

Mirror on the Stage:  
(Refl)Ekphrasis and Agustín Moreto's *La loa de Juan Rana*

Felipe E. Rojas  
University of Chicago

Best known for his play *El lindo Don Diego* (1662), the remainder of Agustín Moreto's *oeuvre*, including his *entremés*<sup>1</sup> work, has been mostly ignored by critics. Cayetano Alberto de la Barrera y Leirado asserts: "Su ingenio, viveza y natural festivo, le abrieron las puertas de los saraos y academias, y acaso debió al jóven é ilustre Calderón la entrada y parte que tuvo en los festines literarios del Buen Retiro" (275).<sup>2</sup> Like Pedro Calderón de la Barca, Moreto composed theatrical works for a famous actor of the Spanish royal courts, Juan Rana, alias Cosme Pérez (1593-1672). Eugenio Asensio has asserted that Juan Rana represented "la más completa identificación del actor con su personaje" (166).<sup>3</sup> Hannah E. Bergman similarly observes that this character preserves "rasgos del bobo del teatro anterior, que se destilan en algunos toques característicos: la 'flema' que desespera a los demás interlocutores, las disparatadas 'razones' de sus explicaciones, un determinado traje, ciertos ademanes, gestos, cualidades de la voz" (67).<sup>4</sup> With these numerous accolades one may easily have overlooked the fact that in 1636 Juan Rana was arrested by Spanish authorities and found guilty of sodomy. This could have single-handedly ended a person's career and, at times, his life, yet his popularity grew after receiving a curious pardon from the Spanish monarchy.<sup>5</sup> Peter E. Thompson analyses many interludes written specifically for this Spanish *gracioso* and demonstrates that "what is important [...]

are the many Juan Rana *entremeses* that constitute a professional, public, and flagrant confession of the actor's irregular sexuality" (8). In other words, playwrights, as will be shown in Moreto's *La loa de Juan Rana* (1664),<sup>6</sup> would write this actor personal works that would include clues and references to his publicly known sexual crime.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, there are critics, like Francisco Sáez Raposo, who find Thompson's study anachronistic, as the "revolución o liberación sexual" of the 1960s was centuries away from Golden Age Spain (34). I would point out that there are many precedents during the seventeenth-century in the Iberian Peninsula where we find examples of homosexual<sup>8</sup> characters or *graciosos* (for example, the aforementioned character of don Diego) that show by counterexample Raposo's statement.<sup>9</sup> In spite of this critique, in this present study, I will not only define and discuss a new literary word, reflekphrasis, but I will also use it as a way to study the possible homoerotic or sodomitic undertones of Juan Rana in Agustín Moreto's *La loa de Juan Rana*.

To begin, the similarities between the homosexual and the artistic, which is crucial to this current study, are plentiful and deserve some explanation. Spain, much like the rest of Europe, defined homosexuality as a combination of both male and female characteristics. The same dualities present in human sexuality are equally found in art but, much like in *La loa de Juan Rana*, an imbalance and power struggle surges. The beauty of the feminine is transferred by the male pen in an attempt to appropriate what is otherwise foreign to the masculine representation. James A.W. Heffernan states that a battle of expression emerges between the feminine and the masculine; "the male speech striving to control a female image that is both alluring and threatening, of male narrative striving to overcome the fixation impact of beauty poised in space" (1). In other

words, through art and literature, the masculine tries to control the feminine. As a result, Heffernan investigates this struggle between the male word and the female image through the use of *ekphrasis*. An ekphrasis, broadly speaking, is an ancient stylistic recourse that sketches a visual object through narration. Michael Baxandall has also described ekphrasis as having “qualities of detailed lifelikeness, of physiognomic expressiveness, of variety, and they describe these in an affirmative form, for ekphrasis is a device of epideictic, the rhetoric of praise or blame: there are no neutral ekphrases” (87). Frederick A. De Armas has defined many different kinds of ekphrases, such as notional (a description of an imagined work), combinatory (combines more than one work of art), and fragmented (uses parts of a work of art), yet affirms that “most literary ekphrases cannot be held to just one of the above categories” (“Simple Magic” 23).<sup>10</sup> William Worden, when reflecting on the possible Cervantine theory of art and how Miguel de Cervantes illustrates a future painting of himself, coins the term “auto-ekphrasis” which may be defined as an ekphrasis described by the same person being portrayed in the painting (180-81).<sup>11</sup> While there are various types of ekphrases, I believe that a new ekphrastic representation emerges in *La loa de Juan Rana*. In this *loa*<sup>12</sup> or *entremés*, the reader is confronted with an original form of ekphrasis or what I would like to term *reflekpbrasis*. As we shall soon see in the study of the *loa*, *reflekpbrasis* is a depiction of a reflection in the narration. More specifically, the reflection presently being studied comes from a mirror that Juan Rana looks into. I will argue that in *La loa de Juan Rana* specific reflekpbrastic scenes represent a more complex play on the sexuality and sexual crime of this fool. In this *loa*, the male pen of Moreto is in a way controlling the feminine characteristic (i.e. sodomy) of the *gracioso*. The mirror is central in explaining the *loa* and reflekpbrasis.

