

LITERARY GENRES AND SOCIAL PRESTIGE IN *THE ADVENTURES OF BACHELOR TRAPAZA*

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ABSTRACT: The Adventures of Bachelor Trapaza is a picaresque novel which mixes dramatic and narrative genres in a thematically unified text. Castillo Solórzano decided to include The Female Chestnut Roaster in this picaresque novel by recuperating a cervantine literary practice, the “interlude to be read.” When portraying Juana as a picaresque main character with aspirations, this short drama offers several keys to understand the prestige system which ruled both the Baroque literary world and by extension, Baroque society.

KEYWORDS: Alonso de Castillo Solórzano, The Adventures of Bachelor Trapaza, metafiction, The Female Chestnut Roaster, picaresque novel, short drama, prestige system, Madrid

RESUMEN: Las aventuras del bachiller Trapaza es una novela picaresca en la que se unifican temática y literariamente textos dramáticos con otros narrativos. Castillo Solórzano decidió incluir La castañera en su novela picaresca recuperando la práctica cervantina del “entremés para ser leído.” Al presentar a Juana como una pícaro con aspiraciones, este entremés ofrece varias claves para comprender el sistema de linajes que ordenaba tanto el mundo literario como, por extensión, la propia sociedad Barroca.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Alonso de Castillo Solórzano, Las aventuras del bachiller Trapaza, metaficción, La castañera, novela picaresca, teatro breve, sistema de linajes, Madrid

Alonso de Castillo Solórzano (1584-1648) was not only the “most prolific novelist in the Spanish Baroque” (Bonilla Cerezo, 2012: 244-45), but also one of the writers who decided to use different literary genres and subgenres to experiment with their unity in the same text.¹ To his credit – or better said, discredit – he has been associated to the anonymous personality behind the author of the unauthorized version of the second part of the *Quixote* (Iffland, 1999: 582). In fact, he was recognized by Lope de Vega, who wrote in his *Laurel de Apolo* that “his grace was greater than his fortune” (2002: 472).² Both the influence of the “Fenix” and Alonso Jerónimo de Salas Barbadillo have been related to his ability to “recycle” literary

¹ The new trend to publish creative works displaying both narrative and dramatic genres was practiced by different authors of the period, being Juan Pérez de Montalbán the most relevant one among themselves:

[...] reunió cuatro comedias y dos autos sacramentales y los publicó entre tres novelas y varios tratados y catálogos eruditos, todo ello acumulado sin ninguna relación argumental [...]. Tras estas verdaderas misceláneas [...]. aparecerán una serie de obras, mucho más compactas, en las que los géneros dramáticos y los relatos se unen de acuerdo con la narración [...]. Castillo Solórzano [...] presenta en Sala de recreación una serie de personajes [...] se reúnen [...] en una casa [...] y cuentan historias hasta que el martes, en lugar de relato, se representa a la vista de todos una comedia: *La torre de Florisbella*. (Fernández Nieto, 1985: 160, 163)

² The poems of Castillo Solórzano were also read at the “Academia de Madrid” where he was praised by Tirso de Molina, Lope de Vega and Pérez Montalbán, among other relevant writers of his period (Jauralde Pou, 1985: 10-13).

characters and ideas already present in the works of other writers of his generation.³ His literary career began in 1625 with the publication of a collection of stories, *Tardes entretenidas*, concluding with two posthumous narrative works in 1649, *La sala de Laura* and *Sala de recreación*.⁴

Interludes to be read: the recuperation of a “free” literary genre

The Adventures of Bachelor Trapaza is a picaresque novel that mixes dramatic and narrative genres in a thematically unified text. As it was common in Alonso de Castillo Solórzano’s five short dramas, *The Female Chestnut Roaster* is read in the course of action of this narrative. When Castillo Solórzano decided to include *The Female Chestnut Roaster* in his picaresque novel he was in fact recuperating a cervantine literary practice, the “entremés para ser leído.”⁵ In the case of Cervantes, he decided to publish some of his short dramas in prose following the recommendations of Zan Ganassa and other *commedia dell’ arte* performers, who preferred prose over verse, so that the plot of the play was better understood.⁶

Baroque interludes were often part of narrative texts and at the same time they were relatively easy to be performed, serving a similar purpose of *relaciones de sucesos* as the information contained on them was easily transmitted to and assimilated by audiences at a low cost.⁷ These short dramas fulfil a similar role to Barrionuevo’s “avisos” where potential interlude plots are encapsulated in short paragraphs as well. News of fake duels, simulated kidnapped of ladies-prostitutes and other events associated to the public sphere of the court

³ Rodríguez Mansilla elaborates this idea:

