

Unconventional Theatrics: The Dramatic Monologue in Hispanic Love-Centered Literature of the Fifteenth Century

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Two major issues invariably come to our attention as we peruse any of the standard histories of Spanish literature of the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance: 1) the glaring scarcity of texts that one would readily recognize as theatrical; 2) the momentous birth of a modern theater, signaled by the production of Juan del Encina (1469-1529/30), the renowned humanist from Salamanca, deservedly acclaimed as “father” of that theater.¹ It is hard, indeed, and, for many, impossible to find compelling evidence of a continuous tradition from the *Auto de los reyes magos* (‘The Play of the Three Kings’), dated in the late twelfth century, to the *Representación del nacimiento de Nuestro Señor* (‘The Play of the Birth of Our Lord’), composed by the poet Gómez Manrique toward the middle of the fifteenth century (Deyermond, *The Middle Ages* 208-14). In view of this bleak historical account, critics like Luis García Montero and Humberto López Morales flatly deny the very existence of a Spanish medieval theater. Others, like Charlotte D. Stern and Ronald E. Surtz, advocate a line of research, which, as warranted by their own experience, promises positive results especially in the discovery of unconventional but, nonetheless, viable theatricalities, not to be overlooked. Surtz, for instance, detects, within the multilingual cultural realm of the entire Iberian Peninsula, vestiges of heterogeneous theatrical modalities coexisting with the genre worthily championed by Encina and his followers.²

To illustrate Surtz’s insight we can do no better than to quote a passage, such as the following, excerpted from one of this scholar’s landmark publications:

The convention of seeing Juan del Encina as the “father” of Castilian drama is useful because it is his plays that establish a school whose influence can still be felt at the end of the sixteenth century. But we must not forget that we can find in the fifteenth century evidence for other theaters that might have given rise to a dramatic tradition independent of that initiated by Encina or that might have influenced Encina and his school. (*The Birth of a Theater* 19)

Here I should like to adduce some evidence yielded my own research regarding the “other theaters” that Surtz refers to. It is fair to say that the evidence I will provide defies the time-honored convention, which holds fast to the notion of a stage-worthy text, informed, as are Encina’s plays, by the dynamics of a straightforward dialogue.

In an effort to explore the quintessential otherness announced by Surtz, I have come face to face with a literary icon of a dramatics that stems, unconventionally, not from the dialogue but from the monologue. I hasten to add that this icon happens to be a convenient starting point for the present discussion, which, for the sake of manageability, focuses on the manifestations of the

¹ See Sullivan for a comprehensive account of this playwright’s life and works.

² Usually identified as members of Encina’s “school” are Gil Vicente (ca. 1465-ca1536), Lucas Fernández (ca. 1474-1542), Bartolomé de Torres Naharro (ca. 1485-ca. 1530), Diego Sánchez de Badajoz (died 1549), Juan de la Cueva (1543-1612). Among the distinguished followers of Encina, Eduardo Juliá Martínez includes the names of the following less renowned playwrights: Diego de Avila, Francisco de Madrid, Hernán López de Yanguas, El Bachiller de la Pradilla, Martín de Herrera, and Pedro Manuel de Urrea. To the the latter Juliá accords honorable mention (274-5).

dramatics in question in Spanish literature of the fifteenth century. The vast amount itself of these manifestations gives us good reason to pause and reflect.

Let us consider, for a moment, the *canción*, the short lyrical piece, prototypical composition represented by the hundreds in the eponymous *cancioneros*, the countless anthologies of Spanish poetry, available, some in manuscripts, some in printed form, throughout the 1400s.³ Since the *canción* is the matrix and primary source of the monologue, we may readily deduce that the *cancionero* proves to be a veritable mother lode of a highly dramatic expression. The expression stems from the discourse of a first-person speaker, who turns out to be the alter ego of the author himself. Invariably, the auctorial persona portrays himself as an exemplary long-suffering lover. Even though that lover's profuse lamentations may produce a first impression of monotony, a close reading will dispel that impression by revealing a kaleidoscope of poetic registers, ranging from compulsive narrative to frustrated dialogue, from somber ratiocination to emotional outbursts, from self-conscious reticence to unabashed confession.

In sum, what obtains in the *cancioneros* is a monologue symptomatic of self-absorption, psychic turmoil, ego-centrism, subjectivity. For a start, we may delve into the dimension of soul-searching sensibility, in which the poet-lover is engaged. Such introspection, which leads to an exploration of what may be described—to borrow John Milton's mighty line—as “this dark world and wide” (Sonnet XIX), is eminently epitomized by a text of considerable flexibility, which encompasses various renditions of three main literary modalities: the lament, the dialogue, and the narrative.

Some reflection on the prima facie reading of the monologue and the *canción* that embodies it allows us to distinguish the salient characteristics of a genre. At first we may be struck by the expansive quality of the first-person discourse that, more often than not, shifts from the *canción* to the much longer *dezir*, designated by such rubrics as *infierno* (‘hell’), *purgatorio* (‘purgatory’), *sepultura* (‘burial’), *batalla* (‘battle’), *misa* (‘Mass’), *querrela* (‘complaint’), *sueño* (‘dream’), among others, usually accompanied by the tags “de amor” (‘of love’) or “de los enamorados” (‘of lovers’). Traces of the monologue's expansiveness may be found, as well, in the introspective vein of the woebegone lover's expressionism, dramatized in either the distinctively Hispanic narrative that goes by the name of *novela sentimental* (‘sentimental romance’) or in the little-known type of stage-worthy representation that has been called “auto de amores.”⁴ The various literary forms—the *canción*, the *dezir*, *novela sentimental*, *auto de amores*, among others—that showcase the melancholic mood of the monologue also reveal its special comprehensive elasticity. Thus, we are afforded the opportunity to behold a broad field of introspection from three main perspectives: 1) the psychological, 2) the philosophical, 3) the meditative or contemplative. Each

³ A. D. Deyermond states that “[t]he Castilian *cancioneros* survive in bewildering number and variety, and their complex interrelationship is still to be clarified” (*The Middle Ages* 178). Among the numerous *cancioneros* three easily stand out because of their considerable size and the highly representative authors they showcase. The three anthologies are usually identified by the names of, respectively, Juan Alfonso de Baena, Lope de Estúñiga, Hernando del Castillo. There is no doubt as to Baena's and Castillo's role as compiler of his respective collection. The same, however, cannot be said with respect to Estúñiga. (See Deyermond, *The Middle Ages* 178-205.) The extensive bibliography on the *cancioneros* would make quite unwieldy even a select list of studies and primary sources. Roger Boase, and Keith Whinnom offer an invaluable introductory orientation. See, respectively: *The Troubadour Revival*, and *La poesía amorosa cancioneril en la época de los Reyes Católicos*. See, also, *El cancionero del siglo XVI*, ed. by Brian Dutton.

