MARÍA DE ZAYAS Y SOTOMAYOR: EGALITARIAN POETIC

JUSTICE IN THE SPANISH GOLDEN AGE

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MARÍA DE ZAYAS Y SOTOMAYOR: EGALITARIAN POETIC JUSTICE IN THE SPANISH GOLDEN AGE

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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María de Zayas should be studied not simply because she is a female author of the Spanish Golden Age of literature, but because her work stands on its own in quality. The history of Zayas criticism is described with emphasis on the value of her literature regardless of her gender as well as the approaches that critics take. Due to a lack of biographical information on Zayas, a reader-response critique is decided the best approach to her works.

Zayas's work is analyzed based on marginalized groups of people and the importance they play for the reader. Characters with bad qualities are balanced by those with good for all marginalized groups. The reader then understands that all people have an equal opportunity to save their souls regardless of their background. The novela "El juez de su causa" is analyzed as the most exemplary piece of Zayas's work.

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Introduction

If any of the authors in the Spanish Golden Age has received a recent surge in attention, it is María de Zayas y Sotomayor. The number of papers published on her has increased several-fold in the past decade alone, while finding more a handful of commentaries on and analyses of her work written in the first half of the twentieth century is an excercise in futility.

There is a recent strong critical interest in Zayas which undoubtedly came from a desire to rediscover female authors during the latter half of the twentieth century, as noted by critics including H. Patsy Boyer, Amy Williamsen, and Susan Griswold. However, if that were the exclusive attraction to Zayas, then critics who do not concentrate on Women's Studies would likely not be reading her works and publishing articles on them; a primary example of such a critic is Agustín G. de Amezúa, considered to be quite conservative, whose twentieth-century editions of Zayas's work predates the boom in Zayas studies by a few decades.

While it is indeed interesting that Zayas is a female author of the Spanish Golden Age, that fact alone does not make her works worthy of the study she has received. Rather, she wrote stories that are interesting not just to modern-day readers, but also were to her contemporaries; her popularity is evidenced by the numerous editions she published during her life time. Edward H Friedman states that "Zayas is destined by fate, or more properly, by gender, to play an emblematic role in Spanish literary

history" (472), but continues by noting that "Zayas's narratives are, fortunately, far more than token objects; they are brilliantly conceived, engaging, and mystifying texts." Zayas writes narratives that not only entertain the reader, but subtly also instruct the reader on how things should be according to Zayas, or, at the very least, to make the reader think about the problems and issues she presents.

In Chapter 1, I recount what is known about the life and works of Zayas, emphasizing the fact that contemporary critics are at a loss for information, and know only the most basic of biographical details. A most intriguing aspect of Zayas criticism is how the views of critics have changed.

In Chapter 2, I begin by investigating the views of critics from her lifetime and immediately thereafter. The earliest studies of her work can be found in editions printed before her death, where she is hailed as a wondrous writer whose literature provides a model for people of the time. I then examine changing culture norms which caused her work to be censured in the nineteenth century along with other previously popular works from her time. During this period the only edition published was in France where societal tastes and norms were generally more open than in Spain. Finally, I examine twentieth- and twenty-first-century critics' views and approaches. I begin by noting the few sparse editions and critical studies of Zayas that appeared between the turn and the middle of the twentieth century. These works had few innovations. During the latter half of the twentieth century, Zayas was initially seen as a champion of women's rights, who presented the problems ofwomen trapped in a masculine patriarchal society. This viewpoint began to change with the publication of Susan Griswold's paper, which I

consider to be a turning point in Zayas studies, as it ushered in a new body of work looking at Zayas more as a Baroque writer, as opposed to a feminine or feminist writer. More recent criticism approaches previous thought on Zayas's feminism cautiously, using methods similar to those employed by Griswold and other critics who see her as a Baroque author. Different critics have approached Zayas's text from many different angles, such as the aforementioned Baroque and feminist views, but a few have also used unique approaches including numerology and stylistics.

In Chapter 3, I examine various approaches and techniques in order to determine the best approach to studying Zayas's works. As Zayas was rediscovered during the Women's Studies movement in the seventies, initial studies applied early feminist theory, and I devote the first part of the chapter to describing and examining benefits and problems of such approaches to Zayas's texts. One key problem, for example, arises in attempting to account for inconsistencies in the actions of Zayas's characters which cause some stories that superficially seem to praise the virtues of women to actually become critiques of women. The second part of Chapter 3 discusses how critics have previously used discourse theory and narratology to further Zayas studies. It is in these types of analyses that the beauty of her work emerges, with extremely complex and deep narrative structures, carefully designed for specific effects on the reader. While Zayas leaves many clues that point to possible interpretations of her works, and while undoubtedly her personal beliefs are inscribed in her works, barring significant new discoveries of her life, one will never know her exact views. A promising approach, from this author's point of view, is to read Zayas's work less as a critic and more as a reader with a critical eye, that

is, interpret her novelas first as a reader to understand the reader's reaction, and then apply critical thought to that reaction. If Zayas wanted to impart some knowledge or belief, it would be something that her readers should be able to grasp—that her book was considered of didactic value to her readers is acknowledged in the ecclesiastical approval of her first collection of novels. Therefore, in doing a very close reading I have constantly tried to keep in mind the effect of the text on the contemporaneous rather than the contemporary reader.

María de Zayas is quite well known for placing female characters in rather prominent positions. Her play, *La traición en la amistad*, features far more female characters than male characters. The central character in the frame narrative of her two collections of novels is Lisis, a headstrong woman whose sickness provides the initial rationale for the soirées at which the stories are told, and most of the *novelas* are narrated by women. Because of the intense focus of research on her writing's inclusion of female characters and their role as such in her writing, my interest will lie elsewhere. In Chapter 4, I will begin by focusing on other marginalized groups or classes present in her two volumes. With regards to race, the most striking inclusion to the reader of Golden Age literature should be the three black characters who feature prominently in three different stories. Beyond their mere inclusion, it is the quite interesting status that these characters enjoy and the actions that they take that should most interest critics. Zayas also prominently features Moors in her stories, be they true Moors or Christians disguised as Moors. Zayas presents a full gamut of Moorish characters, ranging in type from kind and respectable to deceptive and despicable with several gradations in between. There is

no single Moorish character type; Zayas's representation of Moors is nearly as diverse as that of Spaniards.

As mentioned, while the topic of female-male interaction has been well studied in Zayas's works, there are still other less well-charted topics dealing with gender relations. Zayas treads lightly, though explicitly in one instance, on the issue of homosexuality. Like other authors, she plays with the idea of gender roles in potentially homosexual contexts for the purpose of humor, but at other times does present such issues in far more serious situations, both sexually and non-sexually. Even within the same (supposed) gender, gender roles are present, with distinct masculine and feminine roles being taken by those within a relationship, such as who courts whom. Sometimes the role of a character in terms of race or gender is not the one that is biologically assigned. Disguises, an important narrative technique in Golden Age literature, are used quite liberally by Zayas with many characters allowing her to further explore gender roles.

Socioeconomic characteristics also significantly affect her characters' actions and ways of thinking. Rich characters might refuse poorer suitors, or after a life of wealth die poor. Each of Zayas's characters comes from a distinct social class which directly affects how he or she lives. As well, in order to assist the reader in interpreting her stories, Zayas generally makes it clear at the beginning of her stories which characters are the pious or good ones.

Zayas's two novel collections contain a large amount of didactic material for the reader which I examine in the latter half of Chapter 4. While they primarily serve for entertainment, she uses the stories to present the reader with guides for living. I select

and focus on several moral issues on which to elaborate more fully, including Catholic virtues, magic, and lying.

Zayas, even through her non-Christian characters, promulgates Catholic virtues through her use of poetic justice. She does this by providing desirable endings for her virtuous and pious characters, while reserving the worst fates for those who deliberately go against God's will. This is a principle that applies equally to all her characters, not just in how they act publicly and toward other characters, but also in their private spiritual lives.

Magic, generally reserved for characters with less than good intentions, is found both in real and fraudulent forms that offer a single lesson: it is quite dangerous to believe in magic. For if it is real magic, it is diabolic, and if it not, it is a fake that is likely to lead one to something harmful. These fake magic tricks also involve another theme that Zayas attacks: deception. Lying is probably the single most damning act a character can commit, and almost always results in a less-than-desirable fate for the one who lies.

The thesis will demonstrate that the reader of Zayas's works receives an image of a society where all people are capable of good and bad, regardless of their background. In the proces, morality and marginalization will be investigated as they pertain to Zayas's two collections of novelas.

Chapter 1: The Life and Works of María de Zayas

An increased interest in the works of an author naturally leads to a similarly increased interest in the author him- or herself, and in this regard María de Zayas is no different. Today, however, critics of Zayas know little more than what was known decades ago. This is unfortunate since many critics find an author's life and times to be instrumental in the analysis of his or her works.

Zayas's extant works include a *comedia*, two collections of *novelas*, and a scattering of poems spread amongst many different works. The play, *La traición en la amistad* (1632), is, at its essence, a female version of *Don Juan*. It features a female lead, Fenisa, who, with just as little concern for all others as Tirso's Don Juan, conquers all whom she desires. Zayas's first collection of novels, *Novelas amorosas y ejemplares o Decamerón español* (1637), as its title indicates, follows a similar structure to that of Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron*. While the frame-story is more closely tied to that of Boccaccio's, some of Zayas's themes were clearly influenced by Cervantes, as Zayas even directly responds to Cervantes's "Fuerza de sangre" with her own "Fuerza de amor." She continues the frame narrative of her first collection in her second, *Parte segunda del Sarao y entretenimientos honestos* (1647), which features exclusively female narrators, instead of alternating between male and female narrators as in the first. Nearly all of the second collection's stories focus, at least on the surface, on the mistreatment of women by men.

The stories in her second collection of novels, along with her play, might indicate superficially that Zayas was quite feminist. But despite all the interest in Zayas and even her popularity in her time, critics know very little about her personal life. The majority of research on her biography was done by Agustín G. de Amezúa, and presented in the first critical edition of her works. The daughter of Fernando de Zayas y Sotomayor and María Catalina de Barrasa, she was baptized on September 12, 1590 (presumably born days earlier) and lived primarily in Madrid. Being of aristocratic status, she was able to frequent the literary circles of the time, where she met and befriended Lope de Vega. The two both wrote poems praising the other's works and intellect.

There are no known painted portraits of María de Zayas. Her presence in the literary academies did, however, result in her having a physical description recorded in the versed archives of one particular night, written by Fransesc Fontanella and included in Margaret Rich Greer's study (30). Those wishing to have an accurate or romantic physical description of her may find themselves in want of a more literal description (or perhaps hoping that it is *not* literal):

Doña María de Sayas		Donna Maria de Zayas
viu ab cara varonil,		lived with a manly face,
que a bé que 'sayas' tenia,		and upon seeing the skirts she had,
bigotes filava altius.		she spun moustaches high.
Semblava a algun cavaller,	5	She resembled a sort of gentleman,
mes jas' vindrà a descubrir		but I just came to discover
que una espada mal se amaga		that a sword she poorly hides

baix las ‘sayas’ femenils.		is underneath her feminine ‘skirts’
En la dècima tercera		By her tenth madame
fou glosadora infeliz,	*10*	she was glossed unhappy,
que mala tercera té		what a bad madame she has,
quant lo pris vol adquirir.		how quickly she wants to acquire.
Per premiar sos bons desitgs		By awarding her goodly desires
del sèrcol de un guardainfant		from the sword of an infantryman
tindrà corona gentil!	*15*	she shall have a minx’s crown![1]

According to Greer, this description is not, as the reader may have guessed, meant to be taken seriously (30). Rather, in the Golden Age it was common to wittily (and at times harshly) insult the character of other writers at the literary academies. Although it was more common to insult the intelligence of the writers, she notes, it is her physical appearance that is mocked in this text, probably due to her gender. Nonetheless, as is common with humorous caricatures, there may be some truthful basis for the exagerations (if they be exagerations). Given the current texts we have about her, however, the modern critic will never know for sure.

More is known about where she lived throughout her life, though not without some degree of speculation. While born in Madrid, she most likely resided to Naples for a time before returning to Spain. Presumably she stayed in Madrid the majority of her time in Spain after Naples, as many editions of her works were published there and there is evidence of her attendance at literary academies.

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[1] This is my own translation. C.f. Greer’s very different translation.

The date of her death is a mystery in part because her name was common in the seventeenth century. Amezúa located two death certificates with her name around the time of her final published works and advises that either or neither of them might be Zayas's death certificate. Critics do not know if she was ever even married. Unfortunately, it does not appear that there will be any new biographical information about Zayas in the foreseeable future, as most critics view Amezúa's effort as exhaustive, and, inasmuch as it can be, conclusive.

Chapter 2: The Evolution of Zayas Criticism

Reading across the literary and cultural eras, one finds distinct patterns in how critics and other literary authorities have evaluated the works or person of María de Zayas. Margaret Greer details in her monograph a number of different trends of criticism of María de Zayas's literature (37-60).[2] I find that these trends can be coalesced into three chronological waves of criticism.

