

CAPES AND SWORDS: TEACHING THE THEATRICALITY OF GOLDEN AGE POETRY

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“debajo de mi manto, al rey mato...”
Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quijote I*

As is the case with many undergraduate Spanish programs, the teaching of Golden Age poetry at Concordia University is combined with that of Golden Age theater. Although this arrangement severely limits what one can do with either of these significant and vast cultural phenomena, the traditional rationale for this type of program is solid, as the concentrated study of poetic forms, themes, imagery, and topics in the more manageable texts of sonnets and *canciones* prepares students for the formal, conceptual, and intertextual complexities that make Renaissance and Baroque drama so endlessly challenging. The purpose of this paper, however, is to describe what can happen when one inverts the terms of this relationship and focuses on the *theatricality* of Golden Age poetry rather than the *lyricism* of Golden Age theater. Theatricality, of course, is a very complex concept which has produced a quiet unmanageable theoretical and critical corpus; so for this course I settled on four distinct yet interrelated approaches to theatricality which were introduced throughout the thirteen-week semester.¹ My goal was to construct a series of dialogues between Renaissance *poesía cancioneril* and the theater of Encina, the mystical eroticism of Juan de la Cruz and the marketplace humor of Lope de Rueda, the political wit of Gracián, and the political allegories of Calderón, and so on.

I began the course with a consideration of the *cancionero* movement of the early Renaissance. Not only is this witty and enigmatic theatrical in its ritualistic, competitive, and performative aspects, but the central role played by the Spanish nobility in this courtly movement makes the *cancionero* a compelling stage on which the social, political, religious, and artistic transformations and conflicts of the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance may be played out for students. What was perceived in the Middle Ages as the nobility's inalienable moral and social superiority, a superiority based, in turn, on a universalizing, cosmological Chain of Being, in the Renaissance becomes *theatrical*;

which is to say, it becomes subject to an indeterminate and ambiguous confrontation with history. This cultural stage cannot be characterized as a static and resolved landscape or plot, but rather should be approached as the scene of strategic material and historical struggles for rhetorical dominance and/or acceptance. Michel García writes, “When Juan II or Alvaro de Luna composed their verses, they did not expect to be considered men of letters but only to share in and promote a social ritual of court life” (53). In this regard, the practice of courtly love poetry is first and foremost the heightened expression of a theatrical search for courtly honor and prestige.

The first notion of theatricality introduced in the course comes from Shakespearean critic Barbara Freedman, who begins her powerful study *Staging the Gaze* with the following *dialogic* consideration: “What do we mean when we say that someone or something is theatrical? What we mean is that such a person is aware that she is seen, reflects that awareness, and so deflects our look. ... Theatricality evokes an uncanny sense that the given to be seen has the power to both position and to displace us” (1). For Freedman, the theatrical subject is constituted through the realization—conscious or unconscious—that the meaning and social significance of one’s words and actions, as well as one’s status, are not predetermined and stable but rather the ambiguous result of a process of cultural production and reception. This idea of reciprocity is the point of departure for my class’s consideration of several of the enigmatic and playful *invenciones* catalogued by Brian Dutton in his immense anthology of *cancionero* poetry.

Closely related to the more widely known and studied *empresa* (R. De la Flor, *Emblemas*), *invenciones* were a favorite pastime of courtly subjects, who often participated in the competitive *invention* and public performance of these witty devices. This performance art combines a clever motto with a visual *divisa* or *cimera*, as María José Díez Garretas explains, “divisas y cimera pasarán a tener el mismo significado y función: serán la figura decorativa de los trajes y yelmos de los cortesanos, acompañada siempre del mote o lema prestado por la primitiva divisa” (38). Another useful aspect of the *invenciones* for the study of Golden Age poetry is the way in which they crystallize many common motifs and concepts of the Renaissance world view in three or four lines. Finally, the absolute foreignness of both the linguistic and semantic properties of *cancionero* poetry forces students to become aware of their own active engagement with the text without foreclosing the moment of interpretation. Since one of the keys to the social efficacy of poetic wit is the stratification of the field of reception into those who ‘get it’ and those who don’t, students are able to enjoy the challenge

of the riddles as they become interpellated into this theatrical and inventive game.