⁴ For a concise review of the salient characteristics of this genre, see my “Joan Roís de Corella's *Inventio* of Tragedy” 487-90. The bibliography below lists under “Coccozella” a number of other studies on distinctive aspects of the *auto* in question.

of these displays its respective purview—namely: the lover’s inner world, the phenomenology of love, the interface between the human and divine aspects of the love relationship.

At this point it is instructive to examine some specific examples of the monologue’s rhetoric of introspection we have been describing in general terms. We may begin with a few passages indicative of an especially imaginative usage of key lexical items. Take, for instance, the following verses that constitute the first stanza of an *infierno de los enamorados* by the notable poet, Nicolás Guevara, who flourished in the second half of the fifteenth century:

Que en su encendida casa
se queman mis pensamientos.
Allí montan los tormentos,
mis entrañas hacen brasa;
allí suspiro los días
que morir no pude luego;
allí las lágrimas más
fortalescen más en fuego. (*Cancionero general*, ed. González Cuenca 2: 261)⁵

(‘In the house of Love, all afire, my thoughts burn away. There my torments increase and multiply and my innards turn to embers. There I have been sighing all these days that I have not met with immediate death. There, the hotter the flames, the more abundant my tears!’)

We cannot but notice in the stanza an agglomeration of code words of sorts—*pensamientos* (‘thoughts’), *tormentos* (‘torments’), *brasa* (‘embers’), *suspiros* (‘sighs’), *lágrimas* (‘tears’), *fuego* (‘fire’)—matched by kindred expressions—*esperanza perdida* (‘lost hope’), *pasiones guerreras* (‘warring passions’), *amargos aferes* (‘bitter relationship’), *clamores* (‘wailings’), *lloros y dolores* (‘weeping and suffering’), *afanes* (‘anxieties’), *bozes y gritos* (‘shouts and screams’)—to be found in the rest of the poem (see, respectively, vv. 26, 29, 30, 34, 35, 44, 47).

The relentless repetition of the terminology of extreme suffering characterizes, also, a *canción* by one of Guevara’s contemporaries, Francesc Moner, a Catalan prose writer and *cancionero* poet, who flourished in the period ranging from 1480 until 1492, the year of his untimely death at the age of twenty-nine.⁶ The *canción* reads as follows:

¡Ay del byen que mal me haze,
mi grave dulce tristeza!
Quanto la pena me plaze,
el desconcyerto me pesa.
¡Amor, dolor comportar,

⁵ See González Cuenca, ed. (2: 235, n. 1) for the basic biographic information on this author. On the basis of data derived from Vicenç Beltran’s seminal essay, entitled “Guevara,” Perea Rodríguez is able to make the following observation: “Nicolás Guevara (falleció ca. 1504) sirvió a Alfonso *el Inocente* y poco después, gracias a su amistad con el mayordomo Gonzalo Chacón, entró a formar parte de la casa de Isabel la Católica, desarrollando casi toda su carrera cortesana en ese ámbito” (12, n. 30) (‘Nicolás Guevara (died around 1504) served Alfonso *The Innocent* and not long afterwards, thanks to his friendship with the chamberlain Gonzalo Chacón, became a member of the retinue of Isabella the Catholic. He spent his entire career in that royal entourage.’)

⁶ For the essential data on Moner’s biography see Coccozella, *Introducción* 9-28, and *1 Introducción* 3-38. For the text of Moner’s *canción*, see *Sepultura d’amor* 142.

haver por byen vuestro no,
jamás nadye como yo . . . !
¡Mas nunca vos suppe amar,
ny vos sabéys ultrajar!
Vuestro tratar me deshaze
porque passa de crueza:
ser vos la causa me plaze,
mas la manera me pesa.

(‘Alas, the good that makes me ill, sadness so sweet and grievous, pain that pleases me, distress so hard to endure! Oh Love to be borne in great suffering! The acceptance of ‘No!’ as a favor! Has a man ever loved as I love? But you say I don’t know how to love you! You say you can do me no harm, but the way you mistreat me destroys me—a way that is crueler than cruel. You’re the cause of my grief? What a pleasure! You abuse me no end? That’s a torture!’)

Evidently, Moner vies with Guevara in profusion of language employed to special effect and adds his own touch of ingeniousness in one set of opposites after another: *byen/mal*, *grave/dulce*, *dulce/tristeza*, *pena/plaze*. The play of opposites delivers the impact of a haunting and disturbing conceit. In the contorted syntax of the *canCIÓN*, the protagonist confesses that the extreme cruelty of the ladylove pains him to the point of distraction and, still, brings him pleasure all in one. How can that be? As he reproaches his *belle dame sans merci* in absentia, he ponders with dismay how he could ever have been brought to consider as beneficial (“haver por byen”) the *amada*’s categorical rejection (“vuestro no”).

As we have indicated, samples borrowed from the *novela sentimental* are not out of place in our discussion.⁷ Take, for instance, the nightmarish scene that opens before our eyes at the very beginning of *Cárcel de amor* by Diego de San Pedro. Vividly depicted in grisly detail, the tower that serves as a prison and the horrid torments endured by the protagonist (Leriano), held captive in that forbidding structure, make the scene, emblematic as it is of an outstanding representative of its kind, not easy to forget. Here we cannot go into the analysis of San Pedro’s memorable presentation. Instead, we will concentrate on the points of esthetics that this author shares with the masters of the monologue of the *cancioneros*. The coincidence between San Pedro’s prose fiction and the enormous contingent of *canciones* and kindred *cancionero* pieces resides in the same word play that has caught our attention apropos of Guevara’s and Moner’s lyrics. That very coincidence is brought to light in Barbara Kurtz’s illuminating commentary on the spatial and allegorical factors inherent in San Pedro’s double perspective on the *cárcel* (that is, the tower or prison). Kurtz capitalizes on a captivating combination: the view of an outsider (the author-narrator) and that of an insider (the tormented lover, Leriano). Kurtz states poignantly:

To a certain extent, the interior scene duplicates parts of the allegorical exterior: the table of steadfastness is the equivalent of the foundation of faith, the three servants (*mal*, *pena*,

