Tragic characters of the Celestina

James Arthur Flightner

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THE TRAGIC CHARACTERS OF THE CELESTINA

by

JAMES ARTHUR FLIGHTNER

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Although the Celestina was the first long Spanish prose work to be translated into English, it has only recently begun to receive the consideration and acclamation in English-speaking countries that it has received for centuries on the European continent. By the end of the sixteenth century, there had been eighty editions of this work published in Spain; by 1952, the total had reached one hundred and nineteen. Eighteen editions appeared in Italy before 1551; fourteen French editions were published in that same century. In contrast with this wide continental interest, the first English edition was published in 1631; not until 1894 was the translation reissued.

Within the last decade, however, there has been a considerable resurgence of interest in the Celestina. Three English translations have appeared in the United States and the number of scholarly articles on this Spanish classic has grown rapidly.¹

The earliest extant version of the Celestina, published anonymously in 1499, consisted of sixteen acts and bore the title, Comedia de Calisto y Melibea. The first folio of this edition is missing, but it seems likely that it contained the same information as appeared on the first folio of the second (1501) edition of the work.² The title with

¹For an excellent study of the publication history of the Celestina see Clara Louise Penney, The Book Called the Celestina (New York, 1954).

²This supposition is based upon spatial considerations and on the similarity of the argumentos which introduce the sixteen acts of both editions.
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its expression of a moral purpose in warning youths away from the false
counsels and deceits of procuresses and unfaithful servants is printed
on one side of the folio, and a summary of the plot of the entire work
is on the reverse side.

This 1501 edition contains several elements not present in the
1499 version. A prefatory letter states that the first act was found as
a fragment of an earlier comedia and that the author (still unrevealed)
thought so highly of its style, composition, and artistic intention that
he added fifteen acts to complete the anonymous beginning.

The 1501 edition also contains verses of arte mayor at the beginning
and end which present an acrostic revealing the identity of the author
to be Fernando de Rojas. Subsequent investigations have led scholars to
a general agreement that Fernando de Rojas was the author of at least
a portion of the work.

The next year, 1502, a new text of the Comedia de Calisto y
Melibea appeared. This new text contained five new acts interpolated
into the fourteenth act, and many minor changes scattered throughout the
work. A new prologue to this twenty-one act version contains a titular
change from Comedia to Tragicomedia.

Serious students and critics of Spanish literature have approached
the Celestina with great caution. First, there is the unusual format
of the work. The large number of acts, the shifts of setting within
the acts, the long monologues and the bawdy language all seem to
indicate that in spite of the dramatic format, the work was never
intended to be presented on the stage. Some critics therefore term it
a dialogue novel; others maintain that it is a drama but not drama in the common acceptance of the term. A second problem is that of the authentic version. Without being certain that further search may not reveal an earlier edition, many scholars feel that the 1499 edition is the one that should be considered the princeps. Others assert that the longer 1502 edition, the tragicomedia, surpasses the earlier text in intrinsic worth and they use it for their critical studies.

A third problem, one that has perhaps aroused the greatest interest among generations of scholars, is that of authorship. It is generally agreed that Fernando de Rojas had some part in the composition of the Celestina, but there is wide disagreement concerning his exact contribution. Some critics feel that the first act was indeed written by an unknown person and that Rojas did, as the prefatory letter claims, add the fifteen additional acts in the earliest extant version. Others feel that Rojas was purposely obfuscating the authorship of the work when he wrote the letter and that he was the author of the entire piece, including the five interpolated acts of 1502. Still others feel that an anonymous person wrote the first act, that Rojas wrote the fifteen additional acts in the 1499 version, and that some third party inserted the five additional acts in the 1502 version. Finally, some believe that Rojas wrote all but the first act with the aid of collaborators.

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4 See infra, p. 17 for biographic details.
The polemics revolving around the textual problems connected with the _Celestina_ have either caused critics of Spanish literature to shy away from the _Celestina_ or to be drawn into the fray. The result has been a paucity of scholarship on intrinsic phenomena.\(^5\)

It is not the purpose of this study to enter the various debates concerning these extrinsic problems. Such considerations are important and perfectly valid but our concern shall be with the _Celestina_ as a literary masterpiece which endures regardless of textual considerations. First, however, we must present our position regarding the above-mentioned problems as a means of establishing the basis from which we shall proceed in our discussion of the tragic potential of the several important characters of the work itself.

The first important problem to be considered is that of authorship. The one person who is unanimously regarded by contemporary critics to have been indispensable in the creation of the work is Fernando de Rojas. Ángel Valbuena Prat points out the increasing accord concerning the sole authorship of Rojas, and states what shall be our basic attitude concerning the complex problem of authorship:

> En relación con la unidad o pluralidad de autores, que es cuestión distinta de la "unidad de la obra", que siempre hemos reconocido en sus líneas integrales, se ha llegado hoy a la argumentación mas inteligente, respecto a la paternidad única de FERNANDO DE ROJAS. El estudio de Giulia Adinolfi, _La Celestina e la sua unità di composizione_, ya en los argumentos usuales para explicar como una cautela, el supuesto hallazgo de un acto primero por Rojas; ya en las comparaciones en los "añadidos" de las ediciones de veintiún actos, y las posibles motivaciones de diferencias en el desarrollo de las figuras agregadas, o las

\(^5\)For a detailed, yet concise, résumé of these and other _Celestina_ problems see D. W. McPheeters, "The Present State of _Celestina_ Studies," _Symposium_, XII (1958), 196-205.
nuevas, como el Rufián Centurio, constituye un intento de prueba más profundo que los anteriores defendidos. Sin que se llegue a una evidencia, la posición de un autor único, puede verse así cada vez más clara; y, desde luego, la preferimos, quedando la genial novela dramática, en torno a una sola figura que la creara y re-creara, con el cariño integral y paterno que se tiene a las cosas exclusivamente propias.

Our attitude, then, shall be to regard Rojas as author of the Celestina while recognizing the continuing lack of definite proof that he was author of all portions of the work.

Concerning the problem of genre, perhaps the least controversial decision is to consider the Celestina to be ageneric. The Celestina is unique. It blends both novelistic and dramatic elements in a manner which has not been successfully achieved by subsequent efforts. But if we should, in the course of our discussion, feel compelled to endow the work with a generic tag, we shall consider the Celestina to be a dramatic work. It is not the nominally dramatic form of the work but the fact that the work continually emphasizes action rather than narration that causes us to make this choice. Since this was at least one of the primary criteria for the identification of the genre in sixteenth century Spain, we shall consider the Celestina to be a play.


8. Yet the form, too, supports the claim that the Celestina is a dramatic work, especially if the relation of the Celestina to the Italian humanistic comedies of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is recognized. These comedies concern illicit love, are long, and approach and even exceed the Celestina in the number of acts. See Lida de Malkiel, Two Spanish Masterpieces, pp. 54-57, and Edwin J. Webber, "The Celestina as an Arte de Amores," Modern Philology, LV (Feb. 1958), 151.
Finally, the twenty-one act version has been chosen in accord with the established custom of considering the additional acts to be integral parts of the play.\footnote{The Celestina text referred to is the Cejador y Frauca edition available in the \textit{Clásicos Castellanos}. The volume and page numbers are given for all quotations.}
CHAPTER ONE

TRAGEDY: A DISCUSSION

The theoretical discussion of tragedy has almost as long a history as does tragedy itself. In spite of this prolonged and multiple effort, no simple or generally accepted explanation of tragedy or of the fascination tragedy holds for Western man has been developed. This great diversity of attitudes toward tragedy makes it essential that we define the term "tragedy" as it is to be used in this paper.

The author of the Celestina twice mentions Aristotle, author of the Poetics, the oldest extant document of literary criticism. The discussion of tragedy contained in this work was well known and widely accepted during the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Aristotle's definition of tragedy must be considered, then, because his concepts influenced those of the Renaissance artist.

In the Poetics, Aristotle defined tragedy as "the imitation of an action that is serious and also, as having magnitude, complete in itself; in language with pleasurable accessories, each kind brought in separately in the parts of the work; in a dramatic, not a narrative form; with incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish its catharsis of emotions." Amplifying this definition, Aristotle deduced that unhappy endings are the proper endings for tragedy in that the tragic effect of "catharsis" is most fully excited by a change in fortune from good to bad.

This definition and its subsequent elaboration in the Poetics presents the two dominant features of tragedy: the emotion portrayed,
i.e., suffering, and the "cathartic" emotion evoked in the vicarious participant whom we shall term the partaker. By the same logic, Aristotle reasoned that the complex emotional response produced by tragedy was most intense when the tragic character was a man essentially but not entirely good whose misfortune was brought about by some "error or frailty" in his own character.

Seeking to better understand the psychological conflict and suffering of the tragic character, Aristotle and others have coined terms such as "tragic vision", "tragic spirit", "tragic choice", "tragic fate", and "tragic recognition"—terms which attempt to define more precisely Aristotle's basic recognition that tragedy includes a change in fortune stemming in some manner from an action or personal characteristic of the tragic character himself.

The exact meaning and interpretation to be placed upon Aristotle's use of the word "catharsis" has aroused widespread controversy. Tragedy's ability to arouse a commonly felt, yet never satisfactorily delineated, emotion containing a mixture of pity, fear, and exaltation is recognized by all. Tragedy is a personal experience, its effect on the individual participant varies, but an intense emotional response is tragedy's characteristic effect on all who partake. No works can rightly be called tragedies which do not bring forth this intense emotion; no elements are tragic which do not contribute to this effect.

This brief discussion of Aristotle's esthetic approach to the analysis of tragedy has furnished two essential attributes of tragedy—the emotional content and the emotion evoked—and several additional concepts of value to the literary critic. The Renaissance concept of
tragedy also included the medieval definition of tragedy as a narrative in which a person of high rank falls from high estate to low, with the melodramatic, gory example of Senecan tragedy as an admired model. The three principal influences, then, which formed the conception of tragedy current in Rojas' time are classical theory, the example of Seneca, and the medieval definition.

However, this understanding of tragedy will comprise only one part of our treatment of this esthetic mode of expression. Some of the philosophical characteristics of tragedy which should receive consideration in any inclusive definition are not included in the Aristotelian discussion of tragedy which contributes a major portion of the Renaissance understanding. Aside from the important afore-mentioned attributes of tragedy, the clue to the nature of tragedy lies in its content and its purpose, matters of ethical rather than esthetic import.

The basic definition which will serve as the source for this aspect of our discussion of tragedy will be taken from Herbert J. Muller:

Tragedy might be defined as a fiction inspired by a serious concern with the problem of man's fate. Taken literally, word for word, this definition implies more and excludes more than may at first appear. Thus "serious" excludes melodrama, or sensational works that exploit bloody doings chiefly for the sake of thrills. "Concern" and "problem" imply a measure of uncertainty or mystery, the strictly problematical; they exclude popular notions about poetic justice, which usually turns out to be neither poetic nor just. Next, it is the problem of "man"; not of an adolescent, of an abnormal individual, of a particular type merely as a type, or of a social class, but of man in a universal aspect, as man-kind. Above all, tragedy is centered on the problem of his "fate":... his relations to his total environment, his position in the universe, the ultimate meaning of his life."

This definition stresses the universal significance of tragedy.

Tragedy treats the most fundamental concerns of man: his awareness of

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death and the suffering he endures while living. Doubts and questions arise from this concern with man's condition. How should man live with himself, with others, with the seemingly implacable superior powers that surround him? Tragedy seeks an ethical explanation and ordering of an apparently irrational, unjust universe.

Centered thus on man's problems and man's fate, tragedy can be seen to be intensely humanistic. Man, not the Supreme Being (be he Zeus, God, Fortune, Machine, or Society), is the center of attention. The emphasis is placed on how man can cope with the human experience of suffering in a seemingly disordered universe, how man can acquire at least a limited understanding of a supreme moral order which does, appearance to the contrary, order events.

From this emphasis on man and man's search for an understanding of his condition, it follows that the spirit of tragedy is essentially pessimistic. Muller states the matter succinctly:

However it ends, tragedy begins as a challenge to the universe and goes deeper than the conventional religious spirit. Its characteristic irony itself implies that the ways of Providence are paradoxical, mysterious, possibly inept.  

This does not mean that tragedy is cynical. Tragedy is an affirmation of positive values. Questioning the universe, it exalts the spirit of man. It affirms man's dignity even against death and thus wins for man a measure of superiority over his fate. Failure and death cannot rob man of the dignity he has won by taking a heroic stance before his destiny.

Perhaps a comparison with comedy will be of some service. Comedy aims primarily to amuse and ends happily. Comedy deals with man's folly;
it does not often come to grips with profound moral issues. Comedy is concerned with man's relation to society, with man as a social animal, and comedy is willing to seek a solution in compromise and the judgment of society rather than in unchangeable truths or one's own conscience. Comedy thus confirms the normal expectations: it concerns the probable, the mean, while tragedy deals with the wonderful, the extreme, the heroic in events as well as in individuals.

Summing up the previous discussion, we observe that the dominant emotion of tragedy is suffering; the dominant attitude is pessimism linked to the courageous affirmation of man's worth against all-embracing superior forces; the goal is the achievement of at least a partial understanding of an apparently chaotic, irrational universe; the effect is the exaltation of man's dignity and worth on an absolute scale of values. Not all-powerful in matters of foresight, longevity, or ability to endure pain, man is yet proclaimed to be supremely worthy.

Let us now take a closer look at the tragic hero and present some characteristics common to all tragic characters, recognizing at the same time that they possess characteristics which differentiate them as well.

