

The Role of the Narrator-Expositor in *Tragèdia de Caldesa* by the Valencian Humanist, Joan Roís de Corella (1435-1497): The Rhetoric of Perspectivism and Theatricality

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1. Traces of the Rhetoric of Theatricality

The short dramatic monologue entitled *Tragèdia de Caldesa* (dated 1458) is widely regarded as the masterpiece of the Valencian humanist, Joan Roís de Corella (1435-1497).¹ It is fair to say that, by and large, critics have shied away from discussing the theatricality of Corella's *Tragèdia*. They deny any interest on the author's part for a representation on stage.² In an entire monograph and a few essays, I have expressed my respectful disagreement with this prevailing trend of criticism. I have argued persistently that Corella's *chef-d'oeuvre* is eminently suited for the stage (*Text, Translation, and Critical Interpretation of Joan Roís de Corella's Tragèdia de Caldesa*; "Dramatic Monologue and Isidorian Paradigm 416-8;" "Juan Roís de Corella's *Inventio* of Tragedy").³ I have conducted my analysis in tandem with the exploration of his pioneering rendition of some rather broad and complex issues, such as the narcissism of the auctorial persona ("From the Perspective of a Narcissistic Lover"), the initiative of the transgressive woman ("Juan Roís de Corella's *Inventio* of Tragedy" 478-84), and the assimilation of the *Tragèdia* in question into *Tirant lo Blanc*, a novel of considerable proportions authored by two of Corella's colleagues, the fellow Valencians Joanot Martorell and Martí Joan de Galba ("Juan Roís de

¹ The precise dates of Corella's birth (September 28, 1435) and death (October 6, 1497) are provided by Cantavella ("On the Sources of the Plot of Corella's *Tragèdia de Caldesa*" 75) and Martos ("La revaluació crítica de Joan Roís de Corella, Notes" 1). For an updated overview of Corella's career, see the chapter ("Joan Roís de Corella") that Martos contributes to the recently published *Història de la literatura catalana*. In that chapter Martos provides a brilliant critique of Corella's signal accomplishments. See, also, Martí de Riquer's essential orientation on Corella's life and works (*Història* 3: 254-320), and Chiner, "Aportació a la biografia de Joan Roís de Corella." Additional information is available in Badia, "L'ascensió irresistible de l'astre literari de Joan Roís de Corella: cinc anys de bibliografia (1993-1997)," and "Materiales para la interpretación de la obra literaria de Joan Roís de Corella;" Martines, "Comentaris a la bibliografia sobre Joan Roís de Corella;" and Martos, "La revaluació crítica de Joan Roís de Corella." Particularly commendable are the following collections of essays: Hauf, *Joan Roís de Corella i el seu temps*; Martines, *Estudis sobre Joan Roís de Corella*; Martínez, "*Lo gentil estil fa pus clara la sentència*:" *De literatura i cultura a la València medieval*. (See Wittlin's review of these three collections.) Of great interest is, also, *Multilingual Joan Roís de Corella. The Relevance of a Fifteenth-Century Classic of the Crown of Aragon*, ed. Antonio Cortijo and Vicent Martines. This volume contains various essays and translations of Corella's masterpiece into various languages. For an overview of the intellectual life in the Valencia of the 1400s, see Fuster, "Poetes, moriscos i capellans," and Delgado-Librero 7-13. For the text of *Tragèdia de Caldesa* see Gustà's edition, and the transcription by Romeu i Figueres, "*Tragèdia de Caldesa*, de Joan Roís de Corella: Una aproximació textual" 82-6.

² Annamaria Annicchiarico, for instance, denies not only the suitability of Corella's *Tragèdia* for an actual performance on stage but also any interest on the part of the author for the *mise en scène* ("la pur minima preoccupazione per l'elemento scenico e per il montaggio drammatico") ("the least preoccupation for the factor of staging and for the dramatic setup") (62).

³ I outline the way the plot of Corella's *Tragèdia* could unfold, step by step, in an actual performance (Cocozzella, *Translation and Critical Interpretation* 170-81).

Corella's *Inventio* of Tragedy" 482-4)⁴

On this occasion I intend to sharpen the focus of my argument. I shall limit my discussion to only one factor: the role of the first-person speaker. As I shall try to demonstrate, the speaker embodies the exclusive point of view that he brings to bear on the way we perceive the unfolding of the plot. It is, then, of foremost importance to explore the esthetics of perspectivism inherent in the speaker's role. For a start, we will acknowledge that Corella invests his speaker with the characteristics of the auctorial persona and portrays him as the typical *mártir de amor* ('martyr of love'), so called. We may identify such *mártir* as "the exemplary sufferer" in Susan Sontag's catchy phrase (Sontag 49-57). Quite appropriately, Hispanists would readily recognize him as the iconic exponent of the mournful idiom of suffering prevalent in the lyrics of the *cancioneros* and kindred specimens of the love-centered literature, written within each linguistic domain of Castilian, Catalan, and Galician-Portuguese.⁵

What is truly distinctive in Corella's portrait of the male protagonist qua auctorial persona is the masterful subordination of the dynamics of the narrative to an overarching dramatic effect. Not only does that protagonist provide a straightforward account of the events he experiences; he also highlights them in a special way so as to underscore the power and persistence of their impact. To put it succinctly, our first encounter with the male protagonist of Corella's *Tragèdia* provides the prima-facie evidence of the traits commonly attributed to a literary figure known as "narrator-expositor" or "expository narrator." Crucial for the identification and diagnosis of these traits are two studies authored by, respectively, James T. Monroe and Max Harris. These scholars present a review of various impressive exemplars of the narrator-expositor along the mainstream of a tradition that harks back to the times of Ibn Quzmān of Córdoba (twelfth century) and persists within the Castilian realm well into the 1600s. Here I intend to show that Corella may well be regarded a worthy representative –and a very early one, we may add– of that tradition within the domain not of Castilian but of Catalan.

I believe an appropriate comparison may be drawn with respect to some personages to whom Harris devotes an enlightening commentary. We may take into consideration, for instance, the Shepherd, Shepherdess, and the Sibyl that appear in Diego Sánchez de Badajoz's *Farsa del juego de cañas espiritual*. Worthy of special attention is, also, the unnamed boy that carries out the tasks of announcer and interpreter in a famous episode of Cervantes's *Don Quijote*: namely, the puppet show put on by a shady impresario, known as Maese Pedro (*Don Quijote*, part 2, ch. 26).⁶

What, we may ask, does Corella's *mártir de amor* have in common with the

⁴ For a recent overview of the scholarship on the magnificent narrative of *Tirant lo Blanc*, see Pujol.

⁵ 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. (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.

⁶ It is well to bear in mind that Corella's *Tragèdia* antedates by a span of some one hundred and fifty years Cervantes's narrative. As is well known, *Don Quijote*, Part 2, in which the puppeteer and his assistance make their appearance, was published in 1615.

outstanding *dramatis personae* that Harris draws our attention to? The answer, I believe, resides in the awareness that Corella's narrator-expositor foreshadows by decades the ingenious use of rhetoric demonstrated by Sánchez's and Cervantes's respective counterparts. Corella anticipates the other two masters by fully exploiting through a well-rounded, true-to-life literary figure –the narrator-expositor in each case– the technique of bringing into focus in vivid detail a scene that will remain impressed in the mind of the reader, converted by that very technique into a spectator.

In a coup of well-managed verbalization and in the relentless centripetal thrust of his diction, Corella's speaker rivets our attention to an incident he finds utterly shocking and profoundly disconcerting. He recalls that, lately, on the last visit he paid to the incomparable Caldesa, she locked him up in a dark room of her house and left in a hurry, saying that she had to attend to some urgent transaction with another visitor. She promised she would come back before long. That proved to be a false promise. After hours of languishment in that depressing place, the hapless guest got suspicious. He did not know what to make of some noises coming from the adjacent courtyard. Curious as to what was going on, he decided to look through the room's only window –a small one, to be sure. Following is his own account of what he saw:

[L]os meus plorosos ulls mereixqueren veure la tan estimada donzella, que partint-se d'una cambra, gest, paraules, abraçar, ab altres mostres d'amor extrema, d'honestat enemigues, a un enamorat presentà la figura... E, per cas de més adversa fortuna mia, lo darrer comiat al terme de ma oïda arribà, en estil de semblants paraules: "Adéu sies, manyeta!", tancant la darrera síl·laba un deshonest besar... (27)

([M]y tearful eyes were rewarded with the sight of my beloved damsel. I saw her come out of a room just as she was surrendering her body to a lover, exhibiting all the while the gestures, words, embraces, and other manifestations of passion, wanton to the extreme, offensive to all common decency... And to aggravate the adversity of Lady Fortune toward me, the act of their leave-taking came within the range of my hearing with the sound of the following words: "Good-bye, my little hussy!" The last word was sealed with the smack of a disgusting kiss.)

By a preliminary or summary comparison we readily discern that Corella's artistic alter ego is just as adept as are his signal successors –Sánchez's and Cervantes's analogues– in the masterful use of rhetoric aimed at the complete control of the viewer's perception. I would point out that here "viewer" is synonymous with "reader" or "spectator." Sooner or later, we realize that the individual with "plorosos ulls" of Corella's monologue is no less successful in setting into operation a veritable theater of rhetoric and make-believe (or make-believe through rhetoric) than is Sánchez's Sibyl in conjuring up, in collaboration with her associates, a full-scale epic battle between virtues and vices on a stage that remains empty all the while. By the same token, Corella's tour de force prefigures, even at the distance of some one hundred and fifty years, the oratorical skills of Maese Pedro's assistant. That *Wunderkind* is able to transcend the stodgy histrionics of his master's puppets. He really brings to life a French love story –the rescue of Melisendra by her spouse, Gaiferos– as told in an ancient Spanish ballad.⁷

⁷ In her suggestive essay, Beatriz Mariscal Hay concentrates on not only the impact of the Melisendra episode on Cervantes's narrative but also the considerable diffusion of the *romance* ('ballad') based on that episode.