The following *invención* is attributed to Diego López de Haro (I have placed a modern transcription next to the original text of the following *inventions*):

[*cimera*] Otra letra suya a una capa leonada con unas mancillas en ella y dijo.
 Quando de mi coraçon *Cuando de mi corazón*
 sallen manzillas al paño *salen mancillas al paño*
 que tal deve ser el daño. *que tal debe ser el daño.* (Dutton 345)

The poem seems quite simple, but its playful reference to the displayed object makes explicit the often implicit goal of the Renaissance lyric: to publicly *represent* the pain of the poetic *I* and, just as importantly, to display the absent *presence* of the creator behind the mask. The objectification of an ostensibly internal suffering in the spotted, or stained, cape opens a point of ambiguity between the poetic act and the public representation of that act. Moreover, the way in which a cape simultaneously reveals and disguises its wearer is a great metaphor for the emergence of a theatrical subject (Egginton). Too often trapped inside a Romantic—and romantic—view of poetic creation, students often get stuck on this distinction; but when I shift the class discussion toward the world of MTV, they are quick to recognize the theatrical nature of amorous complaints ... and taunts.

More problematic is the following enigma by Hernando de Sillveyra:

Sacó en otra justa los martirios de la passion y dixo.
 Ygualar otros aestos *Igualar otros a estos*
 Seria gran desuario *sería gran desvarío*
 Mas por dios grandes el mio. *Mas, por Dios, grande es el mio.*
(Dutton 347)

In this case religious symbols become subject to the theatrical displacement theorized by Freedman. Although Sillveyra declares that he ought not to compare his amorous martyrdom to the passion of Christ, the publicly displayed sacred objects inevitably fall victim to the ambiguous possibilities of his *invención*, which arguably becomes scatological in the last line of the poem. It is easy to imagine how a well timed deictic gesture would quickly send the uneasy audience into a fit of hysterical laughter at the bold climax of Sillveyra's uncanny display of religious imagery: "¡Mas, por Dios, grande es el mio!"

By struggling with these deceptively simple and hybrid devices, students begin to perceive the changing social status and power of art in the Renaissance, as the *cancionero* movement embodies many

characteristics that can be classified as modern even as it questions modern presuppositions about art and poetry. Once again, although the social and cultural differences are staggering, a curiously framed allusion to contemporary Rap or Hip-Hop music brings home some of the more pertinent characteristics of Renaissance poetry, not least its musical and theatrical qualities. From a pedagogical point of view, the public nature and unspoken possibilities of the *invenciones* prepare students to become accomplices in the exploration of the symbolic and ideological ambivalence of Golden Age letters in all their scatological and eschatological potential.

This last point brings me to the second concept of theatricality introduced in the course: Mikhail Bakhtin's *translinguistic* concept of carnivalesque or "grotesque realism." In a pioneering study which bridges Bakhtinian linguistics and literary theory, Elias L. Rivers writes:

Es la dimensión social de la práctica lingüística, donde están constantemente en juego los valores ideológicos, lo que separa a Bajtín tanto de Saussure como de Vossler. Para Bajtín, en la función concreta del lenguaje el signo no tiene nada de arbitrario: dentro de cualquier grupo social el signo lingüístico es un factor históricamente determinado que contribuye al sistema de valores verbalmente constituido de cada individuo. (435)

This dialogic encounter between interlocutors is in essence a theatrical stage where desire learns how to present its best face as well as to alter its masks in the interest of social coherence and/or transformation. Few works can compare with the poetry and theater of Juan del Encina in offering students new perspectives and possibilities where theatricality — and modernity — is concerned.

