Conozco dél que no bivo engañada. Pues él me ama, ¿con qué otra cosa le puedo pagar? Todas las debdas del mundo resciben compensación en diverso género; el amor no admite sino sólo amor por paga [...] Haga y ordene de mí a su voluntad. Si passar quisiere la mar, con él yré; si rodear el mundo, lléveme consigo; si venderme en tierra de enemigos, no rehuyré su querer. Déxenme mis padres gozar dél, si ellos quieren gozar de mí. No piensen en estas vanidades ni en estos casamientos; que más vale ser buena amiga que mala casada [...] No quiero marido, no quiero ensuziar los ñudos del matrimonio, ni las maritales pisadas de ageno hombre repisar.

The argument is somewhat confused, but Melibea seems to be saying that as Calisto's wife--no need of bell, book, and candle--she cannot commit bigamy even with the man who is already her husband; she can only be his *manceba*. Yet, as the *Argumento general* makes clear and as she reminds her father in her suicide speech, that flower of *cibdadana cavallería* Calisto would by no means have been an unacceptable match, even in a marriage of convenience ('el qual tú bien conociste. Conociste assí mismo sus padres y claro linaje', 587). Her rejection of legitimate civil marriage with the man she loves must be due not to passion, but to the shameful adultery in which she has become embroiled as a result of the intervention of Celestina. It is this which effectively cuts Melibea off from every conceivable link with the society of her day, so that in truth her offer to sell herself into slavery in a Moorish harem falls little short of any actual fate that might await her. We must conclude, therefore, that Rojas introduced the theme of marriage in Auto XVI explicitly in order to demonstrate that a wedding of the two lovers, though in theory acceptable, was excluded by the criminal means which they used to pursue their affair. The scene, like Calisto's speech on crime and punishment in Auto XIV, portrays the violent unhinging and malfunction of social norms brought about by the action and conduct of Celestina and the servants.

This point can be clarified by a comparison with the sentimental romances on which Melibea, like a medieval Emma Bovary, modelled her behaviour. Diego de San Pedro's *Cárcel de amor*, for instance, is another story with a social dimension: Leriano cannot marry Laureola for reasons of honour and social inequality, and also for reasons of state to do with the king's need for a suitable heir. But in San Pedro's book these motifs are thin, one might almost say rachitic, pretexts for motivating a plot whose chief dramatic mechanisms remain sentimental and psychological: artificial *estorbos* invented, like the fictional 'ley de Escocia', merely in order to provide excuses for Leriano's *Liebestod*, and, above all, for initiating the tiresome controversies on the casuistry of courtly love which are the true purpose of the book. The romance concentrates on introspection, and lacks any feeling of social space. In the *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea*, on the other hand, the social dimension is no structural makeshift for motivating a plot with other centres of interest; it is the centre of interest.

As if to prove the point, we have at the very end of the work my second topic for comment, the famous *planctus* of Pleberio (Auto XXI). Critics have not been slow to point out the parallel of this parent's lament over a child *in articulo mortis* with that of Leriano's mother at the end of the *Cárcel de amor*. The latter is a transparent manoeuvre for the insertion of a pathetic *peroratio* which could not, for reasons which need not detain us, be made by Laureola herself; and Bataillon considered Rojas's Auto XXI to be little more, accusing Pleberio's plangent despair of being a rhetorical excrescence on the comic body of the play.<sup>30</sup> Seen from our social or 'economic' perspective, however, the father's lament turns out to be an entirely logical and definitive conclusion of all that has gone before. For if the *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea* is in some sense designed to show a love-affair subverting the pillars of civil order, that order must, of course, be represented not by Calisto, but by citizen Pleberio and his household. I have already spoken of the walled garden and its watch-tower as symbols of a threatened social republic; Pleberio and his womenfolk represent, or ought to represent, all that is decent and respectable in the honourable estate of civil and family life. That in turn means that, if there is any tragedy in this tragicomedy, it is the tragedy of the destruction of Pleberio's calm and ordered husbandry (596):

[Y]a quedas sin tu amada heredera. ¿Para quién edificué torres? ¿Para quién adquirí honrras? ¿Para quién planté árboles? ¿Para quién fabriqué navíos?