Like all *loas*, *La loa de Juan Rana* is performed before the first act, and here serves to introduce the actors of the *entremés* to the audience. It begins with a monologue in which a retired Juan Rana warns us that “ya nada me hacen creer con desemulo” (234). Although around thirty years have passed since his very public arrest and eight years since he “retired”<sup>13</sup> from the stage, the beginning of the *loa* insinuates that Juan Rana feels very comfortable alone and does not need to return to theatre.<sup>14</sup> Orozco, another actor, enters and informs Juan Rana that his presence is requested by the royal family to perform in a *loa* at festivities.<sup>15</sup> Orozco also surprises the *gracioso* by notifying him that he will perform “seis papeles” in the *loa*. Even though he brushes off this suggestion, Juan Rana moves center stage. While at first hesitant to participate, Juan Rana is asked by Orozco:

Pues si os veis en un espejo  
 con una Luna muy fina  
 entera vuestra persona,  
 desde el pie a la coronilla,  
 y tocándoos con las manos  
 halláis ser otra distinta,  
 ¿no creeréis que sois la otra? (240)

Juan Rana responds that this transformation would be absurd and wonders where such a mirror is found to which Orozco answers: “¿Adónde? en el armería” (242). The reader likely assumes that this is a direct reference to the *Armería Real* on the palace grounds. As this argument goes further, on stage there would seem to appear two mirrors.<sup>16</sup> Juan Rana looks to one of the mirrors where he very easily identifies himself and subsequently glances at the empty frame. As the play progresses, the actor describes the majority of the characters that appear behind this frame. The characters that Juan Rana “performs” and believes to be present are Antonio de Escamilla, Alonso de

Olmedo, Mateo de Godoy, Maria de Quiñones, Maria de Prado, and Manuela de Escamilla, all well-known actors of the time.<sup>17</sup> Each time a character emerges, Juan Rana extends his hand through this *espejo* and pulls out the actor from the other side. In the end, Juan Rana is able to act out all six characters in one *loa*.

In essence, the joke of this *loa* is based on the inability of the unsophisticated actor to tell the difference between a reproduction, that of the mirror, and the real person. It is this kind of confusion that makes Don Quijote think that the puppets are real people or Finea in *La dama boba* (1613) reject a suitor, after seeing a portrait of him, because he has no legs. As Laura R. Bass asserts, “only a fool [...] does not know that a portrait is just a representation and not a presence” (114).<sup>18</sup>

Effectively, the qualities of the mirror, or, more precisely, its frame, play a vital role in *La loa de Juan Rana*. This portal to the stage is used as a passage from which all the characters come to life; as such, it serves as a theatrical “womb.” The frame, by itself, serves as a means for reproduction in the literal (reproductive) and artistic sense of the word. According to the *Diccionario de Autoridades*, *reproducción* is “la producción que de nuevo, o segunda vez se hace de una misma cosa, o la restauración de la ya deshecha u destruida, por la unión de las partes que la componían” (586). In other words, reproduction is a copy and reflection of an original. The mirror not only functions as a birthing canal but also reproduces an “inverted” image of reality: it takes all the parts of the original and reverses it; the left becomes the right and vice versa. Sabine Melchoir-Bonnet also notes a parallel between the mirror and visual art: “the mirror shares, with the art of painting, an emphasis on the worth of the image, resemblance, and simulation, all of which are intertwined with the theme of looking at one’s self,” much like Juan Rana does throughout the *loa*, “the visual arts are thus

inseparable from any study of the mirror” (3). Painting and theatrical staging, like the mirror, moreover, are incapable of fully and correctly replicating the original object as they are solely visual reproductions. An ekphrasis as a written reproduction of visual art or object is just that, a reproduction. However, given that the visual arts and the mirror are so connected, an ekphrasis or, in this case, a reflekphrasis can therefore be defined as a suspension in the action to describe a reflection be it of oneself or that of another person, much like the descriptions given by Juan Rana of what he believes to be himself but are, in fact, other characters in the *loa*.

It is interesting to note that it was not only wealthy royals and nobles that owned mirrors at this time but also actors: “an actor for the king, for example, possessed six [mirrors], but they were perhaps tools, used to study the gestures of his craft” (Melchoir-Bonnet 29). In this *loa* six characters are pulled out by Juan Rana from the empty frame much like the number of mirrors used by a monarch's actor. This *gracioso* may be using these six different individuals as a tool not only to show some hidden characteristics that will pick up on his sexual deviation but also to practice and study his craft by describing what he sees.

When discussing the inversion of the mirror and the importance of it to the reflekphrasis in the present *loa*, we must not forget that, at the time, the word *invertido* was a synonym for a homosexual: the sexually inverted person.<sup>19</sup> While trying to mimic the opposite sexuality the *invertido*, ironically, ends sexual reproduction. In an interesting twist, only three years had passed since the birth of the future king Charles II of Spain (1661-1700), the only surviving offspring of Philip IV of Spain (1605-1665). Charles II, much like the *invertido*, was later incapable of producing an heir possibly caused by the amount of

consanguineous marriages that was practiced by the Habsburgs. As a result, his death also brought the end of the Habsburg reign in Spain. Juan Rana was in fact married, as Bergman affirms, but “*enviudó antes de 1636, y por lo visto no se volvió a casar*” (66). He also had two children but both of them had died by the time this *loa* was enacted (68), leaving him, like Charles II, without an heir. Even though it may not be argued that the *loa* foreshadows the future of Charles II’s reign, one can nonetheless contend that the inverted image of the mirror or its frame is taken to yet another level by making a covert reference to Juan Rana’s sodomitical crime.