[...] Castillo Solórzano es considerado, en lo referente a sus opiniones literarias, una caja de resonancia de su venerado Lope; no obstante, el grueso de sus recursos narrativos proviene de la obra de Alonso Jerónimo de Salas Barbadillo. Podría decirse que, en el plano de la experimentación novelesca, el vallisoletano encuentra en Salas un predecesor [...]. Queda claro, entonces, que el mérito de Castillo Solórzano es el de reunir los elementos heredados y confeccionar una trama narrativa relativamente novedosa que lleva al personaje ya conocido a un desarrollo más complejo. (2012: 331)

⁴ Urzáiz summarizes his evolution as a writer:

Nacido en 1584 [...], su familia debió de ser hidalga, aunque de escasos recursos económicos, por lo cual el joven Alonso [...] hubo de entrar al servicio de diferentes nobles, como el conde de Benavente, el marqués de Villar o el marqués de Molina, virrey de Valencia, de quienes fue, respectivamente, gentilhomme de cámara, administrador y maestresala [...]. Desde 1619 residió en Madrid (ese mismo año publicó su primer poema), formando parte de academias literarias y participando en concursos poéticos; durante esos años publicó sus conocidos libros *Donaires del Parnaso* (1624), *Tardes entretenidas* (1625), *Jornadas alegres* (1626) y *Tiempo de regocijo* (1627). Pasó a Valencia en 1628 con el virrey, y allí siguió publicando numerosas obras, entre las más destacadas *Las aventuras del bachiller Trapaza* y *La guarda de Sevilla* (ambas en 1634). También en Valencia, y en 1634, publicó las *Fiestas del jardín*, conteniendo novelas y comedias. Otros libros suyos se publicaron en Barcelona y Zaragoza. Su actividad literaria se extendió a la labor editorial, recogiendo las obras de su amigo Sebastián Francisco de Medrano, que fueron impresas en Milán, ciudad donde residió una temporada; en 1643 había acompañado a Roma a Pedro Fajardo (hijo del virrey de Valencia, y nombrado él mismo virrey de Aragón y embajador). Al parecer, murió precisamente en Roma, hacia 1648, aunque otros autores dicen que fue en Zaragoza. (2002: 232-33)

⁵ Fernández Nieto defends *The Female Chestnut Roaster* as the culmination of the evolution in the integration of interludes in picaresque narratives in the context of the rest of Alonso de Castillo Solórzano’s short drama (1983: 198).

⁶ See Ojeda del Valle’s study (2004) on dramatic preceptives of Zan Ganassa’s *Zibaldone* and *Tablas destempladas* (Pérez de León, 2005) for a study of the evolution of the prose interlude until Cervantes.

⁷ Urzáiz discusses the intention for these texts to be read: “Berenguer señala que ni sus comedias ni sus entremeses se escribieron para ser representados, “aunque esto habría resultado factible”; algunas de sus obras, de hecho, lo fueron” (2002: 233).

where used by Baroque writers who claimed they were inspired by these accounts (Martínez López, 1997: 59).

The inclusion of the interlude of *The Female Chestnut Roaster* within the context of the picaresque novel is presented on the one hand, within a metatheatrical frame inserted into the narrative that precedes and follows the interlude.⁸ Thus, it creates a context of artistic discussion where the literary work is announced as a “product” which is being traded for prestige and material compensation within a corrupted system of “autores de comedias.”⁹ On the other hand, the protagonist of the short drama, Juana, shows both a dissimulating and simulating attitude which is related to similar practices in the aspiring nobility of her times.¹⁰ Madrid is represented as a collective entity in this interlude, including both those who belong to the prestige system of the town, and those who are eagerly seeking to be part of it.¹¹

Castillo Solórzano makes use of *The Female Chestnut Roaster* for discussing the unfair way *comedias* were picked for their performance in Madrid in a burlesque way,¹² while

⁸ The mix of literary genres is related to a fashion originally exported from Italy:

Los españoles tomarán modelo de Ravisio, Téxtor, Pierino Valeriano o Celio Rodriginio presentes en mayor o menor medida, en todos los narradores de los Siglos de Oro. Los escritores no están pendientes de unas reglas de la preceptiva, sino que buscan agradar al lector; saben que la variedad de episodios gusta, siempre que no distraiga la acción que debía ser “una y varia.” El “género mixto” pasará a ser el mejor de todos, y en una misma trama se engazan distintas formas literarias [...] evitando que ninguna de ellas destruya el recurso que sirve de hilo argumental [...]. Dejando aparte los diálogos renacentistas [...]. uno de los primeros modelos es el proporcionado por el género pastoril. (Fernández Nieto, 1985: 167, 152)