⁷ Deyermund’s *Tradiciones y puntos de vista en la ficción sentimental*, and Cortijo Ocaña’s *La evolución genérica de la ficción sentimental de los siglos XV y XVI* are indispensable for a general orientation on the sentimental romance. Particularly informative is Joyce Boro’s succinct review of the salient trends of scholarly discourse on the definition of the *novela sentimental* as a literary genre (Boro 46-54). See, also, Gerli, “Metafiction in Spanish Sentimental Romances.”

dolor) recall the three images (*tristeza, congoja, trabajo*) of the allegorized edifice. This duplication, together with the profusion of scarcely distinguishable terms of grief (*congoja, trabajo, dolor, angustia, desesperación, mal, pena, dolor, cuidado*) leads to some confusion in the allegorical design. The synonymy of the terms pushes the allegory in the direction of verbal play instead of genuine analysis of emotions to be portrayed; but the very confusion and monotony are a reasonably accurate transcription of the protagonist's tenebrous psychological world. (128)

As will become apparent presently, Kurtz's astute observations shed light on the compelling dynamics that energizes, generally speaking, the dramatics of the monologue of the *cancioneros*.

Before looking any further into this *vis dramatica*, it is well to review other essential traits of the *cancionero* monologue. Aside from the expansive and comprehensive scope already mentioned, now we may pay due attention to the complex structure that allows the organic composition of the soliloquy to assimilate the components of the narrative and the dialogue. Such an integration of constituents into an organic whole is accomplished brilliantly in a magnificent poem by the renowned *cancionerista* Garcí Sánchez de Badajoz, who flourished in the second half of the fifteenth century and the beginnings of the sixteenth.⁸ Here is how Patrick Gallagher, editor of Garcí Sánchez's works, summarizes the poem usually identified by the titles of "Sepultura de amor" or "Sueño:"

[I]n Garcí Sánchez's *Sueño*, addressed to his lady, it is the poet himself who dies. The idea is ingenious: the poet dreams that he dies of unrequited love in the presence of a nightingale; Love questions the nightingale and is told how Garcí Sánchez died (the birds sang his funeral rites and now sing their love-songs on top of the laurel grove into which his body was converted); the poet then wakes up, and is disappointed to find he has not died after all:

recordé y halléme biuo
de la qual causa soy muerto. (Gallagher 276)⁹

Beneath Gallagher's concise statement we detect the rather complex structure of the overarching monologue, announced, poignantly, as an *écriture* ("en la forma en que aquí escriuo" ['in the manner in which I am writing here']) in the very first stanza of Sánchez's poem. The auctorial voice, lodged in the customary tone of lamentation in a direct address to the ladylove ("la mucha tristeza mía que causó vuestro deseo" ['this great sadness of mine caused by your whims'] [vv. 1-2]) shifts into a first-person narrative ("Yo soñava que me iba / desesperado de Amor" ['I dreamt that I was wandering in despair because of Love'] [vv. 11-2]). The narrative incorporates, imperceptibly, the intervention of the God of Love (Amor) and his dialogue with a bird of melodious warblings: ("Dime, lindo ruseñor, . . ." ['Tell me, beautiful nightingale' [v. 21]). There is a smooth transition from the dialogue to the nightingale's extensive account of the death of the poet's persona and the momentous reaction of the winged fauna to that sorrowful event:

De allí nos quedó costumbre,
las aues enamoradas,

⁸ Gallagher argues that Garcí Sánchez was born around 1480 (3) and died around 1541 (22). For Garcí Sánchez see, also, González Cuenca 2: 366, n. 1.

⁹ ('I woke up and found myself alive, but the awakening is the cause of my death.') Unless otherwise indicated, the translations throughout this essay are mine.

de cantar sobre su cumbre
 las tardes, las aluoradas,
 cantares de dulcedumbre. (vv. 61-5)

(‘From then on, from those of us who are in love, the custom originated of singing, in the evening and at dawn, sweet songs on his tomb.’)

Thus, the nightingale’s speech, awash in delicate sentimentality, produces the effect of not only a narrative (that of the nightingale himself) within a narrative (the frame of the entire poetic account) but also a dialogue (the quick question-and-answer between the bird and the protagonist [vv. 41-5]) within a dialogue (the exchange between the bird and Amor [vv. 21-70]). The overall effect of the poem qua monologue is masterfully rounded out in the last stanza (vv. 71-80), which reverts to the protagonist’s original mood of profound melancholy:

Vime alegre, vime ufano
 de estar con tan dulce gente,
 vime con bien soberano
 enterrado honradamente
 y muerto de vuestra mano.
 Assí, estando en tal concierto,
 creyendo que era muy cierto
 que veía lo que escribo,
 recordé y halléme bivo,
 de la qual causa soy muerto.

(‘I saw myself happy, I saw myself at ease for being among such pleasant people; I saw myself in supreme well-being having been buried with full honors after my death had been dealt by your hand. Now, after I have been at peace, believing that what I saw in the dream I have described really happened, I woke up and found myself alive, but the awakening is the cause of my death.’)

Suffice it to recall in this context another eminent specimen of the poetic of complexity embodied in the frame of a monologue. The specimen consists of the *Querella ante el Dios de Amor* (‘The Complaint Brought to the God of Love’), authored by another distinguished *cancionero* poet, the Valencian author that goes by the name of Comendador Escrivá.¹⁰ In the

¹⁰ As for the problematic identity of this gifted poet, see *Cancionero general [de Hernando del Castillo]*, ed. Joaquín González Cuenca, 2: 472, n. 2. Through an extensive research of numerous documents, Perea Rodríguez specifies three possibilities as to the identity of El Comendador Escrivá: 1) Joan Ram Escrivá (father), Maestre Racional of Valencia, an impressive personality, who distinguished himself as an economist, diplomat, and high-ranking member of the military at the service of both John II of Aragon and his son, Ferdinand the Catholic, in the kingdoms of Valencia and Naples from the late 1470s to the time of his death around 1502 (*Estudio biográfico* 185-91); 2) Joan Ram Escrivá (son), who, in 1501, succeeded his father as Maestre Racional and, at that post, throughout his distinguished career spanning from 1501 to 1548 (the year of his death), rendered invaluable services to King Ferdinand the Catholic, Queen Juana of Naples, and the emperor, Charles V (*Estudio biográfico* 192-4); Pirro (or Pedro) Luis Escrivá, “caballero de la Order del Hospital de San Juan” (ca. 1494-1571), who wrote a treatise on the construction of castles—he actually built two of them in Italy—and, as the exemplary courtier that he was, authored his own specimen of the *novela sentimental*, the distinctive genre of Spanish prose narrative that deals with the suffering and the melancholic strains of passionate love (*Estudio biográfico* 197-200). In view of the chronological factors pertinent to the

Querella, which intermixes some passages in prose with some in verse, Escrivá deftly blends episodic and descriptive narrative, regular dialogue, formal debate, and an ample dosage of diffuse lamentations and specific complaints.