When placed in his field of social and cultural relations, Encina plays the role of what Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano calls the "free-lance humanist" (156). In a society structured along *estamental* lines, this is a difficult character to portray, as the mere idea of a self-styling and self-creating author challenges the entire cultural and social tradition which medieval *auctoritas* both utilized and upheld. According to Yarbro-Bejarano, "Unlike the medieval writer, the free-lance humanist had no permanent institutional attachment and was dependent on noble patronage as the chief means of support. This economic insecurity was compounded by the awareness of the lack of a genuine and recognized function within society as the self-constituted 'learned'" (156). It is here, in the social relations that inform the artistic practice of Encina, where a vital key to understanding what his poetry and theater attempt to carry out can be found. I have discovered that teaching his difficult theater helps pull back the veil on the complexity

of Renaissance culture(s), as Encina's universal talent makes its entrance onto various scenarios simultaneously: poetic invention, theatrical writing, acting, and directing, musical composition and performance; monarchical, aristocratic, as well as papal politics in Spain and Italy; the bitter competition for ecclesiastical benefices (Anthony Van Beyserveldt); the newly opened terrain of art as commodity (Arnold Hauser), and so on. In every case, Encina ingeniously constructs a public *persona*—in Gracián's sense of the word (Castillo)—while framing a receptive gaze within which said *persona* may be recognized as honorable, or innately superior.

To connect with our previous discussion, the witty use of religious symbolism and language in the secular world of the *cancionero* prepares students for a concentrated reading of Encina's *Égloga de Cristino y Febea*, in particular the climactic—and theatrical—transformation of Cristino back into a worldbound shepherd after having cut short his attempted conversion to a religious hermit. The play opens with the entrance of Cristino, who has come seeking the advice of his friend Justino. Cristino has just broken with his latest love and is not so much seeking advice as demanding that Justino bless his determination to retire to the ostensibly simple and solitary life of a hermit. It is here where the Bakhtinian model of linguistic production helps clarify what Encina is doing, as Cristino's utterance does not receive a ready acceptance from his friend. To the contrary, Justino proceeds to catalogue all of the pleasures of pastoral life that Cristino will leave behind if he insists on fleeing the constant changes and transformations of his worldly existence. Notwithstanding Justino's tempting portrait, Cristino perseveres in his *empresa* and makes his way to the hermitage. In the meanwhile, *Amor*, or Cupid, regards this action with great interest, as he is not about to permit one of his most lively amorous warriors to quit the field before his time is up. After a short dialogue with Justino, the god of love dispatches Febea, a beautiful nymph, to tempt Cristino out of his pledge to abandon worldly trials and pleasures. Febea flies to Cristino and swears she will love him if he returns to his former state. Cristino agonizes over this predicament, but in the end he returns to the meadow, where he encounters Justino.

The following scene of transformation is more complicated than it appears, as is generally the case with Encina, who must channel his avant garde aesthetic through the traditional beliefs and conservative expectations of his courtly patrons. To begin, Justino directs Cristino to leave his priestly dress in the hermitage: "Dexa los ábitos ende, / dalos por Dios o los vende" (493-94). By suggesting that Cristino sell his robes, Justino underlines the material as opposed to symbolic status and function of this religious costume. In contrast to his previous