⁹ Arredondo defends that Castillo Solórzano’s style was conditioned to his eagerness to add prestige to his career as a writer:

Sus últimas publicaciones, salvo *La Garduña de Sevilla*, se consideran póstumas y no añaden ningún mérito a su obra literaria. Ésta empezó en 1624 como poeta académico, se enriqueció hasta 1632 con distintos experimentos novelísticos, y pretendió prestigiarse practicando otros géneros entre 1634 y 1639, quizás acariciando la posibilidad de ascender social y económicamente. Pero, al truncarse esa vía, Castillo Solórzano vuelve a lo más característico de su oficio de escritor, a esa miscelánea de poemas, relatos y teatro que hallamos, por ejemplo, en 1642 con *La Garduña de Sevilla*: un relato apicarado protagonizado por una mujer, con tres novelas intercaladas, muchos versos, y algo de teatro en el cuarto y último libro de la obra. (2006: 43)

¹⁰ The council of Trent denounced ambition and greediness, both of them identified as spiritually and socially negative attitudes:

La línea de pensamiento que se impuso tras el concilio tridentino insistía en colocar la causa de la insatisfacción de los individuos en la imperfección de la naturaleza humana. Entonces la defensa de los viejos principios se centró en criticar los factores que, a su juicio, perturbaban el orden querido por Dios. Así, la codicia y la ambición de los hombres eran las causas del desgarro social. (Carrasco, 2000: 17)

¹¹ Listón Tolosana summarizes the ultimate value of Madrid in the social hierarchy:

La nobleza castellana participó, en conjunto, y fue aculturada en el ethos espiritual cortesano de tal forma que Novoa, con ocasión del destierro de la Corte de un noble, escribió: “Salir de la corte es salir de la órbita de nuestro mayor planeta, marchar [...] lejos del calor y de la luz, vivir solo en un mundo inhabitado, estéril e inhóspito.” Este exquisito universo de ilusión, fantasía y representación cultural no es posible, ni puede darse, en modo alguno, fuera de un contexto, en el vacío; al contrario, sólo podemos llegar a él a través de visibles encarnaciones que nos lo hagan patente e interpretable; son las concretas relaciones de interdependencia jerárquica, es decir, la ordenación piramidal de superiores e inferiores en interacción, las que objetivan y expresan en variadas formas simbólicas [...] ese sutil mundo del espíritu que disfraza el poder en unos milímetros de elevación espacial, el prestigio en una mirada apenas perceptible o la autoridad en la iniciación de un mínimo gesto protocolario. (1991: 135)

¹² The term “burlesque narrative” has been used as a subgenre in the classification of the works of Castillo Solórzano:

Mi definición provisional de “novela de burlas” es la de un relato breve [...] cuyo núcleo es una burla más o menos compleja, elaborada con propósito aleccionador. El punto de partida para considerar la relevancia del término proviene de la clasificación de la narrativa de Alonso de Castillo Solórzano que propuso M. Velasco Kindelán en su monografía sobre este autor, cuando reconocía tres novelas cortas cuyas bajo el rótulo de “novela jocosa” (Rodríguez Mansilla, 2012: 122)

vindicating the importance of the creative minds of short and long dramas for the intra-diegetic audience of *The adventures of Bachiller Trapaza*. On the contrary, authors such as Cervantes will include several political statements in his short dramas, mainly against the “purity of blood meritocracy” system. This literary practice is present in *The Marvellous puppet show* and *The Election of the Majors of Daganzo* where the interlude is used as a literary genre where ideas are more freely expressed and transmitted.

The interlude “to be read” of *The Female Chestnut Roaster* included in *The Adventures of Bachelor Trapaza* is related to the anti-utopian topic of “menosprecio de corte,” or “scorn of court” popularized by Antonio de Guevara (1539). Its main characters are frequently exposed on stage precisely by trying to belong to a higher social class by simulating “signs of prestige.” The criticism of these “social behaviours” illustrating and depicting the pathetic talents of aspiring “madrileños” is paralleled with the representation of the Madrid “corte” as a dynamic and conflictive space. *The Female Chestnut Roaster’s* humour is based on the erotic allusions present in the dialogue between Juana and her suitors, from whom she hides her inexistent chastity. In sum, *The Female Chestnut Roaster* portrays the story of the frugal triumph of appearances, following the easy and predictable literary structure of the “parade of characters.”