The first wave consists of critics, censors, and other authors, who are quite laudatory of Zayas, and who find didactic value despite content that would later be viewed as excessively vulgar and graphic. The second wave finds Zayas's work relegated to a lowered status for multiple reasons, but primarily due to the perceived vulgarity of her works under the growing influence of Victorian-era morals in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The third wave is the most modern, within which Nancy LaGreca further identifies two more phases (565-82), and I recognize a third which proceeds from those identified by LaGreca. The first of these modern phases presents the concerns of women as found in Zayas's works. The second modern phase primarily focuses on the Baroque qualities of her work, while the third examines at her feminist qualities through some of the second phase's foci. As societal views and norms have changed, so too has the value placed upon Zayas's works, which has led to numerous contradictory opinions

[2] Greer devotes a chapter of her book to the history of Zayas criticism; the chapter is divided into sections that roughly correspond to phases of critical response, although some refer more to singularly important critics.

on questions including authorial intent, possible (auto)biographical connexions, and (anti)feminist qualities. Before evaluating these questions, however, these previous studies must be evaluated based on their context with regards to their chronological ordering and in the spectrum of Zayas studies.

There is little doubt that, during her lifetime, Maria de Zayas was a respected author. Other authors praised her, and several of the extant poems of hers that remain are poems lauding other authors and their works. She was well-known to other authors, and, because of these poems, it is obvious there was mutual respect between them. The large number of editions of her *novelas* in multiple languages across Europe is ample testament to her popularity. Lena E. V. Sylvania finds references to at least twenty-three editions up to 1847 (19-22).[3] Agustín de Amezúa, who edited the first modern edition of Zayas's novels, concluded that she had more editions printed than any other author of her time with the exception of Cervantes (*Don Quijote*), Alemán (*Guzmán de Alfarache*), and Quevedo (*El buscón*), placing her in very distinguished company (xxxi).

The dedications to her in her *Novelas* include such well known authors as Alonso de Castillo Solórzano, initiator of the *comedia de figurón* genre, and Juan Pérez de Montalbán, an author, poet, and playwright who collaborated Lope de Vega. Lope himself who praises her in his *Laurel de Apolo* (Sylvania 4). Because the *Novelas* had so many editions, it is clear that her works were quite popular, as Zayas herself indicates in "La

[3] Of these, four are editions of the *Novelas* only (1637, and two printings in 1638 in Zaragoza), two are of the *Desengaños* only (1647 and 1649 in Madrid), fourteen are complete editions (1648, 1705, 1752, 1764 in Barcelona;1659, 1664, 1724, 1729, 1733, 1748, 1786, 1795, and 1814 in Madrid; and 1847 in Paris), one is a complete edition in German (1806 in Penig), and two are partial translations to French (1656 and 1680 in Paris), as well as a number of other anthology inclusions.

inocencia castigada": "si unos le desestimaron [the *Novelas*], ciento le aplaudieron, y todos le buscaron, y le buscan, y ha gozado de tres impresiones, dos naturales, y una hurtada" (*Novelas 1847,* 234).[4]

Although her works were certainly violent and sexual, these qualities do not preclude any possible moral benefit. A notable precedent is Juan Ruiz, Arcipreste de Hita, who defends the vulgarity of his *Libro de Buen Amor* by saying that such vulgarity is in the best interest of the message he tries to convey.[5] As well, the increased readership gained with the tantalizing scenes permits further propagation of the works, which in turn results in increased education of the reading public. As implied by Sylvania's bibliography of publications of Zayas's works between the seventeenth and eighteenth century, this stage would have ended roughly some time following the 1814 edition. The only other nineteenth-century edition was printed in Paris.

Societal norms change, and during the nineteenth century, Maria de Zayas's works, as well as those of several other prominent Golden Age authors, were deemed vulgar and unfit for literary consumption. Only three Spanish-language editions of Zayas's work were printed during the nineteenth century due to readers' preferences for more morally correct books. The second stage of Zayas criticism primarily comprises

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[4] All subsequent quotes from Zayas's texts come from the 1847 Parisian edition unless otherwise specified.

[5] The Arçipreste writes specifically in his "Intellectum tibo dabo," "Et ruego et consejo a quien lo viere et lo oyere, que guarde bien las tres cosas del alma, lo primero que quiera bien entender e bien judgar la mi intençión porque la fis', et la sentençia de lo que y dise, et non al son feo de las palabras, que, segund derecho, las palabras sirven a la intençión et non la intençión a las palabras" (Ruiz). He gives himself license to include tantalizing "fea" things, but at the same time serve a higher need; this technique might be likened to taking ill-tasting medicine with sugar.

this century. The first edition during the period comes in 1814 and represents the transition between the first and second wave of criticism. The only edition printed in the middle of the century was printed not in Spain but in France, which in 1847 was under the July Monarchy, a regime defined by its liberalism that would have been more tolerant of vulgar works such as Zayas's.

Lisa Vollendorf cites the introduction of Emilia Pardo Bazán's 1892 edition of Zayas's work to show that Victorian-era values (and hence distaste for discourse about the particularly graphic representation of the violence and sex represented in Zayas's work) continued up to the end of the nineteenth century: "Nuestro recato exterior ha progresado tanto desde el siglo XVII acá, que temo, al presentar nuevamente á doña María de Zayas, que se la juzgue mal por culpa de algunas frases vivas y algunas escenas poco veladas" (Qtd. in Vollendorf 90). Although the conservative preferences began to wane by the end of the nineteenth century, it is clear their effects on Spanish deportment still existed. The end of this second wave of Zayas criticism is difficult to determine precisely. Amezúa's critical edition in the middle of the twentieth century does not itself signal the transition to the third wave, as criticism pertaining to the third had already begun by the turn of the century. For this reason, the end of the second wave is best dated to the early twentieth century.

The third wave comprises most all critical works written in the twentieth century. As previously mentioned, LaGreca has identified two trends in the more recent attention to Zayas. The first of these phases primarily focuses on María de Zayas as a female author, and her feminist and didactic qualities, while the second shifts to the merits of her

writing in the Baroque context. I also add to this a third, in which I classify LaGreca herself, which aims for a synthesis of the two in order to resolve the differences between the initial two phases. I call these phases Traditional Modern Criticism, Griswoldean Criticism, and Contemporary Criticism.[6]

LaGreca identifies three questions asked by the first phase of the modern wave of Zayas criticism (567):

- Which concerns facing women did Zayas address?
- How did she present these problems in her fiction?
- To what ends does Zayas present women's problems?

To the traditional modern critic of Zayas, Zayas's writing is somewhat self-explanatory. Her works are designed to show the cruelty of men and the patriarchal social system in the Spanish Golden Age. Hence Zayas's female characters are often placed in situations where they must forfeit their honor in order to save it, or are forced to marry a suitor to whom they have little attraction, all as a result of the male-imposed honor system. Carol L. McKay succinctly summarizes these concerns: "Truly, the women of that era [seventeenth century] lived a life restricted to a degree that the women of today would find incomprehensible. In her stories, doña María paints a picture of a woman totally dependent upon men—father, brother, husband, even brother-in-law or father-in-law" (377).

Within the *Desengaños*, a primary example cited by many different critics to demonstrate this Scylla-and-Charybdis situation is the contrast, or similarity, between "El

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[6] Henceforth, this thesis will use these three terms to denote the respective stages of modern Zayas criticism.

verdugo de su esposa" and "La más infame venganza." In "El verdugo de su esposa," the protagonist tells her husband that his best friend has been making advances towards her, and as a result of her speaking up, loses her life. The reverse, however, is seen in "La más infame venganza." One of the main female characters opts not to tell her husband, and because of this, according to early critics, she is also punished with death.

These two situations are representative of a much larger picture: a woman trapped within a patronymic system, with no control over her destiny. Although she might try to save herself, her efforts are ultimately futile, and it is man who finally ends her life. This is the primary concern presented by Zayas according to traditional modern critics: women are trapped and are ultimately dependent on men.

The first critical edition of María de Zayas in the twentieth century is by Agustín de Amezúa in the 1950s. Amezúa believed that Zayas represented life in aristocratic seventeenth-century Spain as it actually was, that is, her criticism of males was quite literal and, if not based in reality, as Zayas's characters claim, was at the very least based on realistic situations. Either view posits the entirety of Zayas's corpus as a reflection of reality, a belief shared by Mireya Pérez-Erdelyi, who notes that "[e]s de recordar que 'Literature both reflects and helps to create reality'" (8). As much as picaresque literature of the time might have been considered to be a reflection of a more "real" Spain, many critics, even in traditional modern criticism, disagreed strongly with the idea that Zayas might have been accurately representing Spanish society. The extreme level of violence, noted as evidence of Zayas's supposed attacks on a chauvinistic Golden Age Spain, was

considered by most to be symbolic, especially in light of her didactic structure and literary techniques.

Some of these critics, including, according to Greer, Juan Goytisolo, Hans Felten, and Monteso Peydro, found her writings to be of an intricately designed hodgepodge of previously used rhetorical devices which Goytisolo specifically terms "argumentos crucigramas" (Greer 85). Their belief, then, is that Zayas's writings followed Spanish literary tradition of the time, using elements from previous works—LaGreca traces this as far back as *Khalilah et Dimnah* (Greer 27)—in order to further her didactic intent. This conclusion has a sound basis: Cervantes's *Novelas exemplares* had strong foundations in previously written literature, and by merely naming her characters Zayas creates obvious references to other widely popular Golden Age literature (such as Don Juan from *El burlador de Sevilla*); in addition, Fray Pío in his *aprobación* showed that he found the work to be "un espejo de lo que más necesita el hombre para la buena dirección de sus acciones" (*Desengaños* 5).[7]

These traditional modern critics distinctly saw María de Zayas as an early feminist, or, more specifically, a "proto-feminist" (Greer 2). For them, her *Desengaños* was representative of the treatment of women:

> Las damas cuentan historias que muestran la constancia en el amor de las mujeres y la necesidad de vengarse si han sido engañadas. En cambio, las 'maravillas' contadas por los caballeros son de tema y tono más variado e incluso en una de ellas la mujer engaña al hombre. (Yllera 34)

[7] All quotes specified from the *Desengaños* come from Amezúa's 1950 Madrid version instead of the 1847 Parisian edition that included both collections.

Patsy Boyer agrees (xx), and perhaps in part because of this, many early critics focus specifically on the *Desengaños*, but seemingly ignore the *Novelas*.[8]

Although Zayas's two prose works employ a story-within-a-story structure, which, according to Amezúa, is a masculine structure due to its rigidness and hierarchical form, Amezúa considers Zayas's verbal style to be "francamente femenino, por su ligereza, nerviosidad e impresionismo, trasunto del alma de una mujer" (Qtd. in Greer 567). If then, her style is actually feminine rather than masculine, especially in light of her aristocratic family life, a didactic interpretation of Zayas's writing becomes more feasible. Mothers instruct their daughters on honor, as Zayas the author. instructs the reader on honor and proper behavior.

LaGreca summarizes Sandra M. Foa's monograph, saying that:

> the three pages dedicated to "conciencia artística" discuss only the *novela* as genre, and gloss over the prose style as "claro y simple y no culto ni retórico" ([Foa] 105) [….] it is clear from her analysis that she does not question this characterization of prose as simple – instead she notes that it contributes to the collections' didactic value. (567)

There would thus be a correspondence stylistically to previous didactical works which also have simpler styles, at least superficially, to aid the moral interpretations of them.

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[8] Patsy Boyer finds that, within the *Novelas*, the male authors present a pro-male point of view, detailing situations in which women have deceived men. In contrast, the women narrate the opposite: males subverting and deceiving women. Most critics focus primarily on the women-narrated stories, and although not always the case, the result is essentially ignoring nearly a quarter of Zayas's prose works.

Drawing from Foa's and Amezúa's views, one can see how a rapid, impressionist, and simple style might add to the story's quick development of plot, with frame narrative characters being at times disagreeing in their interpretations of individual novelas. For example, in "El verdugo de su esposa," Don Rodrigo is told that his wife has had an affair with Don Juan. At this time, Rosaleta, his wife, is being bled for a throat condition, and Don Rodrigo passes sentence on her and kills her without letting her defend herself, although she might not have been able, given her illness. After the *desengaño* is told, "empezaron las Damas y Caballeros a dar sus pareceres sobre el desengaño dicho, alegando si D. Pedro fue fácil en creer lo que Angeliana le dijo contra el decoro de su esposa […] con que sujetándose todos a su parecer dieron lugar a la linda Doña Isabel y a los demás Músicos" (*Desengaños* 339). Because a conclusion is never decidedly reached by those in the frame story, the onus of judging right from wrong falls upon the reader; however, like previous didactical works, the stories could be designed intentionally to admit multiple interpretations.

Ultimately, the traditional modern critic would say, Zayas presents women's problems in order to educate them about treacheries of men as well as proper aristocratic life. Even when multiple interpretations are given, as in "El verdugo de su esposa," the discussion created by the disagreement of opinions serves only to better inform her readers.