The list of salient traits of the monologue—expansiveness, comprehensiveness, complexity—would be far from complete without an acknowledgement, however brief, of the landmark contribution of Ausiàs March (1400-1459), the Valencian luminary, one of the greatest literary poets of all time.¹¹ What instinctively comes to mind as an unfailing testimony of that contribution is March's awe-inspiring "Cant 105." It takes the reading of but a few verses of this intriguing poem to convey the arresting impact of March's poetic diction. Let us focus on the first stanza:

Puis que sens tu, algú a tu no basta,
 dóna'm la mà o pels cabells me lleva;
 si no estenc la mia envers la tua,
 quasi forçat a tu mateix me tira.
 Jo vull anar envers tu a l'encontre;
 no sé per què no faç lo que volria,
 puis jo són cert haver voluntat franca,
 e no sé què aquest voler m'empatxa. (*Obra completa* 480)

(‘Without your help, no one can come to you:
 lend me a hand or drag me by the hair!
 If I toward you my hand should fail to stretch,
 by force, if need be, draw me to Yourself.
 To you I yearn to come, I seek the encounter
 but fail in this and cannot tell you why.
 My will, I know for sure, was born in freedom;
 but why should, then, my will be so constrained?’)

March wastes no time in situating the reader in an inhospitable place, March's own adaptation of the spatiality of the *infierno de los enamorados*, represented in various *dezires* of the *cancioneros*. From the very beginning the Valencian bard evokes the *infierno*'s gloomy ambiance, which he transforms into the primordial locus of existential desolation.

In "Cant 105" the speaker's desolation reflects the prevailing mood of an aborted dialogue that falls back into the sway of a monologue. The auctorial persona experiences utter frustration in his attempt to communicate with the "other." That persona's voice expresses a profound anguish that, to the extent that it may be gauged at all, must be gauged in correspondence with the absolute silence of the "other," who happens to be none other than God Himself. It may be said that Ausiàs March has discovered a most effective vehicle for dramatizing the desperate quest for communion with the Divine and, in doing so, has fashioned a *sui generis* idiom suited to his precarious experience. Critics like Robert Archer, Josep Miquel Sobrer, Marie-Claire Zimmermann become

compilation of the *Cancionero general*, Perea Rodríguez argues in favor of the candidacy of Joan Ram Escrivá (son) for the authorship of the poems attributed to El Comendador Escrivá in that prestigious anthology.

¹¹ For the essential orientation on March's life and works, see the recently published entry "Ausiàs March: 1400-1459," included in *Poetry Criticism*, ed. by Lawrence J. Trudeau.

engrossed, from sundry perspectives, in the egocentric, subjectivistic resonances of that idiom.¹² Costanzo Di Girolamo marvels at March's uncanny talent in recapturing, in harsh starkness, the ambiance and the very spirit of the penitential psalms—Psalm 51 in particular. As we ponder the unheard-of boldness of the speaker's tone of voice, in which we may well detect Job's daring remonstrations addressed directly to the Creator, we will gain a full appreciation of the uniqueness of "Cant 105" and agree, doubtless, with Di Girolamo's description of that chef-d'oeuvre as "una obra sin precedentes y como suspendida en el vacío" ('an unprecedented piece that appears as if suspended in the vacuum') (508).¹³

In the final analysis, "Cant 105" brings out the full extent of modernity in March's dramatic text. E. Michael Gerli and Valentín Núñez Rivera's respective essay on the religious poetry of the *cancioneros* provide abundant points of comparison, which enable to determine what that modernity is about. The readers of Ausiàs March will find most revealing the terms of contrast that lie in store in the outstanding exemplars these two scholars call attention to. Núñez Rivera, in particular, delves into the most ingenious exponents of parody, which prove to be of paramount importance for our study. The long list of works reviewed by Núñez Rivera includes Diego de Valera's *Salmos penitenciales dirigidos al Amor*, Rodríguez del Padrón's *Los mandamientos de amor*, Garcí Sánchez de Badajoz's *Liçiones de Job*, Nicolás Núñez's rendition of the canonical hours, Jaume Gaçull's *Aplicando el salmo De profundis a sus passions de amor*, two *misas de amores*—one by Suero de Ribera and the other by Juan de Dueñas—and so forth.

In short, the abundant data adduced and the commentaries provided by critics like Gerli and Núñez Rivera enable us to draw a sharp distinction between March's "Cant 105" and the aforementioned compositions emblematic of the religious parody of the *cancioneros*. It does not take long for us to figure out that Ausiàs March does not deal directly with the fundamental characteristics that Núñez Rivera identifies with such labels as "fenómeno de suplantación" ('phenomenon of substitution') (124), "fenómeno secularizador" ('phenomenon of secularizing') (128), "síntesis sacroprofana" ('synthesis of the sacred and the profane') (127), "versión secular de lo religioso" ('profane rendition of matters of religion') (127), "acomodación de distintos discursos religiosos" ('adaptation of various types of religious discourse') (125). In other words, March stays clear of the glaring substitution of the Christian God either with Cupid as in Valera's *Salmos* or with the ladylove as in Gaçull's *De profundis* and Garcí Sánchez's *Liçiones*. Indeed, March does away altogether with the stock mechanics of the parody in vogue, which readers by and large automatically interpret as irreverent, if not downright sacrilegious burlesquing of spiritual texts, devotional practices, liturgical ritual, doctrinal principles—in short, the entire venerable corpus of sacrosanct matters. Consequently, March sidesteps the reaction of many a scandalized reader, outraged by such passages as the following one, taken from Juan de Dueñas's *misa de amores*:

Gloria patri, linpio manto
de amores, el qual cobijo
válgame con el tu fijo,
graçia del espíritu santo;
Cupido, Venus y Apolo,
tres personas y vn dios solo:

¹² For the specific title of the essay of each of these authors, see the bibliography below.