The Female Chestnut Roaster’s narrative context

The picaresque novel *The Adventures of Bachelor Trapaza*, which frames the dramatic embedded short drama includes two essential details narrated by a poet. On the one hand, the interlude is preceded by the anecdote of the real chestnut roaster from the Andalusian city of Écija who had returned to her village dressed as a lady after being “served” by a gentleman who had left her to travel to América. On the other hand, the coherent narrative “framework” of this interlude includes the literary presence of the actual poet who decides to share his interlude with a group of travellers. In order to add a sense of “distinction” to his work he claims it will be delivered to the “best company in Madrid” for its potential representation. The recitation of the interlude is preceded by a narration of its realistic inspiration:

–Primero – dijo el poeta –, tengo de referirles a vuestras mercedes el motivo que tuve para escribirle, que fue haber salido de Écija una moza que vendía castañas, de buena cara, para Sevilla, llevada de un mercader que se aficionó a ella y la puso en paños mayores. Habiéndola este personaje dejado, volvió a Écija tan dama que no la conocíamos, donde se casó, escogiendo a uno de muchos pretendientes que tenía. Este es el asunto. (Castillo Solórzano, 1637: 175)

The Female Chestnut Roaster is thus an interlude to be read, but it is also an easily representable work consisting in an elaborated discourse about the difficulties of authors to have their *comedias* being performed in Madrid. The plot of *The Female Chestnut Roaster* becomes an intradiegetic verisimilar echo of the original anecdote of her main character being materialized in a manuscript to be delivered for its representation by one of the best companies in Madrid.¹³ The complaints of the poet about his unfair competition against other

¹³ Similarly, in the play *El ensayo* by Andrés Gil Enríquez, such as it happens in the interlude of *Las Carnestolendas* by Calderón, the universe of the *comedia* is imitated in the interlude in a metatheatrical fashion:

Malagú: Ea, señores, ensayemos la comedia, ya que importa, que eso ahora es lo de menos. (Cit. en Castillejo 112) (1668) Ociosidad entretenida

Luisa: Pues la comedia dejemos, hasta mañana

Simón: Jamás se hace ensayo con concierto

Finalizando con esta paradigmática allusion incluída en *La pedidora* de Calderón:

Teresa: No me hables de intereses,

artists include the “tricks” of rouges hired to sabotage certain *comedias*, suggesting that the rules of the game are not based on pure meritocracy, but on an “intergenerational” abuse. Those who have attained a position of privilege and power are the ones who dictate the rules, both in the theatrical world and by extension in Madrid. The inertia of the past recurrently prevails in both the nobility and the main character of *The Female Chestnut Roaster*. Aristocracy based on lineage was the frustrated aspiration of any individual of this period in order to ascend the social ladder. In the literary world, since the publication of *La Celestina*, several works of fiction published in Spanish were dedicated to exploring the possibility of offering alternatives to an oppressive “lineage taxation” as the only yardstick to measure social validity. The frustration of those who did not belong in the group of the “good ones” led to the nihilism and cynicism inherent in picaresque aesthetics. The three pillars of social order, namely function, wealth and lineage finally merged into the last one (Carrasco, 2000: 20). Any attempts to alter this order, which in fact was strengthened during the monarchy of favourites of Philip III and beyond, were in vain; lineage was promoted by using historical, philosophical, religious or economic arguments, among others.

In the period when *The Female Chestnut Roaster* was published interludes occasionally included self-reflections on the process of performing a play, contributing to understanding some of the motivations and frustrations of some writers. Authors decided to portray themselves in the fictional work following an agenda associated to related complaints by aristocrats about the difficulties of being favoured in the Madrid court. In fact, the poet’s complaints in *The Adventures of Bachelor Trapaza* are a recurring echo of the ones of court aristocrats against the unfair courtly structure of prestige distribution. Similarly, *The Female Chestnut Roaster* makes use of a female protagonist with a costume and possibly an Andalusian accent to point directly at the criticism of the “newcomers” to the court aspiring to ascend in the social scale.

Performing a hybrid text

The Female Chestnut Roaster is a hybrid interlude with a narrative context necessary to understand its full meaning. It is presented in the form of a “parade of characters,” typical of authors of the period such as Salas de Barbadillo or Quiñones de Benavente, among others. Its plot contains erotic allusions and dialogues involving the use of a series of gestures which are complementary to the double meaning of Juana’s and her suitors’ interaction. For the performance of this interlude, furniture would not be necessary, but just situating Juana standing on one of the sides of the stage and slightly to the rear next to Lucía, her necessary companion. Both women would be expecting four suitors who will be “parading” on the stage, anticipating the final harmonic dance. The candidates to marry Juana will gradually occupy the dramatic space in order to present their husbandry credentials to her. Their respective jobs will be systematically unveiled, they will be humiliated and then will disappear from the stage. All of them but the final one, the winner of Juana’s heart, the *lacayo* or “servant.” The classic final dance perpetuates the carnivalesque tradition of restoring the “natural order of things” altered by Juana, who will suffer a similar humiliating public exposure than the one of her previously rejected suitors. They all appear on stage wearing a slightly comical costume which suggests their true identities associated to their jobs. In fact, their dissimulating attitude is the key feature of the humour in this short drama. The climax of the play is double: on the one hand, it coincides with the unveiling of the true identity of Juana, and on the other with the final dance celebrating the paradox of the apparent triumph of the deceiver who is finally deceived.