determination to go it alone, Cristino now protests he is unable to quit the habits by himself: “De los ábitos, te juro, / no me curo. / Tú, Justino, me los quita” (495-97). Identity becomes a dialogic process here and will remain so throughout the rest of the eclogue. Justino scoffs at his friend’s reticence: “Dusna, dusna el balandrán,² / que es afán. / Quitate el escapulario, las cuentas y el brevario. / No *semejes* sacristán” (501-05; my emphasis). Some critics have read dialogues like this as indications of how Encina incorporates dramatic cues into the text. Another way of interpreting this moment, however, is to recognize how Encina foregrounds the material nature of social identity; or, stated otherwise, how he plays with the constitutive nature of material signs, which take on great importance in theatrical scenes of transformation. As we have seen in the *inventions*, when symbolically charged objects, such as López de Haro’s cape, are taken up—or set down—the space around them becomes reorganized according to the presupposed social and cultural meanings that circulate around these objects. Indeed, Cristino’s reticence is perhaps due to the weighty significance that religious garb itself takes on within the space of the hermitage, a relationship which signals an ontological dependence between space, meaning, and identity. Such dependence would require his movement into the more empty and homogeneous—indeterminate—space of the pastoral world before being able to unmake his religious persona. The command of Justino, “no *semejes* sacristán,” furthermore, places the status of religious vocations themselves in the indeterminate space of theatricality, as the religious persona is displayed as just so much pageantry with no substantive claim on Cristino’s desire or his identity. As with the *cancionero*, a quick sidestep to modern culture and the wide and varied use of religious symbols and gestures establishes the weightiness of Encina’s bold theatrical wager.

Coincidentally, it is also here where the personal becomes political, as Encina introduces a wider gaze when Cristino asks “¿qué dirán en el aldea?, / que tornar es cosa fea” (508-09). In answer to Cristino’s doubt concerning the social efficacy of his changing of roles, Justino urges his friend, “*Amuestra* plazer, pues vienes; / *fingelo*, pues no lo tienes; / trabaja por te alegrar” (513-15; my emphasis). I believe that this exchange demonstrates precisely what Bakhtin means when he talks about the “dialogic.” Cristino understands that his identity is determined in large part by his ability to meet the expectations of the community around him, *el aldea*. What Justino intuits, however, is that those expectations can be altered by a convincing performance regardless of the sincerity of the actor: “*fake it*” is his answer to Cristino’s doubt. In the end, the *transformation* of Cristino is more properly conservative in its content; the structure of this transformation, on the

other hand, is completely open-ended and indeterminate in its potential. As Julian Weiss argues, “Como Fernando de Rojas, Encina parece más consciente de la manera en que las relaciones sociales están constituidas dentro de la materialidad del lenguaje, y por tanto el hombre ya no ocupa un lugar central, sino que está descentrado” (245). To conclude, Encina creates a theatrical space as well as a dramatic force capable of modeling social transformations.

I will end my consideration of Renaissance art by considering the theatrical possibilities of what has generally been recognized as its most significant development: three-point perspective. I am particularly interested in how Garcilaso de la Vega incorporates this new window on and of reality into both the structure and thematics of his poetry. My point of departure is William Egginton’s recent book, *How the World Became a Stage*, in which the author differentiates between the “full spaces” of medieval rituals of *presence* and the empty and homogeneous space of pictorial perspective, a space within which the critic frames his innovative attempt to replace the problematic notion of *subjectivity* with, what else, *theatricality*. Concerning the theatrical subject, Egginton states: “This ‘subject’ is the intellectual manifestation of a new way of experiencing the self in space, a way of experiencing that depends on the ability, for example, to distinguish actors from characters and the space of the one from that of the other ... a product of a specifically theatrical spatiality” (6). Where Freedman concentrates on the *gaze* and Bakhtin privileges the material word, Egginton lays the foundation for his challenging discussion of theatricality on a phenomenology (in the Heideggerian sense) of *space*. We have gotten a glimpse of the historical conflict between medieval *presence* and modern theatricality in Encina’s eclogue, wherein I noted the difficulty Cristino encounters when he attempts to leave behind his religious costume (character) in the hermitage. The space of the hermitage, a “full” space which demands certain types of social comportment due to its religious symbolism and ornamentation—including dress—and which largely escapes the movement of time and history due to its otherworldly status, gives way to the indeterminate space of Encina’s pastoral world. The ability of the metatheatrical and never overdetermined actor Cristino to move from character to character in this open and empty space brands Encina’s theatricality as modern in comparison to medieval rituals of divine presence.³ Juan Carlos Temprano and Ana María Rambaldo, in fact, identify *lo pastoril* as the key to understanding Encina’s attempts to positively frame the revolutionary potential of early modern subjectivity and social mobility, as well as to allegorically suture the social and ethnic breach that was being created and exacerbated by conflicting ethnic and political classes.⁴ Returning to