I do not claim to have found in the preceding analyses any key to the artistic significance of the *Tragicomedia*. The question of whether the didactic meaning can be, or was meant to be, sustained by an overall reading of the play has not been touched upon; and besides, as I hinted at the outset, it is my belief that the authors' intentions in this matter are largely irrelevant to criticism. Nevertheless, if my proposal helps to sharpen understanding of the function of some words or passages in the text, or to clarify some imprecision of critical interpretation, it will have served its purpose. Above all, I have tried to argue that the authors' offer of *avisos* against the evils of prostitution and vice need not, given the social parameters of their age, have been as foolish or nugatory as we might at first sight suppose. We may even be able to understand why someone could have thought a work like the *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea* a 'necesidad que nuestra común patria tiene [...], por la muchedumbre de galanes y enamorados mançebos que posee'.

Elicia      Arcusa.      Sofía.



Valencia 1514. Grabado del 17<sup>o</sup> auto.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Fernando de Rojas, *Comedia o tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea*, ed. Peter E. Russell (Madrid: Castalia, 1991), 205. Quotations are from this edition, except that I use italics for emphasis, not to indicate interpolations in the '1502' revision.

<sup>2</sup> Marcel Bataillon, '*La Célestine*' selon Fernando de Rojas (Paris: Didier, 1961), 70. This is why the *Incipit* does not come at the beginning of the text, but after Rojas's preliminaries and acrostic verses, as I have suggested in 'On the Title *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea*', in *Letters and Society in Fifteenth-Century Spain: Studies Presented to P. E. Russell on his Eightieth Birthday*, ed. Alan Deyermond & Jeremy Lawrance (Oxford: Dolphin, 1993), 79-92 (83).

<sup>3</sup> 'El principio desata' should be glossed 'undoes the [generic constraints of the *primer autor*'s comic] beginning', as I suggest in 'On the Title *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea*' (for this sense of *principio* compare 'el primer autor quiso darle denominación del principio, que fue plazer, y llamóla *comedia*', *Prólogo*, 202); the revised version of the lines cited in Russell's note *ad loc.* does not affect the meaning. On the authorial statements of didactic intention Bataillon's account of the facts (201-25; also 77-107, and *passim*) remains incontrovertible, although it is possible to disagree about their relevance to the play; for two counter-attacks see María Rosa Lida de Malkiel, *La originalidad artística de 'La Celestina'* (Buenos Aires: Eudeba, 1962), 292-316, and P. E. Russell, 'Ambiguity in *La Celestina*' [review-article of '*La Célestine*' selon Fernando de Rojas], *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 40 (1963), 35-40.

<sup>4</sup> Bataillon, 226-50, and 251-68 (on Kaspar von Barth); P. E. Russell, 'The *Celestina* comentada', in *Medieval Hispanic Studies Presented to Rita Hamilton*, ed. A. D. Deyermond, Colección Tàmesis, A42 (London: Tamesis, 1976), 175-93, repr. in his *Temas de 'La Celestina' y otros estudios: del 'Cid' al 'Quijote'*, Letras e Ideas, Maior, 14 (Barcelona: Ariel, 1978), 293-321, and many incidental notes elsewhere. Lida de Malkiel, 294-300, gives the contrary evidence for sceptical views of the morality of the *Tragicomedia*.

<sup>5</sup> Bataillon, 73 ('cette «moralité» à signification restreinte et fort explicite [...] dont les modernes ont abusivement étendu la portée jusqu'à en faire une grandiose malédiction jetée sur l'amour et sur la vie').

<sup>6</sup> The first author specified one further topic, the sacred hyperbole ('*a sus amigas llaman e dicen ser su dios*'). This trivial commonplace of court sermons (see 219, note 47 on Íñigo de Mendoza) was not followed up by Rojas.

<sup>7</sup> Russell cites Vergerio's *Paulus*, '*comoedia ad iuuenum mores corrigendos*' (Rojas, 47).