¹³ The pagination refers to Di Girolamo's note in his edition of *Páginas del cancionero* by Ausiàs March.

esto creo y más de tanto. (Piccus 323)¹⁴

(‘Gloria be to You, Father! May You and Your Son, grant me, I pray, the shelter of love’s clean mantle and the grace of the Holy Spirit. Cupid, Venus, Apollo, three persons and one God: This is what I believe and much more!’)

One may wonder how Ausiàs March manages to elude handily the charges of sacrilege leveled at Juan de Dueñas, Suero de Ribera, Nicolás Núñez, Garci Sánchez and the like. The answer may be put simply: In fashioning for himself an impressive *rifacimento* or *contrafactum* of the prototypical penitential psalm, March sets forth the principles of a mimetic process of desacralization, which is a far cry from an esthetic of burlesque verging on desecration. It may be argued that, with his mimesis of desacralization free of desecration, March, by a prodigious coup of artistic intuition, foreshadows the notion of non-comedic parody that Linda Hutcheon theorizes upon in her landmark study on the subject. Without going into an extensive review of Hutcheon’s theory, we may call to mind the key terminology that serves to illustrate, in retrospect, the most significant aspects of March’s monologue. Hutcheon refers to the “artistic recycling” (15), “extended refunctioning” (16), “complex forms of ‘transcontextualization’” (15) that readily apply to March’s take on the phenomenology of parody. Telltale measures of March’s parody are, precisely, the recycling, refunctioning, transcontextualization at play in his transplanting of the Biblical phraseology and kindred modalities into a masterful setup of the dark night of the soul, devoid of, in general, pious fervor, contemplative rapture, ecstatic abandonment, and, in particular, consolatory asides à la Boethius.

Harking back to March’s modernity, one cannot but find remarkable even the possibility of the link that a perceptive critic like Purificación Ribes Traver in her enlightening essay (“Religious Struggle in John Donne and Ausiàs March”) cogently establishes between “Cant 105” and “Holy Sonnet XIV” by the English “metaphysical poet,” John Donne (1572-1631). Tucker Brooke, an authoritative scholar on English Renaissance literature, underscores in Donne’s entire collection of sonnets, the traits for which we, in addition to Ribes Traver, find unmistakable affinities in March’s magnificent verses. Donne’s sonnets, Brooke notes, “show little piety and are remarkably egocentric, dealing mainly with Donne’s two phobias: his sense of personal unworthiness and the terrors of Judgment Day” (635). This goes to show that March can foreshadow, across national boundaries, the poetics conceived in strife-ridden religion and hammered out in turbulent language by a kindred spirit, who would live in a foreign land some two hundred years after March’s lifetime.

In deference to March’s modernity, it would not be far-fetched to expand the range of affinities that “Cant 105” exhibits with Donne’s sonnets to encompass, as well, such icons of unsettling dissonance and alienation as “No worst, there is none” by Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889). To be sure, despite the multi-dimensional esthetic of gloom and despondency the two poets share, the March-Hopkins connection, though certainly valid on an academic level, does not rest on any historical documentation. Precisely on the basis of circumstantial evidence, well-warranted is, on the other hand, the supposition of a link between Ausiàs March and Salvador Espriu (1913-1985), doubtless one of the major Catalan writers of the twentieth century. Espriu, who showed a predilection for the classics in his native language, must have read March with

¹⁴ A passage of this nature is still likely to raise the eyebrow of a critic or two. Núñez Rivera considers these verses as “el blasfemo gloria de la composición [Dueñas’s *Misa*], uno de los textos más irrespetuosos de todo el corpus paródico” (‘the poem’s blasphemous Gloria, one of the most disrespectful texts in the entire parodic corpus’) (135).

special care. As I have tried to show elsewhere, Espriu derived from March the essential perspective on the tragic vision (“Aspectes de la persona tragic en Salvador Espriu,” especially 87-8). Espriu vies with March in internalizing the tragic vision in a monologue—“monòleg interior,” to use Espriu’s own term—incarnated in the auctorial persona.¹⁵ The persona assumes the characteristics of an individual of flesh and blood, called Salom de Sinera (‘Shalom of Sinera’).¹⁶ The modernity of Ausiàs March’s seminal monologue reaches a high point in the enhancement of Shalom’s tragic vision with the various traits anatomized in Josep Maria Castellet’s landmark study on Espriu’s production (*Iniciación a la poesía de Salvador Espriu*). In Shalom’s primordial existential monologue, ultimately inspired by Ausiàs March, we contemplate, then, the integration of the reminiscences that Castellet detects from miscellaneous sources, such as the *Book of Job*, the exponents of Jewish mysticism, and the “negative” theologies of Meister Eckehart and Nicholas Cusanus (Castellet 143-84).

At this point a word is in order about the dramatic thrust and theatrical potential of the multifarious monologue I have tried to illustrate here. Let us recall, for a moment, the agglomeration of key words in the passages we have excerpted from the compositions of, respectively, Guevara, Moner, San Pedro. These words signal the proliferation of passions in the protagonist’s turbulent inner world, which may be described as a “hall of mirrors” of sorts. The general consciousness of a feeling of malaise multiplies itself in countless reflections of reflections produced by subconscious mirrors. As a result, the reflected images boomerang and assail the lover’s mind.

Is it reasonable, we may ask, to expect a stage-worthy dimension that would fulfill the aforementioned dramatic thrust and theatrical potential, inherent in the monologue? For an answer to this question we may recur to none other than the nonpareil dramatist, Lope de Vega (1562-1635). As a case in point we may adduce the short passage that portrays the intense grief of Laurencia, the protagonist of *Fuente Ovejuna*, Lope’s masterpiece, written between 1612 and 1614 (López Estrada 12). The passage consists of Laurencia’s soliloquy, couched in a sonnet, which takes up an entire scene, that is, Scene 13 of Act 3 (vv. 2161-74; ed. López Estrada 238-9). Following is the text of the extraordinary poem:

Amando, recelar daño en lo amado,
nueva pena de amor se considera,
que quien en lo que ama daño espera
aumenta en el temor nuevo cuidado.

El firme pensamiento desvelado,
si le aflige el temor, fácil se altera,
que no es, a firme fe, pena ligera
ver llevar el temor el bien robado.

Mi esposo adoro; la ocasión que veo,
el temor de su daño, me condena,
si no le ayuda la felice suerte.

Al bien suyo se inclina mi deseo:

¹⁵ Espriu himself applies the term to one of his earliest works (*El Dr. Rip* [1931]), which is, in fact, a dramatic monologue (Coccozella, “Aspectes de la persona tragic en Salvador Espriu” 75-7).