Egginton's point, unlike ritual drama in which the difference between the "then and there" and the "here and now" is collapsed in a process that parallels the collapsing of the individual perception of a religious spectacle into a collective expression of devotion (Surtz), perspectively rendered space frees objects and individuals so that they may move and interact in ways that are not ritualistically prescribed.⁵

Garcilaso's sonnet XI, which begins "Hermosas ninfas, que en el río metidas," provides many indications of the rhetorical importance and significance of pictorial perspective in both formal and thematic terms. In this poem, the gaze of the reader moves from the central figures of the nymphs to an architectonic description of their watery palace: "contentas habitáis en las moradas / de relucientes piedras fabricadas / y en columnas de vidrio sostenidas" (185-86).⁶ The next stanza, which describes the enraptured labors of the nymphs, who suddenly look more like Fates as they weave and count the threads of the souls of lovers, introduces movement into the frame even as it marks off an unbridgeable distance between the spectator and the subject of representation/object of desire: "agora estéis labrando embebecidas / o tejiendo las telas delicadas; / agora unas con otras apartadas, / contándoos los amores y las vidas" (186). As Georges Güntert observes, time and space penetrate each other in Garcilaso's poetry, as the movement of the timeless nymphs becomes tied to the time-bound activities of the lovers whose histories they weave (450). The poetic *I* comes upon this scene without being noticed, indeed, his narration of their actions is circumscribed within the nebulous *perhaps* of the subjunctive. What becomes apparent in this opening up of what Güntert calls "aesthetic distance" is that the poetic *I*, or eye, desires to break through the barrier implied by the surface of the water—or time—which is yet another reference to Renaissance perspective and its concept of the *window* through which the spectator regards another world (Bryson). As we gaze on the "figure of the author" (Güntert 447), this same figure gazes on a hazily evoked mythological scene, observing the nymphs as they turn his amorous longing and pathos into a tapestry, a work of art. The linking of art, history, and desire, though implicit, creates a *mise en abyme* structure which situates us in a theatrical space, more specifically, 'the play within the play.' Notwithstanding the desire of the plaintive voice, the theatrical wall remains to the end of the poem and absolutely frustrates the desire of the poet lover to be seen by these divine beings: "y no os detendréis mucho según ando; / que o no podréis de lástima escucharme, / o convertido en agua aquí llorando, / podréis allá de espacio consolarme."

When I teach this poem, I often use Sandro Botticelli's *Allegory of Spring* to contextualize Garcilaso's use of perspective as well as to

analyze what happens in the sonnet in ideological terms. In Botticelli's well-known work, the central mythological figures gaze directly at the spectator from the middle of the painting. This passing of the gaze, I explain—more in the attempt to establish a dialectical relationship with Garcilaso's art than with any pretension of convincingly donning the mask of an Art historian—establishes a structural link between the mythological world of Neo-platonic Ideas and the mundane plane of historical existence as represented by the spectator. This same structure occurs in other Botticelli paintings, most famously in *The Birth of Venus*. In Garcilaso, however, this encounter fails to materialize, which of course is disheartening to the poet lover. At the same time, however, the gaze of the spectator-reader steps in to witness the pain and pathos of the poetic *I* as well as the beauty and power of Garcilaso's art. This shift, moreover, is suggested by the grammatical ambiguity of the poem. The pronoun "os" is directed at the nymphs; they, however, are completely unaware of the mortal gaze under which they weave their fateful tapestries. This failure of the dramatic link within the poem produces a qualitatively different theatricality through which the reader steps in to provide the missing gaze of the nymphs. At this point I ask my students: does the "os" not include the reader? Are we not sutured into the poem much as the eye of the spectator of a painting is geometrically situated in the vanishing point of the painting? And if we are now the object of the gaze, are we not introduced into an indeterminate and dialogically structured dynamic of theatricality? Not only is the poem theatrical, it is metatheatrical, as the gaze of the poetic *I* gives way to the regard of the reading *I*. As Güntert argues, "El dolor puede, en parte, ser superado cuando el lector adopte, ante los dolorosos casos (que no dejan de conmoverle) la *distancia estética*, tratando de contemplarlos—en vez de soportarlos" (445; Güntert's emphasis). The drama of the frustrated lover shifts rhetorical planes in order to make the reader conscious of her investment in the poetic enterprise, not to mention the author's effectiveness in soliciting that investment.