<sup>8</sup> 'I described the manners of mankind, young and old; how slaves deceive their masters, what lies the prostitute uses for deception, and what the pimp. Whoever reads my works will surely be forewarned.'

<sup>9</sup> For an account of humanist commentaries on Terence see Marvin T. Herrick, *Comic Theory in the Sixteenth Century*, 2nd ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1964).

<sup>10</sup> Ps-Donatus (=Euanthius), *Excerpta de comoedia*, V, 1: '*Comoedia est fabula diuersa instituta continens affectuum ciuilium ac priuatorum, quibus discitur quid sit in uita utile, quid contra euitandum*', in Aelius Donatus, *Commentum Terenti*, ed. P. Wessner, 3 vols (1902-08, repr. Stuttgart: Teubner, 1962-63), I, 13-31 (22). In the same paragraph Euanthius quotes Cicero's famous dictum, '*comoediam esse imitationem uitae, speculum consuetudinis, imaginem ueritatis*'.

<sup>11</sup> *Ad Eun.* Praef. I, 9, '*in hac Terentius delectat facetiis, prodest exemplis, et uitia hominum [...] carpit*' (in Donatus, I, 266-67); *ad Adolph.* Praef. I, 9, '*in hac spectatur quid intersit inter rusticam uitam et urbanam, mitem et asperam, caelibis et mariti, ueri patris et per adoptionem facti; quibus propositis ad exemplum imitanda perinde fugiendaque Terentius monstrans artificis poetae per totam fabulam obtinet laudem*' (in Donatus, II, 5).

<sup>12</sup> *Publii Terentii Comoediae VI post optimas editiones emendatae. Accedunt Aelii Donati commentarius integer, cum selectis notis Guieti et variorum*, ed. Cornelius Schrevelius (Leiden: Hackius, 1657), 29, Argum. ad *Andr.* I. ii: '*Et humani ingenii ac prudentiae coniecturam in re ciuili non sufficere ad ueritatem dispiciendam haec scena declarat; et serui non stolidi sed uersuti calliditas exprimitur, qui rem omnem pro captu seruilis ingenii ac rationis considerat et ratiocinatur ne incautus opprimatur; et patris nimia indulgentia erga filios ac negligentia in illorum educatione describitur. Ethica 1. Matrimonium utilissimum*

est amatoribus remedium. 2. Domestica exempla sunt admodum pernicioso. 3. Improbis seruis sua est poena'.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, 55, Argum. ad *And.* II. ii, 'dexteritatem seruilis ingenii haec scena describit, et dolosam iactantiam et animum ad circumueniendos dominos natura propensum, ut difficile sit cauere, totidemque nobis esse hostes quot seruos. amantium insuper affectus exprimitur qui libidinis caligine obducti consilio serui dolosi reguntur, quod uel maxime dedecet'.

<sup>14</sup> Ad *Hecyram*, Praef. I. 3, 'multum sententiarum et figurarum continet in toto stilo, unde cum delectet plurimum non minus utilitatis adfert spectatoribus' (in Donatus, II, 189). Compare the remark in ad *Adelph.* Praef. I. 3, 'prodest autem et delectat actu et stilo' ('it profits and delights by both action and style', *ibid.*, II, 3).

<sup>15</sup> The play demonstrates that whereas apophthegms and *exempla* can be used by unscrupulous characters like Celestina to justify any evil, they offer no genuine help, either because they cannot be 'guardados en la memoria para trasponer en lugares convenientes' ('Mel.--Algunas consolatorias palabras te diría antes de mi agradable fin coligidas y sacadas de aquellos antiguos libros [...] sino que ya la dañada memoria, con la grand turbación, me las ha perdido', Auto XX, 589-90, and note *ad loc.*), or because they are not 'convenientes' ('Pleb.--Aunque más en mi fatigada memoria rebuelvo presentes y passados [...] todo esto bien diferente es a mi mal', Auto XXI, 600-01). Both passages, let it be noted, are in the sixteen-act version. See George Shipley, 'Authority and Experience in *La Celestina*', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 62 (1985), 95-111.