que es lugar muy común en entremeses;
y es cosa muy cansada ver, Teodora (1) (Cit. en Castillejo, 2007: 114)

While the arguments in favour of the narrative nature of this play are its lack of stage directions, there are frequent allusions of the main characters to the audience, especially when both Juana and her suitors are exposed. The lyrics of the final song moralizes the failure of the Juana's strategy and the triumph of the *lacayo* character, by defending the difficult harmony of a marriage of posers. As it is the case in the rest of the interlude, it is very possible that the potentially erotic allusions in the song would be exploited as a complement of the dance, which was not uncommon, as Emilio Cotarelo has studied in his controversies about theatre performance in Spain (2000).

Without being an exception to the rest of their five suitors, the insertion of a theatrical text with a brief overview about the origins of it draws the attention of the reader about the imaginative possibilities offered by this fusion of genres. It connects it to the theoretical prologue of Cervantes's drama which proposed the publication of dramatic texts to "read slowly what happens fast." Actually, the story of a female rogue was decorous enough for it to be included in a short drama, thus following the advice of the *Arte Nuevo* where it was recommended not to perform "interludes of a King." As if the realist narrative of the real chestnut seller from Écija was not self-conscious enough, after the interlude is read to the audience, in the novel *The Bachelor Trapaza* a paragraph follows where the poet justifies why he is quitting sending comedies to drama companies in Madrid. He suggests that they represent a lobby which systematically rejects any *comedia* written by anyone not in their circle of friends. The producers of *comedias* have developed an elaborated mechanism of selection which includes a prepared intervention in the success or failure of the performance:

Pónese la comedia: aciertan a saberlo los poetas que se hallaron presentes, y cuando ven que no ha aprovechado su malicia a estorbar el ponerla, válense de la mosquetería, a quien tienen sobornada, y suele malograrse una comedia aunque sea la más perfecta cosa del mundo. Cuando hay desapasionados oyentes que atajan el tumulto de los mosqueteros, acábase, y continúa otros días, con que, aunque cobre fama el poeta, se le queda la dificultad para con otros autores cuando les quiere dar otras.

Esta es la causa, señores, por que no me pongo a escribir comedias, como conozco que hay mucho para llegar a alcanzar que sea oído un poeta. (Castillo Solórzano, 1637: 185)

If the act of reading the interlude was related to the *Ocho comedias y ocho entremeses* by Cervantes, this part of the narrative text evokes the dialogue between the priest and the canon on the representation of *comedias* in chapter 49, *Don Quixote I*. The likelihood that the interlude of *The Female Chestnut Roaster* is accepted by a good company in Madrid appears to outweigh the potential failure that the *poeta's comedias* are not performed, not so much for its quality, which no one would hesitate about after having read *The Female Chestnut Roaster* - but by the arguments summarized in the envy and indifference by the *linajudos poetas* in Madrid, who are able to collaborate with rogues in order to contribute to their failure if necessary. Paradoxically, the complaints of the poet shows arguments against a fair competition, presenting a parallelism between the false personality of Juana and the *autores* themselves. In her rejection of her suitors, she uses dissimulation and simulation in a similar way as *autores* do themselves in order to gain success. The main issue is related to the administration of the "cultural capital" accumulated in creative works, which are ranked by strict and unfair "judges" who have censorship power.

Ideology and prestige in Alonso de Castillo Solórzano

The Female Chestnut Roaster examines four characters which are properly stereotyped as exaggerated protagonists which include Juana, a little *figurona*, very attractive and provocative, whose discourse will betray her newcomer status in the court. Her disguised

accent reminding the audience of her Andalusian origin will clash with her effort to conceal her geographical and social origin associated with its past. This characterization would increase the power and tone of the review of potential husbands, who will not hesitate to elaborate their erotic responses, as it happens when she identifies the job of the first one, the apothecary. The same scheme of exposing identities of suitors while reaffirming Juana's chastity will be repeated in the case of a tailor and a shoemaker. Finally the *lacayo* is really Juana's nemesis, as he is the one who makes public that she is not "pure". Despite having retained an air of distinction with her three previous candidates, she is overcome by the *lacayo*, so she is forced to marry him because he knows about her dark past. On the one hand, the *lacayo* is related to Chirinos and Chanfallas by his use of witty words able to handle any obstacle. On the other hand, Juana has followed the recommendations present in courtly books, such as the use of simulation and dissimulation, demonstrating her mastery of both when pretending to be a virtuous lady while being able to hide her past.