It is well to reflect upon what a simple juxtaposition of *Tragèdia de Caldesa* with the two analogues we have just discussed can teach us. To put it succinctly, it shows in the three works a common oratorical strategy, which may be described as follows: the three authors attribute to each respective narrator-expositor a highly inventive rhetoric that challenges the reader-spectator to imagine the essential elements of the plot that are either represented on stage in a sketchy manner, as in a puppet show, or not represented at all, as in Sánchez's whiteout *mise en scène*.⁸ Our brief comparative overview illustrates in Corella and the other authors the utmost importance of rhetoric as an indispensable complement for the action on the stage or even as a substitute for that action and for the stage itself. In the course of my discussion I intend to go into the specifics of the challenge posed by Corella, who paves the way for his readership to become an audience precisely by the manner of seeing what is not overtly apparent in the written text.

The path that Corella opens up for his readership-audience is distinguished by what I would call the syndrome of bountiful language –the very syndrome upon which at a much later date Cervantes would stamp the brand of his own inimitable genius. Not unlike the lad in Cervantes's aforementioned episode, Corella's narrator-expositor uses abundant language, which, although verging on the effusive, ultimately conveys intense emotion and heightened tension, blended into a crescendo that is bound for an explosive denouement. It is worth noting that both Corella's persona and Cervantes's youthful personage intuit the efficacy of maximizing the use of language in order to minimize the range of the narrative. Both use up recitation and declamation in the exact amount that transforms narrative into drama, novelistic plot into performable action.⁹

2. Psychic Space: Compressed Speech as Theatricalized Locus of Grief

The preliminary comparison of *Tragèdia de Caldesa* with the analogous compositions of a later period has yielded *prima facie* evidence of a primordial *vis dramatica* shared by the three masterpieces. Now I should like to complement the comparative analysis with a comment or two about the qualities of Corella's dramatics specifically related to the role of the narrator. A few moments of reflection lead us to the realization that Corella generates and develops a keen sense of theatricality out of compacting an abundance of language –the language of the speaker's suffering– into the vessel of a small text. The operation brings about a special effect of the kinetics of compression. This curious mimicking of the factors of basic mechanics segues with the process of creating a good deal of pent-up energy, which naturally exerts pressure to be released. The released energy is precisely the factor that manifests itself in the *vis dramatica* in question. Consequently, operative in Corella's *Tragèdia* is the process of intensification symptomatic of the rhetoric of grief. This very rhetoric is prevalent, as we have indicated, in the lyrics of the *cancioneros*, with which Corella is well acquainted. Equally familiar is Corella with another source of the aforementioned rhetoric of sorrow and mourning: the poetry of Ausiàs March (1400-1459),

⁸ Martos acknowledges that Corella is quite capable of using the narrative format for a distinctly dramatic intention. In his eloquent commentary on Corella's *Història de Jàson i Medea*, he poignantly states: "La força dramàtica de la història descansa en els recursos de la paraula. . ." ("Joan Roís de Corella" 233).

⁹ It may be argued that in the Maese Pedro episode it is Quijote himself that brings to full realization the boy's hyper-dramatic rhetoric. Quijote, we may recall, is not simply a disinterested observer. He participates excitedly, with disastrous consequences, in the fray represented on stage.

the incomparable bard from Valencia.¹⁰ Worth taking into consideration is, as well, the palpable affinity between the speech of Corella's protagonist and that of Leriano, the leading personage of Diego de San Pedro's *Cárcel de amor*. As is well known, the latter is the prototypical *novela sentimental*, a distinctive genre of the Hispanic narrative of the late Middle Ages.¹¹

For a compelling overview of Corella's use of the obsessive, compressed idiom of suffering, we may take a look at Antonio Cortijo Ocaña's recent essay on *Tragèdia de Caldesa*. Following is an excerpt of Cortijo's opening paragraph:

As the work begins, the narrator depicts in first person the *extreme pain* that aggrieves him ... This doleful pain is characterized in the original Catalan by the repetition of the words *tristor / dolor* (sadness / pain) which serve as a leit-motif for the whole composition: *extrem de ma dolor, me dolc, ma tristor, l'èsser trist, ma dolor, ma dolorida pensa, tanta dolor, ma dolorosa pensa, la dolor que raona, trists e sollicit pensaments, semblant dolor, adolorit pensament, la tristor que... ma trista pensa combatia, la meva Trista presó, extrem de ma dolor, adolorit estil*. It is also accompanied by an abundant array of tears and sighs: *ab moltes llàgremes, sospirs e sanglots*. Around this theme, numerous words belonging to the same range of aggrieved emotional pain describe the inner tragedy experienced by the protagonist. (11)

Cortijo's analytical discourse reveals, behind the veil of Corella's linguistic medium, a lookout onto an entire panorama of existential gloom. It mediates the transition into a spatial ontological correlative of the stream of lamentations that gush forth from the *màrtir*'s mouth. The transition is subtle but substantial all the same. Cortijo appeals to Corella's bold advancement from the auditory perception of those mournful strains to the actual visual witnessing of the precincts of the lover's torments. That advancement ultimately redounds to the challenge it poses to the eyes of the reader-spectator's creative imagination. The shift from aural to visual betokens the self-evident phase and first-hand witnessing of the spatial transmutation of speech.

In view of the phenomenology of speech as a determinant of spatiality, Corella's *Tragèdia* may be classified as an exponent of the type of composition that Hispanists label *infierno de amores* or *infierno de los enamorados*, well represented in the *cancioneros*.¹² Aside from the tangible ambiance of gloom, which it shares with the various *infiernos*, Corella's *Tragèdia* exhibits two distinctive characteristics –namely: a) an enhanced sense of psychic space; b) an insight into the nature of the narrative as a vehicle of perspectivism

¹⁰ March's influence on Corella is discussed in Cocozzella, *Translation and Critical Interpretation* 41-63. See, also, Martos, "March en Corella."

¹¹ Deyermond'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 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."

¹² In his *Medieval Spanish Allegory*, Chandler R. Post classifies the *infiernos* under the general heading of "erotic Hell" (75-102). A broad discussion on these compositions is found in Cocozzella, *Text, Translation, and Critical Interpretation of Joan Rois de Corella's Tragèdia de Caldesa* 21-40. For a recent bibliography on the subject see: Deyermond, "Santillana's Love Allegories, and the studies by Pérez Priego, Recio, and Rohland de Langbehn.

—specifically, the point of view of the narrator-expositor— which, in turn, serves as a function of dramaturgy. As we shall soon find out, the second characteristic, by far the more complex, invites a detailed analysis of Corella’s creation of psychodrama especially as envisaged by the auctorial persona. Due consideration of the first characteristic entails the acknowledgment of the similarity between Corella’s theatrical mode and the performative qualities that critics readily recognize in Ausiàs March’s mighty line. Particularly revealing are the comments that Robert Archer and Josep Miquel Sobrer devote to Poem 105, widely acclaimed as the apex of March’s creativity. Archer calls attention to the Valencian bard’s stroke of genius in capturing the sense of “l’ara i aquí de l’acte d’escriure” (‘the here and now of the act of writing’) (Archer, *Aproximació a Ausiàs March* 22). In the same vein, Sobrer perceives “un teatre íntim” (‘an intimate theater’), “l’escenari” (‘the stage’), on which “la veu d’un home sol” (‘the voice of a lonely man’) “[s]’adreça a algú que no li respon” (‘addresses someone that does not respond’) (*La doble soledat* 57). Sobrer’s astute observations enlighten our comprehension of a crucial factor that Corella evidently derived from March: a direct involvement in what a critic calls “theatre of the mind” (Pattison 321). Indeed, Corella adds an experiential quality to that theater.

Going back to the notion of palpable psychic space, we may consider two images that prove to be particularly illustrative in Corella’s case. I would designate them as a) the hall of mirrors and b) the optics of the camera obscura employed metaphorically and symbolically. The effect of the hall of mirrors is precisely the result of the agglomeration already discussed of key words, which signals the proliferation of conflicting emotions in the protagonist’s “theatre of the mind.” Corella maneuvers the phenomenology of reiteration into an ingenious interplay of two realms: one conscious, the other subconscious. The conscious, projected into the subconscious, becomes reflected from a multiplicity of angles. This means that the general consciousness of a feeling of malaise multiplies itself in countless reflections of reflections. The way Corella negotiates the expression of the lover’s anxiety into performable action reminds us of the iconic soliloquy by which the stellar Lope de Vega brings to life the plight of Laurencia, the lead character of *Fuente Ovejuna*. Laurencia’s affliction, painfully endured in silence—eventually it will swell into majestic rage—is couched in a sonnet, of which we will quote here the first quartet:

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. (Act 3, scene 13)

(‘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.’)

What we may call “standard *cancionero* fare” is brought to light precisely by the familiar proliferation of vocabulary and the overwhelming 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”).

As for the representation of the camera obscura, Corella works out not only the symbiosis between rhetoric and spatiality but also the interaction between the inner realm of the psyche and the outside world. The *poca finestra* (‘little window’) of the room in which Caldesa abandons the protagonist exhibits a striking analogical function. It constitutes the aperture that allows the lover to direct his glance outward just as, by a reverse trajectory, the observable reality in the outside realm encroaches on the observer’s private space. First, Caldesa’s liaison with the extra lover is encapsulated in the torrid embrace, depicted in nightmarish vividness; secondly, the love affair is epitomized in the offensive image that, through the small opening, penetrates into the dimly-lit room; thirdly, the image is projected with devastating impact onto the consciousness of a hypersensitive, vulnerable observer; fourthly, that very image, imbued with the passionate impact of the turmoil in the lover’s psyche, is externalized and, hence, theatricalized by that lover’s lamentations. By means of the window, the beholder’s glance reaches outward to the offensive spectacle, and, at the same time, the scene creeps back to haunt the beholder. In short, Corella creates a special perspective, which begets the unwholesome bond between the protagonist and the vicious image. That bond strikes us as the primary determinant of a circuitous experience of relentless anxiousness.