¹⁶ For a comprehensive study of Espriu’s tragic vision in general and Salom’s role in particular see Coccozella, “Aspectes de la persona tragic en Salvador Espriu,” and “*Ronda de Mort a Sinera: An Approach to Salvador Espriu's Aesthetics.*”

si está presente, está cierta mi pena;
si está en ausencia, está cierta mi muerte.

(I have made some slight changes in the punctuation presented by López Estrada.)
(‘To be in love and fear the worst for a loved one may be considered a self-renewing pain: the lover that foresees the beloved in harm’s way adds to apprehension a newly-born anxiety.

When awakened, that constant preoccupation, beset by fear, is likely to be in turmoil: to see fear make off with the beloved that has been abducted is a pain not easy to bear.

I adore my husband. This is my plight, as I see it: I am cursed by the fear of his being harmed if he is not favored by a stroke of good fortune.

I am moved by my wishes for his welfare. If I envision him in my presence, my pain is for real; if he is away from me, what’s for real is my dying.’)

As for the metrical structure—that of the Petrarchan sonnet—the poem is, of course, unmistakably Italian; as for everything else, it is strictly Spanish. What we may call “standard *cancionero* fare” becomes evident precisely in the familiar proliferation of emotions or passions and the overall effect of the “hall of mirrors.” Witness how the mind of the distraught Laurencia, a newly-wed tormented by her apprehensions concerning the safety of her beloved spouse (Fronoso), spawns, at a relentless pace, undefined premonitions (“recelar daño”), sensations of unceasing pain (“nueva pena”), hints of impending harm (“daño espera”), fear and trepidations constantly reviving themselves (“aumenta en el temor nuevo cuidado”). More of the same may be easily documented in the second quartet. In the two tercets Lope intensifies the expression of a sense of distress by the use of the paradox: “si está presente, está cierta mi pena; / si está en ausencia, está cierta mi muerte” (vv. 13-4).

Lope de Vega points out the way the pervasive monologue of the *cancioneros* can mutate into a fully theatricalized manifestation: Laurencia’s reflection on her own condition as a tragic protagonist. There is evidence of a similar phenomenon apropos of Ausiàs March’s monologue enhanced by Espriu’s poetic insights. In this case the mutation comes into being thanks to the intervention of Ricard Salvat, the accomplished director who transforms Espriu’s monologue into the living presence of Salom de Sinera. Ultimately, it is Salvat that projects the poetic vision epitomized in Salom’s monologue into a grand spectacle entitled *Ronda de Mort a Sinera*, a collage of poems together with narrative and dramatic pieces by Salvador Espriu.¹⁷

So far we have shown how the monologue of the fifteenth century, whether exemplified in the *cancioneros* or in Ausiàs March’s poetry, can attain a stage presence in later periods respectively, to give concrete examples, in *Fuente Ovejuna* by Lope de Vega and in *Ronda de Mort a Sinera* by Salvador Espriu and Ricard Salvat. These notable developments of the seventeenth and twentieth century should not distract us from one paramount issue: the viability of the monologue in question for a special kind of stage of its own. We owe Henry Ansgar Kelly, a distinguished connoisseur of medieval and early-modern European theater, the exhuming and interpretation of a considerable amount of data that illustrate the age-old evolution of precisely the kind of stage I am referring to. In his seminal study, entitled *Ideas and Forms of Tragedy from*

¹⁷ For the English translation of this super-spectacle see Espriu and Salvat, *Death around Sinera*, trans. Peter Coccozella. A useful analysis of Salvat’s technique may be found in Coccozella, “*Ronda de Mort a Sinera*: An Approach to Salvador Espriu’s Aesthetics.”

Aristotle to the Middle Ages, Kelly profiles the traits of a theater that ultimately stems from the description found in some key passages of the influential *Etymologies* by Isidore of Seville (seventh century). With meticulous scholarship Kelly accounts for the many changes and adaptations that Isidore's quintessential idea of a theater underwent throughout the Middle Ages in not only countless commentaries by renowned glossators but also original compositions by several playwrights. Kelly himself traces the vestiges of what I propose to call "Isidorian paradigm" in three fifteenth-century compositions, two written in Catalan, one in Castilian (Cocozzella, *Text, Translation, and Critical Interpretation of Joan Roís de Corella's Tragèdia de Caldesa* 153).

For an apt illustration of this paradigm, which Kelly, somewhat laconically, calls "dumbshow with voice-over" (*Ideas and Forms of Tragedy* 219), we can do no better than follow the lead that Kelly himself provides in another study. In *Chaucerian Tragedy* he takes into account the handy description formulated by none other than Giovanni Boccaccio. The description found in *Esposizioni sopra la Comedia di Dante* reads as follows:

Chiamano [...] i comedi le parti intra sè distinte delle loro comedie «scene»; per ciò che, recitando li comedi quelle nel luogo detto scena, nel mezzo del teatro, quante volte introducano varie persone a ragionare, tante della scena uscivano i mimi trasformati da queglii che prima avevano parlato et fatto alcuno atto, e, in forma di queglii che parlar doveano, venivano davanti dal popolo riguardante e ascoltante il comedo che raccontava. (Boccaccio 4-6; Qtd. in Kelly, *Chaucerian Tragedy* 16, n. 26)

(‘Comedians [that is, poets who composed comedies] call the separate sections of their comedies «scenes,» because, when they recited them in the place called the scene in the middle of the theater, each time that they introduced various personages to speak, mimes would come forth from the scene. The mimes would have transformed themselves from the characters whose words and actions the *comedi* had spoken and performed before, and would appear as those who were now supposed to speak; they would come before the people, who were looking on and listening to the comedians speaking the lines.’) (Trans. Kelly, *Chaucerian Tragedy* 16)

Worth bearing in mind is, also, the following excerpt from the *Esposizioni*, in which Boccaccio clarifies what he means by "scena" and proffers further observations concerning the histrionics of the *mimi*:

E queste cotali comedie poi recitavano nella scena, cioè in una piccola casetta, la quale era costituita nel mezzo del teatro, stando d'intorno alla detta scena tutto il popolo, e gli uomini e le femine, della città ad udire. E non gli traeva tanto il disiderio di udire quanto di vedere i giuochi che dalla recitazione del comedo procedevano: li quali erano in questa forma: che una spezie di buffoni, chiamati «mimi», l'ufficio de' quali è sapere contrafare gli atti degli umonini, uscivano di quella scena, informati dal comedo, in queglii abiti ch'erano convenienti a quelle persone gli atti delle quali dovevano contrafare, e questi cotali atti, onesti o disonesti che fossero, secondo che il comedo diceva facevano. (Boccaccio, *Esposizioni* 37-8; Qtd. in Kelly, *Chaucerian Tragedy* 16, n. 29)