First of all, the tragic character is an exceptional individual. In Classical and Renaissance tragedy this is taken to mean that the tragic character must be of noble estate. Some, if not all, contemporary opinion does not accept this confinement of the tragic possibility to the highest social classes. Arthur Miller states this contemporary view forcefully:
The tragic right is a condition of life, a condition in which the human personality is able to flower and realize itself. The wrong is the condition which suppresses man, perverts the flowing out of his love and creative instinct. Tragedy enlightens—and it must in that it points the heroic finger at the enemy of man's freedom. The thrust for freedom is the quality in tragedy which exalts. The revolutionary questioning of the stable environment is what terrifies. In no way is the common man debarred from such thoughts or such actions.3

The tragic character is involved in both inner and outer conflict. Outwardly, the tragic individual may be in conflict with his environment; inwardly, the tragic hero is beset with whatever emotions can act on the human spirit—doubts, desires, scruples, ideas. This conflict provides the interest of tragedy. The concentration of this interest on the inward struggle of the hero indicates also that a large part of the power of tragedy stems from its role as an expression of character.

Most tragic characters are one-sided. In the power of their passion, one aspect of their personality is emphasized. This one-sidedness provides the intensity which makes them great—it also is one of the elements contributing to their downfall.

There is a certain sequence to the tragic action. The tragic character makes a mistake concerning the nature of his universe and his particular position in this universe. Because of this mistake, he suffers intensely, examines his predicament, and achieves a measure of awareness concerning the nature of his mistake. This awareness brings an enlarged perception of the universe, and particularly a recognition that there is a rational ordering of events—though he may understand it imperfectly. Here then, we have the basic rhythm of the tragic action:

3Arthur Miller, "Tragedy and the Common Man," New York Times, February 27, 1949, Section 2, p. 3, col. 6
Purpose, Passion, Perception--these elements being primarily portrayed in the inner conflict of the protagonist's soul.

Now we have traveled full circle. Proceeding from the effect of tragedy on the partaker to the elements producing the effect, we have returned once more to the effect of tragedy. The perception of the tragic character brings an increased perception to the individual partaker of tragedy, enabling him to receive a partial glimpse of an order in his life. Representing man, the exaltation of the tragic character brings an exaltation and a recognition of their innate dignity to all men. The tragic character becomes a powerful affirmative voice protesting for man against the great multitude of forces which besiege him.

As a last remark concerning our general ideas on tragedy, it may be noted that we claim no specific form to be necessary for the expression of tragedy. Not form but content, purpose, and effect determine whether works are wholly or in part tragic. This fact is especially important in our present study, for although we consider the Celestina to be most like a dramatic work, we do so quite undogmatically, recognizing that those who claim it to be a dialogue novel have much to substantiate such an opinion. For our purposes, fortunately, a positive decision with respect to genre is not only impossible, it is unnecessary.
CHAPTER TWO

FIFTEENTH CENTURY SPAIN AND THE TRAGIC POTENTIAL

A prologue to the 21-act version of the Celestina states that the first author wished to give the work a descriptive title which would reflect what happens in the beginning, so he called it a comedy. Others wanted to call it a tragedy because it ended sadly. So Rojas says he decided to split the difference and called the work a tragicomedia.¹

Rojas' tongue-in-cheek description of the naming of the 21-act version should not lead the reader to suppose that it was named capriciously. Tragedy and comedy are intermixed in the Celestina. The humorous portrayal of man's folly linked to a serious concern for his fate is one of the attributes which give such stature to the Celestina that in Spanish literature it is considered to be surpassed only by Don Quijote as a literary masterpiece. But the numerous comic elements contained in the Celestina are soon recognized as only the pleasing highlights of a deeper tragic sense. The comic elements emphasize by contrast the serious, somber intent and effect of the work.

Contemporary history and criticism of world drama, written for the most part by non-Spaniards, describes the growth of Spanish drama from native sources, its popularity, power and expressivity during the Golden Age, and its decline after the death of Calderón. This criticism

¹The first dramatic criticism in Spanish literature, the Propaladia (1517) of Torres Naharro, distinguishes sharply between comedy and tragedy, a distinction later lost. We therefore know that this distinction was being made in the period when Rojas wrote.
alleges that the Spaniards, complacent in their faith about their destination in the afterlife, were free from the questioning, pessimistic, individualistic spirit of tragedy. Herbert J. Muller expresses the common European and American attitude concerning the possibility of tragic expression in Spanish literature:

The popular drama of Spain makes plainer that the spirit of the Elizabethan Age was not essentially medieval. For Spain remained orthodox, Catholic, hierarchical; and Spain wrote no tragedy. Its greatest dramatist, Calderón, presented some nominally tragic actions but always arrived at a pious or patriotic conclusion, resounding with devotion to God, king, or country. Calderón’s most thoughtful play, Life Is a Dream, is still free from serious doubt, irony, or tragic sense of life. In developing the theme that life may be "dreaming but a dream within a dream," he includes some nightmarish elements in his fantasy, but he stirs little terror. His main point is that we are sure to wake up in another life. If Spaniards might have worried about their destination in the afterlife, given their passion for gold and earthly glory, it appears that they were sufficiently assured by their freedom from heresy and religious doubt. England was coming up, at Spain’s expense; but its poets were less complacent about their destiny.  

Was this the situation throughout the development of Spanish literature? Was there a time when tragic expression was possible, when "complacency" was not the attitude of the creative literary artist? In particular, was it possible for a person living in the Spain of the Catholic Kings and the Inquisition to feel and to express himself in the affirmative, humanistic manner of the tragedians?

The creation of a literary work always takes place in a historical contexture. When Fernando de Rojas composed the Celestina, he was influenced by his cultural heritage and by his social situation. Rojas’ literary antecedents as well as his own immediate circumstances must be examined if we are to determine his opportunity for tragic expression.

\[2^\text{Op. cit., 149.}\]
Then we shall turn to the *Celestina* itself to determine whether an embryonic tragic awareness did, in fact, exist briefly in Castilian letters.

There is a curious dualism in Spanish literature. The majority of the works of the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries display a tranquil acceptance and affirmation of Christian concepts. Little gloom or desperation is evident. Those creations which passionately disavow this world look forward with anticipation to the hereafter. But among these reflections of the prevalent Christian tradition can be found other works written during these centuries which express an oddly contrasting attitude of suffering, despair, and pessimism.

Some of the foremost masterpieces of Spanish literature are among those early works which present the Christian attitude toward life. The *Poema del Cid* (ca. 1140) evidences the intense religious faith of the twelfth century. Likewise the thirteenth century works of Gonzalo de Berceo, the first Spanish poet known by name, represent the religious conviction of the thirteenth century. In the fifteenth century, the *Coplas* (1476) of Jorge Manrique are an outstanding presentation of the Middle Age Christian awareness that from birth man is in the process of dying and that life is but a preparation for eternity. *El libro de buen amor* (ca. 1350) of the Arcipreste de Hita expresses a more positive appreciation of this life while affirming Christian values. This humorous work, perhaps the greatest creation of the Spanish Middle Ages, is joined by the *serranillas* of the Marquis of Santillana in evoking impressions of pleasant and peaceful calm quite devoid of
gloom or desperation. The majority of the compositions of the Spanish Middle Ages, then, would seem to support the contention that Spaniards and Spanish literature lacked the questioning attitude essential for tragic expression.

We have mentioned a second, smaller, number of works which inject a discordant note into the conventional Christian chorus of these centuries. América Castro has bestowed the title "Literary Expression of Despair" upon this bitter, somber exhibition of suffering.3

The first of these "non-Castilian" expressions of despair are found in the Proverbios morales (1350-1369) of Sem Tob. Many of the stanzas of this work reflect the preoccupations of a troubled, pessimistic spirit whose somber judgment of life is continued in the fifteenth century by Juan de Mena in his El laberinto de Fortuna and by Rodrigo de Cota in his Diálogo entre el amor y un viejo. Finally, the court historian of the Catholic Kings, Hernando del Pulgar, displays in his Letras an anguish and a questioning demoralization quite at odds with the prevailing Christian expression of faith.

The striking feature concerning these somber works is their authorship: in each case cited, the author was Jewish. In spite of occasional periods of prosperity and personal freedom, Spanish Jews had been living insecurely for centuries, estranged from the Castilian society for which they performed such valuable services. This fact is of particular import because Fernando de Rojas was of Jewish descent. Rojas' Jewish ancestry makes his somber literary heritage quite

significant; it also makes his social situation in the realm of the Catholic Kings important with respect to our investigation of the opportunity for tragedy in late fifteenth century Spain.

The Jews had been exiled by Ferdinand and Isabella in 1492, eleven years after the establishment of the Inquisition as an instrument for the political and religious unification of the peninsula. Those members of the Jewish faith who desired to remain in Spain were forced to accept Catholicism. These people who had professed Christianity, and their descendants, were closely watched and suspected because of the taint of their Jewish blood, a taint which corrupted the veins of most of the noble families of Castile.

A detailed description of the activities of the Inquisition is unnecessary. For our purposes, the important consideration is the effect the Inquisitional atmosphere of enveloping suspicion and persecution had upon the conversos. Fernando de Rojas was a converso, a member of that segment of the population which lived and feared in an atmosphere of anguish and torment. He was a member of a noble Spanish family which had intermarried with a Jewish strain and was himself married to a suspect person, Leonor Álvarez, daughter of the converso Álvaro de Montalbán. Little else is known concerning his life, education, and exact ancestry, but the one important fact remains: Rojas was a converso and lived in a period when many individuals less obviously Jewish than he became victims of religious intolerance. The atmosphere of constant threat, fear, and torture would inevitably produce a sense of estrangement in those menaced and would allow the formation of the attitude the English critic Theodore Spenser observes to be appropriate for the writing of tragedy:
In the periods when great tragedy has been written, two things seem to have been necessary: first, a conventional pattern of belief and behavior, and second, an acute consciousness of how that conventional pattern can be violated.¹

Some scholars emphatically refute the assertion that Rojas could have been fearful of the Inquisition:

To clarify our thinking about the Celestina we need to be reminded that the Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea circulated in Castile untouched by official censorship for 141 years, being first mentioned in the Index of Sotomayor (1640). Nor did Fernando de Rojas need to fear the Inquisition as he composed his work, or fear punishment by it after the work was published. The Inquisition did not concern itself with the censorship of books until long after the Celestina was penned; its first Index was published eighteen years after Rojas' death in 1541.²

This is valuable factual information but the facts stated do not substantiate the denial. Though the Inquisition did not censor books officially, a written work could still attract the attention of the officials of the Inquisition to its author. Rojas did not know when the Inquisition was going to begin the censorship of books. He did know, however, that many of his contemporaries were being persecuted without any validity whatsoever to the charges brought against them. He did know, also, that the Celestina contained passages which were fully capable of attracting the attention of an informer, an enemy, or an official of the Inquisition, passages which would be doubly suspect and dangerous because of the Jewish ancestry of their author. The famous exchange between Calisto and his servant Sempronio as Calisto is declaring his boundless love for Melibea is but one element which could have been interpreted to Rojas' detriment:

⁴Shakespeare and the Nature of Man (New York, 1942), p. 50.
CAL.--Por cierto, si el del purgatorio es tal, mas querría que mi
spíritu fuese con los de los brutos animales, que por medio de
aquel yr a la gloria de los santos.
SEMP.--¡Algo es lo que digo! ¡A más ha de yr este hecho! No
basta loco, sino ereje.
CAL.--¡No te digo que fables alto, quando fablares? ¿Qué dizes?
SEMP.--Digo que nunca Dios quiera tal; que es especie de heregía
lo que agora dixiste.
CAL.--¿Porquè?
SEMP.--Porque lo que dizes contradize la cristiana religión.
CAL.--¿Qué d' mí?
SEMP.--¿Tú no eres cristiano?
CAL.--¿Yo? Melibea so e 'a Melibea adoro e 'en Melibea creo e 'a
Melibea amo. (I, 41)

The feeling of estrangement, pessimism, and despair because of his
insecure position within his society, coupled with a broad cultural
background and remarkable expressive powers--these factors contributed
to the composition of this masterpiece. That much of it is tragic is
due to its author's cultural heritage and to his position in his
society. That this promising budding of the tragic spirit in Spanish
letters would not reach full bloom was inevitable. Such people as
Rojas, possessing the necessary pessimism, individualism, and estrangement
from the bonds of confining beliefs, would not be able to emerge from
the constricting mold of religious fanaticism and rigid social codes
which settled upon Spain after the consolidation of power by the
Catholic Sovereigns. A new generation, born into an environment free
of essential skepticism and doubt, would not have the tragic capacity.
It would leave its concern with the eternal verities, with the fate
of the individual, in the hands of the Church, thus negating that
deep preoccupation with man's condition which is the substance of
tragedy.
CHAPTER THREE

CELESTINA: THE PLAY AND THE PERSON

The plot of the Celestina is simple. Calisto, a young nobleman, meets Melibea in her father’s garden where he has followed his hunting falcon. Immediately enamoured of the young girl, Calisto makes advances which she indignantly rejects. The lovesmitten Calisto returns to his house where he laments his misfortune.

One of Calisto’s servants, Sempronio, tells his master of a certain woman-of-all-trades, Celestina, who can, for a fee, enable Calisto to satisfy his desires. Another servant, Pármeno, cautions his master against Celestina but the desire-driven young nobleman does not heed his counsel. Celestina comes to see Calisto and the two soon reach an accord. She will be well paid for using her wiles to secure Melibea for Calisto.

Celestina uses one of her many professions— that of a seller of thread— to gain entry to Melibea’s home. There she uses her extensive knowledge of feminine psychology to arouse Melibea’s interest in Calisto. The battle not yet won but re-entrance into the house certain, she leaves. One obstacle still remains— Calisto’s young servant, Pármeno. Celestina wins Pármeno’s full support by providing him with the object of his desires, the young girl Areusa. Now both of Calisto’s servants are her allies.

