



**Love's Fools: Aucassin, Troilus, Calisto and the Parody of the Courtly Lover.**

Review Author[s]:  
Daniel Eisenberg

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review, and one could scarcely hope to improve on the editors' thorough discussions.<sup>3</sup> It should merely be noted in conclusion that the editors have dealt with ease and skill with the difficult problem of transcription norms, not yet standardized for Sephardic texts, that they have collated duplicate copies, when available, that they have made an attempt, hopefully to be copied by other scholars in this area, to relate Yoná's texts to other Mediterranean versions (the discussions of modern Greek influence are particularly welcome), and that they annotate motifs with references to Stith Thompson's standard work, *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*. Six indices, a glossary, and a thorough bibliography complete the volume.

Drs. Armistead and Silverman deserve the congratulations and thanks of the Hispanic community for their definitive edition of these important texts.

*The City College*  
City University of New York

DANIEL EISENBERG

**June Hall Martin.** *Love's Fools: Aucassin, Troilus, Calisto and the Parody of the Courtly Lover.* London: Tamesis, 1972. xiv + 156 pp. £2.80. ONE of the easiest, and usually the least valuable, forms of criticism consists of comparisons of ostensibly unrelated figures or works—the Cid, Hamlet, and the Stone Guest, for example. Countless second-rate dissertations and third-rate articles use it. It is a pleasure, therefore, to find that Dr. Martin has taken this rather hackneyed form and, with a breadth of vision and a keen critical eye, used it to produce surprisingly valuable results through a comparison of the parody of courtly love in three dissimilar works, in which neither parody nor courtly love has always been acknowledged to be present.

In *Aucassin et Nicolette*, Dr. Martin sees Aucassin as the central figure of an essentially humorous, non-didactic parody of Chrétien de Troyes and the *Tristan*. Aucassin is a ridiculous figure, who tries to follow literary ideals in a real world which is at best indifferent to them. By so presenting him, the author exposes, though kindly, the falsity of these literary practices.

Dr. Martin devotes more space to Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, as a consequence of the greater values she sees in the English author's work. Chaucer's Troilus is the subject of a "gentle parody" which combines both the comic and the tragic, as Chaucer admires, at the same time he burlesques, courtly practices. Troilus is not the ideal lover, the incarnation of the rules

<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, the publication of this lengthy volume has been delayed for several years (the introduction is dated June, 1967), and although there is a Bibliographical Epilog (pp. 489-90), there is little reference in the text to contributions published between 1967 and 1971.

given in handbooks, that some critics have seen him to be; rather, he is a ridiculous figure, who first scorns love and then becomes quite literally helpless under its influence, who can only wail and moan, not act, and who faints away when the moment of seduction is at hand. Dr. Martin also sees Troilus as a ridiculous figure because of his incapacity during Troy's desperate struggle with the Greek forces, thus attributing to Chaucer an objectivity I am not sure he possessed.

It is, however, to the *Celestina* that Dr. Martin devotes the greatest amount of space—more than to *Aucassin* and *Troilus* combined—and brings the most significant insights. In the *Celestina*, the courtly tradition is still operative. Dr. Martin makes an interesting case for the influence on Rojas of the *Roman de la Rose*, which it is not unlikely that he (and the author of Act I?) knew. Calisto tries to follow the rules of courtly love, but he follows the letter while ignoring the spirit; he uses courtly love only as a means to his own sensual ends. Here lies the parody, much less sympathetic than in the case of the French or English works. “Fernando de Rojas . . . deals the most cruel blow to the courtly convention by revealing its potential for concealing common lust. He shows the rules, the rhetoric, all its ‘niceness’, would-be sublimination, and elegance to be for Calisto but an empty form, a meaningless euphemism for base desires” (p. 140). As Dr. Martin sees humor as inversely related to didacticism in these works, while the *Celestina* is the most didactic of these works, showing what will happen to “locos enamorados” who make love their religion, it is the least humorous. Rojas' humorous elements, in view of the end of the book, become “black and terrifying irony” (p. 142).

Hovering over this book, though without the author's knowledge or at least intent, is the shadow of the *Quijote*, as certainly befits a study of Hispanic orientation. I am aware that nit-pickers may feel that for this reviewer to find Cervantine bias implicit in such a critical work as this reveals as much prejudice in the reviewer as he claims to find in the author. Nevertheless, the parallels are strong. Aucassin is presented, I believe correctly, as a person attempting to follow the conventions of an ideal world in the real one. Pandarus and Troilus are a pair, the former the “foil” (p. 48) for the latter, and Dr. Martin states, again correctly, that Pandarus represents a practical, Troilus an idealistic approach to life. Even the fusion of the tragic and comic which she sees as one of the most positive aspects of Chaucer's work, is strongly reminiscent of Cervantes. The discussion of the motives behind Don Quijote's love for Dulcinea, and of his misinterpretation of the rules governing courtly activity, are quite familiar to Cervantine scholars.

It is thus to be regretted that Dr. Martin did not carry her chronological investigation a century further and examine the *Quijote*, which is never mentioned, not even in her extensive bibliography. Don Quijote is

certainly the most distinguished example of "love's fools" in Hispanic literature, and is, moreover, one who seeks this *folie* and defines himself in terms of it. There is no need to demonstrate, as Dr. Martin felt obliged to do, that the courtly tradition is operative in the *Quijote*, as it is a primary theme of the novel. Recent criticism has indicated, as Dr. Martin indicates for the three works she has chosen, that to view Cervantes' treatment of courtly love as serious is an error, and that he intends more to expose the convention than to defend it. The relative proportion of humor and didacticism in the *Quijote* is a truly controversial topic which any critic may safely attack without worry that his or her position will succeed in satisfying a substantial number of Hispanists.

Be this as it may, Dr. Martin has shown herself to be a critic of considerable powers who can handle complex works with skill and insight. It is a pleasure to welcome her to the growing number of *celestinistas* who are contributing to the reevaluation of this paradoxical work.

*The City College*  
*City University of New York*

DANIEL EISENBERG

Stephen Gilman, *The Spain of Fernando de Rojas. The Intellectual and Social Landscape of La Celestina* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972. xv + 559 pp. \$17.50). *THE Spain of Fernando de Rojas* is an attempt at history and biography by a scholar whose major interests are literary. The fusion of the disciplines is exciting, often provocative, but from the historian's point of view the book's main argument—*La Celestina* as the product of the converso mind—is disturbing, both in its methodology and focus. Echoing the racialist school of Spanish history, the author ignores or overlooks many of the realities of late 15th Century Spain in order to prove his basic assertion correct while the evidence that is marshalled is frequently more imaginative than empirical. Consequently, the book is often less than convincing. Thus in spite of its valuable contribution to our understanding of *La Celestina*, it is certain to become an object for controversy and discussion.

Professor Gilman begins his study with the question: "How was the completely unprecedented, immensely original art of its [*La Celestina's*] author, Fernando de Rojas, possible?" (p. 3). He believes that the answer can be found in the person of Fernando de Rojas and his relationship to his race (Judeo-Spanish), his milieu (Salamanca), and his moment (the Isabelline Renaissance). Accordingly, the bulk of the volume is dedicated to elucidating what little is known about Rojas and the epoch in which he lived. Towards this end Professor Gilman has explored Spanish archives,