María Cristina Quintero offers many examples of art that illustrate the mirror and reflection where women take a central role (for example, Titian’s *Venus at her Toilet*).<sup>20</sup> Quintero declares that the paintings “depict a beautiful woman” (87) and while Juan Rana was certainly not this, he is the holder, as it were, of the mirror on the stage making him symbolically assume the feminine role and quality. As a *gracioso*, moreover, he is made to parody the role that women played in front of the mirror as seen in Golden Age art. Instead of looking at himself and contemplating his beauty, he will breathe life into his characters. Then again, for the audience or reader of the play this would not have been the first example of a male holding or looking at a reflective image of himself. The story of Narcissus gives a hyperbolic example not only of a *reflekphrasis* but also touches on the theme of vanity. The narration is stopped, much like it is seen in the *loa*, to describe Narcissus’s beauty as reflected in the water. There is, however, a slight difference between the Narcissus story and the present *loa*: Narcissus dies while reaching for his own reflection<sup>21</sup> whereas Juan Rana gives life to other characters; the former just happens to be a nonproductive *reflekphrasis*. For Narcissus, vanity gets the better of him. It is

typical at the time for the woman to be portrayed as sitting in front of the mirror to observe her own reflection. Neither Narcissus nor Juan Rana is actually a woman, yet both use a female-identified object to relate their respective stories. For Narcissus, the reflection stemming from the water can easily stand for the mirror itself. Juan Rana, because of his known crime against nature, as has been argued, is part of both the male and female domain. The mirror, as a prime example of inversion, furthermore advances the homosexual undertone of the theatrical work. Let us now turn to the *loa* to show how reflekpheasis is used to further play on this *gracioso's* sexuality.

Ironically, in *La loa de Juan Rana*, this famous buffoon warns us not to believe everything we see, but he does just that as the action progresses. While hesitant at first, Orozco successfully convinces Rana to go to the palace, the exact location of the mirror which is used as a tool of perception, persuasion, and act.<sup>22</sup> The first manifestation of reflekpheasis appears when Juan Rana believes to be Antonio de Escamilla. He is described as being an *estatua* that Juan Rana must pull out of the frame “para que haga su papel” (242). Henceforth all characters come to life much like the myth of Pygmalion and Galatea. Pygmalion, a very talented sculptor, falls in love with his sculpture but is unable to bring her to life. He prays to Venus, who takes pity on him and asks Cupid to use one of his arrows to give life to the statue-Galatea. If we follow the storyline of the myth and take it one step further by relating it to our current *loa*, Juan Rana would fall in love with every sculpture that he symbolically breathes life into by pulling them out of the mirror; since the first three characters he pulls out are men this could be a possible hidden allusion to his sodomitical acts. The *loa*, then again, does not overtly claim that Juan Rana loves this character-statue. The mirror does, on the other hand, fulfill its purpose



when Juan Rana asserts that “pensaba que era / así un tantico Escamilla” (244). It is important to note that Escamilla is the only character in the interlude that is referenced as being an *estatua*. This is also the only time in the *loa* where the word is ever found. Juan Rana does not describe the reflection seen in the frame but it certainly does reflect something inside Juan Rana: his inner Escamilla.

For the second character, the well-known Spanish *gracioso* is further confused when told that he would become Olmedo:

Digo, que Escamilla soy; [...]
   
mas ¿cómo he de ser Olmedo
   
con la cara de un Macías,
   
bigotillo a la francesa,
   
planta de retrato, y vista,
   
la capita a la jineta,
   
y con la habla de almíbar? (244)

Here, a pure *reflekphrasis* describes what Juan Rana sees even though, to the audience of the *loa*, he was already behind the “mirror.” The viewer or reader of the play may parallel the appearance of Olmedo and Lope de Vega’s *El caballero de Olmedo* (1620). Peter E. Thompson claims that the tones of the verses mock those of the renowned play but in doing so they also link Juan Rana to the tragic hero: “Indeed, with his arrest for *el pecado nefando*, Juan Rana could have been put to death. Instead he, unlike Alonso, returned alive and well from *la Puerta de Alcalá*” (167 n24). The actor also believes, similarly to the Escamilla episode, that there are some resemblances between himself and the actor he sees as his own reflection: “yo podía ser Olmedo, / así en algunas cosillas” (244).<sup>23</sup> In yet another possible extratextual reference, the audience may connect these particular lines to those found in *Lazarillo de Tormes* where Lázaro works for a “fraile de la Merced” but quickly leaves him for breaking

too many shoes and “por otras cosillas que no digo” (111). In his edition, Francisco Rico acknowledges the sexual connotation that *romper los zapatos* and the word ‘cosillas’ had and have for readers (111-12 n8-9) making this homoerotic reference more overt.<sup>24</sup> It was very common for irregular sexualities to be portrayed on stage in seventeenth-century Spain because theatrical commentators were also concerned with “visual stimulants to heterosexual passion: lascivious dancing, for example, and the revealing costume of the female transvestite” (Bradbury 570). As Gail Bradbury has noted in her study of sexuality in the Spanish theatre, “dramatists were not averse to including the occasional sly reference to homosexual practices” (571). Both Moreto’s Don Diego and his depiction of Juan Rana in this interlude show that the playwright did not concern himself with this overt sexual commentary in the presence of the men at court. In any case, the similarities between Juan Rana and Olmedo appear to have some underlined and veiled references to sodomy.