Events move rapidly. Melibea agrees to talk secretly with Calisto.
Soon he is visiting her in the garden at night. Celestina is well paid for her part in the intrigue but refuses to share the spoils with Calisto's two servants and is killed by them. Attracted by her screams, the watch captures the two servants as they flee the crime and they are beheaded the following morning in the square.

Calisto continues to meet Melibea at night. One night while the two lovers are together in the garden, Calisto hears a disturbance outside the garden wall. The inexperienced young stable boys he is using as replacements for his executed servants are waiting there for him and, fearful for Melibea's reputation and the safety of all, he rushes to their aid only to fall to his death from the ladder which he had used each night to surmount the wall. Bereaved by his death, Melibea locks herself in a tower. Her father, Pleberio, awakened by the noise and confusion, hears her lament and confession, then watches helplessly as she leaps to her death. The drama ends with the long lament of Pleberio mourning his daughter, protesting against the injustice of these events, and mourning the long lonely years that await him.

Celestina dominates the story. She exercises a controlling influence over the other characters. Her worldly wisdom, good humor and wit, shameless self-interest, and absolute conviction that in satisfying men's passions she is performing a valuable service by bringing happiness to the world make her the center of interest. From the moment she enters the story, her scheming, shrewdness, and intense love of life establish her as one of the great figures of literature.

After reaching an agreement with Calisto, Celestina manages a number of intrigues and machinations with masterful ability. Servants and
masters alike come under her control; no one is a match for her unscrupulous ingenuity. She threatens, bribes, cajoles, philosophizes, and preaches as she moves steadily toward her goal: the satisfaction of Calisto's desires and her own greed. She triumphs and in the moment of triumph is murdered. She has made a fatal miscalculation of the resolute determination of Calisto's servants to share in the rewards of the intrigue. An abrupt reversal of fortune is heightened by its occurrence at her greatest moment of triumph and satisfaction.

A quote from the preface to Lesley Bird Simpson's translation of the 16-act version of the Celestina will reveal how one scholar views Celestina's death:

Our interest and sympathies cluster about the game old woman who goes down fighting, pitting her ingenuity against the senseless brutality of the young men she has taught too well. This is tragedy in its purest form. It is also superb art. The death of Celestina is the counterpoint that gives meaning and poignancy to the others. Celestina has stature. Her magnificent pride is never broken and she meets her destiny screaming defiance like a female Lucifer cast into the abyss.¹

Celestina does indeed have stature and she does meet her destiny screaming defiance. In so far as her death is the result of her own past actions and her final, fatal, mistake, her death even has a tragic element. But her death is not "tragedy in its purest form." Far from it. Her death is intensely dramatic but the dramatic is not synonymous with the tragic just as drama is not synonymous with tragedy. In spite of Celestina's stature and the impact of her sudden death at the moment of her triumph, she lacks many of the features of the tragic character. She is a comic, rather than a tragic, character.

Celestina is in harmony with the life around her. She sees man as

a social being, is well aware of man's foibles and follies, and knows the highest as well as the lowest levels of the society in which she lives. Celestina is alert to, and takes full advantage of, the fact that very little separates the noble from the base in man and society. She knows her world, is master of it, and is well content that things should be so. As she goes about her errands, receiving the greeting of "Mother," "Lady," or "Old Whore" from those whom she meets, Celestina is happy.

Where is the questioning, the protest against the mortality and the fate of man which is the concern of tragedy? Celestina does not worry herself with such unpractical preoccupations. She is too engrossed in her enjoyment of the present. Her frequent references to the necessity of putting something away for her old age are merely phrases which implement her machinations. She is quite certain that she shall continue to make her way in life regardless of age. Death does not concern her. Her consciousness is of the "now" rather than the "will be."

This lack of the tragic spirit, the tragic awareness, is revealed in other ways. Celestina does not suffer the loss or the change in values which is so necessary for the development of tragic stature. She is content with life and her confidence in her role in life remains steadfast till death. She is concerned with the external world, the world of passions, and experiences none of the shift to the preoccupation with internal conflict and the attempt to resolve self-questioning and doubt which gives the truly tragic character such power.

Celestina's death fulfills the expectations of comedy rather than
tragedy. Admirable though she may be, the death of the old rip has a measure of justice which is alien to the tragic fate. Our normal expectation and desire that the unethical and immoral should receive punishment has been bolstered. Celestina's fate is reassuring: there is still some measure of order in the world.

Celestina, then, is a comic figure. Her awareness of man as a social being, her contentment, her awareness of only the present, and the justice of her fate--each of these attributes belongs to comedy rather than tragedy. The character of Celestina contains a major portion of the comedy present in this hybrid tragicomedia.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE LOVERS: TRAGIC CHARACTERS?

In the previous chapter it was pointed out that Celestina dominates the work. The story itself, however, concerns love, in particular the love of the two young people of noble birth, Calisto and Melibea. Their love relationship can be interpreted in several ways. The approach taken by the critic with respect to the possible interpretations of the central love theme largely determines his attitude toward the work. Since these various approaches reveal a great deal about the predecessors of the Celestina and the cultural attitude of the time when it was written, they will be discussed before we present our analysis of the lovers' status as tragic characters. Perhaps each of these possible interpretations of the central love theme can also contribute something to our treatment of the lovers' situation.

Senecan tragedy was well known in Spain during the period when the Celestina was composed. Several authorities have established Rojas' familiarity with the works of Seneca and his indebtedness to Seneca for many of the refranes which appear in the Celestina.1 Edwin J. Webber has pointed out a structural likeness of the Celestina to a specific work by Seneca, the Phaedra. To quote Webber:

Despite a structural similarity between the Celestina and Seneca's Phaedra in the succession of elements which lead to the tragic conclusion--namely, the arrangement of the elements of pursuit, rejection, love laments, service of a go-between, death of the hero, lament and suicide of the

heroine, and lament of the father—in the nature of their content, the individual elements have only a general, even remote, resemblance...2

Here, Webber quite rightly points out both the structural likeness and the pronounced artistic dissimilarity of the elements. There is little kinship between the bloody elements of Seneca's melodramatic glut of horror for its own sake and the corresponding elements in the Celestina. In spite of his excesses, however, Seneca contributed to subsequent artists yet unacquainted with Greek tragedy the awareness that suffering is the all-embracing feature of tragedy. This awareness became a part of their cultural heritage.

Another attitude that may be taken toward the Celestina is to regard the work as a continuation of the sentimental novel. The sentimental novel's most popular era, the final decade of the fifteenth century, coincides with the composition and publication of the Celestina. A specific comparison is often made between the Celestina and the Cárcel de Amor of Diego de San Pedro, first published in 1492 and an extraordinarily popular example of the genre. Peter G. Earle has listed the similarities in plot of these two works:

a) Instant passion of the hero, strongly rejected by the heroine.
b) Hero solicits the services of a go-between. 
c) Go-between inspires "piedad" in the heroine by referring to the lover's "enfermedad." 
d) Death of 20-year-old heroine (Celestina) lamented by the 60-year-old father. Death of the 20-year-old hero (Cárcel) lamented by 60-year-old mother.3

Earle considers the Celestina to be the highest development of the sentimental novel, performing the same role in that genre that Don


Quijote performed for the chivalric novel—the mocking and parody of some of the excesses of the form, the outright elimination of certain elements, and, in general, the substitution of a degree of plausibility for fantasy. From this point of view, then, Rojas has humanized this genre.

A third way of regarding the Celestina is to accept the repeatedly avowed moral purpose of the author and to consider it as another example of the didactic prose literature quite common during the Spanish Middle Ages. The didactic prose of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries consisted primarily of moral tales and apologues which were for the most part merely Spanish adaptations of oriental fictional motives. These tales lacked artistic polish until Juan Manuel composed his fifty tales collectively entitled El libro de los enxiemplos del conde Lucanor et Patronio (1323-1335). Juan Manuel wrote in a simple, vivacious, and mildly satiric style. Northup comments on Juan Manuel that "Like Boccaccio, Juan Manuel stands as the earliest cultivator of artistic prose fiction in a great modern literature."

In the fifteenth century, didactic prose reached its highest development with the Corbacho (1438) of the Arcipreste de Talavera, Alfonso Martínez de Toledo. In his Orígenes de la novela española, Vol. 1, Menéndez y Pelayo repeatedly emphasizes the debt owed by the author of the Celestina to the Arcipreste de Talavera. In the Corbacho, Spanish prose for the first time becomes truly familiar, expressive, witty, and popular. This novel purports to be a moral treatise against the vices of women but is much more satiric than didactic. Menéndez y

"George Tyler Northup, An Introduction to Spanish Literature (Chicago, 1960), p. 87."
Pelayo has this to say about the Corbacho:

El Corbacho es el único antecedente digno de tenerse en cuenta para explicarnos de algún modo la perfección de la prosa de la Celestina. Hay un punto, sobre todo, en que no puede dudarse que Alfonso Martínez precedió a Fernando de Rojas y es en la feliz aplicación de los refranes y proverbios que tan exquisito sabor castizo y sentencioso comunican a la prosa de la tragicomedia de Calixto y Melibea, como luego a los diálogos del Quijote.⁵

In addition to its contribution of a popular prose style to the Celestina, the Corbacho also provides a more fully characterized version of the trotaconventos, female fore-runner of Celestina, first made a standard literary type by Juan Ruiz in his Libro de buen amor. But perhaps the Corbacho's greatest contribution to subsequent artists including Rojas and Cervantes was its embodiment of the recognition that thematic content is not inimical to artistic expression. After the Corbacho, Rojas could take full advantage of a colloquial, lively idiom to express artistically a frequent literary purpose of the time--didactic instruction against the danger of loco amor.

Although the fifteenth century was not a century when the didactic tale was treated to the extent that it had been treated during the two previous centuries, and though, as Menéndez y Pelayo remarks, the Corbacho buried the old didactic-symbolic genre at the same time it opened the doors to a new art,⁶ three centuries of literary productivity in this genre had helped to make it a prevailing cultural attitude to regard many prose works from a didactic moral point of view and thus to accept the author's declared moral intent for the Celestina.

⁵Orígenes de la novela, I (Santander, 1943), 189-190.
⁶Orígenes de la novela, I, 190.
One of the most stimulating points of view assumed toward the *Celestina* is to consider the fortunes of the two lovers with respect to the courtly love convention. While not offering a complete explanation of their love as it appears in the *Celestina*, the courtly love convention does offer much toward an increased understanding of some of the motivations of the characters and answers some doubts that have been expressed about the plausibility of the love theme as it was developed by Rojas.

Three objections are frequently raised against the course of love in the *Celestina*: 1) Calisto's immediate infatuation upon seeing Melibea. 2) Melibea's change of heart after her initial indignant rejection of Calisto. 3) The two lovers' failure to consider the possibility of marriage, a course seemingly open to them as they were both of noble birth. The latter of these three objections has particularly annoyed many readers. Perhaps the failure to consider marriage is understandable in a lecherous Calisto, if such an interpretation should be placed upon his character, but it seems somewhat unreasonable that Melibea, so deeply and passionately in love, should not want to ally herself permanently to her lover by the bonds of matrimony.

An understanding of cultural attitudes of the period, particularly the courtly love convention, will clarify these uncertainties. It was both a social fact and an accepted literary commonplace that marriages were arranged as matters of convenience. Love in such a situation would be the exceptional event. If one wanted love, it must be sought

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7See the unpublished dissertation (University of Washington, 1955) by Margaret Eva Palmer, "An Interpretation of La Celestina."
outside the marriage state. As this attitude was an instinctive part of the characters' background, it would be quite reasonable for them to disassociate their love from the concept of marriage. The dutiful nature of marriage destroyed the illusion of love; those who had been courtly lovers found that their love had ended if they married.

This loss of love by marriage had its solid base in social custom. The woman who was eagerly sought and raised to a high position of worship during courtship immediately became her husband's inferior with marriage. The change in status from goddess to household article eliminated the possibility of love's continuance. The lady's love must be freely given, an impossible situation where duty removed the grace of the gift.

Lovers fully aware of the consequences of marriage upon their love might well and wisely disregard it as they devoted full attention to the gratification of their passions. Seen in this light, Calisto and Melibea's mutually accepted need for secrecy, gratification of desire, and failure to consider marriage is plausible. Rather than pointing out Rojas' use of a mechanically contrived plot, the objection to the secrecy of their relationship points out every author's unavoidable situation of writing within the framework of his own time.

An immediately obvious comparison exists between these lovers and the "star-crossed lovers" of Shakespeare. Both Romeo and Juliet and the Celestina concern young love. Love comes quickly in both works. Juliet's nurse offers a minor equivalent to Celestina as a go-between. The lovers meet secretly and their fate is death. So the principal elements of the love action itself are quite similar in the two works. As Romeo and Juliet are generally regarded to be tragic characters, we must be careful not to extend this rating to Calisto and Melibea by analogy without closer examination.
The previously mentioned failure of Calisto and Melibea to consider marriage contrasts with the secret marriage of Romeo and Juliet. This observation leads to the conclusion that Calisto and Melibea are of lesser moral stature than are Shakespeare's lovers and thus are less worthy of esteem and tragic status. But the situations of the two couples were not the same. Shakespeare's work was written nearly a full century after Rojas first published his sixteen-act version of the Celestina. By Shakespeare's time, the courtly love convention had lost its force. Such was not true, however, in fifteenth century Spain. If the courtly love explanation for Calisto and Melibea's failure to consider marriage is accepted as having some merit, the choice of marriage was not available to passionate lovers. Failure to seek marriage should not, by itself, be of sufficient import to disqualify the Spanish pair from the opportunity to attain tragic stature.