3. The Rhetorical Tradition

The strongest evidence in support of the theatricality that Corella embodies in his narrator-expositor crops out in the studies of those scholars like Sol Miguel-Prendes, Amaranta Saguar García, and, above all, Jody Enders, who elaborate a comprehensive theory regarding the evolution of classical Roman rhetoric into dramatic and, eventually, full-fledged theatrical representation. To Enders we are indebted for the special use of specific terms to illustrate her overall argumentation. Enders speaks, for instance, of a process of “*letteraturizzazione*” or “aestheticization,” terms she borrows from George Kennedy, who describes them as a shift of rhetorical focus “from persuasion to narration, from civic to personal contexts, and from discourse to literature, including poetry” (Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* 5; qtd. in Enders, *Rhetoric and the Origins of Medieval Drama* 5).

Enders goes into the discussion of concepts of special significance that may well have considerable bearing on the features of Corella’s esthetic. The notion of *actio* stands out because it figures as not only a substantial replacement of the vague designation of *vis dramatica* but also a prime motivator of a wide phenomenology quintessentially dramatic. It is precisely because of Enders’s wide contextualization of *actio* within the vast field of *letteraturizzazione* that the following passage deserves to be quoted in full:

As a significant conduit between rhetoric and literature, law and drama, orality and literacy, *actio* offers paradigms for performance which restore the lost dynamism of early performative discourses wherever they may have appeared. At the same time, however, its attendant dramatic orality highlights a more general fluidity of medieval genres... (*Rhetoric and the Origins of Medieval Drama* 9-10)

The passage is particularly instructive as it adumbrates the wondrous mutation from rhetoric to literature, from law to drama, from the province of orality to that of theatricality. The mutation takes place at the heart of the interior monologue (Enders's term) that, a little later in the same paragraph, Enders lists as one of the main exponents of that "fluidity." The factors identified by Enders –the "paradigms for performance," "performative discourse," "dramatic orality"– become manifest in what the critic calls "the actual production of an inchoate psychodrama" (*Rhetoric and the Origins of Medieval Drama* 46). I hasten to add that the gestation and birth of psychodrama is exactly what is revealed in Corella's *Tragèdia*.

Indeed, what Corella intuits and dramatically elaborates in his own interior monologue may be described in exactly the same terms adduced by Enders and the other two critics – Miguel-Prendes and Sagar García– we have referred to already. Of utmost importance for its pivotal function and rich potential is the so-called *imago agens*, which Miguel-Prendes defines as those "shocking, active images, with a theatrical quality to trigger recollection" (15).¹³ Sagar García explains that the *imagines agentes* exercise "a durable effect on the observer" and "adhere to memory because of their strangeness, their positive or negative emotional impact, and/or their exceptional nature" (247).¹⁴

There can be no doubt as to the striking presence, powerful impact, and lasting effect of what may be considered Corella's *imago agens* par excellence. For a proof, if proof be needed, we need only look at the aforementioned lurid scene of the erotic embrace, loud kiss, and boorish adieu. Clearly the scene constitutes the core episode, which infuses dramatic vehemence into the entire plot. Not surprisingly, the mere perception of the *imago agens* triggers a reaction of a painfully slow and somewhat morbid peering into the most minute details of the shocking incident that generates the noxious *imago* to begin with. Elsewhere I have analyzed this reaction in its literary epiphany, which I call the "text of visualizing" ("Text, Translation, and Critical Interpretation" 111-49).

The visualizing has to do with glancing and gazing, two complementary phases of the act of looking. The first is definite and instantaneous; the other is indefinite and long-lasting. To distinguish the two, scholars like Mary Corruthers, Jan Ziolkowski, and Miguel-Prendes propose the Latinisms *conspectus* or *brevitas* for glancing and *copia* for gazing (Cocozzella, "Text, Translation, and Critical Interpretation" 120-3). In the dialectic between glance and gaze, *conspectus* and *copia*, a pivotal rhetorical device called ekphrasis comes into full operation. To borrow Stephen G. Nichols's concise definition, ekphrasis is

¹³ In her own definition Sagar García goes into details particularly worthy taking into account:

This term [*imago agens*]... defines the recourse to mental places (*loci*) and images (*imagines*) to improve memory, basically using a mental reconstruction of a real or imagined place –for instance, a building or a landscape– to organize and store some mental images of the contents to be remembered. (247)

To illustrate these very points, Sagar García segues with the quotation of the seminal passage: *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 3.37 (247-8).

¹⁴ The primary source of the *imago agens* is the pseudo-Ciceronian *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 3.37. Enders identifies *Ad Herennium* 3.37, Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* 6.2.29, Vinsauf's *Poetria Nova* 2022 for, respectively, *imagines agentes*, *visiones* or *phantasmatae*, and *imagines peregrinae* and complements her commentary by adducing Cicero's and John of Salisbury's respective meditation on the visualization of thought (*De Oratore* 2.357-8) and the effective blending of visualizing and hearing (*Metalogicon* 200) (Enders, "Memory and the Psychology of the Interior Monologue" 10-3).

“the description of a visual art work” (134).¹⁵ This small label for what has proved to be the object of extensive studies is quite adequate for my discussion.¹⁶

Strictly speaking, in *Tragèdia de Caldesa* there is no “visual art work” as such. There is, nevertheless, a fit substitute for that artifact. We have already commented upon the horrid snapshot perceived by the “plorosos ulls” of the perturbed observer. A close reading allows us to comprehend how, by fully assimilating the mode of ekphrasis, Corella’s imaging segues from the scope of the glance (*conspectus*) to that of gaze (*copia*). The moment he manages to take in, as best he can, the repulsive *imago agens*, the first-person speaker starts mulling over, masochistically, the excruciating visual details that provoke his mental torture and unending nightmare. We can well imagine the pangs of jealousy aroused by his ladylove’s “loçana e humil reverència” (‘lustful and seductive curtsy’) (Corella 27), proffered to one he considers an intrusive, unworthy scoundrel. The adjective “loçana” is a perfect match for the remarkable sensuous and sensual tenor of Corella’s diction. What makes Corella’s ekphrastic depiction truly extraordinary is the subtle blend of the erotic strain with the delicate pictorial touches alluding to the allures of the female physique. The narrator-expositor does not miss the sight of the woman’s *gonella* (‘skirt’), which “fèu estalvi lo seu genoll esquerre no tocàs la dura terra...” (‘prevented her knee from touching the hard ground’) (Corella 27). Then, voyeuristic jealousy compels the beholder to savor the dubious pleasure of a titillating synesthesia (“color e calor” [‘color and heat’]): splashes of cold water coming into sudden contact with the red hot flashes in the beloved’s complexion. The following excerpt gives us a good idea of Corella’s suggestive style:

¹⁵ Ryan Welsh offers an informative essay on ekphrasis. Elizabeth B. Bearden proposes the following definition as the basis of her extensive study:

A rhetorical term originating in the grammar school exercises or *progymnasmata* of the Second Sophistic (c. first to second centuries CE), ekphrasis has been defined as broadly as a vivid description, and as narrowly as the description of an extant work of visual art. Ekphrasis is defined here as the verbal representation of visual representation. (3)

In her introduction, she presents a survey of the pertinent scholarship and representative views on the subject (3-18).

¹⁶ This is how Miguel-Prendes explains the evolution of ekphrasis out of the description of the castle’s tower (“una torre de altura tan grande que parecía llegar al cielo” [‘a tower so high that it seemed to reach the heavens’] [84]), in which the incarcerated Leriano languishes:

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

For the text of Leriano’s explication, see San Pedro 88–9. Miguel-Prendes points out the parallelism between the exegetical method employed in this passage and St. Jerome’s “spiritual interpretation on Ezekiel’s heavenly city (mentioned in Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought* 33–34)” (qtd. in Miguel-Prendes 21, n. 32). For another useful explication of San Pedro’s accomplished use of ekphrasis, see Kurtz 127–8. From the very start of her discussion, Bearden addresses some rather broad issues:

Renaissance imitators of the Greek romance employed ekphrasis to represent and question socially determined hierarchies of ethnic, gender, and religious difference. (3)

By contrast, in keeping with the rather narrow scope of Miguel-Prendes’s analysis on the *Càrcel de amor*, I focus strictly on the phenomenology of the lover’s introspection into his own dysfunctional psychological condition. An outstanding example of ekphrasis is found in *La noche* by Francesc Moner: see Cocozzella, “Ekphrasis and the Mirrored Image: The Allegory of Despair in *La noche* by Francesc Moner, a Catalan Writer of the Late Fifteenth Century.”

Ab la freda aigua [Caldesa] assajà apartar de la sua afable cara la color e calor que, en la no sangonosa, mas plaent e delitosa batalla de Venus, pres havia... (Corella 27)

(‘With dashes of fresh water she tried to erase from her expressive countenance the color of the hot flashes she had experienced during the bloodless, that is, pleasurable and exciting battle of Venus...’)

A few lines onward Corella’s ekphrastic technique reaches a high point thanks to an ingenious rendition of floral imagery:

Estava, però, la sua delicada persona maculada, semblant a roses ab blancs lliris mesclades, si ab sùtzies mans se menegen... (Corella 27-8)

(‘Her delicate complexion was, to be sure, all in splashes, looking as if a bouquet of roses commingled with lilies had been put together by dirty hands...’)