<sup>16</sup> That the *Tragicomedia* is about public morality rather than religious or chivalric ideology was intuited, before Bataillon, by Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, *Orígenes de la novela*, ed. Enrique Sánchez Reyes, 4 vols, Edición Nacional de las Obras Completas, 13-16 (Santander: CSIC, 1943), III, 219-458, who wrote that the play reflected a fatty degeneration of the Spanish social fibre brought about by Semitic infiltration in the reign of Enrique IV (1454-74)—a judgment which the evidence of history forces one to admit would have struck a chord with Rojas's contemporaries. The most thought-provoking examination to date, however, is the historian José Antonio Maravall's *El mundo social de 'La Celestina'*, 3rd ed. (Madrid: Gredos, 1972); although his concerns are different from mine, Maravall agrees on the

social nature of the moral (see his first chapter, '*La Celestina* como «moralidad»: la conciencia de crisis en el siglo XV', 15-31).

<sup>17</sup> Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional MS 17.631, fol. 206v. In addition to Russell's note *ad loc.* see '*The Celestina comentada*', in his *Temas de 'La Celestina'*, 305-06.

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, Angus MacKay, *Anatomía de una revuelta urbana: Alcaraz en 1458*, CSIC, Confederación Española de Centros de Estudios Locales, Serie I: Ensayos Históricos y Científicos, 24 (Albacete: Instituto de Estudios Albacetenses, 1985), which concerns, incidentally, a *torre*. Also relevant is his 'Courtly Love and Lust in Loja', in *The Age of the Catholic Monarchs, 1474-1516: Literary Studies in Memory of Keith Whinnom*, ed. Alan Deyermond & Ian Macpherson (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1989), 83-94.

<sup>19</sup> Martín de Riquer, 'Fernando de Rojas y el primer acto de *La Celestina*', *Revista de Filología Española*, 41 (1957), 373-95.

<sup>20</sup> On the late-medieval social structures to which I refer here see, for example, David Starkey, 'The Age of the Household: Politics, Society and the Arts c. 1350-c. 1550', in Stephen Medcalf (ed.), *The Later Middle Ages, The Context of English Literature* (London: Methuen, 1981), 225-90. It is the thesis of Maravall's book, *El mundo social de 'La Celestina'*, that the play reflects the breakdown (which he too calls 'desorden') of these structures in the face of a nascent capitalist economy based on money. Julian Weiss has brought to my attention an important recent essay on this subject by Miguel-Angel Ladero Quesada, 'Aristócratas y marginales: aspectos de la sociedad castellana en *La Celestina*', in *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma: Revista de la Facultad de Geografía e Historia* (UNED, Madrid), Serie III, 3 (1990), 95-120, which I was unable to consult for incorporation here.

<sup>21</sup> On the general point see, for example, Juan Ruiz, Arcipreste de Hita, *Libro de buen amor*, ed. Alberto Blecha (Madrid: Cátedra, 1992), strophe 188a-b 'De cómo enflaquezes las gentes e las dapñas | muchos libros ay d'esto', and 291-94, with the note on 293c; and Alfonso Martínez de Toledo, *Arcipreste de Talavera, o Corbacho*, ed. E. Michael Gerli, *Letras Hispánicas*, 92 (Madrid: Cátedra, 1981), [Libro I], Cap. XVI 'Cómo pierde la fuerza el que se da a luxuria' (97-99).



<sup>22</sup> Russell's punctuation of the last phrase, with the comma after 'Pleberio', is precise, and vital; every attribute of Melibea's (even including her physical beauty, according to contemporary medical theories on the properties of the 'homuncule' or sperm) she owed to her father; all that was left for her mother, another (and less valuable) Pleberian chattel, was the lame afterthought of maternal affection.

<sup>23</sup> For *desordenado* in the political sense, compare Martínez de Toledo, *Arcipreste de Talavera*, prologue: 'uno de los usados pecados es el amor desordenado, especialmente de las mugeres, por do se siguen discordias, omezillos, muertes, escándalos, guerras e perdiçiones de bienes' (63). There is a useful commentary on the medical sense of the word in Michael Solomon, 'Alfonso Martínez's Concept of *Amor Desordenado* and the Problem of *Usus Immoderatis* [sic] *Veneris*', *La Corónica*, 18.2 (Spring, 1990), 69-76.