The basic fact that does deny the two lovers tragic stature is their failure to form a complete union. Their sensual joining is not accompanied by a spiritual union. To use Celestinesque language, they couple but are not a couple. In comparison with Romeo and Juliet who think only of each other, who are desolate when separated and a single ecstatic entity when together, Calisto and Melibea feel no mutual bonds of similar magnitude. The fault lies with Calisto--Melibea could easily compare with Juliet in her selfless passion and devotion to her lover. But a twosome requires the active joining of both individuals into a single, grander unity and Calisto at no time loses his preoccupation with the satisfaction of his personal desires. Considered as a pair, then, our lovers do not achieve tragic stature because the division of interest and motivation does not allow their passions
or their relationship to reach the intensity and unity of purpose characteristic of the truly tragic experience.

One key example is sufficient to point up Calisto's basic alienation from Melibea. When Calisto returns home after his first sexually successful rendezvous with Melibea, he begins to feel other concerns than a preoccupation with his loved one. The death of his supposedly loyal servants troubles him:

¡O mezquino yo! quanto me es agradable de mi natural la solicitud e silencio e escuridad. No sé si lo causa que me vino a la memoria la traición que fíz en me despartir de aquella señora que tanto amo, hasta que más fuera de día, o el dolor de mi deshonra. ¡Ay, ay! que esto es. Esta herida es la que siento agora que se ha resfriado. Agora que está elada la sangre, que ayer heruí; agora que veo la mengua de mi casa, la falta de mi servicio, la perdición de mi patrimonio, la infamia que tiene mi persona de la muerte que de mis criados se ha seguido. ¿Qué hize? ¿En qué me detuve? (II, 122-3)

This new preoccupation with a sense of personal dishonor is incompatible with the absolute self-identification with the loved one necessary if they are to become a tragic pair.

Another way to point up Calisto and Melibea's basic weakness as a pair is by examining the nature of the external conflict in their relationship. Whereas Romeo and Juliet face a definite adversary—the hatred and certain disapproval of their families—and gain unity and "togetherness" by their joint defiance, Calisto and Melibea face no such menace. Courtly love may provide a satisfactory cultural reason for their failure to consider marriage, it cannot, however, be extended to provide a satisfactory antagonist. The basic reason for this is that though courtly love can contribute to the prevailing cultural attitudes of the time, it cannot make a courtly lover out of Calisto. Calisto profited from the convention but he is not a courtly lover.
Under this convention, a true lover would have been so emotionally involved with thoughts and concerns for his loved one that the extraneous intervention of concern for personal esteem and reputation could not possibly have entered his consciousness. His love would have had a psychological base that could not be mitigated by physical satiation.

Neither courtly love nor any other convention or device can endow Calisto and Melibea as a pair with the dignity necessary for tragic ranking. Since their basic disunity, their status as individuals rather than as parts of a greater unity, prevents them from achieving tragic greatness, let us consider them as individuals. Perhaps each will achieve additional dignity when considered singly.

Let us first consider Calisto. As we see it, Calisto faces five important moments during the course of his life:

1) His instant lovesickness upon seeing Melibea.
2) His accord with Celestina.
3) His success with Melibea.
4) Diminution of desire accompanied by an increase in sense of personal dishonor.
5) His fall to death.

The first of these events, Calisto's lovelorn whimpering after being smitten with an apparently hopeless desire for Melibea, has drawn many snickers from contemporary critics as well as from his own servants. But the idea of instant love is not really so foreign to our own literature and folk consciousness and in Rojas' day of uninvolved psychological explanations, this phenomenon was an accepted
fact. The courtly love poetry and the sentimental novel evidence that the people of fifteenth century Spain did believe in love at first sight. In any event, Calisto was smitten with love for Melibea and she became the object of all of his concentrated passions. Striving to satisfy this longing which could conceivably end in his death if not gratified, Calisto is advised to avail himself of Celestina's services. Seen as a desperate attempt to save his life by achieving the object of his desires, this use of a procuress is not necessarily despicable.

With Celestina's aid, Calisto soon achieves his goal, though she and his two servants who have served as her accomplices have perished in the meantime. But now that his passions have been assuaged, Calisto finds that his enthusiasm for Melibea is diminished and begins to mourn the servants who have died in his service and whom he believes he has betrayed. Several nocturnal meetings later, Calisto hears a commotion outside the garden while visiting Melibea and hastens to aid his two young servants, Tristán and Sosia. In his haste he slips from the ladder by which he has surmounted the garden walls and falls to his death.

As an individual, then, Calisto has been shown to be singularly heartless to Melibea, playing a role much closer to that of libertine than lover. Melibea's repeated beseeching of him to treat her more gently may be seen as not only the coy entreaties of a lover desiring exactly that which she protests against, but as a mournful request for more of the true interest and kindness which the crude, rough Calisto has never shown her: "no me destroces ni maltrates como sueles." (II, 181)

From the moment when Calisto first enters the garden in pursuit of his falcon until he falls from the ladder, Calisto evidences none
of the alteration in values which distinguishes the truly tragic character. Calisto does experience suffering, but his suffering is diminished in import by having its source in whichever interest preoccupies him at the moment. Calisto remains self-centered, the direction and intensity of his desires wavers as one satisfied desire is replaced by a new anxiety. Calisto possesses none of the constancy and single-mindedness of purpose characteristic of the true tragic hero. As a lover, little of the paradoxical nature of love—that it improves the lover's character in spite of its sensuality and is ennobling while it is selfish—is seen in Calisto.

One opportunity for dignity, if not tragic stature, yet remains for Calisto. Perhaps the reader can feel that Calisto's sense of honor was deeply disturbed by his failure to support his first brace of servants because of his infatuation for Melibea. If so, Calisto's subsequent haste to aid his second pair of servants when he believes them to be in danger is certainly a laudable act. The obstacle to this opinion is that just as his role as a courtly lover is marred by his fitful concern for his honor, so is his concern for his honor marred by the intrusion of sensual reflections. That Calisto's charge over the wall is motivated by a sense of honor is by no means certain. Calisto may well have been fleeing from the garden so as not to be apprehended rather than rushing to the aid of his men.

As a final ridiculous finale to a vainglorious existence, the fall from the ladder shatters Calisto's scant chance for dignity as well as his body. Dignity demands a certain degree of competence and Calisto has been consistently inept. Calisto is not a tragic figure; he is
not even pathetic. He more closely resembles a noble antecedent to the gracioso of Golden Age Drama, without the self-awareness of personal deficiencies which endows these characters with a certain dignity and personal worth. Mocked by his own servants, victimized by Celestina, dead through his own awkwardness, Calisto makes a ludicrous figure. Rojas' moral warning against loco amor is exemplified in a most ridiculous manner by this self-centered fool who presents only one side of the ambiguous nature of love--its destructive, selfish, sinful aspects.

Melibea, however, is a different sort. She represents love in all of its ambivalence. As an individual and as a lover, Melibea has an essential dignity that is never entirely lost even when she becomes most tightly bound and dependent upon her lover. This innate dignity, coupled to her modest and yet passionate nature, gives Melibea a nobility of character suitable to the tragic heroine. An analysis of the trajectory of Melibea's experiences and her reactions to them will enable us to decide whether Melibea is, in fact, a tragic character.

Melibea also undergoes five important experiences:

1) Her chance encounter in the garden with Calisto.
2) An unequal contest of wills with Celestina.
3) Her love for Calisto.
4) Calisto's death.
5) Her choice of suicide.

One common objection to the course of love as presented in the Celestina has been mentioned previously. To many readers, Melibea's change of heart after her initial indignant rejection of Calisto does
not seem plausible. This objection must be resolved by our analysis of her character and actions if Melibea is to be seen as a tragic character.

Calisto's fervently expressed passion and desire for her cannot have failed to make an impression on Melibea. She was quite sincere in her indignant, emphatic rejection, yet the intensity of his passion could not but produce a stirring response which the innocent girl would recall later with interest and curiosity. This interest and curiosity would be of great aid to Celestina when she attempts to exercise her skills on the young girl.

Celestina's role in Melibea's change of heart is crucial. To gain any insight into the true depth and nobility of Melibea, one must realize that not only was Celestina extremely astute in her argumentation and in her knowledge of feminine psychology, but also that her reputation for practicing witchcraft is a positive asset rather than a detriment to the achievement of her goal. Everyone with whom she comes into contact seems to recognize the ultimate futility of opposing this practitioner of the supernatural.

When Celestina arrives at Melibea's home for the purpose of pressing Calisto's cause, she is received by the servant Lucrecia, who warns Melibea's mother, Alisa, against Celestina, pointing out her evil reputation and her recent exposure as a witch. Alisa also reveals that Celestina has sold young girls to clergymen. In spite of this warning, Alisa permits Celestina to enter the home and leaves soon thereafter to visit a sick sister. Celestina is left alone with Melibea.

There is no rational explanation for this departure of Melibea's mother, who has been shown to be an attentive and loving guardian of
her daughter. One has to accept that there are only two possible explanations: Celestina's magic is producing a desired effect, or fickle Fortune has spun her wheel and brought about this event. The former is much the more satisfactory explanation, in spite of modern reservations about witchcraft. The Celestina contains many references to witchcraft and the power of black magic is always treated with respect and fear. Its presence and force is not denied. It must be considered, then, that Celestina's reputation as a witch, coupled to the prevailing social superstitition and combined with her adeptness at argument, is the reason for her power and for the seeming vulnerability of the characters to her wiles.

The importance of witchcraft as a force in the seduction of Melibea is best evidenced by Celestina's most obvious display of supernatural powers. Before departing for Melibea's home, Celestina invokes the aid of subordinate Pluto:

...vengas sin tardanga á obedecer mi voluntad é en ello te embuelas é con ello estés sin vn momento te partir, basta que Melibea con aparejada oportunidad que aya, lo compre é con ello de tal manera quede enredada que, quanto más lo mirare, tanto más su corazón se ablande á conceder mi petición, e se le abras é lastimes de crudo é fuerte amore de Calisto, tanto que despedida toda honestidad, se descubra á mi e me galardone mis passos é mensaje. (I, 151)

From this point of view, Melibea's spirited defense is remarkable. Celestina suffers some anxious moments when Melibea counter-attacks and threatens Celestina with death. But Celestina has three strong aides in addition to Pluto: first, a week has passed since Melibea's encounter with Calisto in the garden and she cannot have failed to be impressed by his ardor; secondly, Melibea is conscious of her honor and would not denounce Celestina lest this in some way cloud her reputation; thirdly, her

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initial dialogue with Celestina has introduced the joys of young love versus the sorrows of old age as a subject for discussion and established a certain rapport between Melibea and the old rogue. Melibea finds both Celestina and the topic interesting. Curiosity, yearning, and the suggestion of an unknown but yearned-for pleasure prove to be sufficiently powerful allies of the matchmaker.

Once Melibea makes the initial emotional step, the released tide of pentup emotions tears her from her sheltered existence and rushes her along a precipitous sequence of events. In one day, Melibea reverses the values and standards of a lifetime. If one accepts the efficacy of Celestina's natural skills and supernatural powers, the short time factor of such a fundamental change becomes plausible. Also, one might remember, Celestina's reputation for proficiency is reassuring to Melibea in that she can feel there is a greater surety of maintaining secrecy in an affair managed by such an experienced hand.

The preliminary meeting with Calisto and the subsequent tryst in the garden complete the change in values and attitudes begun by the witchery and astuteness of Celestina. Melibea has now placed her honor in Calisto's care. She is bound to him and dependent upon him. He is the demanding element in their love relationship, she the beseeching. To Calisto, the trysts mean an easing of physical desire; to Melibea, the meetings are an affirmation of love and identity with the one loved.

It is in the nature of her relations with Calisto that Melibea first begins to achieve depth and complexity of character. She begins to display the aspects of the ambiguous quality of love: selfish while inspired, an ennobled character accompanied by sensual intensification.
For although no one can doubt that Melibea is deeply in love with Calisto, she is selfish also. She has delivered her well-being into Calisto's keeping and feels vulnerable. Her attempts to maintain Calisto's ardor and her requests that he respect her are based on a real need for security. Also, the intensification of desires and the focusing of her values and interests upon a single object gives Melibea an intensity, a grandeur of emotions that is ennobling—a paradoxical effect, as previously mentioned, in that she also enjoys the sensual satisfaction of his rude embraces.

In addition to an increase in emotional capacity, Melibea has achieved a greatly increased awareness of the nature of her world. Her love for Calisto has broadened her horizons. Previously, Melibea had lived a secluded life, sheltered and excluded from any close contact with life's less tranquil experiences. Now Melibea is taking part in life and learning much in the process.

After losing her maidenhood, Melibea becomes aware of the possible ramifications of her act:

¡O pecadora de mi madre, si de tal cosa fueses sabidora, cómo tomarías de grado tu muerte e me la darías a mí por fuerça! /Cómo serías cruel verdugo de tu propia sangre! ¡Cómo sería yo fin quexosa de sus días! ¡O mi padre honrado, cómo he dañado tu fama e dado causa e lugar a quebrantar tu casa! ¡O traydora de mí, cómo no mire primero el gran yerro que seguía de tu entrada, el gran peligro que esperaba! (II, 119)

With these words, Melibea indicates an increased awareness of the interpersonal nature of her existence. In this moment, she is essentially non-selfish as she considers those other beings whom she loves—her parents. But the intensity of her passion prohibits her from maintaining this increased awareness. Melibea overhears her
parents discussing a marriage for her. They recognize that Melibea possesses the discretion, virtue, virginity, beauty, name and wealth of the ideal bride and claim that there is nothing like an early marriage to maintain one's reputation. Melibea listens to the enumeration of her virtues, ironical in that she no longer possesses some of them, and is guilt-stricken at the thought of her betrayal of her parents. This guilt contributes additional depth and dimension to her personality.