According to LaGreca, the next phase, which evaluates Zayas's writings in a Baroque context, begins with a study by Susan C. Griswold. More than simply questioning the feminism of Zayas, Griswold posits that Zayas is not so much a woman

author, but a Baroque author, or even more simply, an author who also happens to be a very good one. This is an important transition in Zayas studies that "opened the floodgates for criticism that concentrates on the Baroque elements of Zayas's texts" (LaGreca 568). Griswold refocuses critics' approaches to the text and its style from the feminist debate to looking at her works within the Baroque context:

> At best, feminism and antifeminism are counter themes which provide an important structuring element to the book and a concrete articulation of a more abstract theme. All of this is merely to say that it is time for Zayas to cease being thought of as a *writer of propaganda*, whose works are interesting for historical and sociological reasons, and for her to be dealt with as an *artist*. (Griswold 113, emphasis mine)

In other words, previous to this study, published in 1980, focus from critical authors such as Carol McKay or Lena E. V. Sylviana had been on the interaction between the men and women in Zayas's works and on the author's feminism. Both topics place the focus squarely on the author so that the qualities of the text itself—which Zayas implores the readers to consider in her prologue—are largely ignored. Peter Coccozella observes that it is in the closer readings that her style is truly distinguished:

> Even though she borrowed a great deal from her predecessors (especially from Cervantes and Lope de Vega), she developed her own distinctive narrative style. A close reading of "Desengaño 4" ["Tarde llega el desengaño"] reveals how Zayas fleshes out her vision of a well-integrated

> triad—*escarmiento*, *desengaño*, *entendimiento*—and transforms that vision into an organic artistic composition. (199)

Griswold agrees in large part with the qualities presented by Coccozella. To her, Zayas's presentation—violence, sex, and injustices inclusive—is simply the way that Zayas decided to describe "a more fundamental opposition: will (*voluntad*) versus reason (*entendimiento*)" (110). This opposition leads the reader to the *escarmiento* indicated by Coccozella.

One way that Zayas presents this *escarmiento* is through the binary opposition typical of Baroque stories. For example, in "El juez de su causa," there are two women deeply in love (or lust) with Don Carlos. Estela remains chaste, protects her and her lover's dignity, and is willing, albeit she also is forced, to wait years to marry him. Claudia, on the other hand, has Estela kidnapped, renounces her Christian faith, and is not long after wed. The reader necessarily compares the two women, and begins to form an opinion on women's correct manner of acting based on the opposition. Zayas does not need to be explicit with her views.

Similarly, in "Tarde llega el desengaño," Don Jaime has romances with two women. First, he has a very curious relationship with Madama Lucrecia who has a servant escort him to her each night so that she may entertain him; he never actually sees her, and he is forbidden to speak about it. When he inevitably does, she tries to have him killed. Later, he meets Elena, a poor woman who he initially thinks is Lucrecia, for the two have very nearly the same appearance. They marry, but a disenchanted slave tells Jaime that Elena has been romantically seeing a seminarian. Jaime in turn enslaves Elena

until the slave recants just as Elena dies. Coccozella sees this opposition as one that does not necessarily offer a model to emulate, but an important one nonetheless for Zayas studies:

> Doubtless, Lucretia stands out as the exemplary champion of María de Zayas's lifetime cause. A champion she certainly is and a feminist *avant la lettre*. A heroine she is not, however. Heroism and martyrdom shine forth in the emblematic portrait of Helen, brave Lucretia's saintly counterpart. […] Helen is the victim par excellence, victim not only of an individual (her husband) but of an entire society as well. (196)

Traditional modern critics of Zayas would point to Lucrecia as the empowered woman, but she is not favorably portrayed by Filis, the narrator of her novela. Her end is not known, but Zayas generally displays contempt for those who unjustly order others to death, and so Lucrecia is not the optimal role model. However, Elena does not fit the role of model character either. She allows herself to suffer, and does not take the action that other abused women do to rectify their situations. Doña Aminta in "La burlada Aminta y venganza del honor," for instance, after being seduced by Don Francisco and his lover Flora, takes it upon herself to kill her deceivers, an act which is not surprising given the description of Zayas's characters provided by the earlier critics.

Even though Coccozella focuses on the differences between the two women, viewing the same story from a different perspective reveals a more universal interpretation. Disenfranchised characters are not simply controlled by the empowered ones, but are abused to the point of death. In "La burlada Aminta," both Elena *and* Jaime

take on the disenfranchised role as the power exchange is not exclusively based on gender roles. In "Tarde llega el desengaño," Lucrecia's status is higher socioeconomically than that of Jaime's, and his, in turn, is superior to that of Elena. In "El prevenido, engañado," Doña Beatríz exerts control over a black sex slave, and in "El juez de su causa," the Moorish Amete fulfills the role of the empowered character, enslaving both Doña Estela and Claudia. Given the wide variety of examples based on gender, race, and class, the reader is able to learn the dangers of over-empowerment of any type.

By using a format with which her readers would be familiar already (her structure is more fully treated later), Zayas is free to explore other thematic interests. After rejecting the early critics' contention that Zayas's *novelas* and *desengaños* are "unilateral diatribes against the mistreatment of women by men," Deborah Compte believes that Zayas "experiment[ed] with multiple discourses and craft[ed] a provocative posture in examining the vicissitudes of sexual politics, gender relations and the problematics of love" (53). Her primary focus is to represent the apparent inversion of the role played by the *mora*, Zelima. As the narrator of the first *desengaño*, Zelima reveals herself to actually be Doña Isabel. She is able to travel by transforming herself into a slave girl, and with the help of her servant, finds hire in the ship where her deceitful lover is employed. In the same manner she returns to Spain and eventually becomes Doña Lisis's slave. As Isabel, her freedom is limited, but as Zelima, a Moor, she finds in many ways she has more power than does her undisguised self. The primary opposition in play is not male/female, but rather Spanish/Moorish or slave/free woman.

A unique study in Zayas literature is that of Alvin F. Sherman, Jr., on the use of numbers in "El castigo de la miseria." In this extremely close reading, he finds that Zayas prefers the numbers three and four over the number two, because the latter "symbolizes harmony and love," and, when it occurs in a relationship, "the harmonic meaning is replaced with negative, disruptive references" (339). The number three, of course, has strong meaning within the Catholic Spanish culture, and the number four has Greek mythical backgrounds. According to Sherman, a large portion of quantities given by Zayas are based on multiples of three and four. True to the spirit inspired by Griswold, Sherman's article does not include any mention of Zayas's purported feminism, nor on the gender interplay within relationships. Instead, he writes an article that serves to promote Zayas's artistry:

> her structure goes far beyond what has been studied by the critics. She demonstrates a profound understanding of plot development and allows her knowledge of other writers to enhance her own ability [….] the appearance of numbers in her works are [sic] not arbitrary, but conscious act. (341)

Griswold and those critics who follow her line of reasoning analyze Zayas's literary works not to explore her feminism directly or to focus exclusively on gender relations, but instead to define her style, and explore the depth of her text as a work of art, rather than as a political statement. Hence, as LaGreca defined three questions posed by the early modern critics, I would propose two such questions for those of the Griswoldean wave of criticism:

• Is Zayas, regardless of her gender, worthy of study as an author?

• If so, what makes her work worthy of study?

The first question is asked as a reaction to some early modern feminists' study of women authors without looking at the quality of their works. That is to say, by reading someone such as Zayas as a woman writing in the Golden Age, rather than reading her as an author who *happens* to be female, critics risk setting the standard for inclusion in the literary canon lower for female authors than for male authors; doing so risks giving the impression that women necessarily cannot write as well as male authors.

Deborah Compte finds that it might simply be a question of time. Once the novelty of the female Golden Age writer fades, for Zayas to remain in the canon other qualities must arise: "[a]s the corpus of critical studies on María de Zayas expands, we as informed readers become ever more attuned to the nuanced alterity of her works, the multiplicity of voices she presents in articulating varied subject positions, her complexities and contradictions, as well as her multifaceted perspectivism" (53). For Edward H. Friedman, "Zayas's narratives are, fortunately, far more than token objects; they are brilliantly conceived, engaging, and mystifying texts" (472).

Zayas is not simply a female author of the Golden Age. Her writing is of the same caliber as contemporaneous male authors, and was so seen during her own lifetime, a fact attested to by the number of editions and translations of her work during her lifetime, something to which mediocre or less popular authors would not have claim. While popularity in and of itself does not ensure quality, one can be reasonably assured of her quality when her popularity is coupled with the praise she received from other well-

known quality authors. Therefore, her gender should not be the primary factor in reading her, nor the primary theme in studying her. Zayas herself would not advocate such a narrow approach:

> Te ofrezco este libro muy segura de tu bizarría y en confianza de que si te desagradare, podrás disculparme con que nací mujer, no con obligaciones de hacer buenas novelas, sino con muchos deseos de acertar a servirte. (*Novelas* "Al que leyere")[9]

This statement has been seen by some to be a request *not* to judge her work on the same standard as the works of male authors (Paun de García 45). However, Zayas's request is more cunning than simply saying she should be judged easier; rather, she formulates a complex argument to prevent a personal attack on her ability to write. She reserves the excuse of being a woman in case the reader does not like her work. If the reader does enjoy her work, it is because she is a qualified author and not because she is a woman. Readers who approach her as a woman who happens to write will have an experience colored by a presupposition that women cannot write. These readers will likely find her incapable of writing due to her gender instead of her intellect. Readers who approach her as an author who happens to be female can opine whether her novels are well or poorly written. If they find them poorly written, Zayas asks them to understand it is *because* of her gender, not her intellect. If they find the novels well-written, Zayas makes it clear that it is her intellect, and *not* her gender, that enabled her to write so well.

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[9] All quotes specifically designated as from "Novelas" come from the 2002 Julián Olivares edition instead of the 1847 Parisian edition which also included the *desengaños*.

Zayas does not exhibit simply interesting stories, but well-written ones, taking influences from major authors such as Cervantes and Bocaccio and reviving their stories with important differences that attest to her intellect. Paul Scarron writes that the Spanish authors of *novelas* had "the secret of making little stories on the everdyday level of humanity […] not laden with impossible actions and impossible persons" (qtd. in Griswold 98). The secret that Scarron mentions can be found throughout Zayas's stories. While some are perhaps improbable, every single story she wrote could possibly have happened.[10] Aristotle states:

> The reason why we enjoy seeing likenesses is that, as we look, we learn and infer what each is, for instance, 'that is so and so.' If we have never happened to see the original, our pleasure is not due to the representation as such but to the technique or the color or some other such cause. (1448b)

Even the experiences that are foreign to the reader become enjoyable to the reader, but also, in part because of the enjoyment they provide, allow for readers to learn from what they read.

One of the most important characteristics of Zayas's style, in terms of its quality, is her manner of discourse, important enough to be the topic of a collection of articles titled *Dynamics of Discourse,* edited by Amy R. Williamsen and Judith A. Whitenack. Zayas exhibits complete control in structuring her narrative, at times creating three and four levels of narration. None of her stories has a single theme, and most are integrated

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[10] This conclusion assumes that a certain amount of magic exists, which is probably a fair assumption for the seventeenth-century Spanish reader.

into the frame story. Zayas's discourse techniques will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

Even though Griswold's study was relatively recent—less than three decades ago in light of the more than the three centuries since Zayas was published—and her foundations for Zayas studies are still followed in contemporary times, there has been a subsequent change in general approaches and ideas used by scholars with respect to Zayas's works, though it is not easily datable. Instead of simply labeling Zayas a feminist as in traditional modern criticism, contemporary critics have approached her purported feminism with more caution, but have not entirely abandoned the idea, instead using methods similar to those of critics following the Griswoldean model to re-enforce earlier thoughts on Zayas's intent.

For example, Margaret Rich Greer does not label Zayas as a feminist, but instead cautiously applies the prefix *proto* to the title. She admits the potential problem for the feminist argument when many of Zayas's female characters are represented in rather reproachable roles. However, because these women are often cast in a castrating role in the narrative, she sees them as being empowered women—a standard for her readers to follow—, even if still within a patriarchal system. This femininity within a masculine system is reflective of the form that the *Novelas* and *Desengaños* take. Each set of stories follows the well-defined model of Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron*. Boccaccio's characters, seven women and three men, flee the country to escape the plague and pass time during the two-week period by telling stories each night, except for two days in each week which they use for religious observation and chores. Each night has a particular

theme as dictated by a character designated either *re* or *regina* for the the night. In Zayas's *Novelas*, the characters are gathered to tell stories to comfort Lisis during her illness, but there are only two stories told each night, with an equal number of men and women as narrators. In the *Desengaños*, the narrators are all female, and the action takes place over a span of ten nights with one story per night, a form closer to that of Boccaccio's.[11] There is a theme proposed by Lisis, which is "volver por la fama de las mujeres" through the *desengaños* (183).

This structure is inherently very hierarchical and ordered, thus giving it a very masculine quality. However, as numerous critics point out, especially Amezúa, the overall style *within* this form is quite feminine. Nina Cox Davis notes that Paul Julian Smith "finds in many formal and stylistic characters of Zayas's literary discourse (such as excessive detail, a lack of adherence to grammatical rules, and particularly anacoluthon) evidence of 'woman's writing'" (330). Zayas's characters, the contemporary Zayas critic would say, are not much different from herself, feminine entities trapped in a male-built cage. Even within each narration, some critics find that Zayas utilizes standard masculine structures for her stories, but then adds a unique twist.