As the final male character takes centre stage, Juan Rana’s simplicity does not seem to dissipate as he is just as surprised to become the *viejo* Godoy. Since this *loa* was performed in 1662, our *gracioso* was close to his seventies so it should come as no surprise that the parallel of both Godoy and Juan Rana is their age: “porque siempre los mozos / vuelven viejos” (246). The purpose of the reflekphrasis in the first three characters, while still somewhat maintaining its reflection in the male sphere, is clear as Juan Rana sees in himself something that is manifested through these actors: Escamilla references the myth of Pygmalion and Galatea; Olmedo alludes to a possible link to *El caballero de Olmedo* and the homoerotic episode in *Lazarillo de Tormes*; and, Godoy, through his age, resembles our famous fool. In the end, the male characters paint Juan Rana as an enamored

and aging sodomite. In a sense, the male eye continues to control the overtly feminine.

But Juan Rana is not limited to only play male roles. He is, in effect, very conscious of his inability to play female characters and believes to have caught on to Orozco's deception when stating that:

Pues ahora he de cogeros.  
 Confieso por mi desdicha,  
 que me he vuelto tres barbados  
 de personas muy distintas,  
 pus no puedo hacer la [loa]  
 sin la gente femenina.  
 Y no es posible hacer,  
 que con esta mascarilla  
 sea María de Quiñones,  
 cuya cara es bien prendida  
 cuyo talle es bien carado  
 cuya habla es muy mellisla<sup>25</sup>,  
 cuya representación  
 es de lo de a mil la libra. (246)

Even though he is at first hesitant to believe that he can portray the next three female roles, he is once again tricked into looking at the empty frame and see María de Quiñones waiting for the *gracioso* to recognize her. He does not realize that the mirror from the *Armería Real* is playing tricks with his perception and, this time, his sexuality through reflephrasis. For the reader and even for the protagonist, the fact that his reflection is both male and female does not warrant extreme gender panic as this metamorphosis goes along with the purpose and the amusement of the *entremés*. The fact that this gender change also entertains the common knowledge of his forbidden sexual acts is a visual and theatrical game that Moreto plays with his audience. The

reflekphrasis is the necessary stylistic tool to illustrate both genders that Juan Rana embodies as it reflects not only his masculine but also his feminine attributes by describing other characters.

Juan Rana paints himself as both a man and a woman before he looks at what he thinks is his reflection but is in fact just other actors on the other side of a frame. He, as it were, has the characteristics of both genders as he is a man (male trait) who is attracted to other men (female trait): he is in fact representing a sodomite. The reflekphrastic scenes reinforce Juan Rana's perceived same-sex desires by directly describing him as a hermaphrodite. In effect, he even recognizes this ambiguity as he shouts: "Santa Cristina; / ¡que yo mismo no supiese / nunca, que era hermafrodita!" (246). A hermaphrodite, as a hybrid of both sexes, allows our *gracioso* to fool himself not only into believing that "seis papeles podéis hacer" (238) but also that he can honestly be a man and a woman at the same time.

It is not sufficient, nevertheless, to play just one female role. The *loa* makes it so that this buffoon believes that he is a man and a woman as the "seis papeles" are divided equally between male and female actors. In order for the sexual ambiguity to truly become a factor in this *entremés*, Juan Rana must not only become three different male actors but he must also portray three different actresses. There is, therefore, equality amongst the sexes. As it turns out, much can also be said about the final two characters that Juan Rana embodies: María del Prado, "tan hermosa, tan pulida / como aceda" (248) but very temperamental; and Manuela de Escamilla, a talented singer.

In an interesting twist, María del Prado, another distinguished actress, is the only *estatua* in the play that speaks. Not only that, but she does this before being pulled out of the mirror and brought to life. Her impatience is shown as she yells:

“Ea, valga el diablo sus tripas. / Acabe, pues, porque estoy / ya de esperarle mohina” (248). Basically, she wants Juan Rana and Orozco to quickly finish up the interlude as it is putting her in a sour mood. Her disgruntled attitude appears to mirror that of Juan Rana in the early stages of this one act comedic play. As an angry character who wants to close out the *loa*, Maria del Prado inversely resembles that hesitant and unwilling *gracioso* who did not want to participate in the production of the *entremés*. A mirror, as already stated, shows the opposite: Juan Rana did not want to play a part in this *loa* much like Maria del Prado could not wait for it to be over. This flashback further acknowledges the femininity within Juan Rana as he is being reenacted by a woman with a hostile attitude. We will shortly return to this point but in any case what is important to note is how Juan Rana fully adopts his hermaphrodite qualities by not only saying that he is a male with female qualities but also having a woman take up his role and becoming a fool, as we will see portrayed in the next and final character.

María del Prado, as has already been discussed, is the only *estatua* that speaks before being actually pulled out of the mirror. This scene may also point to what Juan Pablo Gil-Osle has termed as a speaking ekphrasis or the “act of speaking, or the appearance of it, in one painting” (95). While specifically referring to Boccaccio’s *Amorosa visione*, the reasons for the usage of speaking ekphrases can also be useful in this current study as “they interact directly with the viewer through speech; while speaking they dramatize well-known stories; they assure their permanence in the mind of the reader; and most important of all, a selective use of the powerful rhetorical speaking ekphrasis enhances the voice of the [narrator]” (101). In other words, Maria del Prado surprises Juan Rana by speaking to him; she is able to play with this *gracioso*’s sexuality by making him believe