Juana epitomizes the caricature of the many posers arriving in mass to Madrid's gates while leaving clues of their imitating behaviour associated with what was recommended in the courtly manuals of the period. Due to the brevity of the interlude, Juana's behaviour is synthesized, showing many of the negative values associated to Castillo de Solórzano *pícaras*. These are cloistered within a dramatic structure theoretically related to the performance but which is made available to the intradiegetic characters of the picaresque novel, which extradiegetic readers enjoy too.

During the Baroque period, the role of short plays is similar to one of the *graciosos*, acting as a kind of "ideological police" in their effort to uncover pretenders and posers such as Juana, who is portrayed in this interlude as a *figurona* claiming a prestige which is missing in her lineage.¹⁴ The pretending culture in the Baroque period will materialize in the popular controversy of the *carros* -against both their proliferation and the immoralities happening inside them. On the one hand writers fulfilled the role of demystifying and censoring, with the "exemplary" claim that they should not be promoted, on the other hand they will show that aristocratic imitation could lead to a "world upside down," an empire of distributive injustice where rogues with an attitude might be more relevant than "noble" writers.¹⁵ The similarities in style and ideology in the short dramas of authors such as Castillo Solórzano and other writers of his generation confirms their commitment to a Baroque interlude which propagates attitudes and existential approaches with agendas quite close to those of the aristocrats of the

¹⁴ An aesthetic and ideologic link between short drama and "gracioso" is identified by Maravall:

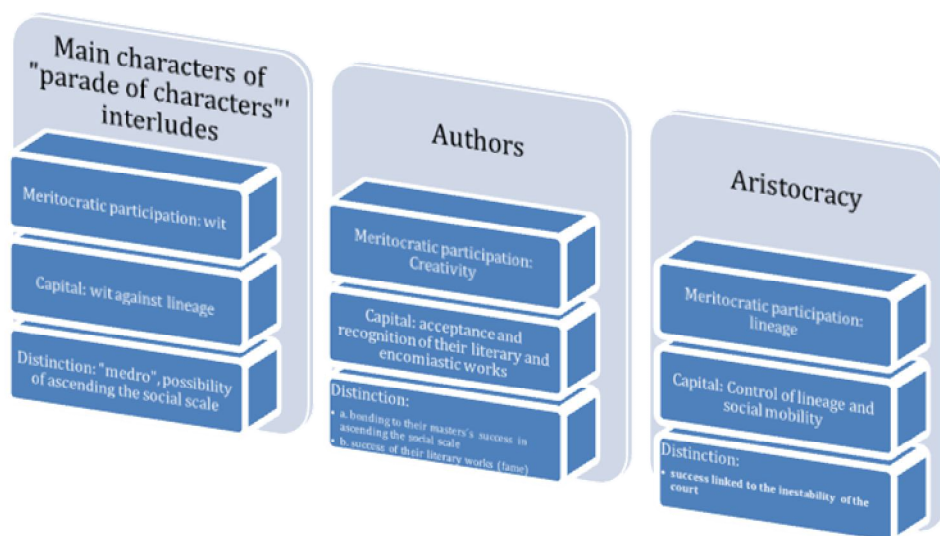
Esa sátira social, (del gracioso), sin intención de cambiar cosas, lo que pretende es limpiar de impurezas, de malos usos, de peligrosas novedades o desviaciones, a la sociedad establecida, a fin de que pueda mantenerse sólidamente en pie. (1986: 228, 239)

¹⁵ Huerta Calvo highlights ideological aspects of the short Baroque drama in the period:

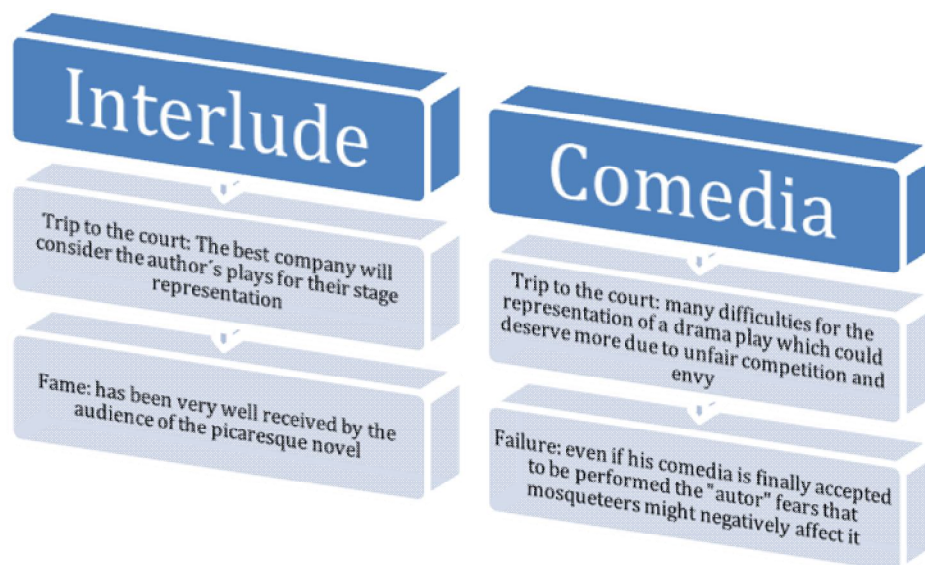
Son numerosos los entremeses que presentan un componente ideológico considerable. Y ello no quiere decir, ni mucho menos, que este componente sea siempre de carácter crítico o – por entendernos mejor – contestatario. Las piezas de mediadas y fines del siglo XVII – a diferencia de las anteriores, que cabe calificar de renacentistas – albergan una visión negativa y pesimista de la existencia: la xenofobia – alimentada por la ridiculización de las hablas extranjeras – , el odio por las minorías, el antisemitismo – topo verdaderamente obsesivo y que da lugar a series enteras como la de *Los Alcaldes encontrados* –, además de la topística del folklore: misoginia – ridiculización del afán pecuniario de las mujeres, fanfarronería de la clase militar, sátira de médicos, taberneros y otros oficios [...]. No es extraño que el esquema de burla amorosa – predominante en los entremeses primitivos, sobre todo en su vertiente amorosa – deje paso a los más convencionales y estáticos del cuadro de costumbres o desfile de figuras. Al mismo tiempo la sustitución de la prosa por el verso, la complicación – a veces extrema de las formas, la adopción sistemática de estereotipos y, principalmente, la teatralidad – el metalenguaje del teatro- como propiedad relevante son algunas de las causas que coadyuvan a que el género pierda la fuerza revulsiva de sus inicios y a que los rasgos primitivamente contestatarios de su código queden neutralizados en el hecho global de la representación. (1980: 76)

period. The short drama genre by definition has an element of “direct jokes,” in this case oriented to preventing the ascending on the social scale.

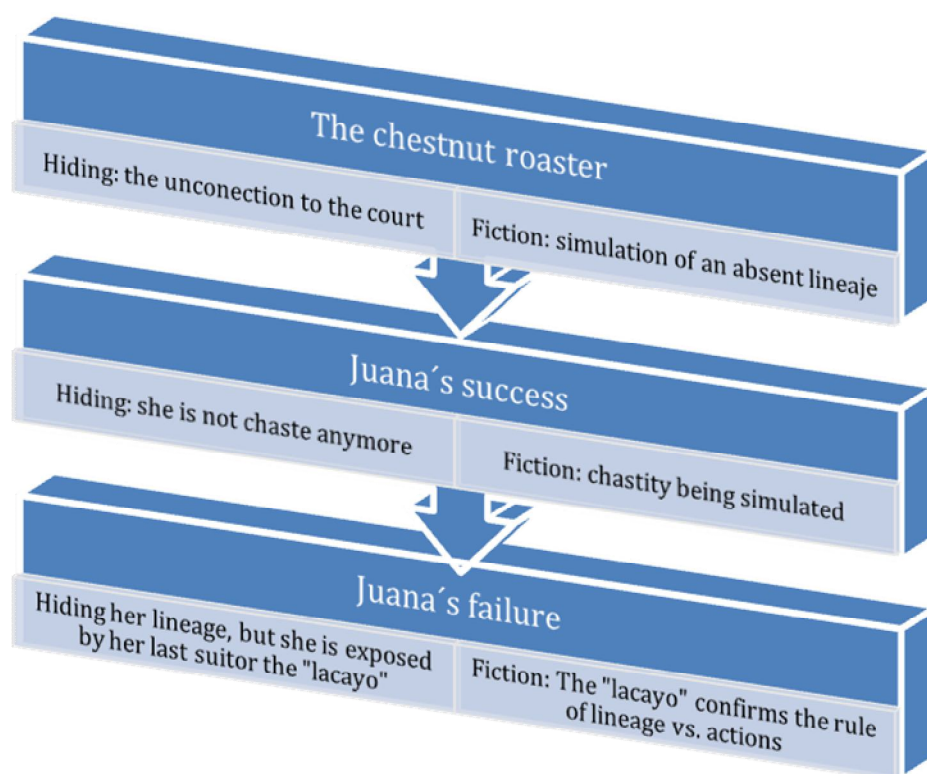
In sum, *The Female Chestnut Roaster*, within its context of metaliterary coments, is an exceptional Baroque text as it shows the ideological connection between court and newcomers by an author who clearly defends aristocratic values. In a period of intense competition between writers, Castillo Solórzano’s literary proposal shows a reflection of what was occurring at a higher level in the very competitive aristocratic space. The art of praising and pleasing by authors such as Castillo Solórzano materialized in a specific kind of Baroque aesthetics where “accumulation” of “literary capital” was pursued. This parallelism between aristocrats and authors is easily extended to the protagonists of interludes such as *The Female Chestnut Roaster*:



All these three interlocked “habitus” are present in the narrative context of *The Female Chestnut Roaster*, where the distinction of the aristocracy is mostly dependant on their control of the value of inertia of the past. The poet will complain about what it takes to accumulate the “cultural capital” which leads to fame in a context where no meritocracy prevails, emphasizing why both *comedias* and interludes demand great sacrifices before reaching an elusive glory:



In the fashion of Baroque interludes as part of a self-contained genre based on “real events” which sometimes exceeds the actual *ingenio* of authors, the value of *The Female Chestnut Roaster* increases with its realistic reference in Écija:



A parade of characters in search of prestige

Asensio defends that the literary genre of the interlude is attractive to readers because it gives them superiority over the characters performing, which is very different to the “sense of equality of the *comedia*” (1965: 39). Short drama was canonized by Cervantes and popularized by Quevedo and Quiñones de Benavente. During the period Castillo Solórzano when writes his interludes these plays focus on less privileged social classes, usually being depicted in a picaresque context. Most of the *graciosos* of interludes are presented as *medradores* and in some cases under the burlesque “*figurón*,” popular both at interludes and *comedias* in this period. On stage, topics such as xenophobia and misogyny were part of burlesque representations reacting against any hint of social mobility.¹⁶

The Baroque ideological aesthetics is definitively present in Castillo Solórzano’s short dramas included in his picaresque narrative. Such is the case of one of his interludes, *The matchmaker*, where Madrid is described as a place “more confusing than Babylon / where a great variety of people concurs / of extravagant languages and nations / and more extravagant claims [...]” (Cotarelo 303). The Baroque short drama and narrative literary trend of demystifying impostors will affect several literary genres, including the picaresque novel,

¹⁶ The increasing number of reactionary opinions against new social classes, especially those enriched through the use of money was evident:

En Castilla de pocos años acá que el que tiene riquezas ese tiene la honrra y como el noble vee que se guarda y usa esto y que si es rico lo onrran, dexa de hazer lo que es obligado conforme a su estado, ejercitándose en mercaderías y otros viles oficios que le son vedados por derecho y no sostiene el ávido de la nobleza. (*El dinero, disolvente de los valores de la sociedad estamental. Historia de la nobleza. Finales del siglo XVI*. BN, MSS 3084, ff 3v-4r cit. en Carrasco, 2000: 113)

drama and short drama. A moral purpose will be embodied in the literary device of mockery or “burla,” affecting ideologically both the short drama and its narrative equivalent, the picaresque novella “a la *Buscón*.” Juana's victory in the interlude is Pyrrhic, similar to that of the protagonists of Cervantes' *The deceitful marriage* and *The fake Biscayan*. Despite being put in evidence, she has been able to choose the most ingenious candidate to manage the deceptive world of the court. The *lacayo* is no less wicked than her previous suitors, but he is clever enough to match his erotic discourse with Juana's, thus being able to reveal the attitude and hidden past of this *disimuladora*.

The intra-diegetic author of *The Female Chestnut Roaster* takes advantage of any opportunity to “promote” his own drama to get attention of *autores*, contextualizing his play in a both metaliterary and propagandistic Baroque atmosphere. The poet of the narrative *The Adventures of Bachelor Trapaza* understands that there are more possibilities for an interlude to be performed in Madrid than in the case of a comedy. As a distinctive example, *The Female Chestnut Roaster* was reprinted and probably performed with some success in the time period. This confirms, to the relief of the oligarchy, that in the world of appearances of Baroque society “nothing is what it seems to be”, but in the literary world, “nothing is as it should be.”

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