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[11] Later editions of the *Desengaños*, such as Alicia Yllera's 1983 edition, compile the stories into three nights based on explicit textual references to changes of day: Lisis "así nombró para la primera noche a Zelima, y tras ésta a su prima Lisarda; luego Nise, tras ella Filis. para la segunda noche puso la primera a su Madre, segunda Matilde, y tercera, y cuarta a Doña Luisa y Doña Francisca [….] Y la tercera noche puso primera a Doña Estefanía […] y ella tomó para sí el postrero desengaño" (*Desengaños* 229) . Earlier editions labeled each *desengaño* as a different night in spite of the aforementioned designation. For the same reason, the second and fourth desengaños are occasionally swapped. Lisis's order does not match early editions orders. Yllera and others follow Lisis's order. As the content remains otherwise unchanged, the significance of the change is somewhat negligible.

The contemporary critic avoids the question of "is she or isn't she a feminist?" by focusing on qualities that might describe how she could be, but in order to construct arguments unrelated to her feminism. Doing so allows for a greater variety of opinions on authorial intent—especially with regards to gender roles—which continues to be a primary focus of their studies.

Amy R. Williamsen examines the role that beauty plays in the deaths of three sisters and the attempted murder of a fourth in "Mal presagio casar lejos" to contradict Nancy Saporta Sternbach's belief that female death cannot be a "seductive" literary model for a female authors. Williamsen acknowledges the extreme violence towards the women, but instead of commenting on such violence and proposing Zayas as a forerunner to feminism as early modern critics have done, she concludes that the unique elements of Zayas's work "combine to create a disturbing narrative that anticipates many insights from contemporary theories regarding female/male relationships" ("Death" 622). Gender roles remain an important topic, but both the conclusions reached and their development are realized by emphasizing more than the simple theme of women being abused by men.

Others look less at what Zayas says, and more at how she says it, and in doing so, attempt to establish a definitive link between Zayas and her lead protagonist, Lisis. Nina Cox Davis finds that the style of discourse is similar between the two and in doing so alludes to the possible authorial self-representation of Zayas in Lisis. She notes that "Ruth Anthony El Saffar and others have seen in Lisis's troubled love life a reflection of the personal experiences of or known to Zayas" (326). However it is difficult to distinguish what might be Zayas's personal experience from her fictional literature, which

presumes unproven autobiographical content. In this way, Davis attempts to break from traditional Zayas analyses. For instance, in her prologue, Zayas attempts to demonstrate the worth of literature, and more specifically that produced by women. For Davis, "it is through her [Lisis's] voice that she will work to reestablish her public worth in the face of amorous rejection" (335). Establishing "public worth" is made difficult because of the audience, which for Zayas is primarily men, and for Lisis if not majority, then in large part, men, who reject female authors. In spite of this, Zayas does not want to be seen as a female author, rather in her "Al que leyere" she demands that she be judged as a man would be.

Davis states that in light of such a potential audience, "Zayas and her double in the frame narrative, Lisis, take on the task of authoring literary representations of experience and appear bent upon meeting the requirements of the male audience to whom the narratives are directed" (332). In large part, experience plays the primary role in convincing the listeners of the stories. Stacey L Parker Aronson notes this as well:

> Zayas […] presents rape from the point of view of her female protagonists and endeavors to keep the victims' stories at the level of the personal […] she presents them as actual events, even going so far as to corroborate the events with eye witness testimony narrated in the present tense. (529)

If listeners perceived the works as fiction, then they might not feel the same incentive to pay attention and learn from the stories—a technique not at all uncommon in contemporary literature and film. Authenticity commands respect.

Aronson approaches the otherness in Zayas's work by applying Jeffry Jerome Cohen's "Monster Theory" to rape in the novelas. Cohen's theory proposes that throughout literature and culture, people have deemed certain people or groups of people as "monsters," and that through analysis of such designations one can read the culture. The women who are raped become monsters shunned by society, and are hidden away to be dealt with only by the men immediately involved, who, according to Aronson, are the very perpetrators. For instance, in "La inocencia castigada," Doña Inés is bewitched by a sorcerer hired by don Diego, who is obsessed with Inés. Aronson considers this method of seduction equivalent to outright rape, yet, it is Inés who is punished by her family and Diego, walled up in a room for six years. It is obvious to the reader that the fault lies not with Inés, who slept with Diego unwillingly, but rather with Diego himself. Hence, "Zayas leads her readers to conclude that no matter how monstrous the bodies of her raped women may be, the real monsters engendered by seventeenth-century Spanish society are men" (544). Though Aronson looks at Zayas's works with a new approach, her findings are not novel and seem as though they were written by a traditional modern critic.

Contemporary Zayas critics, unlike their predecessors, do not question whether or not Zayas is worthy of study nor are they interested in the superficial display of violence and oppression of women, this having been already well researched. At the same time, however, they do not ignore Zayas's gender nor her style in their work. Contemporary Zayas critics ask themselves a single question: "How does Zayas's gender affect her writing?" The answer is not simply that she chose themes pertinent to women or

women's rights, as again, previous critics have already covered that area of investigation. Instead, the answer is a multifaceted response that attempts to identify *how* she effectively goes about presenting issues such as women's rights, the cruelty of men, the otherness of women, and the problems with the current social structure. As previously indicated, these questions are answered by investigating the stylistic representation of women, their function in her works, or by linking Zayas to her characters in order to explain such characters' idiosyncrasies.

Criticism of Zayas literature has passed from seeing her as an outstanding author worthy of praise to an author whose work is representative of a vulgar past era. After years of giving her work no attention, the critics rediscovered her, hailing her as an early champion of women's rights. As time went by, more diverse approaches to her literature began to appear. I intend to further this diversification by presenting my own approach with a unique focus in this thesis.

Chapter 3: A Reader's Approach to the Text

Throughout the study of Zayas's literary works, a number of different approaches have been used in order to better understand her stories and their intended meaning. There is, however, considerable variance in the application of these approaches, most especially differences in which traits and elements are found to be important and worthy of focus. Specifically, this chapter will focus on Zayas as a female author and how critics have or have not viewed her as a feminist; her discourse and narrative style; and the involvement and importance of the reader in her works.

Early Approaches to Zayas's Works

Beginning with traditional modern criticism on Zayas, many studies looked at Zayas's work from what would in contemporary times be considered a feminist approach. Although a few earlier studies had treated her feminism or femininity, the emergence of women's studies in the 1970s and 1980s began to relocate Zayas in canon. giving birth to a multitude of studies on Zayas's feminism. Paul Julian Smith summarizes the studies of women in Golden Age Spain and offers a general description of women's studies: "There are at least two options available to contributors to women's studies. The first is the study of representation: the images of women produced by (male) writers. The second is the study of women themselves as writers" (220). His typification of then-contemporary studies is curious in that both options present the women as objects. Although Smith tries

to examine specifically stylistics or textuality in his study which compares Zayas and Santa Teresa (221), upon studying Zayas, he explicitly changes to a feminist reading: "[i]f we abandon traditional modes of criticism, it may be possible to offer a progressive or feminist reading of a superficially conservative text" (235).

Part of the aim of feminist criticism is to identify forgotten women authors whose place in the literary canon has been denied to them on the basis of their gender. Numerous critics have speculated on the reasons for her exclusion. For example, Mercedes Maroto Camino believes that Zayas's "absence from the school canon for over three centuries corroborates that this silencing obeys a criteria of aesthetics firmly anchored in a masculinist discourse which rests on the marginalization of women" (7), although as previously noted, even some women found her literature distasteful (Vollendorf 90). Whatever the precise reason for her sudden disappearance from literary circles, Zayas is certainly now a major part of the Spanish Golden Age canon, a testament to the success of the feminist movement in literary studies.

In part because Zayas was rediscovered by feminists,[12] as noted by Amy R. Williamsen, contemporary critics "often debate the 'feminism' or 'antifeminism' of her work" ("Challenging," 133). Perhaps initiated in part by Amezúa who felt that Zayas acted as an advocate for women by attacking men and the patriarchal institution and whose edition of Zayas's novels was the primary source of her works until Yllera's edition, the idea of Zayas's feminism has led to a tendency to use feminist theory in the

[12] Although Amezúa's critical edition might be considered key to Zayas's resurgence in popularity, the earliest critics of Zayas were overwhelmingly women looking at Zayas in line with feminist goals of recovering lost authors and reading literature through the eyes of the female author.

analysis of her works. Mention of Zayas's supposed feminism has become virtually unavoidable in contemporary criticism (even if only because of the observer effect).

The feminist critique of Zayas culminates in the work of Vollendorf, whose article "Fleshing Out Feminism in Early Modern Spain: María de Zayas's Corporeal Politics" is likely the first complete treatment of Zayas's feminism and identifies Zayas as a precursor to such feminist theorists as Hélène Cixous and Elizabeth Grosz. She concludes that "[u]rging women to take control discursively, intellectually, and physically of their own bodies, Zayas speaks through the collective female body in her *novela* collection and pushes women to recognize their undervalued position in society" (108). Hence to her, Zayas is not simply a feminist, a definitive presupposition for some, but more importantly a feminist theorist. However, not all authors consider her writing to be of a feminist nature at all:

> Feminist writing can expose prejudice, critique the status quo, and suggest ways of changing society's attitudes toward women. Zayas seems to anticipate the concept of "reading as a woman," that is to say, of recognizing differences in reading and writing subjects, in language, and in cultural values […] She turns the tables on patriarchy, but to what end?[13] (Friedman 474)

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[13] "She" references the character Florentina in "Estragos que causa el vicio," but is equally applicable to Zayas. Friedman's quote in full: "Florentina is a woman who infiltrates enemy territory, who carries out her sexual fantasies regardless of the prices of her trimphs, and who puts the here and now before divine justice. Florentina's life is spared, first, and in a brilliantly ironic stroke, when Don Dionisio's sword hits the whalebone in her corset (the symbol par excellence of female confinement), and, later, when officials decide not to prosecute her. She gets away with murder through good fortune, through influence, and through collusion. She practices violence indirectly, self protectively. She turns the tables on patriarchy, but to what end" (474).

Zayas inverts and subverts the gender roles constantly in her works, but it might simply be for no reason other than that it makes for interesting reading.

For other critics, the gamut of historical meaning for the term *feminist* creates problems in defining Zayas—or other authors—with such a general term. LaGreca notes that the semiotics of labeling Zayas as such could cause confusion since feminism today is different from feminism of the Golden Age:

> feminism for Zayas is a more general corrective effort aimed at heightening awareness of the injustices men perpetrate against women, while at the same time reinforcing and encouraging women's virtue, intelligence, solidarity, and efforts to be independent. (566)

One might question how Zayas encourages virtue through female characters that seem to be just as bad as the men that Zayas highlights as evil. For example, Lisis, the principal protagonist of the frame story, tries to find a way to break her promise to Don Diego, hence being dishonest and disloyal. In doing so she asserts her independence and more importantly subjects Diego to the objectification more typical of women, although an alternative reading might be that she desires independence not so much from men as from society's rules in general. This alternate reading is supported by Sara Colburn who finds that in Zayas's work, "[s]ociety's attempt to enforce disparity between the sexes makes true love an impossibility" (415).

Nina Cox Davis views Zayas's writing not so much as true activism but as a play on the restrictions and freedoms experienced in seventeenth-century Spanish aristocratic culture:

> Her "feminism," insofar as we are able to give this activism on behalf of women a contemporary label, is articulated through the author's deft play with Baroque wit and stylistic devices well known to her literary contemporaries, in order to speak, in effect, from two places: a shared courtly culture whose mores confine both men, and more particularly, women to limited roles; and an imaginative space where desires are realized in represented experience. (329-330)

Both men and women are oppressed within the same culture and limited in what they can do. The desires that Davis mentions are not just those of women but also of men wishing to be free from the pressures they experience in their lives. Davis does note that the limitations are more particularly seen with regards to the female characters, thus showing perhaps a heightened concern by Zayas for women.

Unfortunately, there is a key element missing in analyzing Zayas as a feminist, although it is not to say feminist theory is inapplicable to her works. Carol L. McKay notes that the "total knowledge of doña María's life barely makes a paragraph" (377). However, a key part of feminist criticism centers upon the author him- or herself. Without knowing her personal view or much of her life, it is impossible to understand her intent for writing her works. For example, while critics often quote her "Al que leyere" and her epilogue as showing her views, the author of these passages is still Zayas as an author, and may not represent her views proper. Susan Griswold observes that, given the standard use of feminist ideas as a theme in Golden Age and other precedent works, "one

must regard 'her' [Zayas's] feminism as a *topos* and be very wary about believing that feminism to be a sincere expression of her personal beliefs on the subject" (100).

In contrast to this advocacy for women in literature and society, she also makes it adamantly clear that her book is to be purchased, not simply borrowed from a library, thus encouraging private reading of her works. Zayas could have included the extreme violence against women in part to attract more male readers—and consequently more sales—who might have found the scenes to be exciting, and may not have seen the treatment of women as bad a light as some more recent critics have found it. Amy R. Williamsen finds that, at least in "Mal presagio casar lejos," "Zayas's text underscores that Blanca's death arouses the Prince's desire, thereby making explicit the 'pornographic' implications of the violent objectification of woman" ("Death" 622). The idea that sex sells is certainly not unique to the twentieth century, and given the increase in private readership in seventeenth-century Spain, the excessive violent and sexual content of Zayas's works should not surprise.[14]

LaGreca writes that the label of feminist can not be easily applied to Zayas, in part of because of the different meanings of feminism between the Golden Age and today. Regardless, Alvin F. Sherman, Jr., notes in his study that "[u]nfortunately, neither biographical information nor religious affiliation lends itself to an interpretation of

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[14] The clearest example of this comes during the transition from Baroque to Victorian eras from the Spanish painter Francisco de Goya. His *La maja desnuda* is the first non-mythical full nude portrait in western painting. Due to the controversy that erupted, Goya painted a second work, *La maja vestida*, identical to the first but fully clothed. The owner of the works would then switch out the paintings depending on present company. In other words, sexually explicit material was permitted in the private world, and likewise, works intended for private reading could be more explicit, and sell better as well.