that he has turned into another woman; by being the only character that speaks, she stands out and could possibly be remembered by the audience; and, finally, Agustín Moreto may be emphasizing the importance of this character to the *entremés* as a whole. Through speech, María del Prado morphs *reflekphrasis* into a speaking *ekphrasis* that highlights Juan Rana's irregular sexuality. Her attitude is hostile and irritable by the fact that it has taken such a long time for someone to pull her out of the mirror. Her manner mirrors that of don Gonzalo de Ulloa in Tirso de Molina's *El burlador de Sevilla*. For Peter E. Thompson, this scene “would seem to be an ironic reference to the last scene in Tirso de Molina's *El burlador de Sevilla*, where the dead father appears as an avenging statue” (166 n17). María del Prado may herself become a hermaphrodite, like Juan Rana, referencing the role of a talking statue like don Gonzalo. This possible hermaphroditic similarity between María del Prado and don Gonzalo could be an attempt by Moreto to demonstrate that the characters that Juan Rana pulls out of the mirror must hold similarities to him. She becomes a memory image that must speak in order to remind the readers and viewers of the *gracioso*'s femininity through the female characters he believes himself to be.<sup>26</sup> Essentially, by being able to describe himself through *reflekphrasis* as a woman, Juan Rana and the *loa* further contribute to the ever-growing display of sexual inversion of this *gracioso*.

On another level, it is not only Juan Rana who sees something within each character of the play, but, inversely, all the actors must also believe themselves to have some similarities to this famous *gracioso*. This is exemplified by the musicians who sing: “A la Escamilla imita / Rana de tonos; / pues haga él las terceras / y ella graciosos” (248). In other words, the next female character, Manuela de Escamilla, and Juan Rana should switch

roles. In doing so, they would also change genders. This inversion of genders and sexualities, as we have seen, is typical of the *invertido* as they represent both the masculine and the feminine. Through this, the present work tries to highlight that it is not only Juan Rana who sees in himself traits that are present in the other characters but that they, as with the example of Manuela de Escamilla, too, have characteristics of Juan Rana. In a way, Manuela de Escamilla should transform into *graciosos* and by doing so she would appropriate certain qualities of Juan Rana.<sup>27</sup> All the characters that are pulled out of the mirror must also see something of this buffoon in themselves, potentially making him a universal character.

The first male and last female characters that this fool pulls out of the empty frame, furthermore, share the last name: Escamilla. This appears to be a total sexual inversion as he is first transformed into a male Escamilla and then ends the *entremés* believing to have become a female with the exact same name (if not a female representation of the first male Escamilla).<sup>28</sup> Moreto begins with male characters to keep gender in check even though, as we have seen, this does not necessarily prohibit allusions to the main character's same-sex preferences. The playwright, then, twists the sexes and finally portrays Juan Rana as a disgruntled hermaphrodite who should change roles with the female Escamilla. This full-circle of characters could not be a mere accident as it appears that the author positioned each character and gender within his *loa* very carefully and purposefully. Each actor, it seems, is placed within the text first to keep the gender in check, and then to openly describe the actor as a man with sodomitic desires.

Juan Rana, in the end, was a phenomenon of his time: it is obvious that his popularity grew after his arrests as playwrights continued to script out personal *entremeses* for him. The use of

the reflekpheasis in Moreto's *La loa de Juan Rana* plays on Juan Rana's supposed sexual ambiguity: the reflekpheasis is a uniquely appropriate literary instrument useful in portraying Juan Rana as a hermaphrodite, basically, denoting his dual or inverted sexuality. In this *loa* the mirror has become a key tool in understanding inversion and reproduction: death and birth. Juan Rana performs the deed of pulling each character out of the mirror in order to allow them to perform in the play that was to come. Through the characters that he pulls out of the mirror, this Golden Age *gracioso* performs both the male and female role. In the end, the beauty and spectacle of *La loa de Juan Rana* is that it metaphorically manages to artistically connect the idea of reflection, reproduction and sexualities on the Spanish stage.



---

<sup>1</sup> The *Diccionario de la comedia del Siglo de Oro* defines entremés as “equivalentes a la *farsa*, tal como se desarrollaron en Francia o en Italia...el entremés es la pieza básica, representada en principios entre el primero y el segundo entreactos” (126).

<sup>2</sup> In 1639, Moreto graduated from the Universidad de Alcalá de Henares where he received his degree in logic and physics. In 1643, he was ordained as a clergyman and, by that time, he in all likelihood had begun his literary production. After six years, he became a member of the Academia de Madrid ó Castellana. The secretary of the Academia, Cáncer y Velasco, was one of Moreto’s literary collaborators and, as indicated by Cayetano Alberto de la Barrera y Leirado, this was the place where the two first met. His literary contribution slowed down after he became a priest in Toledo and “renunciados los aplausos que le daban merecidamente los teatros, consagró su pluma á las alabanzas divinas, convertidos el entusiasmo ó furor poético en espíritu de devocion” (275-6). He died in Toledo in 1669.

<sup>3</sup> In *El triunfo de Juan Rana* (1670) by Pedro Calderón de la Barca, the actor is proclaimed as being “el máximo gracioso” (Wilson 115). Under “Cosme Pérez,” the *Genealogía, origen y noticias de las comediantes de España* confirms the actor’s alias and that he “fue mui zelebrado en la parte de grazioso, y aun excedió a todos los de su tiempo, y solo con salir a las tablas y sin hablar probocaba a risa y al aplauso a los que le veían. Estubo retirado mucho tiempo por su edad y despues de algunos años mandaron los Reies que saliera en una fiesta del Retiro el año [dejado en blanco] y le sacaron en un carro” (117). This royal call refers to *El triunfo de Juan Rana* (1670) as the stage directions of the play states that “sale Juan Rana en una carro triunfal, con mucho acompañamiento” (Wilson, 11).