Enders’s insightful research happens to shed considerable light on the *imago agens*/ekphrasis symbiotic bond we have just focused upon. Enders makes a substantial contribution to the notion of the aforementioned text of visualizing: primarily she furnishes a memorable depiction of that bond as a sui-generis psychic entity. Her delving into a crucial passage of a world-class literary masterpiece engenders a veritable paradigm applicable to Corella’s use of the *imago agens*. The object of her probing is a monologue excerpted from *Cligés*, the acclaimed *roman* by Chrétien de Troyes. Here is Enders’s commentary regarding Fénice’s sorrowful reflections prompted by the departure of her beloved Cligés:

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

It goes without saying that there are points of difference between Fénice’s psychological status and that of the auctorial persona in Corella’s *Tragèdia*. In the latter there is no sign of the “delightful process” that can be attributed to the former. Nor are two conflicting sides easily recognizable in the psyche of Corella’s personage. This notwithstanding, the Valencian writer and his French precursor champion, all differences aside, the same creative process prompted by the fundamental mnemonic devices they both share. All in all, Corella abides by the paradigm already established by Chrétien: the *imagines agentes* stemming, in Corella’s case, from a shocking spectacle (Caldesa locked in a passionate embrace with the “other man”) are stored in a “memory *locus*” within some “secret places” in the speaker’s mind.¹⁷ Corella follows the paradigm to its climactic point:

¹⁷ The metaphor of the “secret places” is borrowed from Geoffrey of Vinsauf’s notion of “circinus interior mentis” (see Enders, “Memory and the Psychology of the Interior Monologue in Chrétien’s ‘Cligés’” 6, n. 4).

the obsessive reminiscence of the *imagines* in the speaker's imagination plays out to a full extent through the stage-worthy verbalization of Corella's *valenciana prosa*.

In sum, we do well in integrating into our own discussion two issues that emerge from Enders's analysis: the author's self-consciousness incarnated in the narrator-expositor, and the gestation of psychodrama. There is an additional item to be acknowledged in Enders's insightful commentary, and that is the discovery of a psychic space at the heart of the monologue. In that space Enders envisages the locus of an internalizing/externalizing interplay. Borrowing Kenneth Burke's terminology, she distinguishes "between the 'confessional' function of the image which 'internalize[s] the external'; and the 'incantatory' function which 'externalize[s] the internal' (Burke, *The Philosophy of Literary Form* 116; qtd. in Enders, "Memory and the Psychology of the Interior Monologue in Chrétien's 'Cligés'" 23). Enders's elaboration upon Burke's criterion is worth quoting in full because it sheds further light on the affinity between Chrétien's and Corella's creativity:

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

In effect, Enders underscores the "literary speech" that pertains to the interior monologue; and the monologue is, of course, the theatrical vehicle of psychodrama.

4. A Narcissistic Perspective

Thus far, we have seen how the role of the auctorial persona as narrator-expositor allows us to come to grips with Corella's insight into the gestation and development of an engaging psychodrama. In other words, Corella accomplishes his rendition of a dramatic composition by assimilating the traits of the interior monologue masterfully championed by none other than Chrétien de Troyes. This is not to say that Corella necessarily borrows his dramatic mode directly from Chrétien. All the same, it is reasonable to argue that Corella's notion of dramaturgy or idea of a theater may have germinated in emulation of other authors, his predecessors or contemporaries that follow in the trail blazed by that stellar French author.

The next step in our analysis is to probe into the way the agency of the narrator-expositor, in conditioning and informing the gestation and evolution of psychodrama, reverberates in a variety of intra-textual and extra-textual phenomena. "Intra-textual," which I use here as synonymous with "sub-textual," refers to factors that Corella borrows from works of his own vintage and assimilates into the frame of *Tragèdia de Caldesa*. "Extra-textual," by contrast, connotes the symbiosis of Corella's *Tragèdia* with works of other authors.

For an emblem of the sub-textual realm I have just referred to, we can do no better than to bring to mind Corella's special remake of the myth of Narcissus. That version of the myth serves, as well, as icon of the protagonist's role within a wide intertextual range. We find that Corella's alter ego embodies through the narcissistic perspective of a single individual the intriguing dialectic between reality-as-it-is and reality-as-it-should-be. What needs to be investigated is how the limited horizon of a single experience ushers in the macrocosmic projection of that dialectic into the wide scope of the narrative featured in *Tirant lo Blanc*.

A simple outline of the intra-textual and extra-textual dimensions we have just referred to calls for a close look at the overall interfacing of the primary perspectives concomitant to the role of Corella's narrator-expositor. We may start with Corella's adaptation of the myth of Narcissus. As Martos demonstrates, the Valencian master derives his unconventional interpretation not, as one might expect, from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* but, rather, from Boccaccio's *Genealogiae Deorum* (Martos, *Fonts i seqüència cronològica* 92). In fact, in keeping with Boccaccio's source, the Narcissus that appears in Corella's *Lamentacions* does not recognize himself in the image reflected in the limpid pool but believes the image to be that of the nymph that inhabits the enchanted waters.¹⁸

It is worth noting that the nymph-fixation operative in Corella's figuration of Narcissus emerges in full vigor in the characterization of the protagonist –alias narrator-expositor– in Corella's *Tragèdia*. It is, then, of great interest to acknowledge the intra-textual affinity between the latter personage and the one that represents so dramatically the mournful speech that pervades the aforementioned *Lamentacions*. It is of no less interest to pursue our analysis a step further and consider how the inter-textual bond between *Tragèdia de Caldesa* and *Tirant lo Blanc* reveals in the latter explicit dramatic details that remain implicit in the former. Worthy of special consideration is the following passage taken from chapter 283 of that celebrated romance of chivalry:

— ¡Oh fortuna, enemiga de tots aquells qui rectament en lo món viure desigen! ¿Per què has permès que los meus desaventurats ulls hagen pogut veure cosa que tots los vivents no han vist, ni porien pensar que un tal cas fos possible qui fer-se pogués, si doncs a la femenil condició no li és res imposible que de mal sia? ¡Oh adversa fortuna! ¿En què t'he jo ofesa, que en les batalles me fas ésser victoriós e triümfant,

¹⁸ It is useful to quote directly from Martos's precise explanation:

Així, doncs, Ovidi presenta dos moments del procés d'autoenamorament *narcissista*: un primer en el qual l'amant no es reconeix i un segon en què és conscient de l'atracció per si mateix. Corella, que simplifica bastant el final de la història, desenvolupa només la primera idea i ens presenta un Narcís que no sap que està autoenamorant-se i que creu veure una nimfa dins l'aigua, amb la qual cosa modifica aquest aspecte del text clàssic. (*Fonts i seqüència cronològica de les proses mitològiques de Joan Roís de Corella* 89)

(‘Ovid presents two symptoms in the auto-erotic, narcissistic syndrome: in the first, the lover does not recognize himself; in the second, the lover is aware of the attraction he feels toward himself. By simplifying considerably the ending of the narrative embedded in the myth, Corella develops only the first motif and, thus, portrays a Narcissus that is not aware of his falling in love with himself and believes he sees a nymph inside the pond. By the latter detail, Corella modifies the narrative of the classical myth.’) (Cocozzella, *Text, Translation, and Critical Interpretation of Joan Roís de Corella's Tragèdia de Caldesa* 68-9).

For a full discussion of Corella's vision of Narcissus, see pp. 65-82 in the latter study.

e en amar só lo més malfadat home que jamés naixqués?... No creguera jamés que en donzella de tan poca edat hagués tan poca vergonya e tant atreviment, que sens temor cometés un tan abominable crim. ¡O fortuna, com est malcontenta de mi, que en uns casos m'exalces e en altres me baixes tant! Ajustes-me a les penes novelles ànsies. Tu, sorda de poca amor, assegura los meus plants e mitiga les mies lamentacions d'infinida dolor, perquè no tinga de fer cas que après m'hagués a penedir. (Ch. 283; ed. Riquer 2: 206)

(‘Oh, fortune, enemy of all those who want to live virtuously in this world!—cried Tirant, tormented by the vile sight that he had witnessed. Why have you allowed my wretched eyes to see this thing which no other living beings have seen, or can ever deem possible, were it not that no wicked trick is impossible for a woman to do? Oh, adverse fortune, how have I offended you to make me so virtuous and triumphant in battle, and in love, the most miserable man ever born?... I would never have believed that so young a damsel could have so little shame, and such boldness, as to have coldly committed so abominable a crime. Oh, fortune, how displeased you must be with me, to raise me up in some instances and to cast me down in others! You heap new woes on my sorrows, and are deaf to the pangs of unrequited love; but I ask that you take heed of my cries and mitigate this hopeless pain, so that I might not have to do something which I shall later repent.’) (Trans. La Fontaine 551–2)¹⁹

At first reading, this passage reveals obvious affinities with Corella’s text in the overall tone of strident lamentations and reproaches voiced by one who considers himself victimized by fortune and betrayed by the woman he loves. A rough-and-ready comparison brings to light, also, signs of a considerable expansion. For instance, Corella’s persona utters a short incidental phrase –“per cas de més adversa fortuna mia” (27)– which not only matches verbatim the confrontational “¡O adversa fortuna!” but also echoes throughout Tirant’s protracted speech sampled in the passage just quoted. What is clear is that the similarities that jump to our attention in the comparison outlined here are not simply coincidental. Rather, they stem from the feat of creativity that the authors of *Tirant lo Blanc* brilliantly carry out by incorporating their amplified rewrite of *Tragèdia de Caldesa* into a

¹⁹ Another drastic demonstration of Tirant’s mournful declamations is found throughout ch. 291 (ed. Riquer 2: 219–25), headed by the rubric “Lamentació que fa Tirant.” In ch. 295 (ed. Riquer 2: 232–5) Tirant provides his own account of what he saw taking place in the garden. The following passage is particularly significant in view of its obvious similarity with Corella’s text:

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

(‘But finally my agonized eyes were presented with the sight of this highly esteemed lady at a time when I could not have been greatly on her mind; for she was with Lausetà, the black gardener. First I saw them kiss dishonestly, and the offense to my eyes and feelings increased as they went together into a room, exchanging words and glances of infinite love. They emerged looking like creatures who had attained all the delights and pleasures available to lovers.’) (Trans. La Fontaine 570)

Worthy pondering is especially the reference to the “deshonest besar.”

sequence of chapters –283 to 296, to be exact– of their novel. Thus, Corella’s incisive and minimalist depiction of the essential details of a most shocking scene becomes, when reworked by Martorell-Galba duo, the step-by-step account of the ingenious ruse devised by Viuda Reposada (‘The Easygoing Widow’), one of the most wicked personages in the entire novel. Reposada’s motives are quite selfish. She claims for herself the amorous attention of Tirant, the knight in shining armor, with whom she is desperately in love. Viuda’s intentions are to arouse Tirant’s jealousy and convince him that his beloved, the Princess Carmesina, is having an affair with another man. The wicked plan is implemented, à la Iago, with impressive, if diabolic, efficiency.