Zayas' novels" (336). Thus, hard evidence as to whether Zayas intent was to make money by selling sexually-arousing literature to men, to educate men and women on the mistreatment of women, some other purpose, none of these, or a combination of these, is likely to be forever lost to history. Any assumptions about her intentions must be made from the texts she has written, which will forever be subject to doubt and subjectivity.

Discourse and Narratology

In part because of the lack of biographical information on Zayas, many critics have instead looked not as much to why she wrote, but to how she structures her writing and made her arguments, whatever they be. Zayas's storytelling is complex, and features four separate levels of narration. Most critics agree that she uses this structure for a particular purpose; after all, she could have modeled her structure more on Cervantes's *Novelas Exemplares*, which lacks the frame story that Bocaccio's *Decameron* uses. Because of the integration between the stories and the frame story, Ruth El Saffar prefers a comparison to *One Thousand and One Nights* (192).

Susan Paun de García reminds critics that the *desengaños* are told with a purpose. It is not a self-serving purpose for Zayas, but rather for Lisis: she decides she does not want to marry Don Diego. Thus, Lisis takes the model of the soirée that helped nurse her to health and uses the *desengaños* to avoid marriage:

> She orchestrates a "debate" that will prove that men cannot be trusted. In particular, married women will suffer tremendously at the hands of their husbands or their husband's relatives. The arguments must be so convincing that they will give her free access to escape the undesirable

> compromise into which she has entered stupidly and petulantly. [….] She cannot simply deny Don Diego only later to accept another, for that would be beneath her nobility. She must deny all men. (43-44)

Given Lisis's intent, it becomes far more difficult to determine a particular authorial viewpoint. In many ways, Lisis is the very woman that Zayas attacks: selfish, impulsive, and disloyal. The soirée is not meant, as some earlier critics have claimed, to show the veritable cruelty of men, but rather to help Lisis avoid marriage to Don Diego. Some narrators, though they agree to tell stories of the cruelty of men and do so quite convincingly, disagree that all men are so distrustful and evil. For example, Lisarda, narrator of "La más infame venganza," begins her story "pidiéndole licencia [toward Don Diego, her lover] como si dijera, más por cumplir con la obligación, que por ofenderte, hago esto" (268). She notes that she has never been deceived. Within the frame story, the one which is closer to the reader, the reader is assured that there are indeed good men.

Another area of interest is the femininity—or lack thereof—within her writing, an issue to which Zayas at least makes reference in her "Al que leyere". Paul Julian Smith notes a nature-versus-nurture opposition in women's writing: essentialists find innate characteristics of women's writing, while relativists believe it to be culturally endowed (224). Amezúa, as already noted, finds her style to be characteristically feminine, but does not consider the source of the femininity (in part, doubtlessly, because criticsm and research on the topic did not really take hold until decades after his edition). In her article "Response to women or to their writing?", Mary P. Hiatt presents the results of a study of both nineteenth- and twentieth-century writings in English, in which she argues

that many of the differences commonly associated with male and female writing are actually impressions formed simply by the reader's knowing the gender of an author. She also finds that while differences do exist in many cases they go against common wisdom.

Though a full analysis of the issues related to engendering styles and the effects such engenderment has on readers is well outside of the scope of this thesis, Hiatt offers a good summary of the important issues involved with the (perceived) gender of authors:

> Literary history is replete with biased, inaccurate judgements, and with responses derived from readers' assumptions about the author. Such matters as an author's age, gender, nationality, and race may all contribute to devastatingly inappropriate critical judgements usually offered in authoritatian pronouncements suggesting infallibility. (249)

Zayas, as noted in Chapter 2, implores the reader to avoid reading her work as though written by a woman. Many critics focus on her as a woman, though, and the degree to which this focus affects or potential hinders Zayas studies is no doubt important. Interestingly, while Hiatt's article generally uses men as example of those critics who let the gender of an author affect their analyses, in the case of Zayas, the trend appears to generally be the opposite.

While Colburn finds that it is freedom from a neuter society-at-large oppresor that Lisis seeks, Davis notes that the pressures of courtly culture affected men as well, if not necessarily to the same degree, and finds that "Zayas appears to be analyzing the conditions necessary for successful and valid discourse production by women, while modeling through her own voice the position and locus of cultural authority that her

characters are made to seek" (329). For anyone to break through the constraints of society, is exceptionally difficult. Breaking free of constraints imposed by single person, such as as slave's gaining freedom, is not without difficulty, but it is not the same as having to break free of a constraint imposed by society as a whole.

The Mock Reader

We admittedly know little about Zayas, and of her corpus consists of but a handful of works. In this author's opinion, Zayas's most important stylistic attribute would be her ability to use expected styles, structures, and plotlines while subverting these to cause the reader to think about not only the situations of her characters but also of her readers. Thus, by examining the intended reader, perhaps more can be learned about Zayas herself.

Reader-response Theory places a decidedly anti-New Criticism emphasis on the reader, his or her subjectivity, emotions, and the reception of the work itself. The reception is not a passive act, and necessarily evokes a response from the reader. In a text such as that of Zayas, where the narrator indicates his or her desire to affect the reader, the interplay between author, text, reception, and reader becomes far more important than any of those elements on their own.

Historically, according to Elizabeth Freund, reader-response criticism comes as a response to critics who expelled the reader due to what they termed the Affective Fallacy, that is, that the effect a poem has on a reader does not have a role in the essence of the poem. Stanley E. Fish's essay, "Literature in the reader: affective stylistics," directly challenged this view and "relocate[s] meaning in the reader by replacing the illusory

objectivity of the text with the 'experience' of a reading subject" (92-93). Jane P. Tompkins places the roots of reader-response criticism "with I. A. Richards's discussions of emotional response in the 1920s or with the work of D. W. Harding and Louise Rosenblatt in the 1930s" (x). Reader-response theory, at its essence, an attempt to bring the reader back into the picture. Zayas herself notes in her "Al que leyere" that an unpublished book (and hence one without a reader) is of minimal value.

Freund notes several differences in reader-response approaches, one of the main differences termed in the German *Wirkungsästhetik* and *Rezeptionsästhetik*.[15] Wolfgang Iser and other *Wirkungsästhetiker* emphasize "the potential effect of the text, and [concentrate] on the interaction between reader and text," in contrast to the earlier *Rezeptionästhetiker* which primarily focused on audience reception (Fruend 135). In this thesis, such a distinction is important, as focusing purely on audience reception loses sight of the connection to Zayas herself. Focusing on the interaction on both sides of the work, as well as the potential interaction, could bring to light not just the structural and thematic elements of Zayas's work that instruct, but also more subtle elements of her literary style.

Given previous criticism on Zayas's work, there are two main points of view that should be considered in a reader-response critique of Zayas's work. First, one must look at how the female Golden Age reader would view the novels. Second, equally important

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[15] Fruend provides no translation for these terms because, according to her, their translation to the English is difficult to arrive to and does not contain important distinctions that the German does. That said, Freund points out that "*Rezeptionsästhetik* emphasizes audience reception whereas *Wirkungsästhetik* emphasizes the potential effect of the text and concentrates on the interaction between reader and text"

is how the male Golden Age reader would view them. In most cases, this distinction is non-existent. If, as I will do later, one examines how she treats race or class, the gender distinction is moot. Therefore, throughout my analysis, I will use a mock reader, "a role that the real reader is invited to play for the duration of the novel," a concept presented by Walker Gibson in the 1950s (Tompkins xi). This reader is imagined as a seventeenth-century reader, but one which could be either male or female. Because the novels occur over a definite period of time for the reader, within and without each *novela*, both in plot and in the actual time used by the reader, an analysis similiar to that used by Michael Riffaterre would be most useful. Riffaterre builds on Gibson's views but adds "attention to the way poetic meaning is reflected in the reader's moment-by-moment reactions to its unfolding" (Tompkins xiii). Riffaterre worked with poetry, and translating his approach of "moving through […] line by line" (Tompkins xiii) to prose, especially anything beyond a few pages, becomes daunting. The central idea, though, can be applied to prose if instead of an line-by-line analysis one uses an analysis of sequential plot events. A whole sequential reader-response critique is out of the scope of this thesis; however, within each of the thematic analyses in Chapter 4, I will use apply a similar temporal approach which is also used in Fish's quintessential article "Interpreting the *Variorum*." [16] Unlike many of the initial reader-response critics, I am not searching for a purely open-ended poetic meaning of Zayas's work. Given that many critics find Zayas specifically to be a feminist, authorial intent and actual textual content is a major factor in the study of

[16] A variorum is a collection of all editions and versions of a work are set together, for example, a Variorum of the Bible in English would set each verse alongside all translations of that verse. In Fish's article, the *Variorum* becomes the collection of readers' "versions" (experiences) of a given work.

Zayas literature. Fish points out that in his study "what [his] analyses amount to are descriptions of a succession of decisions made by readers about an author's intention" (174).

By studying the narrative and literary style of Zayas and its (potential) effect on a reader, a view of Zayas herself, if perhaps only through the eyes of her readers, should appear. Rather importantly, Fish describes an interesting section in the *Variorum* regarding an ambiguous presentation of certain "delights." It and his accompanying analysis closely mirror recurring themes in Zayas's works and my own analyses in Chapter 4:

> In other words, the lines [of the *Variorum*] first generate a pressure for judgement […] and then decline to deliver it; the pressure, however, still exists, and it is transferred from the words on the page to the reader […], who comes away from the poem not with a statement, but with a responsibility, the responsibility of deciding when and how often—if at all—to indulge in "those delights" (they remain delights in either case). This transferring of responsibility from the text to its readers is what the lines ask us to do—it is the essence of their experience—and in my terms it is therefore what the lines *mean*. (166)

While Fish finds the meaning, necessarily subjective, in the transfer of responsibility, I find the meaning a representation of *intent*. The author is certainly not out of the picture, and although his or her involvement with the reader through the text is the focus, the author does not simply set his or her hand and publish without thinking about the text's

meaning. He or she has a conscious involvement that can be deduced from the effect or response that the reader has to the text itself. In the case of this thesis, Zayas's intent will be deduced from my projection of her reader's responses to her texts. The reader has choice, but not freedom, and this has not changed from the seventeenth century to today.

Chapter 4: Analysis of the *Novelas* and *Desengaños*

Critics have traditionally studied Zayas for her inclusion of strong female characters; however, she includes many other characters from a variety of other marginalized groups. Some of these groups, such as the Moors, are relatively commonplace in Golden Age literature, but have roles and depictions different from the standards of the time. Some, like the blacks. are almost non-existent in contemporaneous works, but appear with notable frequency in Zayas's stories. The poor, often neglected in aristocratic literature, have fuller roles in her novels. I propose that her inclusion of these groups is not coincidental; rather she uses the marginalized characters to demonstrate that all humans, body notwithstanding, are equal by nature of their souls having been molded from the same material.

Besides the notable characters, Zayas's writing also makes frequent use of various narrative devices, such as religious allusions and disguises, that serve to further re-enforce the idea that people, regardless of their innate qualities, are capable of the same actions, whether those be good or bad. These two ideas, that humans are made of the same material and that humans' capacities are equal, serve as foundations for the didactic qualities of her works which are universal in nature; that is, the lessons she provides may be equally as applicable to people from her time and condition as they are to ours.

The Role of Race

One of the most interesting aspects of Zayas's literature is her inclusion of one particular group of characters, that of the *negro*. Although often in the Golden Age the terms *negro* and *moro* were interchangeable, it is unlikely that Zayas views them the same in the *Novelas* because the black characters in her works find themselves in similar, if perhaps strange, situations, that are different from the otherwise then-standard role of the Moor.

The first black character introduced to the reader in Zayas's works is in "El prevenido, engañado." This *novela* begins by treating why Doña Beatriz rejects the marital advances of a worthy, and white, Don Fadrique in favor of a secret black lover, Antonio, to whom she brings food on a regularly basis. She caresses him, and cries over his pain, demonstrating how much she cares for him, an act unheard of in Zayas's time. Zayas does not describe Antonio as being a beautiful or desirable man in any way—she instead portrays him as not only black, but also of poor health, both qualities unbefitting a suitor to a lady like Beatriz who, of course, has another suitor who presumably would be a more appropriate and desirable companion.

Within the *novela*, Antonio has a small role. In fact, the courting of Doña Beatriz by Don Fadrique is only one in a series of courtships gone awry that lead him to forever distrust women. Within the smaller context of this specific courtship, Antonio is what Don Fadrique is not. Don Fadrique very much desires the love of Doña Beatriz, and yet for as much as she gives her love to Antonio, the black man rejects it. He chastises her:

> Déjame ya por Dios, ¿qué es esto? Que aun estando ya acabando la vida, ¿me persigues? No basta que tu viciosa condición me tiene como estoy, sino que quieres, que cuando estoy ya en el fin de mi vida, acuda a cumplir tus viciosos apetitos: cásate, señora, cásate, y déjame ya a mí que ni te quiero ver, ni comer lo que me das. (78)

Zayas is not explicit in how Doña Beatriz's sexual relationships caused the death of Antonio, however, it does make it clear that Doña Beatriz is at fault.