(‘Then they recited these comedies in the scene, that is, in a little house set up in the middle of the theater, around which all the people of the city, both men and women, stood to listen. These people were drawn by the desire not so much to hear as to see the acting that proceeded from the recitation of the author of the comedy. This is the way the play was acted out: some jesters of the type called “mummers,” whose task is to know how to mimic human actions, would come out of that scene. These actors were instructed by the author as to what distinctive actions were appropriate to the characters whose actions they were supposed to imitate. The actors performed said actions, whether decent or not, according to the instructions of the author.’) (Translation mine)

In Boccaccio’s explanation there are two aspects of Isidore’s influence that call for special attention. First, there is the counterbalance between, on the one hand, the authors of the dramatic texts—Boccaccio happens to refer, specifically, to the *comedi*—and, on the other hand, the *mimi*. Boccaccio and, for that matter, the extant illustrations as well make it quite clear that the *comedi* express their recitation within the precincts of the “piccola casetta,” while the *mimi*, to paraphrase the bard, “strut and fret their hour” upon the larger area of the stage.¹⁸ The second aspect we are referring to consists of the representation of the “scena” as a locus of darkness. As we have just seen, the attribution of gloom harks back to such a leading glossarist as Nicholas Trevet.¹⁹

In the realm of the *cancioneros* we may expect to find evidence of how a monologue of the type epitomized by Garci Sánchez’s *Sueño* and Escrivá’s *Querella* is adapted to the Isidorian model we have just discussed. In fact, a primary level of this very adaptation is evinced in a short dramatic piece by the aforementioned Francesc Moner. The composition, which may be classified as an *entremés*, appears in both of the extant texts of Moner’s production, a fifteenth-century manuscript (Vaticanus Latinus 4802) and the *editio princeps* of 1528.²⁰ In the manuscript the composition bears the title of “Momaria,” that is, “Momería” (literally ‘Mummery’). The

¹⁸ For an illustration of the “Isidorian theater” we may adduce the images contained, respectively, in two manuscripts: Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal, Paris, MS 664, fol. 1^v, and Vatican, Urbinas Latinus 355, fol. 1^v. The Parisian manuscript, known as *Térence des Duces*, ca. 1400, shows a medieval vision of ancient Roman theater. We see Calliopius reading the text of a play by Terence, while some jesters wearing masks translate that text into dramatic gesticulations. A renowned commentator on Terence’s works, Calliopius is a contemporary of that famous playwright (second century BC). Illustration taken from the Internet: <http://www.theatrales.uqam.ca/chronologie/TerenceDesDuces.html> Accessed 7 April 2012.

¹⁹ Nicholas Trevet links Isidore’s concept of a dark “scena” to a passage in Boethius’s *De consolation*, states: “Dicitur a scena greco vocabulo, “umbra”; unde dicebatur scena quasi obumbratio, quia ibi abscondebantur persone cantantes carmina tragica et comica” (Qtd. in Kelly, *Ideas and Forms of Tragedy* 127) (‘Scene is a Greek word for shade; hence it meant a shadowing, because in it were hidden persons who sang tragic and comic poems.’) (Trans. Kelly).

²⁰ For a complete description of these sources, see Coccozella, *1 Introducción* 65-88. Beyond question is the kinship of Moner’s *Momería* with the *entremés* and those other “entretenimientos” that, in Teresa Ferrer Valls’s words, “tienen lugar en otros momentos de la fiesta, generalmente después del banquete, vinculándose a bailes y danzas” (311). That kinship has been well established in previous discussions on Moner’s playlet (Coccozella, *1 Introducción* 93-9; Surtz, *Estudio preliminar* 46-7). It is appropriate to call attention here to the background provided in the seminal study by Manuel Milá y Fontanals, who traces the evolution of the *entremés* during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in the Catalan domain (232-56). Useful information may be found, also, in Rafael Olivar Bertrand (29-64). Kenneth Scholberg points to chs. 3 and 5 of the *Crónica del halconero de Juan II* (by Pedro Carrillo de Huete) for some interesting details concerning the *entremés* and kindred forms of pastime in the Castilian court during the first half of the fifteenth century (Scholberg 116). In his history of secular drama of the fourteenth and fifteenth century in the Iberian Peninsula (in the domains of Castilian, Catalan, and Portuguese), N. D. Shergold presents an abundantly documented overview of the type of entertainment in vogue at the court and in the aristocratic circles during Moner’s lifetime. Shergold describes various manifestations of spectacular events that are known by a variety of names, such as, besides the *entremés*, *misterio*, *invención*, *momería*, *empresa*, *representação* (113-42).

epigraph, which functions as a veritable stage direction, affords a rare, if not unique glimpse into an actual staging and performance.²¹ The staging consists of a huge structure (probably made of wood), fashioned in the shape of a swan. Through an opening in the middle of its frame, the gigantic bird dislodges a group of six courtiers in somber attire, who immediately take to the floor and begin to dance at the slow rhythm of a sad melody. The melody matches their gloomy expression (“los gestos cubiertos de velos negros”). Each man carries a torch and wears a cap (described in their totality as “sombraretes franceses”), on which a motto of two or three verses, different in every case, is attached. Each cap is surmounted by a black feather. Besides the customary epigrammatic stanzas of the six mottoes, the verbal component of the otherwise musical program includes three stanzas (*coblas*), each comprising twelve octosyllabic verses (*abc abc // def def*). Apropos of these three poems, the stage direction states that they are carried, without indicating exactly how, in the beak of the swan (“Traya el sisne en el pico las siguientes coblas”). Also, there are explicit indications that, in the course of the show, the three *coblas* will be read or recited to some of the ladies in the audience (“dressadas a las damas y leídas”). We may guess that this is a reference to the respective *amadas* of the six lovers that have just come out of the swan’s belly. The text of the *coblas* makes it quite clear that the swan is the first-person speaker.²²