The special interest that the two authors show in the perverse woman’s mindset is an issue to which we shall come back presently. As for now, let us turn our attention to a mere juxtaposition of Corella’s original presentation and the adaptation of the two novelists. The juxtaposition warrants a fresh analytical approach based on what I propose to call “the equation of proportional counterbalancing.” This means that the terms of the equation are inversely proportioned one to the other. Accordingly, we may ponder how Martorell and Galba expand, novelistically, the textual core that Corella encapsulates in a compact plot, quintessentially dramatic and potentially theatrical. In keeping with the equation’s overarching parallelism that subsumes obvious contrasts and differences, Martorell and Galba retain a great deal of Corella’s dramatic mode. In fact, a number of scholars –Aguilar i Montero, Cocozzella (“Ausiàs March and Martorell’s Egocentric and Historicist Modes”), Grilli, Massip (“Topography and Stagecraft in *Tirant lo Blanc*”)– review the theatrical features evidenced in the acting and staging of Reposada’s malicious machinations. What we learn from these scholars is that those features are a clear reflection of kindred qualities inherent or latent in the main source of the two novelists: Corella’s *Tragèdia*. In the final analysis, Martorell and Galba end up attesting to the stage-worthy features embodied in Corella’s idea of a theater.

There are corollaries to be derived from the aforementioned equation of counterbalancing. Corella’s nymph-fixated protagonist and the heroic Tirant hold fast to the notion of the ideal woman, whom they describe in very similar terms. The former refers to Caldesa as “una inclita donzella, en bellea sens par, en avisament passant totes les altres, ab gràcia i singularitat tan extrema que seria foll qui en sa presència alguna altra lloàs en estima de tanta vàlua” (26) (‘an illustrious young woman of unequalled beauty, who surpassed in wisdom all other maidens. Unmatched she was in her demeanor so that, in view of her merits, it would be foolish to praise the virtues of any other damsel’). The latter exalts Princess Carmesina as the embodiment of great physical beauty and supreme wisdom: “La sua bellea e avisament passa totes les altres del món, ab singularitat tan extrema que seria foll qui en sa presència alguna altra lloàs d’èsser de tanta estima” (chapter 295; ed. Riquer 2: 233) (‘In beauty and discretion she surpassed all other damsels in the world to such an extent that one would have to be mad to consider, in her presence, someone else equal to her’) (trans. La Fontaine 570). Even as they express a quasi-ecstatic veneration for the beauty and virtues of the ladylove, the two personages are in unison as to their profound disappointment when they perceive, rightly or wrongly, the devastating collapse of their ideal. We may be sure that Corella’s persona shares fully the sentiments voiced by Tirant in the following passage: “No creguera jamás que en donzella de tan poca edat hagués tan poca vergonya e tan atreviment, que sens temor cometés un tan abominable crim” (chapter 283; ed. Riquer 2: 206) (‘I would never have believed that so young a damsel could have so little shame, and such boldness, as to have committed so abominable a crime’ (trans. La Fontaine 552).

There is no denying that the comparative study we have just undertaken reveals an unmistakable pattern of parallelism. The two personages most afflicted by disillusionment bemoan the tarnished icon embodied in a human being, whom entranced lovers of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries identify as *la belle dame sans merci* or *donna angelicata*. Needless to say, there is trouble in the rarefied realm of courtly love or *dolce stil nuovo*. We need to remind ourselves that the notion of the equation we have sketched out entails the principle of proportional counterbalancing. Probing into that principle, we may easily verify the complementary contrast evinced by the two-pronged phenomenology we have referred to: intensity, compression, compactness on Corella's side of the equation; expansion and amplification on the side of the Martorell-Galba duo. Beyond the broad contrast, there are some specific issues that invite further discussion. For the sake of clarity, it is convenient (1) to analyze the way the two novelists deal with the paramount motif of the protagonist's perspective and (2) take up the urtext consisting of Corella's treatment of the same motif. This reverse procedure promises to shed considerable light on the esthetic of the ultimate source of Martorell's and Galba's creative enterprise.

The two novelists provide a straightforward exposition of Tirant's turbulent state of mind beset by the problematic dialectic between two apparently conflicted, though actually complementary, existential dimensions: reality-as-it-is and reality-as-it-should-be. Apropos of that dialectic, Martorell and Galba allow us to probe into a paradigm of conflict and complementation perceptible at the heart of Tirant's imposing presence as a live human being. Dámaso Alonso and Lola Badia deal quite graphically with that paradigm and describe it, respectively, as a contraposition, on the one hand, between "la naturalidad cotidiana" and "el espíritu unitario caballeresco" (Alonso 502, 515) and, on the other hand, between the "vulnerable home de carn i ossos" and the "immutable cavaller de l'ideal" (Badia, "El Tirant en la tardor medieval catalana" 50). Whatever problematic aspect we may descry in the crisis of Tirant's ideal is resolved at long last by the subordination of the *cavaller's* perspective to the purview of the omniscient narrator. Fashioning a comforting, if not entirely pleasant denouement for Reposada's sordid plot, the narrator tries to reassure the reader with the following observation:

Com Tirant véu la cara e la roba, conegué la gran maldat de la Viuda Reposada, e en presència de tots jurà allí que si en aquell cas pogués eixir en terra, que en presència de l'Emperador la feria cremar, o ab les sues pròpies mans faria d'ella lo que havia fet del negre. Aprés Tirant pregà molt a Plaerdemavida que li volgués perdonar dels mals pensaments que havia tenguts de la Princesa ni d'ella, e com fos ab sa altesa que li volgués recaptar perdó. E Plaerdemavida molt graciosament lo hi atorgà, e així restaren los dos ab molt bona amor e voluntat. (Chapter 296; ed. Riquer 2: 236)

(“Seeing the mask and the rest of the costume, Tirant realized the great wickedness of the Widow Reposada, and he swore, in front of everyone, that if he could return to shore at that moment, he would either have the widow burned in the presence of the Emperor, or, with his own hands, he would do to her as he had done to the black. Afterwards, Tirant pleaded with Plaerdemavida to forgive him for the bad thoughts that he had had regarding the princess and her, and when she returned to her highness, to ask her to pardon him for his behavior. Plaerdemavida graciously granted his request, and the two of them remained in peace, their mutual love and good will restored. (Trans. La Fontaine 572)

With this, all the loose ends are neatly tied. The “cara” and “roba” are the objects used by Plaerdemavida to impersonate the unfortunate black gardener, whose violent death at the hand of Tirant is referred to in the passage.

Now let us turn to Corella’s side of the equation, where we find what may be considered the urtext creatively borrowed and adapted by Martorell and Galba. Even at the risk of overstating the obvious, it bears pointing out that in *Tragèdia de Caldesa* the narrator’s first-person discourse holds complete sway. Consequently, the absence of a third-person impartial, omniscient overview negates the factoring in of any corrective intervention vis-à-vis the distortions or misconceptions generated by the male protagonist’s self-commiserating reflections and lamentations. We deduce that the limited purview of Corella’s protagonist conditions a plot with no clear resolution and reassuring denouement. The incapability to see dispassionately –that is, clearly and comprehensively– invariably takes effect in a primary agon: the primordial conflict between the male and female role. The former’s abusive appropriation of rhetoric at the expense of action is conspicuously reversed in the latter’s characterization.

We will leave for another occasion any discussion of Corella’s insight into the fateful clash of the verbose, abulic, in-your-face narcissism against Caldesa’s energetic, resourceful, surreptitious initiative. We need to reflect yet one more time on Corella’s esthetic of intensification and compactness. Now we discover that Corella’s problematizes some factors of utmost relevance –the protagonist’s limited perspective, for instance– in order to enhance the dramatic qualities and theatrical potential of his psychodrama. Corella furthers the phenomenology of theatricalization by capitalizing on the highly dramatized function generated by the narrator-expositor’s perspective.

In order to bring into focus Corella’s technique of enhanced dramatics through the author’s extraordinary insights into the role of the narrator-expositor, we do well to take a close look at what may be considered the most distinctive aspect of Corella’s *Tragèdia*: the insertion of a versified section into the text. The section consists of forty-two decasyllables distributed evenly into three stanzas of fourteen verses each. The stanzas constitute a veritable compendium of the tragic mode as they open the curtain into the inner theater of the protagonist’s psyche and, at the same time, display the three salient phases of the narrator-expositor’s consciousness.