The oppositions of Don Fadrique and Antonio are clear: one is white, the other black; one wealthy and educated, the other indigent; one well-traveled, the other confined to the back room of a house. Doña Beatriz betrays each of them for the opposite. Don Fadrique wanted her attention and got none of it, and Antonio wanted nothing of it and yet got so much he died of it. Ultimately, the reader may infer that no matter one's status, a woman can betray a man just as he could betray her.

The other black primary character fulfills a similar narratorial role in Zayas's "Tarde llega el desengaño." In an almost orchestrated manner, Don Jaime presents to Don Martín his two slaves. Each is a slave for very different reasons. The black one has been his slave for many years. Don Jaime explains that, before being his slave, the white woman had been his lover, and that, after he believed that she had betrayed him, he took from her all the wealth he had previously endowed upon her. To further her embarrassment and shame, all that she had, he gave in turn to his black slave, who was dressed in the finest clothes and had jewelry that "una reina no la podía tener mejor" (278).

The differences and similarities between these two women can demonstrate what Fadrique considers to be the ideal qualities in a woman. Specifically, in "Tarde llega el desengaño," the black woman becomes a symbol of material wealth. The readers of Zayas would not have found the black slave desirable because of both her race and her position, yet she managed to amass great wealth and attain a position higher than that of her former mistress, Elena. In contrast, the white slave has a physical beauty which—even through the rags that she wears—Don Martín finds to be stunning: "parecía […] tan hermosísima, con tan grande extremo, que juzgó Don Martín que, con haberlas visto muy lindas en Flandes y España, que ésta las excedía a todas" (277). She has neither wealth nor freedom, however, she has a beautiful mind, starkly contrasted with the horror of the black woman, who has no natural beauty, physical or spiritual.[17] Subsequently the male reader makes a choice subconsciously in the narration: the black or the white one? Does he desire wealth and material goods, or does he prefer a natural beauty? When considering both this *desengaño* and the *ejemplar* of "El prevenido, engañado," it is clear the black characters are not included merely for a narrative function. Zayas forces the reader to contemplate what role, if any, race should play in love.

Each of the two black characters has a same-gender white antithesis who provides the reader with a point of comparison for evaluating the decisions of Jaime and Beatriz. The black female slave has Elena, and Antonio has Don Fadrique. The characters whom

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[17] The contrast of physical wealth or beauty and having a beautiful mind is seen in the "La esclava de su amante," when Luis is rejected by Isabel for not being as wealthy as his competition, yet as is shown in the story, he would have been the "correct" choice for her, as he saves her even though she has rejected him. By the end of the *desengaño*, she desires him as her husband, but he rejects her instead.

the reader would find "attractive," that is, the white Spaniards, are in love with the center of the would-be love triangles who ultimately judge the other two. These characters shun the advances of the attractive characters in favor of those who are clearly undesirable. The descriptions of the two black characters are overtly negative:

> era una negra, tan tina, que el azabache era blanco en su comparación, y sobre esto, tan fiera, que juzgó Don Martín que si no era el demonio, que debía de ser retrato suyo, porque las narices eran tan romas, que imitaban los perros bravos que ahora están tan validos, y la boca, con tan grande hocico y bezos tan gruesos, que parecía boca de león, y lo demás a esta proporción. (278)

Her natural appearance is like that of the Devil, a ferocious being in front of whom men would cower. Yet, with all of her fire, she is a caged animal, making the comparison to the lion that much more accurate. She is an exalted beauty and can do nothing with what she has, and is thus reduced to a public spectacle. The physical description of Antonio is also negative:

> un negro tan atezado que parecía su rostro hecho de un bocací. Parecía en la edad de hasta veinte y ocho años, mas tan feo, y abominable, que no sé si fue pasión o si era la verdad, le pareció que el demonio no podía serlo tanto. Parecía asimismo en su desflaquecido semblante que le faltaba poco para acabar la vida, con lo que parecía más abominable. (78)

He is not a paraded about as a prized collection piece, yet, he has a similar worth to his lover. He is a private treasure to Doña Beatriz. Unlike Don Jaime, Doña Beatriz takes

care of her lover out of true love, rather than out of jealousy, and so there is a difference both in why the two blacks are being loved, and why and how they are imprisoned.

Sadly, there is little literary attention paid to the roles of these two characters in the body of critical literature in dealing with Zayas. Mercedes Maroto Camino, writing with an emphasis on the subversive and feminist tendencies of Zayas's writing, focuses her attention on the deficiencies of men. "The tale ["El prevenido, desengañado"] does not offer a laudable perspective upon gender or race but is a remarkable example of men's fears and anxieties about their own sexual performances" (519). However, it is important to remember that Zayas is not narrating this story; Don Diego is the principal narrator. Patsy Boyer acknowledges that, while many of Zayas's stories have a seemingly feminist focus, those narrated by men have indeed a different gender bias. Marato Camino's article represents a missed opportunity to expand into new ground in Zayas studies, instead returning to an earlier critical approach of Zayas by focusing on gender roles and empowerment.[18]

Furthermore, Marato Camino does not consider the slave in "Tarde llega el desengaño." Noting that Zayas included three black characters with prominent positions within her stories, I find it difficult to say that the inclusion of any single one of them was by happenstance. While it is in line with much critical thought on Zayas, what Marato Camino proposes does not require that the character be black. Don Fadrique could have instead found Doña Beatriz with a common beggar, his best friend, or even Philip IV, yet anxiety of his inadequacies as a man would be no different. The black slave could evoke

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[18] The author states that, while the article was published in 2007, an earlier version was read at a conference in 1992.

similar reactions from the white slave, but, for the purposes of the narrative, she need not have been black, merely naturally hideous.

Since the characters' blackness serves no direct function in the narration, there must be a more explicit reason for their inclusion. It certainly is not employed for comic effect: the situations into which it is written are quite serious. Its addition might be testament to Zayas's subtleties when presenting various groups of marginalized characters in uncommon and slightly positive ways. But the terrible physical descriptions of black characters is anything but positive or innovative Howard M. Jason lists a number of works in the Golden Age canon that include blacks, and refers to Francisco Gómez de Quevedo's "Boda de Negros" as a well-known text about blacks. Quevedo's text reads not unlike that of Zayas: "[p]arecía matrimonio / concertado en el infierno" (vv. 6-7).

Instead, Zayas provides a new possible reading on the status of blacks in the Golden Age. Doubtlessly, María de Zayas knew of slavery, and, while it is a stretch to say that she was a proto-abolitionist, she does appear to harbor a view different from that of her contemporaries. As is obvious from the quoted passages, blacks were considered to have a hideous appearance; she presents them both in a way that might cause the reader to think twice about their condition. In both instances, the description does not come directly from Zayas, nor even the narrators of the individual stories; rather, it is one of their characters that find the blacks as such. Antonio "le pareció [a don Fadrique] que el demonio no podía serlo tanto" (78) not to the reader nor the narrator. The diabolic description of the other slave is also particular only to a single character as "juzgó don

Martín que si no era el demonio, que debía de ser retrato suyo" (278) The modern reader, though, is certainly moved to some compassion for these characters. Antonio is being treated as human and an object of desire, and yet he is forced into a relationship with a woman who is so obsessed with relationships that she cannot be bothered to allow him to die in peace. The slavery of the unnamed black woman might not appear as bad were it not paralleled to that of the white slave. Thus, as the reader laments the imprisonment of the white slave, it seems likely that the same feelings would be expressed for the black slave, even given her racial difference.

The only other black character, though playing a minor role, is represented in a genuinely favorable light. Whereas the black female slave in "Tarde llega el desengaño" plays an active role in causing the demise of Elena, and Antonio is quite passive, the black slave in "Estragos que causa el vicio" plays an active, and positive, role. Doña Floretina explains how she was able to escape from Don Dionís:

> me dió las heridas que habeis visto, y acabárame de matar si la negra no acudiera á ponerse en medio, que como la vió don Dionís, asió de ella, y mientras la mató tuve yo lugar de entrarme en un aposento. (422)

This nameless slave comes to the rescue of her mistress without questioning the effect on her life. Dying for another was and is one of the biggest sacrifices one can make and the slave did so to save Floretina. However, as with the other blacks, the role of this slave could have been equally as well served by a white. Therefore, her inclusion must have some other significance.

Zayas includes the three black characters as a willful commentary on the blacks of her time. Because her black characters function both actively and passively in her works, and are presented in positive and negative lights, the purpose of their inclusion is clear: to demonstrate that blacks are able to function in the same roles as whites, whether they be good or bad roles.

In addition to her black characters, María de Zayas also includes several Moorish characters. Like the blacks, each Moor is unique, but, instead of representing all of them in stereotypical fashion, Zayas shows that Moors are not very different from Spaniards, that is, some characters are morally admirable and others despicable. In "El juez de su causa," Zayas uses a classically baroque opposition to convince the reader that a Moor can be either good or bad. Claudia, jealous of Don Carlos and Estela's impending wedding, consorts with Amete, a Moor, to kidnap Estela, hence leaving Carlos to her. Amete does not simply capture Estela, but also kidnaps Claudia, and brings them both to Fez. He forces Claudia to convert to Islam and become his brother's wife. Although he tries to do the same to Estela, her will is too strong and she remains sexually and religiously pure, though Amete treats both her and Claudia as less than slaves. The reader discovers the full extent of his ire after Claudia tricks Estela into escaping to the marina where she knows Amete was waiting for them both. Estela continues to refuse Amete and so he beats her and threatens her life.

The image of Moors, as people who mistreat women, have multiple wives (Amete's father had four), and kidnap and enslave Christians, is probably that which most Spaniards had. The reader is surely surprised to find that it is the prince of Fez who

comes to her rescue. His words to Amete are particularly strong: "¿Qué haces perro? ¿En la corte del rey de Fez se ha de atrever ninguno a forzar las mujeres? Déjala al punto, sino por vida del Rey que te mato" (164). Not only does he indicate that women are not to be treated as he found Amete treating them, but he also indicates that, for the sake of a Christian woman, he would kill Amete, an Islamic man.

Xacimín, the prince, is the antithesis of Amete. He does not mistreat Estela once he takes her under his care. Instead he gives her money and directs her to a group of traveling Christians so that she may return home. Zayas shows the reader that Moors are not unlike any other group: there are good and bad who are not representative of all the members.

The other two Moorish characters who have important roles in Zayas's works are Zelima and Zaída, both characters in "La esclava de su amante." Zelima narrates and reveals that she is not Moorish, nor is Zelima really her name, rather she is the Christian Isabel Faxardo. She disguises herself as a Moor, and for the most part expects to be treated as one; her Moorish persona plays a crucial role in the development of the *desengaño*.

She disguises herself as Zelima in order to follow Don Manuel to sea. He had abandoned her after giving his promise of marriage and never fulfilling it, instead beginning a relationship with the already-married Doña Alejandra. Zelima finds hire on the same boat as Manuel and Alejandra, but soon they are captured, and made the slaves of their captor's daughter, Zaída. Zaída befriends Zelima, and she and her father treat

Zelima and her company, though still slaves, more as Xacimín treated Estela than did Amete:

> Queríame Zaida tiernísimamente, ó por merecerlo yo con mi agrado, ó por parecerle podria ser parte de mi dueño para que la quisiese; en fin yo hacia, y deshacia en su casa como propia mia, y por mi respeto trataban á don Manuel, á Luis, y á Leonisa muy bien, dejándolos andar libres por la ciudad, habiéndoles dado permiso. (207*)*

They are still slaves; however, they are allowed to pay their way out of slavery. At the same time, their title as slaves might as well be in name only, for their lives are relatively free, and they are all treated well, living perhaps better than many free people.

In "La inocencia castigada," the Moorish necromancer Agareno plays a relatively minor, though important, role. More of an enabler than an active participant in the *desengaño,* Agareno creates a charm for Don Diego. Diego desires Doña Inés, and according to Agareno, all he needs to do in order for her to come willingly, yet helplessly, to him, is to light the candle on the top of the wooden figure he has made. There is a fine, yet important, difference between Agareno, obviously a less-than-respectable person, and Amete. Amete commits his acts against Estela and Claudia himself, whereas Agareno only enables Diego to rape Doña Inés. That the necromancer is a Moor is similar to an author stating that a given sword is from Toledo: it signals to the reader that he is not simply any necromancer, but a specific type with special qualities. A sword from Toledo would be perfectly made, strong, and swift in its kill. The magic from a Moor would be so considered as well: powerful, precise, and effective.

It seems less than coincidental that Zayas would include such a diverse cast of Moors. This inclusion is almost identical in function to that of the black characters, that is, they show the reader that, even though they are Moors, they can equally be good- or bad-natured as can whites Christians and blacks.

The narrator Manuel further demonstrates the idea that Moors and Spaniards are both equally capable of the same things when in "Esclava de su amante" he says in order to describe Zelima, that "para no creer que es una hermosura que yo conozco en mi patria; mas puede ser naturaleza hiciese esta mora en la misma estampa" (204). While he is talking about the external beauty of Zelima and comparing it to her undisguised self to whom he had promised marriage, Zayas uses this to draw a connection to the less superficial, demonstrating that a Moor is similar to a Spaniard in many aspects, and has the potential to practice good or bad, to be beautiful or ugly, and to love or hate.