This same dynamic occurs with much greater power in Garcilaso's *Tercera Égloga*. Although there are theatrical elements throughout the poem, I am most interested in the staging of the fabrication of the mythological tapestries of the four nymphs, Filódice, Dinámene, Climene, and Nise. Let us recall that the narrator of this poem stages an incredibly sensual entrance of these characters onto the pastoral landscape, narrating their graceful rise out of the watery abode as they sink one naked foot after the other into the dry sand of the shady arbor. This breaking of elemental and temporal boundaries prepares us for the staged composition of the mythological tapestries, in which

similar transgressions are fatally punished. When teaching this poem I spend a lot of time and effort shifting the gaze of the students from the compelling mythological tales of Orpheus and Euridice, Apollo and Dafne, and Venus and Adonis towards the fact that Garcilaso is staging the creation of art. What is the point, I ask, of making us aware that the nymphs are transforming raw mythological material into compelling artistic works? The answer becomes clear with the last tapestry, in which Nise moves from the world of mythology to that of pastoral history:

La blanca Nise no tomó a destajo
de los pasados casos la memoria,
y en la labor de su sutil trabajo
no quiso entrejer antigua historia;
antes mostrando de su claro Tajo
en su labor la celebrada gloria,
lo figuró en la parte donde él baña
la más felice tierra de la España. (127)

The spatial and temporal shift of Nise's enterprise could not be more complete, nor the effect more striking. Returning to the pastoral landscape, the mythological nymph enters the historical world of sixteenth-century Spain, and vice-versa, as the buildings of Garcilaso's native Toledo now serve as a backdrop for the action about to occur in her tapestry. As is well known, Nise portrays the death and monumental eulogization of Elisa, the nymph who could not or would not reciprocate the love of the shepherd Nemoroso in Garcilaso's *Primera Egloga*. In essence, Nise's tapestry is a metatheatrical structure in which one poetic creation is represented in the act of memorializing and monumentalizing another poetic creation, a structure which allows both creation and creator to reach into the realm of myth while keeping their feet planted in the historical present. By staging the historicized act of creation of mythological motifs "en esta tela artificiosa," Garcilaso shatters the self-sufficient status of Classical culture, subjecting it to the reciprocity and indeterminateness of the theatrical gaze. What we are left with is the "uncanny" movement between the poetic world of the eclogue and its process of composition.

Are we not reminded here of Velázquez's landmark Baroque paintings *Las hilanderas* and *Las meninas*? In all cases, the empty and homogeneous space of modern perspective frames the theatrical gaze of the artist, and we become witnesses and co-participants in the historical act of artistic creation. Which begs the question: what is the goal of this art? The creation of beauty? The novel representation of timeless truths? The monumentalization of a nascent and ill-defined

Spanish genius? Criticism itself comes under the gaze of the reader at this point, which seems like a proper time to close this discussion of theatricality so that the reader may experience what budding students of Golden Age literature so often experience: in the words of Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, “the never ending movement, the both joyful and painful movement between losing and regaining intellectual control and orientation” (128). The displacing potential of the gaze, the boundless materiality of the linguistic sign, and the malleable coordinates of perspectival space all converge in this consideration of theatricality, and modernity.