<sup>24</sup> *Amonesta a los que aman que sirvan a Dios y dexen las vanas cogitaciones y vicios de amor*, 192-93, note 27; Rojas moved the substituted strophe to the final verses (609).

<sup>25</sup> Jacques Rossiaud, *Medieval Prostitution*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988); J. Brundage, 'Prostitution in the Medieval Canon Law', *Signs*, 1 (1976), 825-45, repr. in Judith M. Bennett (ed.), *Sisters and Workers in the Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989). Studies of prostitution in medieval Spain are in an elementary stage, but the pioneering work of Pierre Heugas, *'La Célestine' et sa descendance directe* (Bordeaux: Institut d'Études Ibériques et Ibéro-Américaines, 1973), established the importance and interest of this subject for Rojan studies; for the present, see the useful pages by María Eugenia Lacarra, *Cómo leer 'La Celestina'*, *Guías de lectura*, 5 (Madrid: Júcar, 1990), 23-29, and her 'El fenómeno de la prostitución y sus conexiones con *La Celestina*', in Rafael Beltrán and others (eds.), *Historias y ficciones: coloquios sobre la literatura del siglo XV* (Valencia: Departament de Filologia Espanyola, Universitat de València, 1992), 267-78.

<sup>26</sup> Salamanca, Archivo Municipal, Inv. Tumbo, fols. 233v-35, 19 November 1498, edited in Manuel García González, *Salamanca en la baja Edad Media* (Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 1982), §8, 147-48, and in Lacarra, 'El fenómeno de la prostitución y sus conexiones con *La Celestina*', 277-78; the Arias family retained control of this

lucrative business for two centuries (I am grateful to Professor Ian Michael for this reference). I do not here speculate on what bearing this fact may have had upon Rojas's work, nor on the disturbing evidence for the real existence of a Salamanca *alcahueta* named Celestina discussed by P. E. Russell, 'Why Did Celestina Move House?', in *The Age of the Catholic Monarchs*, 155-61.

<sup>27</sup> Nicholas G. Round, 'Conduct and Values in *La Celestina*', in F. W. Hodcroft and others (eds.), *Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies on Spain and Portugal in Honour of P. E. Russell* (Oxford: Society for the Study of Mediaeval Languages and Literature, 1981), 38-52 (41).

<sup>28</sup> Doubts have been expressed about Pidal's emendation of the contested reading 'piedad de silencio [*Com: celestial Tragicom*]' to 'Seleuco'; they do not affect my argument. Cejador further conjectured that *plebérico* means 'of Melibea', which appears to have been accepted even by editors who recognize the allusion to Valerius Maximus's anecdote; I profess to finding the suggestion perverse and incomprehensible. I am grateful to Donald McGrady for allowing me to see his paper, 'Eras, Crato, Erasistrato, Seleuco and "el plebérico corazón": an explication', *Romance Philology* (in press) which provides a most useful discussion of the evidence.

<sup>29</sup> *La originalidad artística de 'La Celestina'*, 214-15 ('en absoluto un rasgo de época'). Lida's whole discussion of this problem, 206-20, is worth consulting, and convincing. I have not seen Ivy A. Corfis, 'Laws of Head of Household in *Celestina*', in J. Beer and others (eds.), *RLA: Romance Languages Annual* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue Research Foundation, 1992), 397-401, which contains a discussion of some legal aspects of this act.

<sup>30</sup> 'Rojas laisse un peu emporter ou déporter sa plume par la verve rhétorique [...] où il perdait nécessairement de vue le brillant modèle' (9); and, in more detail, 'dénouement grandiloquent [...] et artificiel à notre humble avis' (65). It is unfortunate that these should have become the best-known phrases in Bataillon's book; in taking issue with him, I record my unflagging admiration for what still remains, *à mon humble avis*, one of the two best books on Rojas yet published.