Zayas's Treatment of Homosexuality

Zayas's works feature characters marginalized by qualities other than race or ethnicity. Only one of Zayas's narrators pauses to interrupt his or her narration, and then only once, out of noticeable disconcertment. The point of the *Desengaños* especially is to reveal the truth but in "Mal presagio casar lejos," the narrator, Doña Luisa, oddly stops short of saying what the main character, Doña Blanca, finds when she tries to walk in on her husband at night:

> […] y halló… ¿Qué hallaria?

> Quisiera, hermosas damas y discretos caballeros, ser tan entendida, que sin darme á entender me entendiérades, por ser cosa tan enorme y fea lo que halló. (333)

At other times narrators may pause to lament what happens, or to otherwise make commentary relating to the characters, or to say that what they are about to say is novel either in form or content, but in this case, Doña Luisa finds no pleasure in describing with any more detail than necessary. Given the graphic detail that many narrators employ in describing the assault, rape, and death of characters, especially those of women, through Zayas's work, this should strike the reader as a most interesting interruption.

What follows is the only explicit graphic reference in her works to sexual relations between two people of the same sex. Within the *desengaño*, it certainly fulfills the role of an interesting plot twist, and explains why the servant, Arnesto, seems to have such a high status in the household. If this were the only reference to homosexuality in her stories, one could assume it is just that: an interesting narrative tool. However, there are many other instances of perceived homosexuality, that is, where while there is not an actual homosexual relation—platonic or sexual—, there is a strong implication of it.

Such references are found in both the *Novelas* and *Engaños*. These occur between Don "Fernando" and Don Carlos in "El juez de su causa," Don Fadrique and the husband of Doña Ana in "El prevenido, engañado," Doña "Estefanía" and Doña Estela in "Amor sólo por vencer," and of course Arnesto and the Flemish prince in "Mal presagio casar lejos." Two of these involved a sexual relationship, while the others are of a friendship/romance.

The aforementioned scene that Doña Blanca found was not humorous at all. However, in "El prevenido, engañado," a similar setup is used to great humorous effect. Don Fadrique, suffering his third mishap in the pursuit of a woman, courts Doña Ana and her sister Doña Violante with his cousin Don Juan. So that she can run off with Don Juan, Doña Ana has Don Fadrique take her place in the bed.

The night that follows is quite comical:

> Don Fadrique, que así como se vió acostado al lado de un hombre, cuyo honor estaba ofendiendo él […]; considerando lo que podia suceder, estaba tan temeroso y desvelado […]: y mas cuando suspirando entre sueños el ofendido marido dio vuelta hácia donde creyó que estaba su esposa, y echándole un brazo al cuello, dió muestras de querer llegarse á ella: […] mas Don Fadrique, que se vió en tanto peligro, tomó muy paso el brazo del dormido, y quitándole de sí, se retiró á la esquina de la cama, no culpando á otro que á sí. (85-86)

The reader comes to realize that the back-and-forth nature of "uno procurando llegarse, y apartarse el otro" does not simply resemble a game: it is one. Instead of the husband of Doña Ana, it was Doña Violante who had spent the night trying to embrace him. Don Fadrique is so annoyed that he doesn't speak to them, instead he was "viendolas a ellas celebrar con risa el suceso" (86)

The main difference between these two scenes is, of course, that Don Fadrique did not actually have sex with Doña Ana's husband nor was he ever in bed with another man. However, the reader does not know this when first presented with Don Fadrique in bed

with someone he believes to be Doña Ana's husband. Don Alonso, the narrator, transitions into this scene with the great detail that we come to expect from Zayas's writing. The transition clearly indicates what is to come. Thus, we have an apparent contradiction with the passage in "Mal presagio casar lejos," since Doña Luisa says that "es bajeza, no sólo decirlo [homosexual activity], mas pensarlo" (333). While the difference in transitions could be attributed to a difference in the moral views of Don Alonso and Doña Luisa, or even a change in Zayas's attitude between the first and second book, it is most likely that Luisa desires to add suspense and shock to her story, whereas a slow buildup better serves Don Alonso's story.

Sex, though, is not the only aspect of homosexuality that one can find in Zayas's work. There are two clear cases of homosexual friendships that develop and grow close enough to be considered relationships.

When Doña Estela disguises herself as a man and joins the army after being abandoned by Don Carlos in "El juez de su causa," she takes the name Don Fernando and is able to perform her military duties better than her male counterparts. What initially seemed to be a simple disguise, becomes more complicated when Don Carlos joins the army as well and is made her/his secretary. He is constantly reminded of his Estela when he sees Don Fernando, though "no llegó su imaginación á pensar que fuese ella" (168). The two find themselves extremely close friends, so close, in fact, that he found himself perhaps in love with Don Fernando:

> De esta suerte pasaron algunos meses, acudiendo Don Carlos á servir á su dama, no sólo en el oficio de secretario, sino en la cámara, y mesa, donde

> en todas ocasiones recibía de ella muchas y muy grandes mercedes, tratando siempre de Estela, tanto que algunas veces llegó á pensar que el Duque [Estela in disguise] la amaba. (166-7)

Don Fernando tries his best to keep Don Carlos thinking about Doña Estela, and drops hints about his true self. Physiologically this is a heterosexual relationship, but neither Don Carlos nor anyone around him, save Don Fernando, of course, knows it. The relationship, though, never reaches a sexual state, remaining entirely as a close male friendship.

This type of male-male close relationship in the Golden Age was not considered taboo: "Close friendship, non-sexual partnership, or love between men was not defined as problematic or cause for concern [….] Indeed, the view that friendship between men was nobler and more rewarding than male-female friendship was widely, though not universally held" (Eisenberg 13). Thus, Doña Estela is able to have a friendship which, as a woman, she might not have been able to have had, for during her courtship, out of modesty, she had to maintain a certain distance.

The importance of these non-sexual relations becomes more evident when seen in "Amor sólo por vencer." Don Esteban, disguises himself as Doña Estefanía in order to get closer to the woman of his dreams, Laurela. By doing so, he finds he is able to speak freely, and have his open desires found in jest. One night after singing a song, it is revealed just how successful his seduction-in-disguise is working: "Cierto, Estefanía, que si fueras, como eres mujer, hombre, que dischosa se pudiera llamar, la que tú amaras" (305). While she does not reveal that she is in love, given her disinterest in the

suitor that her father has chosen for her, it is obvious to whom she refers by "la." Estafanía responds with a long explanation of how souls are neither male nor female, and that "el verdadero amor en el alma está, y no en el cuerpo". Interestingly, this mirrors almost exactly Zayas's foreword to the *Novelas*:

> Porque si esta materia de que nos componemos los hombres y las mujeres, ya sea una trabazón de fuego y barro, o ya una masa de espíritus y terrones, no tiene más nobleza en ellos que en nosotras, si una misma la sangre; los sentidos, las potencias, y los órganos por donde se obran sus efectos, son unos mismos; la misma alma que ellos, porque las almas ni son hombres ni mujeres. (*Novelas* 159)

Sexual relationships do not involve the souls, rather, the body, and thus would not have been an acceptable action. These friendships however are based on the souls and the mind of the characters, not on their bodies. Hence Zayas demonstrates the equality of men and women curiously through the representation of Neo-Platonic love, an "eliminación de la faceta sexual del amor y unión espiritual de almas gemelas que, partiendo de la belleza material, ascienden progresivamente hasta Dios, considerado como belleza absoluta" (González Boixo 50)

In addition, Doña Estefanía makes a remark that is even more applicable to Don Carlos and Doña Estela. According to her, love without benefits (*amor sin provecho*) "es mas el verdadero amor, pues amor sin premio es mayor fineza" (305). This is exactly the love that Don Carlos has for Doña Estela and closely mirrors Boixo's description of Neo-Platonic love. She is able to observe this under her guise as Don Fernando, and although

she helps him to maintain his love for her, it is a love he has without gratification, that is, without sex. Near the end of the story Don Carlos confesses that "Digo que adoré á Estela [….] Digo que la adoro" (169). The last minute doubts aside, Doña Estela knows that Don Carlos loves her, and has loved her, and has done so for years without any benefit. In fact, as Don Carlos points out, he has loved her to his own detriment: "Por amarla muero" (169).

There is one thing that all of these relationships have in common: within each couple, one is subservient to the other. Don Carlos, Doña Estefanía, Don Fadrique, and Arnesto are respectively secretary, servant, "wife," and page to their partners. Such power relations are in keeping with traditional representations of homosexuality in Spain, as described by Eisenberg, as being relatively man-boy in nature, that is, one is an authority figure towards the other. Thus Zayas does not break from traditional molds in place at the time of her writing.

Zayas thus presents the problems of heterosexual relationships through the Neo-Platonic tradition, wherein a physical relationship is seen as sinful, yet the Platonic is pure: a couple whose relation is founded in sex and the physical/material is not desirable, but one whose is based on a Platonic love is far more so. Looking at heterosexual relationships within Zayas's works, this same pattern is seen throughout. In "El Castigo de la misera," Don Marco's relationship is based on wealth and sex, but is found to be completely false. In contrast, Doña Blanca, staying pure to her original lover (and dying and coming back to life to break her first sexless marriage), lives happily with her husband in a relationship that was based on a more pure love. Not all relationships can

be seen in this cause-effect manner, but it is obvious when a love is considered good or bad.

Hence, the inclusion of homosexuality in the *Novelas* and *Desengaños* is purposeful. By mapping the negative physical and positive Platonic expressions of homosexuality onto heterosexuality, which is positively viewed whether physical or Platonic, she is able to assert two points at once: first, that it is better for a relationship to be based on one's own person, that is, personality, mind, and soul, than for it to be based on wealth or physical appearance; second, that men's and women's souls are the same.

Disguises and Their Function

Many of the references to homosexuality rely upon what is perhaps the narrative resource most commonly used by Zayas: the disguise. Six of the *novelas* and four of the *desengaños* employ the disguise as a major element of their narration. There is no single disguise used, though, as they are all quite varied and often involve, either before or after disguising, a marginalized quality: from pages and slaves, and shepherds and soldiers, to prostitutes and best friends. Those who take up the disguises are also from varied social statuses. Some are nobles, others peasants, while still others prostitutes. These two facts, that anyone may find themselves in a position to disguise themselves and that their disguise may be of very different group, in and of themselves play equalizing roles. Anyone can find him- or herself in situations where a disguise becomes beneficial for him or her.

There are two primary uses for the disguise in Zayas's literature, though both in essence have the same intermediate, if not final, goal. The first is a defensive disguise,

generally used to protect someone from danger or to hide shame. The other, more common use, is an offensive disguise, used for illicit purposes, often as part of a revenge. Only women don the defensive disguises. Whether this is by design is not entirely clear, as both women and men take on offensive disguises.

In the first *novela*, "Aventurarse perdiendo," Jacinta disguises herself as a shepherd after having been robbed in pursuit of Celio with whom she has fallen in love. The exact purpose of this particular disguise is not clear. Presumably a robber would be less inclined to attack a shepherd than a woman. As the shepherd though, she catches the attention of Fabio by her beautiful singing. Perhaps her disguise was more one that better relates to her own abilities. In earlier pastoral works, such as Cervantes's *La Galatea,* often the shepherds are the best at creating verse.[19]

In "El juez de su causa," Estela cuts her hair and disguises herself as a soldier after leaving Fez. After Amete, the Moor who had kidnapped her, abused her and tried to rape her and other women, she most likely felt it safer to be dressed as a man. She joins the army though, and finds herself forced to remain in the disguise for even longer.

As with Jacinta, the function of her disguise is to protect her during her travels. A woman walking around Monserrat would be an easy target for a gypsy robber, and, without anyone to guard her, looking like a local protects her. As well, Estela, being a woman in a land where perhaps not all men are as kind to women as Xacimín had been to her, pretending to be a man offered her protection as a false show of power or status.

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[19] For an example in *La Galatea*, in refering to the poetry of two shepherds, Tirsi and Damón, Teolinda tells Florisa to listen for "la excelencia de su poesía, la cual es de manera que al uno ya le ha dado renombre de «divino» y al otro de «más que humano»" (ff. 70v-70r).

Thus the two don their defensive disguises in order to protect themselves in an environment that could be hostile to a female alone and without other defense. At its most basic, it allows these women access to a world that otherwise would be unsafe or unaccessible to them.

The remaining disguises are all offensive in nature. Three of the women and one of the men in such disguises pose as servants in order to get close to someone so that they can act out a nefarious desire. For example, in "La burlada Aminta y venganza del honor," Aminta poses as a male and obtains hire as a servant to the couple who had deceived her earlier in the *novela*. As with the defensive disguises, posing as a male and working as a servant has given Aminta full access to Jacinto and Flora's room. The narrator, Matilde, is quite explicit in convincing the reader that in order to carry out the job at hand, Aminta needed to be in her disguise. The purpose of the disguise was not to get her revenge, rather to enable her to gain a position of close access to Jacinto and Flora so that she could take revenge. Her job, requiring nightly visits to Jacinto's room, draws her no suspicion when she enters to draw her dagger, killing Jacinto and, shortly thereafter, Flora.