I cannot end this discussion without briefly talking about how the theatrical approach to Renaissance poetry intruded into class discussions of Baroque theater. If theatricality is unanimously valued and applauded in the *cancionero*, as well as in the theater of Encina and Garcilaso’s eclogues, this is definitely not the case in the *comedia nueva*, where theatricality is most often represented as a malevolent and socially destructive snare, deployed by lovestruck and careless *galanes*, shifty *graciosos* and con artists, and power hungry *comendadores*. Although I do not have time to adequately delineate the complexity of José Antonio Maravall’s consideration of theater in his much discussed concept of “baroque guided culture” (*Culture of the Baroque*), the notions of theatricality considered up to now do help highlight the ambivalent status of theatricality in the *comedia nueva*. In Act 2 of Lope’s *El caballero de Olmedo*, for example, Fabia and Tello don their religious and academic *habits* and enter Don Pedro’s house in order to educate and “tutor” Doña Inés, who has theatrically (falsely) declared her intention to enter the convent: “FABIA: ¿Quién es aquella que ya / tiene su esposo elegida?” (vv. 1414-15). At this moment, meaning becomes completely unhinged from honor, and suddenly we are back in the world of the *invención*, where nothing is as it appears. In Fabia’s words, Inés needs “quien la guíe, quien la muestre / las sémitas del Señor” (vv. 1430-31). I need not remind the reader of the symbolic importance of capes (and ribbons) in this play. Similarly, the deceptive *Comendador* of Ocaña is slain by a peasant, Peribáñez, whom he had ritualistically and theatrically transformed into a military captain. By staging a parody of social ritual the *Comendador* himself paves the way for social chaos: “Mostrad, haréos caballero; / que de esos bríos espero, / Pedro, un valiente soldado” (Act 3, vv. 154-56). In both plays the gaze of the king establishes order precisely by seeing through the theatrical lies of the antagonists and their deceptive play with social identity. As Maravall argues, theatricality in these cases acts to connect evermore firmly the desire of the spectator to the dialectically established stability of the reigning order of things. We are a long ways

from the good natured ambiguity of the *invenciones*, or the promise of social transformation of Juan del Encina. By entering the discussion of poetry through the paradigm of theatricality we uncover a very curious and seemingly impossible antagonism: the ambivalence of a theatrical age to theatricality.

Notes

¹In the order in which they appear in the course: Barbara Freedman's brief and precise definition at the beginning of her theoretical tour de force on William Shakespeare, *Staging the Gaze*; Mikhail Bakhtin's description of carnivalesque theatricality in *Rabelais and his World*; William Egginton's Heideggerian apparatus of "empty and homogeneous space," in *How the World Became a Stage*; and José Antonio Maravall's work on the baroque culture of spectacle in *The Culture of the Baroque*.

²Alberto del Río, "*dusna el balandrán: 'quítate el hábito'*" (148 n.501).

³Bakhtin would connect Cristino's unpredictable malleability with the "immortality of the people," in the sense that *the people* are always both less and more than what they are portrayed to be by cultural elites (256).

⁴Temprano writes, "Lo pastoril en Encina está ... muy directamente relacionado con todo el complejo de situaciones y circunstancias que en la España del siglo XV crearon en las actitudes humanas un nuevo espíritu revolucionario; lo que en último término significa que la imaginación del poeta y su preocupación por la realidad que le rodea se han combinado—al menos, durante esta etapa de su vida—para formular poéticamente una solución que pudiera satisfacer los deseos e ilusiones del individuo que hubiese adquirido conciencia de sí mismo y del mundo que le rodeaba" (76). Rambaldo offers the most thorough treatment of the "converso" question in Encina's works by highlighting instances in his *Cancionero* in which Encina privileges the role of Jews in Christian mythology while downplaying their ever increasing abject status as theological and social villains. Again, the pastoral plays a central role (87).

⁵See Egginton's discussion of Surtz's thesis, 61-64.

⁶I am working from the *Poesía completa castellana*, ed. Consuelo Burell.

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