Finally, Melibea utters the remark which is the apex of the one-sided development of her emotions:

Déxenme mis padres gozar del, si ellos quieren gozar de mí. No piensen en estas vanidades ni en estos casamientos: que más vale ser buena amiga que mala casada. Déxenme gozar mi mocedad alegre, si quieren gozar su vejez cansada; si no, presto podrán aparejar mi perdición e su sepultura. (II, 148)

Now Melibea's emotions, intensified by her recognition of the full extent of the consequences of her love affair, are again heightened by their refocus on a single interest: her love for Calisto. To renounce her parents earlier when she was essentially ignorant of life would have denied her much stature; to renounce them now that she is more fully aware of the consequences of her act is a decision of great magnitude. The intensity of her emotional identification with Calisto is at a peak.

With her passions at a peak and her emotional involvement with Calisto so intense that all other considerations and preoccupations are rejected, it is time for the key event of the drama: Calisto's death. A possible slip from the ladder has already been suggested by Melibea herself when Calisto first visits her:
Melibea, then, is aware of the possibility of a fall. When such a fall does occur, and the laments of the servants inform her that Calisto has perished, her despair is complete. She has lost the one in whom she had invested her emotions, trust, honor, hope, and future. Her complete identification with her lover leaves Melibea no alternative but to die also.

But before her suicide, Melibea remembers those whom she will leave behind, those whose existences will be blighted, who will suffer, and who will follow her to the grave because of her actions. This return to a broader awareness of the ramifications of her actions extends their implication. They become more universal in their significance. Not just Melibea is perishing, but a noble individual who personifies much of the universal nature of all individuals. In her approach to suicide, Melibea achieves a nobility that ennobles all.

What is the manner of Melibea’s death? How does the element of universality enter into her situation?

Melibea dies revealing the facts of her seduction and her despair to her father. She blames herself for the events which have caused four fatalities:

Bien vees este clamor de campanas, este alarido de gentes, este aullido de canes, este grande estrépito de armas. De todo esto fuy yo la causa. Yo cobrí de luto e xergas en este díá quasi la mayor parte de la cibdana caualleriá, yo dexe oy muchos servientes descubiertos de señor, yo quité muchas raciones e limosnas a pobres e enuergonpantes, yo fuy ocasión que los muertos touissen compañíá del más acabado hombre que en gracia nascié... (II, 195)

This selfblame is in part justified: without Melibea’s cooperation,
matters would never have progressed so far. But the willingness to assume the responsibility also indicates that Melibea's love is genuine. Melibea tries to avoid nothing, excuse nothing, and by affirming rather than denying, gains yet more stature in her suffering. She affirms her agency in these events, affirms her love for Calisto and the nobility of that love, and the rightness of the last choice she will make--the conscious choice of inflicting sorrow and pain on her parents while affirming her love by joining her lover in death. There is an exaltation in this conscious choice of suicide which transcends the requirements of the moral theme. Indeed, her suicide gives Melibea a grandeur that contrasts with the harmful affects of _loco amor_ which it is purportedly intended to illustrate.

Yet, as in most tragic situations, irony is present. Melibea's evaluation of the nobility of Calisto's character is quite wrong. He is not the "más acabado hombre que en gracia nació" and Melibea's sincere decision to join him in death is made more tragic because of her faulty evaluation.

It is from the irony of her situation that the universal import of her fate is derived. The intensity of Melibea's love and her unwavering devotion has aroused the sympathy of the partaker and caused him to make an all-important emotional identification with Melibea. When Melibea makes the mistake, not of loving but of loving an unworthy person, the partaker must recognize that this mistake could have been made by anyone. But this is just the first step--the important realization to be derived from Melibea's tragic love and her choice of death is the positive declaration that love is worthwhile, regardless of risk or the chance
that the recipient may be unworthy. Melibea's suicide is not a rejection of this world—a rejection which would nullify the positive and universal aspects of her love—so much as it is an affirmation of her need for love and her faith that there is another lover's world where lovers are joined after death. Neither death nor space can impose limitations on such a love.

Here we see an example of the essential duality which runs through all issues of the Celestina. If the observer or the critic restricts himself to the purely physical events of the work, he will see the moral theme emphasized repeatedly. Melibea loved secretly, the unworthy recipient of her love died, and in her grief Melibea committed suicide. The course of events can therefore be interpreted as a forthright warning against loco amor. The sequence of events carries out the author's declared moral intent.

But the emotional content of the Celestina is often at odds with the moral purpose. The Celestina is more than a work carefully structured to repeatedly emphasize a moral theme. It is an artistic creation and conveys emotions and sensations as well as thoughts and ideas. Melibea's suicide brings an exaltation to her and to the work which is foreign to the spirit of punishment implicitly called for if the harmful effects of loco amor are to be exemplified. Melibea's suicide is inevitable, and it is right, restoring an essential order to the world of lovers—an order which is based upon the fundamental recognition that lovers should be together. When Melibea joins Calisto in death, the disorder introduced into her world by his death is erased.
Thus from one point of view, Melibea's death can be considered the consequence of an immoral act, while from the point of view of one who sees Melibea as a living, sensitive individual, Melibea's death extolls love and all lovers. It is from this latter point of view that Melibea gains the tragic stature she so deserves.

What, then, is our final analysis of Melibea as a tragic character?

Melibea has been shown to possess many of the attributes common to the tragic hero. The principal experiential condition of the tragic hero--suffering--is present in Melibea's life. Melibea undergoes a complete transition in values, changing from the innocent young girl whose standards are those of her parents to a sensuous, passionate young woman whose values are determined by her love relationship. And, as she makes her choice of death, Melibea realizes the full extent of her decision and extends the implications of this decision beyond her own sphere of suffering to include all others. She has achieved the increased awareness of the composition of her universe characteristic of the tragic figure. Finally, the emotion evoked by her death contributes to her tragic stature. Inevitable though it seems that she must die, a sense of loss accompanies the deed. As the stones receive her plummeting body, the partaker receives the esthetic "cathartic" sensation which so interested Aristotle and which, in the final analysis, is the indispensable attribute of tragedy.

One element that reduces Melibea's stature, however, is her largely passive role for the greater part of these events. Melibea's character and standards change, but she is too dependent upon others. The tragic character acts, or tries desperately to resolve some inner
conflict so that he can act. Melibea, however, is more acted upon, especially if she is judged to have chosen love because of the supernatural powers of Celestina. Things happen to Melibea. Not until Calisto's death does Melibea become a dynamic figure, possessing both psychological and physical dynamism. Then, in the short time remaining to her, she does become the mover rather than the moved. She orders events, manages to send both father and servant from her so that no one will interfere with her suicide, and commands her grief-stricken father to silence if he is to hear her tale. She neither falters nor fumbles, but prepares for her suicide, delaying death not to seize an opportunity for melodramatic posturing but to fulfill as well as she can the multi-personal obligations of life of which she is finally aware. Melibea knows that a slight delay before her leap will comfort her father:

Si me escuchas sin lágrimas, oydrás la causa desesperada de mi forzada e alegre partida. No la interrumpas con lloro ni palabras; si no, quedarás más queioso en no saber por qué me mato, que doloroso por verme muerta. (II, 195)

Melibea is in control of the situation and delays her union with her lover to remove one future worry from her father by revealing the reasons for her death.

In her more active role in the moments before death, Melibea does not quite achieve the stature of the great tragic figure. This is through no personal fault but is the result of her position in the work as a whole. A character is bound to the work which is his sphere of action. Melibea does not occupy a central position in the work, nor is her suicide the climax of the work. Whereas in other tragic works the tragic hero occupies the center of attention throughout the work
and the emphasis is on his dilemma and his struggles to resolve it, in the Celestina there is a kaleidoscopic effect as each character occupies the center of attention for a time, then is replaced by a new set of characters, often for several acts, before he reappears.

This is Melibea's situation. She appears in eight of the twenty-one acts and the attention directed by the partaker toward her love for Calisto is interrupted by several other love episodes. These love affairs occur interspersed with that of the main lovers and are developed co-extensively with the main love theme. This division of attention and emphasis does reinforce by variety and contrast the didactic purpose of the work; it also, however, exercises a distracting, attenuating effect on the individual roles. The course of love for Calisto and Melibea is not a steady progression of events but rather a number of events interspersed between the presentation of other characters of near-equal interest and importance. This sporadic presentation of their love affair diminished its intensity, diminishes the role of Melibea, and when she finally assumes dominance of the action, she does not quite achieve the stature of the great tragic figure.
CHAPTER FIVE

THE LOWER CLASS CHARACTERS OF THE CELESTINA

The energetic young attendants of Calisto and Celestina--Sempronio, Parmeno, Tristan, Sosia, Elicia, Areusa, and Centurio--contribute a great amount of humor and rascality to the work. Humor and rascality, however, are not prominent traits of the truly tragic character. Laughter and high spirits cannot long co-exist with the suffering and serious questioning which are necessary qualities of the tragic individual. All but one of the above-named personages can be quickly dismissed from consideration as tragic characters.

Elicia and Areusa, Celestina's two apprentices, offer good examples of comic rather than tragic character. They do not suffer, nor do they experience a change in fortune or character which would cause us to view them seriously. After the execution of their two lovers and the loss of their guardian and counselor, Celestina, they are grieved and angered. But their momentary pique at the loss of hearty lovers loses its scanty amount of dramatic import because of their facile awareness that good lovers are not irreplaceable. In fact, Elicia has a few lovers left: "...essos pocos amigos que me quedan, no me saben otra morada." (II, 143)

Celestina's death has its bright side for these two girls. Now Elicia and Areusa are fully independent and with time and experience may become as skilled as their old mentor in the various arts of their trade. In the future, they will be able to keep all of the proceeds
of their enterprise. At no time do these two suffer any of the alteration in values which is a key part of the tragic experience.

Tristán and Sosia do not receive sufficient emphasis nor perform any function of sufficient importance to merit consideration as tragic characters. At the behest of the vengeful young courtesans, Centurio commissions a friend to frighten Calisto's two young servants. The ensuing commotion brings Calisto hurrying to the ladder. Thus Centurio is the indirect agent of Calisto's fall, but this does not endow him with much strategic importance. A barking dog or the approach of the night watch would have performed the same function of initiating Calisto's haste and subsequent fatal plunge.

Sempronio's role in the fortunes of the two lovers is more important and is also more significant for this study. When the lovesick Calisto returns home after his encounter with Melibeia, Sempronio recognizes immediately that by recommending the services of the astute go-between Celestina he can assuage his master's suffering while earning himself a good piece of cash.

Attempting to earn a reward, Sempronio brings Calisto and Celestina together. His single remaining obstacle is the reluctance of his fellow servant, Pármeno, to condone the scheme. Pármeno's aid is finally obtained and, now allies, the two servants enjoy their female companions and celebrate their anticipated windfall when Celestina shall have paid them for their assistance. Celestina, however, attempts to keep all of the reward given her by Calisto. With Pármeno's full support and encouragement, an outraged Sempronio kills her.

This chain of events serves primarily to indicate that Sempronio does not change in character, values, or desires. He is greedy when we
first meet him and greedy when he commits his decisive action of murder. In drama as in real life a person's worth must be demonstrated before it is unconditionally accepted and Sempronio is never shown to be other than a low-principled character. Aside from his role in bringing customer and procureess together, Sempronio's principal value to our study lies in contrasting his character and actions with those apparently similar deeds of the one minor character with tragic potential: his partner, Parmeno.

Parmeno's character is revealed in Act I. In this act, which many critics have recognized to be a condensed presentation of events developed in the remainder of the work, Parmeno's prominence is equal to that of any of the other characters. This is due in part to his structural function in the work and in part to the care which the author took to delineate the change in character of this servant once he too falls under the evil influence of loco amor.

Structurally, Parmeno is the agent who very early in the work (Act II) introduces the element of certain doom, inevitable and unhappy fate, into the work. In the midst of the initial optimism expressed by the other characters, it is Parmeno who forecasts a bad end for all:

Señor, porque perderse el otro día el neblí fue causa de tu entrada en la huerta de Melibea á le buscar, la entrada causa de la ver é hablar, la habla engendró amor, el amor parió tu pena, la pena causará perder tu cuerpo e alma e hacienda. (I, 121)

After Celestina has visited Melibea and while she is reporting to Calisto concerning the results of her first foray, the skeptical, non-trusting Parmeno makes two more observations which serve to make subsequent events more credible. His first observation predicts the
conduct of Celestina when she is rewarded by Calisto for her aid:

Tú dirás lo tuyo; entre col e' col lechuga. Sobido has un escalón; mas adelante te espero á la saya. Todo para tí e' no nada de que puedas dar parte. Pelear quiere la vieja. Tú me sacaras á mí verdadero e' á mi amo loco. No le pierdas palabra, Sempronio, é verás cómo no quiere pedir dinero, porque es diuisible. (I, 204)

And, a short time later, Pármeno prophesizes: "..no es mucha su vida, luto hauremos de medrar destos amores." (I, 204)

Structurally, then, Pármeno prepares for the future violence which will bring a sudden end to the lives of the principal characters, including herself. But it is Pármeno's character which is of the greatest interest to this particular study. What is his character initially, and does it change?