<sup>4</sup> Bergman also emphasizes Rana’s popularity by pointing to an old painting: “Entre los centenares de comediantes cuyos nombres recordamos, sólo uno ha sobrevivido hasta nuestros días en su figura corpórea, retratado por mano de pintor desconocido en un cuadro al óleo hoy perteneciente a la Real Academia Española de la Lengua” (65).

<sup>5</sup> See Thompson for more information on the date of Rana’s arrest and brief summary on the *pecado nefando* in Spain and its punishment (2006, 5-16). Bergman reproduced a quote from Emilio Cotarelo y Mori that provides further information on the nefarious sin attributed to Juan Rana:

---

“En cuanto al negocio de los que están presos por el pecado nefando, no se usa del rigor que se esperaba, o sea esto porque el ruido ha sido mayor que las nueces, o sea que verdaderamente el poder y el dinero alcanzan lo que quieren. A don Nicolás, el paje del Conde de Castrillo, vemos que anda por la calle, y a Juan Rana, famoso representante, han soltado” (1965, 522). Laura R. Bass points out that Juan Rana's acting and persona was much loved by the Spanish monarchs. This could possibly indicate why he was set free after being arrested for committing the nefarious sin.

<sup>6</sup> Hannah E. Bergamn believes that: “apareció *el entremés de la loa de Juan Rana* impreso por primera vez en 1664, a nombre de Moreto, en *Rasgos del ocio, segunda parte*, de donde la copiamos. Volvió a estamparse como obra de D. Francisco de Avellaneda...en las colecciones *Floresta de entremeses* (Madrid, 1691) y *Manojito de entremeses* (Pamplona, 1700), sin otro cambio. También se conserva en manuscrito anónimo en la Biblioteca Nacional (Ms. 16.748)” (429). I have seen the original manuscript but have been unable to get a copy of it, as such, all the quotations of the play are taken from Thompson's *The Outrageous Juan Rana Entremeses* who uses and translates the manuscript found in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid.

<sup>7</sup> In his book, Thompson studies sixteen plays written for Juan Rana that also highlight his acts against nature. Bergman states that “se escribieron más de cincuenta entremeses” for this famous *gracioso* (1966, 67). Serralta looks at “cuarenta y cuatro piezas...que los autores que escribían para Cosme Pérez-Juan Rana no sólo no le evitaban las sospechas de homosexualidad sino que, al contrario, las fomentaban a veces dándole incluso en ocasiones – inversión clara y rotunda – algunos papeles de *mujer*” (1990, 82-83).

<sup>8</sup> I will use the term *homosexual* throughout my present study to maintain some kind of neutrality in the vocabulary. I realize that this word may not be the most objective, but, currently, *homosexual* seems to be the most neutral within the social and scientific sphere. While the word “homosexual” did not exist as we know it, James M. Saslow affirms that in the Renaissance “homosexual sex, often called sodomy, was widespread among various classes; although a matter of great official concern, in practice it was often tolerated and at time almost expected” (1986, 7). In other words, while a homosexual identity might not have been formed same-sex desires and sex was present in Golden Age Spain.

---

<sup>9</sup> See Daniel L. Heiple for more information about homosexuality in *El lindo Don Diego*. Furthermore, Frederick de Armas has studied characters like Galatea and Florisa in Cervantes' *La Galatea* ('Ekphrasis and Eros') as possibly exhibiting homoerotic characteristics, and Federico and Cassandra in Lope's *El castigo sin venganza* ("From Mantua to Madrid") who reveal, through the myth of Jupiter and Ganymede, their incestuous and sinful desire. Bruno M. Damiani briefly mentions same-sex love between shepherdess (Selvagia and Ysmenia, and Felismena and Duarda) in Jorge de Montemayor's *La Diana* (1983, 48-49). Finally, see De Armas' *Ekphrasis in the Age of Cervantes* for a study, much like the present one, that uses ekphrasis in analyzing Spanish seventeenth-century theatre.

<sup>10</sup> De Armas also demonstrates that while the ancient authors were the ones that believed that an ekphrasis "ought to be a painting or a sculpture, it was up to the Renaissance to reverse the movement from the visual to the verbal and attempt instead to compose art works based on ancient ekphrases, thus fully integrating the concept of the sister arts through a double link" ("Simple Magic" 14). He makes another link between the classics and the Renaissance through ekphrasis since the "symbiotic relation between the sister arts (poetry and painting; literature and sculpture; the verbal and the visual) was a classical motif commonly reworked by Renaissance artists and painters" ("Simple Magic" 21).

<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, Ana María G. Laguna also dedicates a study to Cervantes and the power that images hold in his works; and Juan Pablo Gil-Osle studies the speaking ekphrasis (the description of works of art that speak).

<sup>12</sup> The *Diccionario de Autoridades* defines *loa* as "el prólogo o preludio que antecede en las fiestas cómicas, que se representan o cantan. Llámase así porque su asunto es siempre en alabanza de aquel a quien se dedican" (1990, 426). The term *loa* and *entremés* are interchangeable but each form specialized in "algunos rasgos temáticos o formales" (*Diccionario de la comedia del Siglo de Oro* 2002, 126).