I will quote the first stanza in an effort to illustrate the unfolding of the psychodrama:

Mourà’s corrent la tramuntana ferma
 e tots ensem los cels cauran en trossos,
 tornarà fred lo foc alt en l’esfera,
 en lo més fons, del món veuran lo centre,
 tinta de sang se mostrarà la lluna
 e tot escur lo sol perdrà la forma,
 ans que jamés de mi siau servida;
 e lo meu cos, del prim cabell fins l’ungla,
 mirant-ho vós, sia partit en peces,
 e, tornat pols, no prenga sepultura,
 ni reba el món tan celerada cendra,
 ni es puga fer algú gire la llengua
 a dir “Bon pos” a l’ànima maleita,
 si Déu permet mos ulls vos puguen veure. (Vv. 1-4; ed. Gustà 28)

(‘The steadfast Northern Star will move and run,
 and the whole sky at once shall fall to pieces,
 high in the globe the fire will turn to ice,
 and in the abyss the world shall find its center.
 Spattered with blood the moon shall show its face,
 the sun will lose its form in darkness bleak:
 you’ll see this pass before I serve you again,
 and may my body, as you yourself will witness,
 come to be torn apart from head to toe
 and may it turn to dust, bereft of burial.
 The Earth should not receive my hapless ashes,
 nor lips should move to wish a “Rest in Peace!”
 to a soul like mine that is so direly cursed.
 May God forbid that I should look at you!’)

The first six verses reverberate with the sound and fury typical of Seneca’s tragedies.²⁰ The passage, though brief, exhibits extensive and profound resonances. It strikes us as a veritable showcase of the all-important *imago agens* we have discussed above. Particularly impressive is the apocalyptic overtone of it all: the dislodging of the Northern Star, the falling of the sky, the inversion of the elemental properties of hot and cold, the chaotic transposition of zenith and nadir, the moon spattered with blood, and, most horrendous of all, the sun engulfed in darkness.²¹

²⁰ In “Sèneca i Roís de Corella,” Martos goes into a thorough account of Seneca’s influence on Corella’s literary production. In a related study (“March en Corella: asimilación, perspectiva e innovación en la *Tragèdia de Caldesa*”), Martos reviews, besides Seneca’s, various other sources, including the Bible, masterfully integrated into *Tragèdia de Caldesa*:

La construcción de la *Tragèdia de Caldesa* ilustra cómo Corella reelabora sus referentes, en general, a fin de crear un producto completamente nuevo y, en especial, la poesía de Ausiàs... A March se yuxtaponen otras fuentes, como los *Amores* (II, 5 y III, 11^a-11b) y, quizás, los *Remedia amoris* (vv. 399-420) de Ovidio, Séneca, la *Elegía* de Boccaccio, ecos bíblicos y antropológicos e, incluso, tal vez, cualquiera de las tantas otras obras medievales en las cuales las dama tienden a juntarse con el hombres de baja condición. (“March en Corella” 33)

(‘The structuring of *Tragèdia de Caldesa* illustrates how, in general, Corella re-elaborates his sources in order to bring about a completely new creation. He does this in particular with March’s works... Corella juxtaposes other sources to the ones consisting of March’s poetry: Ovid’s *Amores*... and, perhaps, *Remedia amoris*. . . , Boccaccio’s *Elegia* [*Fiammetta*], reminiscences from the Bible, and even, perhaps, any of those numerous medieval works, in which ladies are inclined to engage in liaisons with men of lowly estate.’)

²¹ This is what we learn from a brief reflection on the prevailing criticism on Corella: indispensable though it is, the tracing of specific sources must not obstruct the path of research that extends beyond positivistic analysis especially when that analysis privileges a literalist reading of a literary text. Martos himself is not averse from resorting, now and then, to broad criteria, such as “eco senequiano” (‘echo from Seneca’), “sabor apocalíptico” (‘apocalyptic flavor’), “recurso hiperbólico” (‘use of hyperbole’), “ambientación apocalíptica” (‘apocalyptic ambiance’) (“March en Corella” 19, n. 32), “patetismo senequiano” (‘Senecan pathos’), “vehemencia trágica” (‘the vehemence of tragedy’) (“March en Corella” 7-8). Martos cogently adduces these less-than-specific criteria as self-evident indicators of March’s and Seneca’s influence on *Tragèdia de Caldesa*.

What we witness here is the full dramatization of the first phase of Corella's psychodrama. This phase, marked by the momentous transition from prose to verse, attains iconic prominence by the multiple manifestations of the *imago agens* and by the slow-motion, special ekphrastic effect evinced in the protagonist's reaction to an array of lurid visions. The effect is sustained in a protracted tirade through the rest of stanza 1 and the entire stanza 2. The speaker indulges, morbidly, in a vehement stream of reproaches and curses he lays upon himself. The harangue culminates in a sinister oath tantamount to a satanic repudiation of the reassuring Christian doctrine concerning the resurrection of the body:

[E] res de mi en lo món no hi romanga.
 E, si per cas, del meu cos, gens ne resta,
 sia menjar als animals salvatges:
 prenga'n cascú la part d'una centil·la
 perquè en tants llocs sia lo meu sepulcre,
 que, el món finit, no es trobe la carn mia,
 ni es puga fer que mai io ressuscite. (Vv. 22-8; ed. Gustà 28)

(‘I’ll have no trace of me remain on Earth;
 and should but a piece of flesh be left of me,
 be it repast of beasts both fierce and wild
 till they devour my body bit by bit.
 Thus, as in many a place I shall be entombed,
 the finite realm shall see no trace of me:
 no part of me there’ll be to resurrect!’)²²

²² The following passage from Seneca's *Phaedra* exhibits an interfacing of doomsday imagery and a number of curses that the speaker (Hippolytus) levels at himself:

Omnis impulsus ruat
 aether et atris nubibus condat diem,
 ac versa retro sidera obliquos agant
 retorta cursus. Tuque, sidereum caput,
 radiate Titan, tu nefas stirpis tuae
 specularere? Lucem merge et in tenebras fuge.
 cur dextra, divum rector atque hominum, vacat
 tua, nec trisulca mundus ardescit face?
 in me tona, me fige, me velox cremet
 transactus ignis: sum nocens, merui mori:
 placui novercae. (vv. 674-84; p. 502)

(‘Let the whole sky collapse in ruin and bury the daylight in black clouds, let the stars turn back and veering run their courses awry. And you, celestial being, radiant Titan, do you observe the outrage done by your grandchild? Drown the light, flee into darkness! Why, ruler of gods and men, is your hand empty? Why is the earth not catching fire from the three-pronged brand? Hurl your thunder at me, transfix me, let the swift fire pierce and consume me. I am guilty, I deserve to die: I have attracted my stepmother.’) (Trans. Fitch, p. 503)

It may be argued that self-cursing is a tangible sign, among others, of Seneca's influence on Corella's *Tragedia*.

In sum, there are two features that stand out in the two stanzas we have just discussed: first, the exploitation of the narrator-expositor's perspective in order to transform psychodrama into a tragic mode à la Seneca; second, the embedding of the *imago agens* into a conspicuous locus, which may be envisaged, in the words of Gaston Bachelard, as "language area" or "poetic space" (Bachelard xxiv). In the first two stanzas that emerge out of the prose of *Tragèdia de Caldesa*, Corella works out a "poetic space" of the psyche within the inner theater of the mind.

Corella's probing into the phenomenology of psychic space paves the way, in turn, for another dimension of spatiality, which is illustrated in the third stanza. The third stanza is preceded by a short passage in prose, which describes Caldesa's compunction ("ab moltes llàgremes, sospirs e sanglots" ['with profuse tears, tears, and sighs']) once she becomes aware that her offended lover is on to her reprehensible deed (ed. Gustà 29). This versified passage, which matches the elevated rhetoric but not the impetuosity of the male protagonist, spells out, supposedly in Caldesa's own voice, her regret accompanied by the desire to expiate her hideous sin. The penance she envisages for herself is harsh and grisly. She ends up portraying herself as a veritable Mary Magdalene. A quotation of the crucial passage is now in order:

"Clarament veig que, en la mundana orla,
Déu no ha fet persona tan culpable:
jo us he comés abominable culpa,
tal, que en l'infern no trob pena conforme.
És-me la mort més dolça que no sucre:
si fer se pot, en vostres braços muira.
En vós està que prengau de mi venja:
si us par que hi bast, per vostres mans espire;
o, si voleu; coberta de celici
iré pel món peregrinant romera.
Déu no farà que el passat fet no sia;
mas, si espe rau esmena de mon viure,
jo la faré, seguint a Magdalena,
los vostres peus llavant ab semblant aigua." (Vv. 29-42; ed. Gustà 29).

('Clearly I see that in this worldly sphere
in God's creation I live in sin and guilt:
with horrid sin I have offended you,
such that in Hell can't find a fit redress.
Now death to me would taste as sweet as honey,
if I should chance to die in your embrace.
It is your right to take revenge on me:
if you so judge, your hands will give me death,
or, if you wish, I shall be dressed in sackcloth
and, henceforth, roam the world in pilgrimage.
God won't undo my past and make it void,
but, if you expect of me to amend my life,
I vow to go the way of Magdalene
and wash your feet as she herself would wash them.')

Here, two concomitant factors are brought to light: first, the dimension of spatiality I have already referred to; second, the process of idealization implicit in the Caldesa-Magdalene synthesis. The first image is illustrated by the very nature of space transposed to a transcendental level. The psychic space associated with the *imago agens* mutates into its transcendent counterpart, which I propose to designate by the term “place.” The journey from “space” to “place” attains to the realm of the spirit or the ideal, eminently suited to the contemplation of an edifying vision: that of the saintly Magdalene and the idealized Caldesa all in one. Thus, the psychic space of the first two stanzas in Corella’s *Tragèdia* is complemented by the soulful or spiritual place of the third stanza.