Pármeno is first seen as a young servant who does not trust Celestina and regrets his master's involvement with her. Pármeno's mother was an old confederate of Celestina and though he ran away when he was a boy he still remembers Celestina and can vividly describe her many artifices. His first warning of his master produces no effect. In fact, Pármeno is admonished not to interfere with Sempronio: "Pero ruegote, Pármeno, la embidia de Sempronio, que en esto sirve é complaze no ponga impedimento en el remedio de mi vida." (I, 87) So Calisto requests his servant not to interfere with the satisfaction of his desires. A short time later, however, Calisto asks Pármeno's opinion concerning his two allies, Sempronio and Celestina, whom he overhears talking, and Pármeno again gives his candid opinion:

Protestando mi innocencia en la primera sospecha é cumpliendo con la fidelidad, porque te me concediste, hablare. De verte o' de cyrte descender por la escalera, parlan lo que estos fingidamente han dicho, en cuyas falsas palabras pones el fin de tu deseo. (I, 89).
Celestina and Sempronio overhear Pármeno's counsel and realize that they have an opponent in him. They meet Calisto, and Pármeno very shortly realizes that Calisto is lost: "Deshecho es, vencido es, caydo es; no es capaz de ninguna redención ni consejo ni esfuerço." (I, 92)

Celestina wants to remove Pármeno as an obstacle to her plans. He is a potential threat as long as he continues to oppose her. But Celestina's dissuasion of Pármeno from loyalty to his master proves quite difficult. When she lectures him concerning the futility of weeping over Calisto's helpless love, Pármeno replies:

Si con llorar fuese possible traer á mi amo el remedio, tan grande sería el plazer de la tal esperançã, que de gozo no podría llorar; pero así, perdida ya toda la esperança, pierdo el alegría é lloro. (I, 97)

Switching her tactics; Celestina concocts a tale of an inheritance left in her thrust for Pármeno by his father. She intimates that to receive it he must remain in her good graces. Even this is not sufficient for some time, but Pármeno finally begins to waver in his denial of Celestina's wishes. Calisto is still his master, but he would also like to receive the inheritance and to share in the reward that will be given if Calisto succeeds in meeting Melibea. However, failure of the scheme to seduce Melibea is both easy and dangerous and Pármeno is hesitant to decide definitely. At last, he does make an initial surrender commitment, the first of several. He will try to become friendly with his fellow servant, Sempronio.

This agreement, however, does not prevent Pármeno from trying to protect his master. Pármeno again counsels Calisto not to let Celestina influence him:
Señor, más quiero que aora me reprehemdes, porque te dö enoj, que arrepentido me condenes, porque no te dí consejo, pues perdiste el nombre de libre, quando cautiustaste tu voluntad. (I, 122)

Pármeno is roundly scolded for this counsel:

¡Pales querra este vellaco! Dí, malcriado, ¿porque dizes mal de lo que yo adoro?...Pungiéndote fiel, eres un terrón de lisonja, bote de malicias, el mismo mesón e aposentamiento de la embidia. (I, 122)

Pármeno still persists in counseling Calisto:

Señor, flaca es la fidelidad, que temor de pena la conuierte en lisonja, mayormente con señor, á quien dolor ó afición priva é tiene ageno de su natural juzyio. (I, 123)

But after this final rebuff, Pármeno decides to put self-interest ahead of all other considerations:

¡O desdichado de mi! Por ser leal padezco mal. Otros se ganan por malos; yo me pierdo por bueno. ¡El mundo es tal! Quiero yrme al hilo de la gente, pues á los traydores llaman discretos, á los fieles nescios. (I, 125)

In Act II, Pármeno appears as an ironic bystander, no longer considering his master's interests, but not yet an ally to Celestina. He recognizes that Celestina is avaricious and warns Sempronio. Finally, in Act VII, Celestina uses her most attractive bait to win his active cooperation. Money had not succeeded, now maybe young girls would, or more precisely, a young girl, Areusa, whom he has desired for some time. Celestina obtains Areusa for Pármeno, first, however, receiving a definite commitment from him:

CEL.--E assimismo que, pues que esto por mi intercesión se hace, que el me promete d’auqui adelante ser muy amigo de Sempronio e venir en todo lo que quisiere contra su amo en un negocio, que traemos entre manos. ¿Es verdad, Pármeno? ¿Prometeslo así como digo?
PARM.--Sí prometo, sin dubda. (I, 258)

After several attempts to counsel his master and after several rebuffs, Pármeno has unconditionally agreed to serve Celestina's purposes
rather than his master's interest. Lust has served to destroy a loyalty already weakened by rebuff and rejection.

Pármeno's lust for Areusa is best satisfied if he keeps her receptive with money and fancies. Pármeno now becomes a close associate of Sempronio and takes an intense interest in the affair of Calisto with Melibea. His share of the spoils will enable him to have steady access to Areusa and also to act the part of the big spender in their little group. The honest, loyal servant has become the lustful, lecherous courtier. As Sempronio says to Pármeno, correctly recognizing his desire for ostentation: "¿Qué has pensado embiar, para que aquellas loquillas te tengan por hombre cumplido, biencriado e franco?" (II, 17)

Though Pármeno is now an ally of Sempronio, he is more apprentice than partner. Inexperienced in matters requiring intrigue, stealth, and deception, Pármeno trails after Sempronio during the remaining acts in which the two appear. They do not again appear separately.

When the two servants escort Calisto to his first meeting with Melibea, Pármeno follows Sempronio's example in preparing for cowardly flight at the first hint of discovery. Indeed, in his youthful awareness of inability and in his fundamental lack of enthusiasm for his role, Pármeno's discretion exceeds that of his new mentor:

SEMP.--Apercíbete: a la primera boz que oyeres, tomar calças de Villadiego...
PÁRM.--Leydo has donde yo: en un corazón estamos. Calças traygo e avn borzeguías de essos ligeros que tú dizes, para mejor huyr que otro...(II, 80)

This fundamentally cautious attitude suggested by Sempronio and enthusiastically expanded by Pármeno is reiterated, along with a very important admission by Pármeno:
EMP.--...En siriendo bullicio, el buen huyr nos ha de valer. Déxale hacer, que si mal hisiere, él lo pagará.
PÁRM.--Bien hablas, en mi corazón estás. Así se haga. Huygamos la muerte, que somos mocos. Que no querer morir ni matar no es coardía, sino buen natural. (II, 88)

Pármeno has admitted the cowardice of their actions and has sought to affirm the validity of such cowardice as a manner of acting. But the two partners are still shamed by their attitude. It is this awareness of their own lack of dignity which impels them toward their last desperate action.

After Calisto has returned home from his first visit with Melibea, Sempronio decides to go to Celestina's house before she has a chance to invent some reason for not sharing the gold chain she has received from Calisto. Parmeno again follows Sempronio.

When they meet Celestina, it is Sempronio who takes the active role, confronting her and demanding their share. Sempronio's ire increases, he threatens Celestina with his sword as Pármeno stands by, in accord but not acting. The final threats unavailing, Sempronio kills Celestina to the accompaniment of Pármeno's vengeful cries:
"Dále, dále, acábala, pues comenzaste. ¡Que nos sentirán! ¡Muera!
¡Muera! De los enemigos los menos." (II, 104)

Finally, as the two attempt to flee and find the door blocked by the watchmen, Pármeno's exit line reiterates his fundamental satellite position since he has become Sempronio's confederate: "Salta, que tras tí voy."

Let us sum up the trajectory of Pármeno's actions and experiences. We first see Pármeno as an honest, loyal servant who repeatedly warns his master against the danger he alone can foresee. Pármeno's loyalty is rebuffed, his inexperience is no match for Celestina's masterful
rhetoric, and his lust is not tempered by caution. Yet Pármeno makes one final desperate effort to warn his master, an effort which is so strongly scorned that he loses his desperate allegiance to master and yields to his inflamed youthful desires. His integrity when scorned has been astonishing and demonstrates a personal nobility greatly exceeding that of his upper-class master.

When Pármeno joins the others, however, he is no longer playing a familiar game. He must follow their lead, and does so, reinforced in this decision by the ridiculous posture of a master he can no longer respect and by the success he has had in satisfying his carnal desires. Unlike the other characters of the Celestina, Pármeno still possesses his foresight, his consciousness of more than the immediate implications of desires and events. His fatal decisions have occurred whenever passions and frustrations have clouded this awareness. Once committed, Pármeno must pursue his course, and, finally, shame impels him to attempt to extract what little can be gained from his actions: money. This too denied, bitterness, shame, and a sense of ultimate futility make him a willing accomplice to murder. Jumping from the window, Pármeno jumps toward that dark fate which he alone has steadily foreseen.

Pármeno, then has many of the major attributes of the tragic character. He undergoes a decided change of values, he possesses an initial nobility of character, he experiences a change in fortune as a result of a personal error, and he suffers. Pármeno is not the lightly regarded lower class character of much Middle Age and Renaissance literature. He is not led mutely and dumbly to a sad fate but on the
contrary is immediately aware of death's imminence. It is this element of awareness that contributes most to Parmeno's position as a tragic character.

Parmeno's execution has universal implications. It emphasizes more clearly than any other death in the Celestina the didactic theme of the work. Parmeno has replaced loyalty with lust and forthrightness with cowardice as component parts of his character. He has aided in the seduction of Melibea, and been an accomplice to murder. Loco amor has caused Parmeno to violate the moral code of his society and his punishment has been severe. His youth may serve to enlist our sympathies; it does not, however, excuse him from the retribution of justice. Parmeno's death evidences that there is a moral ordering of the universe.

Parmeno's position as a lower class tragic figure in the Celestina would seem to support Arthur Miller's claim that the common man may experience tragedy and be the subject of tragedy. But in spite of our contemporary democratic willingness to grant Parmeno the "tragic right," he never becomes more than a minor tragic figure, at best. As with Melibea, the kaleidoscopic nature of the work serves to diminish his stature as a tragic character. Like Melibea, Parmeno's appearances are only occasional. The attention of the partaker is not fully concentrated on Parmeno's deeds or his emotions. He is but one of several co-existing performers. Parmeno thus loses the intensity necessary for tragic grandeur.

Not only is Parmeno seen only intermittently, but after the first act his self-questioning and his conflict and struggle against Celestina's
superior will has lost interest with his initial surrender to
Celestina's wishes. The dramatic effort of a young man to maintain
his standards and to assert himself against a superior adversary has
been resolved with his defeat. Parmeno's initial surrender was small,
a mere agreement to be more friendly with Sempronio, yet this step
away from his principles has been enough to start him down the rapid
descent from naive honesty to disloyalty and treachery. Parmeno's
sporadic appearances during the remaining eleven acts of his existence
present his growing lust and cupidity. Finally, with the indirect
presentation of his death by decapitation, Parmeno has descended so
far that he no longer is worthy of attention even in the act of dying.

The remoteness of Parmeno's death serves to emphasize its
inevitability; it also fails to evoke any "cathartic" response in the
partaker. Justice and the morals of society have been reaffirmed, but
Parmeno has been replaced by other events as matters of interest.
CHAPTER SIX
AN AMPLIFICATION OF THE TRAGIC POTENTIAL

The characters who have been discussed thus far in this study have been primarily interested in the satisfaction of material and sensual desires and have not been particularly concerned with the forces which are presented in the Celestina as determining man's lot. These characters have recognized the presence of several supra-personal forces but have not sought to examine the exact nature of these forces, the relationships between them, or their effect upon man. The awareness of Melibea and Pármeno, the two characters with tragic attributes, has been confined within the limits of their immediate physical surroundings. Under the harsh duress of intense suffering, this awareness has broadened to an increased knowledge of the inter-personal and transitory nature of man's existence, but has not included an increased preoccupation with the powers which govern world and universe.

Before we can proceed to a discussion of that character who is the dominant tragic figure of the Celestina, we must present the supreme powers operating within the work. In the greatest tragic expression, some protagonist has challenged, or at the very least examined, the recognized powers which control his well-being. Just what are the forces which govern the world of the Celestina?

The Celestina seems to be a modern work in many ways, especially in Pleberio's last monologue where he does not reproach his daughter for her acts and where he completely ignores the Castilian code of honor. As María Rosa Lida de Malkiel expresses it, this absence of honor
"defies literary tradition and contemporary reality." But the Celestina also reflects its position as a literary work created during the transition period between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. This is nowhere more evident than in the juxtaposition of the several co-rulers of man’s earthly estate.

The viewer readily perceives that the immediate antagonist, Love, is an all-pervading force which no one can avoid. Love is the fickle deceiver who offers sweet pleasures but whose acquaintance is fatal. Menéndez y Pelayo believes that Love “es, para Rojas, una deidad misteriosa y terrible cuyo maléfico influjo emponzoña y corrompe la vida humana.” Love is accompanied by a number of other forces which also affect man.

The simpler of these entities include the World, which is presented as the arena wherein men are condemned to struggle and suffer; Death, which best represents the insecurities of this life and the unavoidable fate of all humans; and Life, which is also thrust upon man. These three personified forces provide the physical and time dimensions wherein man must face the two major powers governing his well-being: God and Fortune.

There is a system to this unlikely partnership of the two powers which determine man’s lot in Love and Life. Throughout the work, Fortune is pictured as being the sovereign of earthly pleasures and riches. In Act I, Sempronio addresses Calisto:

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2. Orígenes de la novela, III, p. 381.
...fortuna medianamente partió contigo lo suyo en tal cantidad, que los bienes, que tienes de dentro, con los de fuera resplandecen. Porque, sin los bienes de fuera, de los cuales la fortuna es señora, á ninguno acaece en esta vida ser bienaventurado. (I, 52-3)

This identification of Fortune with the dispensation of goods is repeated by Celestina in her attempt to gain Parmeno's cooperation, it is repeated by Pleberio in the final act: "¡O fortuna variable, ministra e mayordoma de los temporales bienes!" (II, 202)

Aside from the use of the Lord's name in exclamations, greeting, blessings, and like expressions, God is presented as being the Creator and the governor of souls. Heaven and Hell, the two extremes of man's opportunities after death, are mentioned several times during the work. The presence of the characters in an at least nominally Christian environment is further reinforced by the fact that when Celestina and Calisto are dying, they cry for confession. So the Christian faith has its place in the Celestina, though God is incongruously accompanied by the fellow deities of Love and Fortune.