²¹ Here is the rubric as it appears in the 1528 edition: “Momería concertada de seys: yvan dentro de un sisne, vestidos con iubones de razo negro y mantos de lluto, forrados de terciopelo negro, cortos y hendidos al lado drexo, y todo lo al, negro: sombraretes franceses y penas negras; y el cabello hexo negro; los gestos cubiertos de velos negros. Traya el sisne en el pico las siguientes coblas, dressadas a las dama y leídas. Abierto el sisne por el medio, sallien los momos con un contrapás nuevo, cada qual con su letra, y todos sobre las penas, con sus achas también negras. (*Momería* 154-5) (‘A mummerly choreographed for a cast of six men. These were mummers riding inside a structure shaped like a swan. The swan carried in its beak the stanzas shown below, addressed to the ladies and read to them. Through a hatchway in the middle of the swan the mummers filed out sashaying to the rhythm of a new dance. Each dancer displayed his own verses dealing with the pains of love. All the mummers wore loose-fitting shirts made of black satin and, as a sign of mourning, matching capes lined with black velvet. Their capes were short with a slit on the left side. The men were dressed entirely in black: black were their French hats and the feathers stuck on top, black the dye of their hair, black the veils that covered their faces. The torches in their hands were also black.’) (For the sake of clarity this translation includes some changes in the order of the sentences of the original description.)

²² Highly pertinent to Moner’s fashioning of his own contribution to the theatrical mode are some prominent issues that beg to be addressed. We may begin with two—namely, patronage and venue—that readily come to mind. We may take into consideration the prominent members of the nobility that, as Josep Lluís Sirera points out, provided generous sponsorship and, with their palatial dwellings, suitable venue for a representation that required a gigantic staging. Sirera recognizes worthy patrons at the highest ranks of the aristocracy not only in Valencia (the likes of the Condes de Oliva, the Duques de Gandía, the Duques de Calabria) but also in Rome (the Borja papacy) and Naples (the Aragonese dynasty) (“Una quexa ante el Dios de Amor . . . del Comendador Escrivá como ejemplo posible de los autos de amores” 268). There is every reason to deduce that Moner in Barcelona, his hometown, would take full advantage of the resources inherent in an urban layout as splendid and in a cultural milieu just as vibrant as that of the cities accounted for by Sirera. Besides, not to be underestimated is the support that Moner received from his Maecenas, the Count, later Duke of Cardona, with whom he maintained close ties for many years. In fact, Moner lived in the Cardona household during the most prolific years of his career (around 1485-1491). This is not to exclude the probability of Moner’s beneficial relationship with other prominent members of the Catalan upper crust—especially those he may have come into contact with during his residence as a page at the court of John II of Aragon. As may be surmised, the issue of patronage goes hand in glove with that of a venue fit for royal and aristocratic entertainment. So, whenever we hypothesize on a suitable staging for Moner’s *Momería* we envisage a type of space that Ferrer Valls describes in the following terms: “En el ámbito restringido de los palacios el espacio real transformado en espacio teatral es la sala o el patio, que entoldado e iluminado queda convertido en un gran salón palaciego, apto para acoger un elevado número de espectadores” (311) (‘Within the confines of the palace, the common space transformed into a theatrical space consists of the hall or the courtyard. When covered with a canvas and equipped with the appropriate lighting, the courtyard becomes a palatial auditorium, large enough to accommodate a great number of spectators.’) Needless to say, Barcelona’s monumental edifices—the seats of civil and religious governments (the *Consell*, the

If we ponder the interaction inherent in Boccaccio's vision of the *comedi/mimi* equation, we discover a notable coincidence with the structuring of Moner's *Momería*. The monumental swan, which takes center stage in Moner's mummery, may be seen as Moner's counterpart of the Isidorian dark "scena." In true Isidorian form, the read or recited text emanates as a voice-over from the inside of that dark place. By the same token, the six lovers, who come out of the bird-like structure and then go about their dance routine without uttering a word, remind us of the "persone" evoked by the illustrious Florentine writer: "dalla scena uscivano i mimi," "venivano davanti dal popolo." There can be little doubt, then, as to the fundamental configuration of the theatrical stage and theatricalized action inherent in Isidore's signal texts and in the works of Isidore's interpreters: Huguccio da Bologna, William of Conches, Nicholas Trevet, Giovanni Boccaccio—to name just a few of the eminent literary figures studied by Kelly. It is safe to deduce that in Moner's *Momería* we find unmistakable vestiges of a primary assimilation of the Isidorian model.

The conclusions likely to be drawn from our discussion may be specified in view of the circumstances that conditioned the composition and performance of Moner's *Momería*. Demonstrably, Moner's playlet attests to the mainstream of a well-established tradition—that of the *entremés*, described and documented by Ian Macpherson, N. D. Shergold, and others. Moner had countless opportunities to watch the *entremés* in its various forms in venues ideally suited to that type of entertainment. The venues include the architectural complex that to date remains a majestic Barcelonense landmark, consisting of the royal palace and the adjacent Plaça del Rei. Moner, it is worth pointing out, spent his early teens as a page in that very palace. Easily accessible to Moner was the mansion of the Cardona, yet another suitable setting in Barcelona for courtly entertainment in general and the *entremés* in particular. The importance of Moner's residence in the household of the Cardonas, his benefactors, from 1485 to 1491, the most productive period of his career, cannot be overestimated.

In the light of the scarce evidence available, we cannot give the exact date of composition of Moner's *Momería*. We may assert, nevertheless, that by the time he was about to prepare a script for his scenario, Moner was quite familiar with the genre and ready to put his mark on it. What is clear is that Moner uses the Isidorian model to bring to the stage a momentous event: the birthing process aptly illustrated by the group of lovers issuing forth from a structure that exhibits many of the characteristics of a womb. We bear in mind that the swan-like structure itself is the symbol of a radical metamorphosis: the transformation of the stage into an allegory of a matrix of dramatic action. Precisely as a matrix of dramatic action, the swan gives birth to six characters—*sei personaggi* à la Pirandello *avant la lettre*—and the drama they are born in transforms them into performers of play-acting, self-conscious players, that is, of their multiform role as suffering lovers. It is the swan itself, metamorphosed into lover-in-chief, that, as we have seen, highlights the unfathomable pathos of that role. Concurrently, the *sei personaggi*, in perfect coordination with the swan's voice resounding from a dark *scena*, become theatrical surrogates of their own selfhood of flesh and blood.

Principat, the bishopric), not to mention the royal palace, the Cathedral, and the *Lonja*, the medieval equivalent of the stock exchange—provided, in conjunction with their surrounding areas, the halls, patios, cloisters, and plazas (the *Plaça del Rei*, for example), eminently suited to be transformed into the "espacio teatral" envisaged by Ferrer Valls.

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