Some further explication is in order about the second factor listed above: with the visionary presentation of Caldesa as a saintly woman, Corella marks the completion of the protagonist’s journey from grievous experience to entrancing contemplation. Such a presentation foreshadows another illustrious Cervantian analogue. It brings to mind chapter 10 of part 2 of *Don Quijote*, in which Sancho Panza challenges his bewildered master to believe in a miraculous, though far from obvious transformation of an ordinary peasant woman into the sublime Dulcinea. In his illuminating study of this episode, none other than Erich Auerbach shines the spotlight on Sancho and observes that Quijote’s faithful companion “adapts himself to the position of puppet-master with as much gusto and elasticity as he later will to the position of governor of an island” (308). The puppet master identified by Auerbach shows an uncanny ability to transpose the nature of *ficció* à la Martorell and Galba to the level of preternatural existence: precisely the existence of the ideal. The result is a key manifestation of reality-as-it-should-be. By underscoring the protagonist’s obsession with the icon of the virtuous lady, Corella anticipates Quijote’s *idée fixe* fomented by that “puppet-master,” Sancho Panza. In fact Corella assigns a complex role to the narrator-expositor, who evokes as does Sancho, the image of the ideal woman while remaining a susceptible individual, a pre-figuration of the quixotic lover entranced by that image. We may well deduce that Corella’s narrator-expositor transforms Caldesa into Magdalene just as Sancho, more than a century and a half later, metamorphoses the aforementioned peasant woman into Dulcinea.

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

After the high point so memorably illustrated in the third stanza, the dramatics of Corella’s “theater of the mind” spells out an anticlimactic turn. Evidently, the escape into the realm of the ideal or the spiritual (“the soulful place”) proves to be short-lived. The vision of the saint in the act of washing Christ’s feet is evocative of the illustrations in the devotional literature very much in vogue in Corella’s lifetime. The religious vignette that could be a most effective antidote for any of the *imagines agentes* that loom up in the first two stanzas cannot, alas, assuage the grief and resentment of the narrator. We detect,

nevertheless, a mood of resignation in the melancholic reflection that demarcates the denouement of the entire monologue. The overbearing voice has lost its characteristic resonance. The stentorian remonstrations give way to wistful reverie. A moment of calm ensues, in which the narcissist unabashedly gives free vent to a powerful desire that issues from the very depths of his frustration. Oh that the lady of his dreams could be divided into two bodies, one beautiful and the other ugly! The extraordinary passage reads as follows:

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

(‘How happy would I be if this beautiful woman could be divided into two parts and her noble person, endowed with subtle understanding, would be my portion, while her deceitful and fickle will, swayed by misguided preference, would inhabit an ugly, deformed body to be allotted to the man that had dealt with her in such a scandalous fashion.’)

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

(1) reality-as-it-is—beautiful body [*bella senyora*], endowed with good qualities [*gentil persona ab tan subtil enteniment*] and bad ones [*falla e moble voluntat, de falsa estima guiada*];

(2) reality-as-it-should be—the beautiful body, graced with virtues, remains the incarnation of the auctorial persona’s ladylove, while an ugly body would be created just for the purpose of concretizing the vicious side of Caldesa, destined to “the other man” that has treated her so indecently.

We realize that in its denouement Corella’s psychodrama reveals a striking shift from the kind of *Sturm und Drang* that critics unanimously recognize as a sign of decisive influence on the tragic mode revitalized by Roís de Corella. The shift is underscored precisely by the aforementioned resignation and concomitant reflection, inspired not by the author of such works as *Thyestes* and *Hercules Furens* but by a Seneca of a different temper: the Stoic *auctoritas* of the *Epistulae Morales*. Corella calls attention to the telltale semiotics that attest to the conflation of two complementary dimensions of *senequismo*.

There are, in fact, two suggestive signs that Corella employs in order to highlight his insights into the dramatics of tragedy. The first sign consists of the wistful creation (*inventio*) of the ugly body conjured up as the existential correlative of the speaker’s disturbing image of a vitiated Caldesa of flesh and blood. There can be little doubt that Corella elicits in his readers a somber meditation on the speaker’s inability to resolve the dichotomy of the two bodies into a blissful stereoscopic outcome. The two visions of Caldesa—one attractive, the other repulsive—do not come together into an integrated, holistic portrait. Rather, the two incompatible images stand out as symbols of a split self. The split self, in turn, attests to the schizoid symptoms that, in Corella’s case, determine the tragic condition. Corella’s protagonist is hard put coming to terms with the uncomfortable ambiguity inherent in his existential bond with his image of Caldesa. He feels the urgent need to reconcile himself to the tension, which besets him no end, between the Caldesa,

physically beautiful but morally flawed, and the perfected damsel, free of blemishes of any kind, whether physical, moral, or psychological. In short, the ambiguity perceptible at first blush in the portrait of Caldesa turns out to be a reflection of the unsettling indeterminacy that gnaws at the very fibers of the protagonist's sense of self-consciousness. Ultimately, the narrator-expositor's constant attempts to look outside himself become frustrated by the urgent exigencies of an obsessive meditation concomitant to his introspection into the confines of the self.

There is, as I have indicated, a second distinctive sign in the semiotic configuration of Corella's complex textuality. Corella's *Tragèdia* may be described as a rich tapestry of nuanced denotations and connotations intertwined with the woof and warp of two main strands. These interact in the evolution of a leitmotif that starts in the form of a query and ends in the manner of a response. The query is formulated in the very first paragraph as a two-pronged question:

¿Com, doncs, serà causa de tanta dolor escriure's puga? ¿Quin paper soferrà ésser tint de lletgea de tant crim? (Ed. Gustà 25)

(‘How, then, can anyone explain the reason for writing about my intense suffering? What sort of paper will withstand enough ink to describe such a sordid deed?’)

The response comes in the last sentence of the protagonist's monologue:

Acceptant la ploma, que sovint greus mals descansa, la present ab ma pròpia sang pinte, perquè la color de la tinta ab la dolor que raona se conforme. (Ed. Gustà 29)

(‘I picked up the pen, which often soothes the severe pangs of grief, and depicted the present story with my own blood. Let the color of this ink conform to the sad episode it recounts.’)

The protagonist leaves us in suspense, absorbed as we are in the contemplation that complements our detailed analysis of a momentous literary event. In that event resides the impression very hard to explain or rationalize and even harder to dispel from our minds: the act of writing, as an existential correlative of a theatrical performance, manifests in itself the dynamic of a catharsis. What lies at the heart of Corella's masterpiece is precisely the catharsis that accompanies Miguel de Unamuno's lifelong meditation on *el sentimiento trágico de la vida* (‘the tragic sense of life’).

5. Conclusion

As my discussion comes to a close, I would call attention to the notion of psychodrama, which merits, I submit, consideration as a substantial contribution, hitherto unacknowledged, to the scholarship on Joan Roís de Corella. A close study reveals that *Tragèdia de Caldesa* belongs to the age-old tradition that stretches from the heyday of Roman civilization to the beginning of the Renaissance. As Jody Enders demonstrates, that tradition attests to a protracted process of what this scholar proposes to call *letteraturizzazione*—the mutation that is, from ancient forensic oratory to a feat of literary creativity, such as the one illustrated by some salient examples of the interior monologue featured in Chrétien de Troyes's *Cligés*. What motivates my argument is the intention to show that Corella is an eminent exponent of *letteraturizzazione*—the complex phenomenology, that is, that informs the monologue of his *Tragèdia*, precisely his psychodrama par excellence.

I have attempted to underscore the significance of the narrator-expositor's role, which happens to shed considerable light on Corella's overall dramatics. I have been able to identify three phases of the "theater of the mind" connatural to that role. Each of the first two phases epitomized in the versified portion of *Tragèdia de Caldesa* exhibits a spatiality of its own: immanent in the first two stanzas, transcendent in the third. I have labeled the former and latter domain, respectively, "psychic space" and "spiritual or soulful place." Phase 3, demarcated by a return to Corella's trade-mark prose, often referred to as "valenciana prosa," occupies the denouement proper of *Tragèdia*. Here we get the sense of the proverbial silver lining in the dark cloud. This section reflects a remarkable change of mood, which I propose to call "Stoic rebound" –a mood of resignation and equanimity, tantamount to a deep appreciation of *consolatio philosophiae*. We see, then, that the narrator-expositor maps out his own journey from the hyperemotional reaction to the *imago agens* (phase 1) to the rapture of contemplating the sainted ladylove (phase 2) until he comes to rest in the *consolatio* of dispassionate musings of the "Stoic rebound."

Closely related to the protagonist's journey I have just sketched out is Seneca's profound influence on *Tragèdia de Caldesa*. The pronounced aspect of Corella's *senequismo*, which critics at large have duly recognized, is, of course, nothing new.²³ This notwithstanding, I would point out a major issue to which critics have not devoted the attention it clearly deserves. I would argue that Seneca's preponderant presence constitutes in itself a reliable index of theatricality. In support of my argument I would refer to the following observation by John G. Fitch, accomplished editor and translator of Seneca's plays:

Senecan drama is a drama of the word. Its speeches are eloquent, forceful, delighting in the language and in the poetic medium. Their fluency reflects the rhetorical training which Seneca received ... Senecan rhetoric, like that of the Elizabethan dramatists, makes a virtue of excess, in the sense that its excesses match excesses of emotion and attitude in the *dramatis personae*. Above all, the script of Seneca's dramas demands performance, as much as a musical score does. At the very least, the reader needs to imagine this poetry spoken on the living voice, in order to gain some sense of its intoxicating richness. (1-2)

In light of Fitch's commentary we can readily appreciate the ingenious technique by which, in the section we have identified as phase 1 of *Tragèdia de Caldesa*, Corella deftly translates the diction emblematic of Seneca's tragic mode into a highly efficient instrument of the protagonist's psychodrama. Fitch's obiter dictum about the Elizabethan dramatics is particularly revealing as it brings to mind at least one impressive analogue foreshadowed by a factor we have already singled out: the conflation of cataclysmic imagery and jarring self-imprecation. The analogue in question is found in act 3, scene 2 of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, where the pathetic and yet majestic old man, in true Senecan form, vents his rage in explosive speech that fills the entire stage.²⁴

²³ For a broad scholarly overview of this subject, see Martos's aforementioned essay ("Sèneca i Roís de Corella") and the informative study by Pujol.