Nothing, however, is static in the Celestina, including the relationship between the deities. The division of authority presented previously is not absolute. Previous Spanish literary presentations of the concept of Fortune during the fifteenth century, notably Juan de Mena's Laberinto de fortuna and Santillana's La comedietta de Ponza, had attempted to establish a hierarch among these powers which they recognized in an attempt to understand their universe. These authors presented Fortune as a servant of God. But in the Celestina, this hierarchy is not definitely established, largely because God is presented

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3For an excellent discussion of Fortune in early Spanish literature see the unpublished dissertation (University of California, Los Angeles, 1949) by Helen L. Sears, "The Concepts of Fortune and Fate in the Comedia of Lope de Vega," pp. 5-50.
as a passive figure while Fortune and Love are regarded as the two
dynamic, and hostile, agents of man's fate. Indeed, a great part of
the supra-personal conflict in the *Celestina* comes from the apparent
assumption by Love and Fortune of some of the functions of God. They,
rather than God, are presented as the inexorable and all-inclusive
powers from which no one can escape.

The tragic figure must recognize these supreme forces--God,
Fortune and Love, in particular--which govern the universe of the
*Celestina*. He must recognize their power, but not acquiesce that they
should be all-powerful. These powers must be questioned and man's
ultimate worth must be affirmed against their supremacy. The previous
caracters studied have lacked stature because their limited vision
of the universe has not enabled them to challenge these powers. The
last important character to be considered, however, is not handicapped
by these limitations.
We come now to Pleberio, the character whom we believe to be the
dominant tragic figure of the Celestina. When we consider Pleberio's
position in the Celestina, we encounter several problems not present
in our analysis of the other characters in the work.

Pleberio makes only two brief appearances before the next-to-last
act when he is the horrified observer of his daughter's suicide. This
might raise the question of his importance in the work. Admittedly,
Pleberio has the last and generally key position in the drama, but it
might well be argued that he merely occupies the position as a sort of
Greek chorus to the play proper and does not receive sufficient
development to justify consideration as an individual character. Then,
too, Pleberio's mournful lament may well be the direct words of the
author, words lacking the additional effectiveness which is derived from
the presentation of the author's thoughts through the medium of a
living, dynamic personage who is an integral part of the work. Several
questions, then, arise with respect to Pleberio: What is the exact
relationship between Pleberio and the author of the work? Is Pleberio
a full-fledged character? Is he different from the other characters
of the Celestina? If so, why, and what is the significance of this
difference?

Any suggestion that Pleberio's role is merely that of a shallow
mouthpiece will, I think, be immediately rejected by the reader. Too
much sincere and eloquently expressed emotion is contained in Pleberio's
long monologue to allow it to be interpreted as mere didactical summarization. There is no denying that Rojas viewed this act as the summarization of his *loco amor* theme, but at the same time the summarization is given power and emotion through its presentation by an authentic character. Pleberio has a function within the work, as all characters in any creative masterpiece must have; Pleberio also has a vitality and an individuality of his own, as will be demonstrated by an analysis of his exact position in the work.

Pleberio is unique among the characters in the *Celestina* in the manner of portrayal. Other characters, notably Celestina and Areusa, are introduced indirectly, but this introduction is soon followed by direct contact with them. Pleberio, however, does not deliver his first lines until Act twelve and remains in the background as a near-mute accessory to the action until Act twenty.

This does not diminish Pleberio's importance. Throughout the play, Pleberio has figured in the consciousness of each of the characters as the mighty antagonist who can bring sudden disaster to all. Pleberio is the immediate reason for the necessity of secrecy, he is the source of the close guardianship which has kept Melibea innocent and isolated from the world for all twenty years of her life, he is the power who can, and would, inflict terrible punishments were he to learn about the events taking place around him. To the other characters of the Celestina, Pleberio is the supreme power in their little world, capable of terminating their intrigues and their lives in an instant. In his love for Melibea, Pleberio is repeatedly shown to be tender and self-effacing, yet all realize that the vengeance he would inflict upon those who sought to disturb his tranquil existence would be sudden and harsh.
Pleberio's integral role is established quite early in the work. Melibea's noble parentage is mentioned by Calisto as being among her assets in Act one and the circumstances in which he encounters her in the opening scene serve to stress the wealth and position of her family. In Act four, Celestina, en route to Melibea's home, cautions herself on the need to plan carefully lest she make a misstep and meet her death or be lashed. Who but Pleberio would be the agent of her punishment? Later in the same monologue, Celestina avers that she will proceed with her plan: "Más quiero ofender a Pleberio, que enojar a Calisto." (I, 156)

When Celestina is alone with Melibea and is pressing her argument in Calisto's behalf, Melibea's initial outraged reaction upon hearing Calisto's name makes Celestina proceed cautiously for a few moments as Melibea storms: "¿Por quién has venido a buscar la muerte para ti?" (I, 177) Who would be the agent of this very real threat of death, a threat which Celestina herself recognizes as being quite authentic? Pleberio, of course. Were Melibea of another social class or less lovingly protected, Celestina would not be hazarding her very life. It is the unseen Pleberio who invests the entire encounter of the two women with drama and tension.

Finally, when Melibea has agreed to allow Celestina to come again, she cautions Celestina of the need for secrecy—a caution which reveals the surrender of her scruples. A caution, too, that her father be kept ignorant of the state of affairs.

The importance of secrecy continues throughout the affair and intensifies when the lover and his servants begin to invade the privacy of Pleberio's estate. The threat of discovery reveals the cowardice
of Sempronio and Pármeno: "Estos escuderos de Pleberio son locos: no desean tanto comer ni dormir como questiones e ruidos. Pues más locura sería esperar pelea con enemigo, que no ama tanto la victoria e vencimiento, como la continua guerra e continenda." (II, 88) This cowardice is reinforced by a previous mention of the efficiency and valor of Pleberio's servants, a valor which reflects the nobility of their old master just as faithfully as the cowardice of Sempronio and Pármeno reflects the worth of their master, Calisto: "Que nuestro amo, si es sentido, no temo que se escapará de manos desta gente de Pleberio, para podernos después demandar como lo hemos e incusarnos el huir." (II, 81)

Immediately upon yielding to Calisto (Act XIV), Melibea becomes aware of the consequences of her act, aware that she has betrayed her parents: "¡Oh mi padre honrado, cómo he dañado tu fama e dado causa e lugar a quebrantar tu casa!" (II, 119) The implications of Melibea's act are extended to the parent and the omen of future ill fate is reinforced.

In Act fourteen, Pleberio begins to take a more active role in the course of events. He talks to his wife about marriage for Melibea. The parents may die at any time and should leave their daughter's affairs in order. Pleberio considers allowing Melibea to choose her husband, a decision which might permit her to achieve happiness, but his wife dissuades him, claiming that marriage decisions are the proper concern of the father. Melibea's desperately obstinate love affair, and the work itself, loses its last opportunity for a happy ending.

Pleberio's move to the center of attention occurs late in the play (Act 20). Up to this point, Pleberio's role has been primarily that of an all-menacing treat. The events portrayed and the significance
of these events has been primarily restricted to the immediate human situation. Pleberio has functioned as the other character's limited vision of the all-powerful.

What have we learned of Pleberio's character? He is old, sixty, and concerned with the possibility of approaching death. His life is centered about his daughter. He is wealthy, powerful, and of noble birth, and is respected by all. We know little more. As Pleberio hears the hubbub attendant upon the death of Calisto and comes to protect his daughter, Pleberio's position in the work has been more functional than immediate and his character is uncertain.

In the discussion of Melibea in a previous chapter, we mentioned that her awareness of the consequences of her act on her father had increased her stature and extended the significance of her suicide. This is true. This awareness also provides a continuity to the work by making the reader aware of the father and his predicament of being a helpless spectator of the wilfull suicide of the daughter who has been his major joy in life. Melibea addresses her father directly throughout her last speech, bringing him to the forefront of attention. She describes his suffering as he beholds her; she describes his next hard task after she dies: "...veo tus lágrimas malofridas decir por tu arrugada haz....Pon tú en cobro este cuerpo, que allí baxa."

Melibea commits suicide. Her fall is a graphic example of the Renaissance concept of a tragic fall from a high place. But the work does not end with this act which brings an end to the life of the last of the lovers. Rojas' concept of tragedy and suffering was much more complete than the mere presentation of Melibea's tragic choice of
suicide. His theme has been illustrated with respect to base as well as noble lovers, some of whom have tragic attributes. Now loco amor will be exemplified by the tragic portrait of suffering and filial love presented by Pleberio. Rojas has recognized the position of the survivor and has provided for the presentation of the survivor's predicament as the most complete, meaningful, universal, and moving development of the entire work. Pleberio has been a power throughout the work, he has achieved individuality through the direct presentation of his suffering while he witnesses his daughter's death, and now that he alone of the major figures of the work has survived, his survival is to give added dimension to the evil effects of loco amor. Emerging from the status of a shadowy, almost impersonal menace, Pleberio becomes an individual human whose condition represents the common suffering of all humans. Pleberio has moved into focus as the sharp, clear embodiment of a situation which is diametrically opposed to that of the sufferer whose dilemma is terminated by death.

It is the focusing of attention on Pleberio accompanied by a universalization of his situation which justifies the addition of an act after the death of the lovers whose affair has provided the central action of the work. Pleberio's closing act-long monologue is the true climax of the work in that he is much more closely linked to all humans than are any of the other characters of the Celestina. The multiplicity of sharply sketched characters in the previous acts has left the reader, admiring and interested though he may be, with a certain aloofness. The reader is contemplating too much, too many things are going on, too many characters are left off-stage for too long. The variety of scenes and subplots is too rich for any of them to have great intensity. The
loco amor theme has been advanced by this kaleidoscopic presentation of the multi-faceted nature of love, but the frequent emphasis on the comic characters has lessened the intensity of the few characters with tragic potential. The play has been, as far as any character other than Celestina is concerned, too fragmented for them to achieve great stature, and Celestina is a comic rather than a tragic character.

Now, however, there are no other distractions. The blight cast upon the other characters by the powerful attractiveness of Celestina has been removed by her death. Two servants and two lovers have died. Melibea's choice of suicide and her father's lone survivorship have restored intensity to the work by placing the emphasis on a single individual. Now Pleberio's actions become the actions of the entire work, the summation of the experiences of all of the other characters.

How does Pleberio bring universal import to the previous events? What is his view of the forces ordering human existence? Does Pleberio or the reader achieve an increased awareness of what it means to live in this world?

A close analysis of Pleberio's monologue will answer these questions. First, it must be stressed that the presentation of Melibea's death is not a Seneca-like emphasis of the gory details of her shattered body, but an emphasis of the intense mental anguish of the survivor. This internal orientation of the remaining action gives power and intensity to the monologue and enables the reader to achieve an empathy with the suffering survivor. Pleberio's suffering is his suffering; it is also the suffering of all men. Pleberio's "why?" is his, but it also belongs to all men. The manner in which this extension of meaning is accomplished will help reveal Pleberio's full tragic character.
Pleberio's final speech is rhythmic, proceeding from a direct address of individuals--daughter, wife, and self--to a direct address of the powers he blames for personal and human suffering--Fortune, Life, World, and Love--and then back to an address of individuals. Learned comparisons which serve to emphasize his loss also serve to extend the significance of his loss. Thus, Pleberio's speech is more than a monologue. The direct address of a series of beings gives Pleberio's speech a conversational quality which the straight monologue does not possess. It is this rhythm and alternation in the address of unseen powers who are the mute recipients of Pleberio's protest which sustains the interest and the import of the long speech.

This rhythmic elaboration and extension of personal suffering broadens the significance of the work while it defines the forces which cause human suffering. Previously, Pleberio has been the power to be considered in the work. Now he shifts the emphasis from himself as antagonist of the other principals to man's antagonist in the Celestina.

Man's antagonist in his worldly existence is Love. Man's existence is made yet more difficult by the fact that Love has several allies: Fortune, World, and Life. In fact, though Love is the reason for man's suffering, Fortune is the agent determining the results of his love, and the decision of Fortune is apparently irrational. Fortune seldom can be seen to be just, and Pleberio's repeated "why?" is an attempt to find an ethical ordering where none is immediately evident: "...yo no lloro triste a ella muerta, pero la causa desastrada de su morir." (II, 207-8)

Pleberio mentions previous figures from history and mythology who have also loved and suffered. This extends the implications of the
events pictured in the work, it also represents an effort by Pleberio to find by analogy some explanation for his own condition. He defines the antagonist: "¿quién forzó a mi hija a morir, sino la fuerte fuerza de amor?" He challenges and questions his opponent, Love: "¿Quién te dio tanto poder? Quien te puso nombre que no te conviene?...Dulce nombre te dieron; amargos hechos hazas. No das yguales galardones."