<sup>13</sup> Thompson believes that most of the *entremeses* performed by Juan Rana were acted between 1636 (the year of his arrest) and 1658 when he had supposedly decided to 'retire' (161 n4). The actor did, however, return to the Spanish stage at least twice: once to perform this present *loa* and the last in *El triunfo de Juan Rana* (1670).

---

<sup>14</sup> Juan Rana's hesitation to reenter the Spanish stage, which is made clear in this *loa*, is caused by his desire to be left alone. He did not want to continue being in front of the public eye and scrutiny that came with it but it was his popularity be it public or royal which caused his return to the theatre.

<sup>15</sup> Orozco refers to the festivities held on December 22, 1662, in honor of Queen Mariana (Cotarelo y Mori in Lobato 131).

<sup>16</sup> Thompson hypothesizes that there seems to be two mirrors on stage: "The first is a real mirror and hence Juan Rana actually sees his reflection. The other consists solely of a frame behind which the other actors will presently stand" (2009, 252 n. 18).

<sup>17</sup> For more information on each character see *Genealogía, origen y noticias de las comediantes de España*.

<sup>18</sup> While specifically referring to *El retrato vivo*, I feel this quote is equally appropriate for this current *loa*.

<sup>19</sup> Instead of calling the homosexual an *invertido*, Serralta terms the same-sex sexual act an "inversion" (85). I must also point out that nowhere in the text is the word "invertido" used nor does Juan Rana reflect on the opposition of left to right that a mirror produces. Even though this word is not seen in the text, I believe that inversion is present as it is almost impossible that a reflection does not demonstrate an inversion of an image to some degree.

<sup>20</sup> "A number of well-known Renaissance and Baroque paintings depict a beautiful woman (often the goddess Venus) sitting before a mirror, caught in the act of looking at her reflection: Rubens' 'Venus Looking in a Mirror,' [c. 1614–15] Bellini's 'Woman with a Mirror,' [1515] Titian's 'Venus at Her Toilet,' [c. 1555] and Velázquez's 'Venus and Cupid' [c. 1647–51] (better known as 'The Rokeby Venus')" (87).

<sup>21</sup> The Narcissus flower, like the *Armería Real* also found on the Palace grounds, grew where Narcissus died. De Armas ("The Play's the thing") studies the three kinds of flowers present in the gardens of the Aranjuez palace: the laurel, the narcissus, and the hyacinth. This reference, then, highlights the "three amorous flowers [...] that grow in the gardens of Aranjuez, one heterosexual, one narcissistic and the third homoerotic" mentioned in the *loa* to *La gloria de Niquea*. (451).

---

<sup>22</sup> After Juan Rana's refusal to participate in the festive *loa*, Orozco tries to convince him to act: "¿Saber no quiere? Sabio adredemente / solía ser." Rana responds: "Pues ya estoy muy deferente" (234). The appearance of the mirror after the discussion between these two characters, refers, for Thompson, "to an item out of reach of most of the audience, a status symbol connected to the court and those who frequented it" (57). The audience of the *loa* should be familiar with the mirror as this *entremés* is being presented in the royal palace.

<sup>23</sup> As noted by Thompson, this similarity is perhaps a reference to his very public arrest.

<sup>24</sup> See Shipley for more information on the word 'cosillas' in the *Lazarillo* episode.

<sup>25</sup> Thompson translates *mellisla* as "sweet" (2009, 247). I have not found this word in any dictionary.

<sup>26</sup> Mary Carruthers believes that memory images "should not be 'mute,' 'silent.' They must speak" (229-30). This is similar to Maria del Prado's presence in the present *loa*.

<sup>27</sup> This, however, does not necessarily make her and the rest of the cast *invertidos* as their sexualities are unknown.

<sup>28</sup> Thompson asserts that the two Escamillas are Antonio de Escamilla (*The Outrageous Juan Rana Entremeses* 252 n19) and Manuela de Escamilla (254 n33).

## Works Cited

- Asensio, Eugenio. *Itinerario del entremés: Desde Lope de Rueda a Quiñones de Benavente*. Madrid: Gredos, 1971.
- Bass, Laura R. *The Drama of the Portrait: Theatre and Visual Culture in Early Modern Spain*. University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania U P, 2008.
- Baxandall, Michael. *Giotto and the Orators. Humanist Observers of Painting in Italy and the Discovery of Pictorial Composition, 1350-1450*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.
- Bergman, Hannah E. *Luis Quiñones de Benavente y sus entremeses: Con un catálogo biográfico de los autores citados en sus obras*. Madrid: Castalia, 1965.
- . "Juan Rana se retrata." *Homenaje a Rodríguez-Moñino*. Madrid: Editorial Castalia, 1966.
- . Ed. *Ramillete de entremeses y bailes nuevamente recogido de los antiguos poetas de España, siglo XVII*. Madrid: Castalia, 1970.
- Bradbury, Gail. "Sexuality in the Spanish 'Comedia'." *The Modern Language Review*. 76.3 (1981): 566-80.
- Calderón de la Barca, Pedro. "El triunfo de Juan Rana." *Fieras afemina amor*. Ed. Edward M. Wilson. Kassel: Reichenberger, 1984. 113-22.
- Campbell, Lorne. *National Gallery Catalogue: The Fifteenth Century Netherlandish Paintings*. London: National Gallery Publications, 1998.
- Carruthers, Mary. *The Book of Memory. A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Casa, F., García Lorenzo, L., and Vega García-Luengos, G. Eds. *Diccionario de la comedia del Siglo de Oro*. Madrid: Editorial Castalia, 2002.