²⁴ Let's quote here a sample of Lear's unforgettable words:

Blow, winds and crack your cheeks! Rage! Blow!
You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout
Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the cocks!

In addition, Corella uses to best advantage Seneca's manner in order to channel the primordial dramatic thrust that, as we have seen, Enders calls *actio*. Now we may add as factor kindred not only to *actio* but also, ultimately, to the mechanics of Corella's psychodrama the function of the so-called *forza icastica* that Elisa Aragone adduces apropos of the style of Rodrigo Cota, an illustrious pioneer of modern Spanish theater (Aragone 54, Lázaro Carreter 73-5).²⁵

It is well to take another look at the denouement that Corella devises for his ingenious psychodrama. In this section, which I have identified as phase 3, Corella applies a personal spin to a factor of unmistakable Senecan vintage. The factor stems from an ethical orientation that Fitch describes in the following terms:

Belonging to the branch of Stoicism concerned with ethics, [Seneca's philosophical writings] set themselves to the practical purpose of curing humans of emotional turmoil. (Fitch 22)

What is truly remarkable is that Corella emulates this "practical purpose" in a wholehearted manner, such as Seneca himself would not admit in his own plays. In these Fitch underscores the conspicuous absence of Seneca's Stoicism:

It should not be assumed, from the examples of certain Greek and Shakespearian tragedies, that tragedy necessarily ends with a movement towards correction or redemption; indeed one could argue that Senecan drama, where there is almost never such a movement, represents a purer form of the genre. (Fitch 26)

Corella, then, brings to light a full-blown *senequismo* absent in Seneca's own plays: he fashions a plot that hits the rock bottom of the tragic condition and still leaves room for the "silver lining." In the very experience of tragedy he allows for a Stoic rebound or upturn in the possibility of a purge of noxious passions or, to borrow Fitch's phrase, "a movement toward correction or redemption." Implicit in that movement there is yet another analogue: one that Shakespearean scholars perceive in the denouement of *King Lear*. Worth quoting in full are the following prefatory observations proffered by one of the editors of that nonpareil tragedy:

So far as the main character is concerned the play might be called, not the tragedy, but the redemption of King Lear... Lear's redemption is not wholly accomplished until his reunion with Cordelia. Then at last he throws off forever the kingly robe of

You sulph'rous and thought-executing fires,
Vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking thunder,
Smite flat the thick rotundity o' th' world!
Crack nature's moulds, all germens spill at once,
That makes ingrateful man! (3.2.1-9) (P. 798)

²⁵ In the context of my argument I interpret *forza icastica* to denote the power of projection that emanates from compressed language as an expression of the surge of emotion and the upheaval of passion. For the sake of a full discussion it is well to take into account the following definition of "icastico" found in Aldo Gabrielli's *Grande dizionario italiano* [Hoepli]: "che ritrae la realtà così come appare, con grande evidenza rappresentativa."

pride and self-will and appears the simple man, owning his weakness, begging forgiveness, and asking for nothing in the world but his daughter's love.²⁶

In Corella's tragedy of full-scale *senequismo* the motif of redemption resides in the protagonist's asking for nothing in the world but the love of Caldesa, subjected, in true Stoic form, to a process of beautification not so much of a physical as of an ethical nature.

An appropriate corollary to be derived from these reflections I offer as a conclusion of my study is a response to the pointed question that the Italian Catalanist, Annamaria Annicchiarico, asks apropos of Corella's masterpiece: "Perché tragedia?" ("Why tragedy?")²⁷ For Annicchiarico and the other voices of the prevailing trend of criticism on Corella, the answer, dispatched in short order, runs as follows: Corella abides by a pattern championed by none other than the author of the *Divine Comedy*. The pattern is based on a stark profile of the tragic mode, defined in terms of a happy beginning and a very sad, often catastrophic ending. As Dante himself puts it in his *Epistola* to Cangrande della Scala, "tragedia in principio est admirabilis et quieta, in fine seu exitu est fetida et horribilis" ("at the beginning tragedy is admirable and peaceful; at the end or in its resolution it is repulsive and horrific") (*Opere* 1390: *Epistola* 13.10). In rebuttal to this vision of tragedy we can now point out that the Stoic rebound and upturn evinced in Corella's denouement do not jibe with the qualities "fetida et horribilis" underscored by Dante. Hence Dante's definition does not apply to the overall Stoic orientation of Corella's plot.

Another likely rebuttal has to do with the full recognition of Seneca's commanding presence. The current trend of criticism on Corella attests to the uppermost consideration that a number of scholars accord to Seneca's towering presence in Corella's distinctive version of the monologue. In my judgment, it is unfortunate that these scholars remain impervious to any reasonable inference validated by their own unanimous agreement as to Seneca's powerful influence. In fact, they staunchly maintain that even a palpable familiarity with the most influential dramaturge of Roman antiquity could not inspire Corella to compose a full-fledged theatrical piece. Indeed, Josep Lluís Martos, one of the most assiduous researchers of Corella's sources, peremptorily circumscribes discussion on that author's obvious assimilation of Seneca's dramatics. Here is how Martos categorically dismisses any consideration of *Tragèdia de Caldesa* as a bona fide tragedy:

Francisco Rico deixava clar que la concepció corellana de la *tragedia* era purament medieval i, tot i que havia llegit i aprofitat les tragèdies de Sèneca, poc els devia des d'una perspectiva de gènere ... Per tant, el gènere *tragedia* no és un dels arguments que refereriré per a la influència senequiana en l'obra de Joan Roís de Corella. ("Sèneca i Roís de Corella" n. 2.)

(Francisco Rico has shown clearly that Corella's notion of *tragedia* is strictly medieval and, although Corella read and used to best advantage Seneca's tragedies, he was not indebted to them as far as genre is concerned... For this reason, the genre of tragedy is not one of the topics I will take up apropos of Seneca's influence on Corella's works.)

²⁶ See p. 776 of the edition listed in the bibliography below.

²⁷ The question appears in the very title of Annicchiarico's seminal essay. See n. 2 above.

Martos stakes his position on what he regards as an apodictic proposition. Not unlike Annicchiarico, he would oblige us to face up or bow down to an *ipse dixit* not to be questioned.

This notwithstanding, Martos himself catches a glimpse of a fresh approach that beckons beyond the path of the conventional, positivistic search of specific sources. Of course, the inevitability and indispensability of that path is beyond question. There can be no denial, all the same, that, on occasion, the research that yields an abundance of raw data leads to an impasse because of a less than satisfactory explanation of what those data signify. In order to clinch my argument, suffice it to quote one of Martos's illuminating declarations. Here is how, according to Martos, Corella comes to the apex of his creative genius after assimilating especially in his *Tragèdia* an impressive number of sources, documented, to be sure, in conformity with the strictest positivistic protocol:

Es un momento álgido en la producción de Joan Roís, en el que, desde la yuxtaposición de fuentes, ha evolucionado hasta el cambio de perspectiva en el uso de motivos, argumentos y géneros, a través de un proceso de reflexión que busca clara e, incluso, obsesivamente la innovación. (“March en Corella” 33)

(‘It is a crucial moment in the literary production of Joan Roís. Now the author has progressed from the juxtaposition of sources to a change in perspective regarding the use of motifs, arguments, and genres. This change he accomplishes thanks to an act of reflection, by which he strives for innovation with clear and even obsessive purpose.’)²⁸

It is fair to say that the irresistible drive toward innovation that Martos intuits in Corella's artistic endeavor, far from precluding, actually invites discussion on a topic such as the one to which I devote the present essay. Let us bear in mind that the “momento álgido” crowning Corella's obsessive quest for innovation must be but a short step away from the eureka moment that climaxes the act best described by the Latin term *inventio* in its double acceptation of discovery and creation all in one. In the final analysis we may observe that Corella concretizes his *inventio* in discovering the attributes and creating the organism of a text well suited for the representation on the boards. Demonstrably, what Corella achieves is the full theatricalizing of tragedy. Corella's momentous, not to say revolutionary innovation is precisely the *inventio* of what turns out to be his own version of the tragic mode.

What I have tried to show is that Corella's *inventio* pertains to a hyper-Senecan or preter-Senecan tragedy conceived strictly from the perspective of the protagonist in the role of narrator-expositor. That notion of tragedy involves not only the fall caused by a hamartia of the protagonist's utter abandonment to one raging passion or another but also a Stoic upturn that consists in the protagonist's ability to rise above depression and despair and find comfort in the vision of a redeemed or regenerated ladylove.

At this point we may take another look at the Shakespearean analogues we have already called attention to. We realize that the Senecan factors –the “recurso hiperbólico” (‘use or the hyperbole’), the “patetismo” (‘pathos’), the “vehemencia” (‘vehemence’), and the like–

²⁸ Martos adduces incontrovertible evidence of Corella's borrowings from March, Ovid, Seneca, Boccaccio, not to mention “ecos bíblicos y antropológicos” (see n. 20 above).

that undergird Martos's seminal studies are the determinants of the performative and performable qualities of Corella's composition. Interestingly enough, no less an authority than T. S. Eliot recognizes these very qualities as instrumental in the birth of Elizabethan theater. We would not go amiss in profiling Corella's *Tragèdia* as a sui generis play, which foreshadows the phenomenology of Seneca's role in one of the most splendid periods in English literature. The profile does not imply necessarily direct influence. It signals, all the same, no small achievement for a Valencian author of the golden age of Catalan letters.

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