Pleberio recognizes the capriciousness, the unequal dispensations of Love and her ally, Fortune. Addressing Love, Pleberio attempts to find a reason for this disparity of fortunes: "Enemigo de toda razón, a los que menos te siruen das mayores dones, hasta tenerlos metidos en tu congoxosa dança. Enemigo de amigos, amigo de enemigos, ¿por qué te riges sin orden ni concierto?" (II, 210-11)

Pleberio has defined his antagonist, tested her justice, and been able to find no reason or order in her rule. He presents a vivid final judgment of Love: "Tu fuego es de ardiente rayo, que jamás hace señal dó llega. La leña, que gasta tu llama, son almas e vidas de humanas criaturas...No sólo de christianos; mas de gentiles e judíos e todo en pago de buenos servícios." (II, 211)

Judging Love to be unworthy, Pleberio has also definitely emphasized his sense of unity with all humans, regardless of faith.

Failing to find a reason for his suffering and the severe fates of the two lovers, Pleberio turns away from the world to a complete inner preoccupation with his own loss. Now he addresses not the antagonist, Love, nor Love's allies, but his beloved daughter. His "why?" addressed to all the forces of his world has proved unavailing. He now questions his dead daughter, a questioning which is highly dramatic if we remember
that he has just beheld her broken body. "¿Por qué me dexaste, quando yo te havía de dexar? ¿Por qué me dexaste penado? ¿Por qué me dexaste triste e solo in hac lachrymarum valle?" (II, 212)

Pleberio has found no ordering, no reason for his suffering or for that of all humans. His final lines are a mournful restatement of personal loss and a recognition of the long period of intense suffering before him. This return to an emphasis of the first-person does not, however, diminish his tragic stature. Pleberio has already amply linked himself and his fortune to the universal fortune of all humans. A return to the emphasis of personal suffering and loss to emphasize this universal condition is quite effective. Pleberio's stature is increased, as is the sense of fear and pity that has been evoked in the reader who has reached an empathy with Pleberio. Pleberio has achieved no increased or broadened perception of order and justice in an apparently fickle universe. But this is not necessary in the tragic figure so long as his suffering brings an increased awareness of order to the reader. Pleberio's suffering and questioning does this, for the reader realizes that his suffering, and that of all of the principals in the work, stems from the reassertion by the supreme powers of their authority over man's affairs.

Enwrapped in his own dilemma, Pleberio attempts to understand but is unable to do so because no matter how honestly he may try to see order and justice in these events, he is limited by his partial view of the situation. Such a limitation is not placed upon the observer. Part of the strength of tragedy as an art form lies in the fact that though the tragic character is somehow grander than the viewer, the viewer possesses another greatness in that he, from his vantage point, is
aware of things which the tragic character cannot know. In this instance, the viewer understands the error which is the source of Pleberio's predicament.

The error is mentioned, though not recognized, by Pleberio himself. Addressing his antagonist, Love, Pleberio says:

Bien pensé que de tus lazos me aullá librado, cuando los quarenta años toqué, cuando fui contento con mi conjugal compañera, quando me ví con el fruto que me cortaste el día de oy. No pensé que tomáras en los hijos la venganza de los padres. (II, 209)

This passage reveals Pleberio to be proud. He has possessed the narrow, thoughtless nature of the comfortably vain. He has never reflected on the nature of order and chance in human events. Now Pleberio is paying the penalty for this former inattentiveness to forces which must occupy the attention of all. He cannot console himself with his wealth, kind personality, or social position, but is compelled to face the harsh punishment of a force which ignores such human values. Pleberio strives to comprehend the deeper implications and preoccupations of human existence which he had disregarded and though he does not achieve even a partial comprehension of a rational ordering of events, Pleberio does gain an increased awareness of the complexity of the human condition which adds depth to his character and stature to his position as a tragic figure.

A measure of the pathos of Pleberio's position rests in the fact that though he has not been sufficiently vigilant in this situation, the measures he has used to protect Melibea were sufficient for twenty years. There is an irony characteristic of the tragic situation in the fact that Pleberio's suffering is in part due to the "conjugal compañera" whom he has loved and entrusted with Melibea's well-being.
In his last speech, Pleberio declares that the sins of the father have been visited upon the daughter. But this is just a part of Love's revenge. The daughter has sinned independently of her father's aid and Love has punished her for it. Love has also punished the father, whose disregard for Love's power has contributed to his daughter's fate. Seen from the viewpoint of Love as the all-powerful, this double punishment and suffering of father and daughter does demonstrate the rule of an absolute ordering authority.

There is an interesting omission in Pleberio's final monologue. Pleberio addresses World, Life, Death, Fortune, and Love—particularly the latter pair—but he does not address God. There are several interesting suppositions that can be advanced concerning this omission of an element which has had its importance in the rest of the work.

First, the omission of God combined with other pessimistic, irreverent, and heretical expressions may seem to reinforce the judgment of most critics that the converso Rojas composed the work. Such expressions and attitudes are absent from the works of other non-Jewish contemporaries. Secondly, Pleberio's failure to address the Lord might be considered to be a recognition that an appeal to the Lord would be unavailing now that Melibea has taken her own life. This would support an opposite opinion concerning the religiosity of the work. A third possible decision on this problem is to regard Pleberio's omission as one more instance of his fundamental error of insufficient consideration of the nature of the world, life, and the forces governing man's existence.

A decision concerning this omission of God is essential. To gain the stature of the great tragic figure, the individual must question all
powers in his effort to gain a greater understanding or a greater measure of justice. If Pleberio consciously avoids addressing God, he is not a great tragic figure.

The decision on this matter will give Pleberio tragic stature. His omission of God during his questioning and protesting is understandable if one considers his lifelong awareness of only the immediate, the tangible, and the material. Pleberio's value system has always been oriented toward his daughter, wealth, and social position. These have been presented as being under the control of Fortune. When Pleberio protests against Fortune, then, he is protesting against the very force which he holds responsible for his great loss. To protest against a God whom he does not feel to be involved in his plight would be especially futile. Pleberio has challenged his Almighty and though he receives no increased perception of order, he has enabled the reader to sense an ordering of events.

Pleberio is a tragic figure. He suffers, has an awareness of the long period of suffering before him, experiences a change of fortune so terrible as to place him in the company of any tragic hero, and has reached a tardy perception of the complexity of life. Pleberio presents a universal lesson in disillusionment and despair, a lesson which is raised above that common commodity, pathos, to tragedy by the intensity of his suffering and the selfless manner in which he treats the human agents of his suffering. He avows his kinship with man as few heroes have, and achieves by this the deepest emotional effect of the Celestina, a true "cathartic" evocation of exaltation, pity, and fear.
CHAPTER EIGHT
EXPANDED PERSPECTIVE: THE INDIVIDUAL RELATED TO MANKIND

Now we have studied the characters of the Celestina with respect to their status as tragic figures. Most of them, above all, that attractive principal, Celestina, are comic characters, illustrating man's ridiculous rather than his heroic qualities and confirming by the manner of their deaths the normal social expectations.

Of the lovers, Melibea has been judged to be the person who most closely achieves great tragic stature. Melibea's death is the result of her own will and passion. She chooses to die and is the only character whose stature is enhanced by death. Melibea's awareness of the pain and sorrow this suicide will bring to her parents increases rather than lessens the tragic implications of her choice.

Parmeno, Calisto's young and naive servant, is also a minor tragic figure. Parmeno is a remarkable and significant creation for the fifteenth century: a lower-class character who is as fully developed as are the more noble personages of the work. In a period when literary theory generally regarded only the most noble individuals as possessing the capacity for the deep suffering and loss characteristic of tragedy, the detailed presentation of Parmeno's fall from integrity and death is astonishing and is one of the components of the work which evidences most emphatically the artistic ingenuity and vision of Fernando de Rojas.

Pleberio is the figure who brings the tragic effect of the drama to an emotional peak. He dramatizes most effectively Rojas' awareness that suffering and anguish are continuous rather than terminal features of the human condition.
Considered with respect to their position in the work as a whole, however, these characters have been shown to be limited in their tragic potential. The words "kaleidoscopic" and "fragmented" have been applied to the work and to the intermittent appearances of the principal characters. This discontinuous presentation of the characters has served to deny each character commanding importance in the work. Individually, their experiences do not receive the continuous development necessary for the achievement of the deep emotional intensity of the tragic experience. It is this limitation which most handicaps the tragic potential of Melibea and Pármeno.

Pleberio is likewise limited by his role in the work. He receives our concentrated attention for a sufficient period to attain full stature as an individual and to convey the somber emotional message of the work. Yet Pleberio, when seen against the work as a whole, is only a minor element. Pleberio's actions do not dominate his work as do the actions of a Prometheus, a Hamlet, or a Willy Loman. An emotional identification with Pleberio's situation is but a part of the reader's understanding of the whole work.

Another way to emphasize the limitations which the structure of the work imposes upon its characters is to discuss the parallelism which has drawn the attention of almost every critic who has commented on the work at any length. Calisto has two servants, Celestina has two young apprentices. The relationship between the two girls, Areusa and Elicia, parallels the relationship between the two men servants. When Calisto's servants are executed, they are replaced by another pair.

The parallelism of situation is even more pronounced. Celestina goes to Melibea's home twice and twice endeavors to enlist Pármeno's
aid. Twice Celestina walks along the streets with Sempronio discussing their enterprise. More important, in so far as a limitation of the stature of the individuals is concerned, is the parallelism of the presentation of love in the _Celestina_. Celestina seduces Melibea for Calisto and Areusa for Parmeno (admittedly, the difference in character of the two girls makes the latter task undemanding) and the subsequent love affairs of the two pairs furnish a parallel presentation of love at the two social extremes. Finally, Parmeno, Sempronio, Calisto, and Melibea experience similarly disastrous falls.

The attention of the reader, then, switches back and forth among these multiple components as each occupies the center of attention for a short span of time, then is replaced by another element. Thus the tragic stature of the serious characters is reduced, yet there is an additional tragic effect created by this multitude of minor elements which makes the tragic import of the _Celestina_ greater than the sum of the experiences of its tragic characters. Each event in the _Celestina_ is a development of a greater vision of human existence than can be revealed by the actions of a single character.

The antagonist has been clearly identified. _Loco amor_ is the all-pervading force which imposes suffering upon the characters of the _Celestina_. But Love's opponent, the actual protagonist of the _Celestina_, has not been presented.

Time and again in the _Celestina_, laughter becomes a choked groan or sob, the manipulator becomes the manipulated, the deceiver finds himself the deceived, anticipation turns into anguish, and trust is betrayed by treachery. The cumulative effect of this repeated display of pessimism and irony from which no character is immune serves to emphasize that Man, rather than any of the individual characters, is the
protagonist of the work. The great import of the Celestina and the deep tragic effect of the work stems from the immediate universal significance of this recognition of the true protagonist, a recognition which is established and emphasized by the parallelism and fragmentation which has so severely limited the tragic stature of the individual characters. It is for this reason that we have attempted to avoid the term "tragic hero" when discussing the tragic characters of the work. The "hero," if we must use the term, is the collective entity of which each of the characters is but a component.

Viewed in this way, several puzzling aspects of the work become more clear. Death is continually before us in the Celestina, yet the work does not emphasize death or the democracy of death as did the Danza de la muerte of the previous century. Death may be the ultimate fate of all humans, but it is not the fate of Man. Addressing his dead daughter, Pleberio emphasizes this preoccupation with life rather than death when he mourns not so much Melibea's death as the manner of her dying. It is with the endless and innumerable living experiences of Man, rather than the terminal experiences of particular men, that the Celestina is concerned.

Similarly, the Celestina evidences no preoccupation with the world to come, no claim that things will be better, or at least different, after death. Pleberio is left in a world of gloom and sorrow by Melibea's fatal decision, but he evidences no concern with either an eternity of salvation or damnation. This world is the concern of the Celestina.

It is from this viewpoint that the true tragedy of the Celestina, the tragedy of theme, can be seen. In all cases, love begins lightly,
happily, and ends disastrously. The common result of man's ambitions and joys is destruction. Celestina herself, confident that she is doing mankind a favor by making love more available and profiting materially from that which she, regretfully, can no longer enjoy, is an example of the tragic theme. Expert in manipulating and evaluating events and people, Celestina is not quite expert enough, and also, ironically, falls victim to Man's remorseless antagonist: loco amor.

Thus, the comic and the tragic elements of the Celestina are united as they emphasize through variety and contrast the tragedy of theme.

It is because Rojas intentionally wanted to develop his simple plot so as to emphasize minutely the realistic, true-to-life experiences of Man that he required twenty-one acts rather than the traditional five. Each of the parallel elements mentioned is dynamically different, and emphasizes by repetition that the implications of the work are universal, that the characters are components of the central protagonist: Man. Rojas made multiple use of specific characters presented in detailed and parallel situations to exemplify the collective nature of his protagonist. The intentionally indefinite location of the action likewise serves to emphasize the universality of subject and theme.

Seen thus, the difficulties encountered in our study of the tragic characters are resolved. Some of the characters are tragic, yet they are but bits of a larger, supra-individual tragic concept. With this realization comes the awareness that the message of the Celestina is a gloomy one. The destruction by loco amor of all of man's joys emphasizes that one important attitude is missing from the work: hope. The Celestina offers no hope, merely a recognition of the transitory, fleeting nature of earthly pleasures and a recognition that man's final
and unavoidable fate will be suffering and disaster. Yet, for all of this affirmation of the harshness of life, Man rather than the supreme powers receives the emphasis. The expectation of the Celestina is for more suffering, more folly, and also that certain individuals, like Melibea, will be able to triumph over their condition and achieve a glory denied the governing forces who lack the capacity for intense emotion.

It is here that we, as individual components of that composite protagonist of the Celestina, can perceive the positive note that distinguishes the pessimism of tragedy from cynicism. Those humans who can achieve an authentic emotional intensity are glorified, frailties and all, above the fickle powers that control their destiny. The final message, then, is not of hope; it is, however, a positive affirmation of the worthiness of human emotions, an affirmation that Man is glorified rather than degraded by his emotional capacity.
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