- Cervantes, Miguel de. *La Galatea*. Ed. Francisco López Estrada and María López García-Berdoy. Madrid: Cátedra, 1999.
- Cotarelo y Mori, Emilio. "Introduction." *Colección de entremeses, loas, bailes, jácaras y mojigangas desde fines del siglo XVI a mediados del XVIII*. Ed. Emilio Cotarelo y Mori. Vol. 1. Madrid: Casa Editorial Bailly/Baillière, 1911. i-clxiii.
- Damián, Bruno M. *La Diana of Montemayor as Social & Religious Teaching*. Lexington: U P of Kentucky, 1983.
- De Armas, Frederick A. "Ekphrasis and Eros in Cervantes' *La Galatea*: The Case of the Blushing Nymphs." *Cervantes for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century/Cervantes para el siglo XXI: Studies in Honor of Edward Dudley*. Newark: Juan de la Cuesta, 2000. 33-47.
- . "Simple Magic: Ekphrasis from Antiquity to the Age of Cervantes." *Ekphrasis in the Age of Cervantes*. Ed. Frederick A. de Armas. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2005. 13-31.
- . "'The Play's The Thing': Clues to a Murder in Villamediana's *La gloria de Niquea*." *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 78.4 (2001): 439-54.
- Gil-Osle, Juan Pablo. "Chatty Paintings, Twisted Memories, and Other Oddities in Boccaccio's *Amorosa visione*." *Studi sul Boccaccio* 38 (2010): 89-104.
- Guerard, Albert J., ed. *Stories of the Double*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1967.
- Heffernan, James A. W. *Museum of Words: The Poetics of Ekphrasis from Homer to Ashbery*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2004.
- Heiple, Daniel L. "El lindo don Diego and the Question of Homosexual Desire." *Hispanic Essays in Honor of Frank P. Casa*. Ed. A. Robert Lauer and Henry W. Sullivan. New York: Peter Lang, 1997. 306-15.
- Keppler, Carl Francis. *The Literature of the Second Self*. Tucson: U of Arizona P, 1996.

- La Barrera y Leirado, Cayetano Alberto de. *Catálogo bibliográfico y biográfico del teatro antiguo español, desde sus orígenes hasta mediadas del siglo XVIII*. Madrid: Gredos, 1969.
- Laguna, Ana María G. *Cervantes and the Pictorial Imagination: A Study on the Power of Images and Images of Power in Works by Cervantes*. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 2009.
- Lanini y Sagrado, Francisco Pedro. *El parto de Juan Rana*. 14.089-43, Madrid: Biblioteca Nacional de España, MS. fol. 426v-35.
- Lazarillo de Tormes*. Ed. Francisco Rico. Madrid: Cátedra, 2002.
- Lobato, María Luisa. "Cronologías de loas, entremeses y bailes de Agustín de Moreto." *Criticón* 46 (1989): 125-34.
- Maestro, Jesús G. "Cervantes y el teatro del *Quijote*." *Hispania* 88 (2005): 41-52.
- Melchior-Bonnet, Sabine. *The Mirror: A History*. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Molina, Tirso de. *El burlador de Sevilla*. Ed. Alfredo Rodríguez López-Vázquez Madrid: Cátedra, 1990.
- Moreto, Agustín. *El lindo don Diego*. Barcelona: Linkgua, 2009.
- . "La loa de Juan Rana/Juan Rana's Prologue." *The Outrageous Juan Rana Entremeses: A Bilingual and Annotated Selection of Plays Written for This Spanish Age Gracioso*. Ed. and trans. Peter E. Thompson. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2009. 231-54.
- Quintero, María Cristina. "Mirroring Desire in Early Modern Spanish Poetry: Some Lessons from Painting." *Writing for the Eyes in the Spanish Golden Age*. Ed. Frederick A. De Armas. Lewisbury: Bucknell U P, 2004. 87-108.
- "Reproducción." *Diccionario de Autoridades*. Real Academia Española. Madrid: Gredos, 1990.
- Rogers, Robert. *The Double in Literature*. Detroit: Wayne State U P, 1970.



- Sáez Raposo, Francisco. *Juan Rana y el teatro cómico breve del siglo XVII*. Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 2005.
- Saslow, James M. *Ganymede in the Renaissance: Homosexuality in Art and Society*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1986.
- Serralta, Frederic. "Juan Rana homosexual." *Criticón* 50 (1990): 81-92.
- Shergold, N.D. and Varey, J.E. *Genealogía, origen y noticias de las comediantes de España*. London: Tamesis Books, 1985.
- Shipley, George A. "'Otras cosillas que no digo': Lazarillo's Dirty Sex." *The Picaresque: Tradition and Displacement*. Ed. Giancarlo Maiorino. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1996. 40-65
- Syverson-Stork, Jill. *Theatrical Aspects of the Novel: A Study of "Don Quijote"*. Valencia: Albatros-Hispanófila, 1986.
- Thompson, Peter E. *The Triumphant Juan Rana: A Gay Actor of the Spanish Golden Age*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2006.
- Vega, Lope de. *El Caballero de Olmedo*. Ed. Francisco Rico. Madrid: Cátedra, 1984.
- Wilson, Edward M. "Introduction." *Fieras afemina amor*. Kassel: Reichenberger, 1984. 3-54.
- Worden, William. "Word Creates Image in Prose of Cervantes." *Cahiers parisiens / Parisian Notebooks* 1 (2005): 175-83.