Clara, in "El desengaño andando, y premio de la virtud," also finds herself desiring revenge for being tricked into an unrequited romance. She weds Don Fernando, who had married her primarily for her wealth, although she was left practically penniless by her father. Fernando leaves with Lucrecia for reasons unknown to Clara, and so Clara, like Aminta, follows them. She employs herself in their house in order to find out the reasons for Fernando's departure. After a year, she finds out the cause:

> un gallo con una cadena asida de una argolla que tenia á la garganta, y en otra que estaba asida al arca, y asimismo preso, y á los piés tenia unos grillos, y luego tenia puestos unos anteojos, al modo de los de caballo, que le tenia privada la vista. (121-2)

She frees the rooster and having done so frees her husband. Since Lucrecia keeps the ark in her house, Clara would never have discovered the cause of her husband's infidelity without her disguise which allowed her to earn the trust of her mistress.

"El juez de su causa" also has an offensive disguise, donned by Claudia. She desires Don Carlos, but he ignores her advances in favor of pursuing Estela. Exactly as did Clara and Aminta, she disguises herself and hires herself out as a servant, going under the name Claudio, taking a position in Carlos's household. There, she learns that Carlos and Estela plan to elope because Estela's other suitor, an Italian count, in whom she has no interest, has been accepted by her parents. Amete, a Moorish sorcerer, by chance meets Claudia, and the two realize they have an opportunity for mutual gain: Amete desires Estela, and, without Estela, Claudia would be in a better position herself to get Carlos. Because of her disguise, she is able to overhear the details of Carlos and Estela's marriage, which she and Amete use to plan the kidnapping. Without the disguise, she would have been excluded from the world of Carlos and Estela, and the two would have been married without her even knowing.

In "El imposible vencido," Don Beltrán is in love with Doña Blanca, and, although many considered them a perfect couple, Blanca's love for Don Rodrigo causes her to completely forget about Beltrán. Rodrigo, however, in response to Blanca's

advances, merely humors her. Beltrán learns that Blanca is enamored with Rodrigo but that he is not interested in Blanca. He meets with Rodrigo and the two concoct a scheme to win Blanca for Beltrán. After trading verses with the man she thinks is Don Rodrigo, Blanca and Beltrán exchange vows in front of a friend, which, according to Flemish tradition, makes their marriage binding, and now thinking that she is with Rodrigo for life, she submits to Beltrán's sexual desires: "creyendo que el que entraba era Don Rodrigo, le dexó Doña Blanca gozar cuanto quiso, y había conquistado con tanto perseverancia, entreteniendo en esto alguna parte de la noche, que como donde estaban no había luz" (150). In this story, the disguise clearly enables him access to something that Beltrán as himself would not have.

Gender-switching disguises are the most common in Zayas's literature, but that does not mean that their only purpose is to highlight gender issues. The disguises generally allow a character to pass into areas in which their normal selves would not be allowed. For example, in "La más infame venganza," Don Juan disguises himself as a woman, in what would perhaps be a more humorous disguise were it not for the end result, in order to gain access to the chambers of Doña Camila. Camila had married Don Carlos, who had already promised himself to Doña Octavia, Juan's sister. To avenge his sister's being left without her lover, Juan rapes and kills Camila and intends to kill Carlos as well, though he never follows through. Camila would not allow another man into her bedroom, but taking Juan to be a Juana, she did not feel threatened.

Similarly, in "Amar sólo por vencer," Don Esteban, knowing he lacks the wealth and the status to properly court a girl like Laurela, decides his best chance would be to

gain her friendship first. As a result, he finds employment as a servant in her house, calling himself Doña Estefanía, and consequently dresses in women's clothes. His disguise gives him access to all of her household, and even allows him to openly court Laurela, although most in the household find his comments to be in jest. Like Claudia in "El juez de su causa," he waits to make his move until he learns that Laurela is to be wed: it is his last chance to convince her to marry him without dishonoring her by courting her after wedlock. Though his disguise is effective, he ultimately is not successful in courting her.

The only person in an offensive disguise for the benefit of someone else is the prostitute hired in "La inocencia castigada" to trick Don Diego into thinking he has slept with Doña Inés. Diego had hired a neighbor to help him seduce Doña Inés, but, realizing the impossibility of that, the neighbor instead hires the prostitute and dresses her up with a borrowed dress of Inés. In this instance, the prostitute only acts for the sake of her employer, but the intent of the disguise, that is, the means to do her job, is the same as other disguises: it gains her access to Don Diego, thus allowing her to trick him into thinking she is the woman with whom he is in love.

In analyzing all of the disguises, both defensive and offensive, the result is a clear pattern. Each character who takes on a disguise enters a particular state of mind, either for fear of danger or for revenge. Because of this state of mind, he or she conceals him- or herself in a disguise to enable him or her to be in a place to which he or she would normally not have access. None of the cases are used to passively hide a character in the

place where he or she normally reside; rather. they enable an active participation on the part of the character donning the disguise.

The active participation of characters is central to the disguises' role in Zayas's literature. What better way to show that men and women, or slaves and freemen, are equal in mind? When Estela disguises herself as a man and enters into the army, she proves that a woman's capacity, given proper maturation, is the same as that of a man. She fit the male gender role so well that the Emperor, having known Estela personally, could not believe it: "Despachóse luego un correo al Emperador, […] dándole cuenta del caso, el cual más admirado que todos los demás, como quien la había visto hacer valerosas hazañas, no acababa de creer que fuese así" (170). When Esteban lives as Estefanía, he demonstrates the softer side of men, qualities generally attributed to the women. The reader comes to realize that, were it not for the social constructs in place, any given person has the capacity to reach nearly any socio-economic status.

All the qualities of the disguise are found at their maximum in Doña Isabel, the narrator of and protagonist in the first *desengaño*, "La esclava de su amante." Don Manuel rapes her, and later promises her marriage to keep her quiet, but he leaves her for another woman. Later he leaves the both of them and sets sails on the open seas. Isabel learns there is want of a slave on the same ship as Don Manuel. As a result, she sees the opportunity to regain Don Manuel, transforms herself into a Moorish slave named Zelima, and, with the help of a former servant, ends up being sold to work on the ship. Her disguise initially appears to be an offensive one, as her intent, though not quite malicious, is to find Don Manuel and convince him to return to Spain with her as her

husband. Unfortunately, the ship that she and Don Manuel are on is captured. Isabel's disguise is convincing to her captors, and she is able to negotiate extra freedoms for her and the others. Isabel, Manuel, and Zaída, the captor's daughter, all leave for Spain, and after arriving Isabel's former servant kills Manuel. Zaída subsequently kills herself in despair. Needing to leave the entire situation, Isabel's disguise takes on a more defensive role, as she is once again sold, this time to Lisis, for whom the stories are being told. The conclusion of her narrative is, incidentally, her coming to tell her story. Stacey L. Parker Aronson notes that "[s]he makes this transformation in an effort not to protect herself from sexual contact but to win Manuel's affection and persuade him to marry her" (529). While its original purpose is to regain Don Manuel, Isabela's disguise ultimately serves defensively to remove her from the murderous situation in Zaragoza. At the same time, it shows Zayas's ability to use disguises as a method of showing the equality of different groups of people. Isabel acts believably as a slave, while her slave self, Zelima, impresses her listeners during the soirée before they come to realize she is a Spaniard like them.

Zayas's character's disguises serve as a means to an end. Aronson gives an accurate description of this means (which she describes as an "otherness") particular to Zelima, but applicable to all: "she is able to escape societal boundaries under the guise of a slave and is permitted a freedom of movement impossible for a Spanish noblewoman of her time" (530). By having characters who disguise themselves in order to escape their societal boundaries, Zayas equalizes the backgrounds that her characters have: each character has the potential to cross social borders, the only thing preventing him or her is

an external social construct, and more often than not, that construct revolves around his or her outward appearance.

Classism

As much as María de Zayas would have it different, often times marriages and romances were not based on actual love; rather, they were based on the parties' wealth or status. It is important to note that within her works, this is not recognized as a fault of men exclusively, rather it is portrayed as a problem in the mindsets of men and women alike. There are four primary examples of marriages for status, two each from either collection. Both the *Novelas* and the *Desengaños* have one example each of parents imposing their classist views, and one example of the lover(s)'s making decisions based on wealth or status.

The influence of parents in their children's marriage is very clearly seen, as potential suitors at times focus more on enamoring the parents than the child him- or herself. In "El juez de su causa," Estela is courted by Don Carlos, "mozo noble, rico, y de las prendas que pudiera Estela elegir un noble marido" (158). He courts her, and although unbeknownst to him, is successful in finding her favor. Unfortunately for him, though her parents deem him an acceptable suitor, an Italian falls in love with her and also proposes:

> vino á Valencia un Conde Italiano, mozo, y galán: […] fué pedirla á sus padres, juntándose este mismo día con la suya la misma peticion por parte de Don Cárlos, que acosado de los amorosos deseos de su dama, y quizá de los zelos que le daba el conde [….] Oyeron sus padres los unos y los

> otros terceros; y viendo que aunque don Cárlos era digno de ser dueño de Estela, codicios de verla Condesa, despreciando la pretensión de don Cárlos, se la prometieron al conde; (159-60)

Thus, Estela's parents decide the marriage based entirely on future title: Don Carlos was worthy, and more importantly, had a prior relationship with Estela, which they promptly ignored because he did not hold a higher rank than the count.[20] There are two things that the reader learns of this poor choice in suitors. First, Don Carlos and Estela are meant to be together. Second, had her parents accepted Don Carlos's offer, quite possibly Estela would never have been kidnapped; her parents' classism give Claudia the opportunity to do away with Estela. Zayas makes it obvious that the two lovers are far better matchmakers than their parents.

The more potent example of parental classism comes from Don Alsono's father, Don Pedro, in "El traidor contra su sangre." His father wants to save money by placing his daughter, Mencía, in a convent; "la negaba á todos cuantos le trataban de merecerla dueño" because of his avarice (340). Don Enrique asks for her hand without requesting a dowry, and even though Mencía wants to marry Enrique, "don Pedro ignoraba, que a la cuenta era haber sido sus abuelos Labradores" (340). Don Alonso kills Mencía with a very classist rational after she elopes with Enrique against his wishes: "Yo le quité la vida, porque no mezclara mi noble sangre con la de un villano" (348). However, not

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[20] Ironically, by the end of the *novela*, Estela has attained an even higher rank than the Count, although perhaps if left to her parents once again, neither the Count nor don Carlos would be suitable choices as husbands, given their vastly lower titles.

even her murder by her brother and father separates her from Don Enrique, testament to the trueness of their romance.

Alonso himself falls subject to the unsuitable-lover trap with his father. His marriage to Doña Ana is also deemed ill-suited because her mother and grandfather were poor: "no tenían que darla, ni aun para traerla, sino con un moderado aseo" (350). Don Pedro is enraged at the idea, disowns his son, and makes a damning statement upon hearing of his son's death,: "Más quiero tener un hijo degollado, que mal casado" (356).

The *novela* that perhaps most plays with the idea of wealth and marriages for status is "La más infame venganza." Octavia and Juan are both born wealthy, but thanks to the improprieties of their father, find themseles poor. Don Carlos, wealthy, seduces Octavia but leaves her wondering when the wedding will be, claiming that he has to break away from a betrothal to a rich woman. Juan takes after his father, and wastes his money on gambling making them even poorer, while locking Octavia at home. Juan leaves and Carlos begins using Octavia again until the rich Camilia arrives. He marries Camilia and tells Octavia that she should become a nun.

In all these instances, the parents, in pursuit of a well-married son or daughter, refused perfectly acceptable suitors. The marriage proposals rejected by the parents are seen not only as "acceptable" to the reader, but are superior to those that the parents do arrange. This is a rather subversive narrative technique. If the reader is not yet married, he or she would perhaps feel the desire to continue a romance for love's sake, rather than heed the advice of his or her parents. Conversely, if the reader is a parent, he or she

might feel inclined to marry his or her children based on qualities outside of status or wealth.

If, though, the reader feels no influence from his or her parents, he or she is still given quite a firm warning by Zayas in Don Álvaro's *novela,* "El castigo de la miseria." Don Marcos is able to accumulate some wealth because of his very meager lifestyle. Courted by a Doña Isidora, he desires her wealth (and body), while she aspires to his fortune. Doña Isidora's anagnorisis comes the morning after their marriage is consummated, when Marcela, the maid, has stolen Don Marco's wealth, leaving both with nothing. From Don Marco the reader understands the danger of marrying for wealth and beauty alone.

In "El jardín engañoso," Carlos tricks Constanza into thinking he is wealthy, and on his false deathbed he offers her all that he has for marriage. However, having courted her and convinced the family of his worth outside of status, the revelation of his poverty does little to change her attraction for him. With Doña Isidora, though, Don Marco was left with nothing but an old, impoverished hag for whom he has no romantic interest and who has none in him as seen in her letter to him: "vuelva á juntar otros seis mil ducados, y luego me avisa" (68).

The stable marriage, hence, comes without reservations of class, wealth, or status. Refusing marriages because they do not produce the best socioeconomic end can mean that one will not marry one's true love. However, accepting marriages for the same reason could lead one down a deceptive path with no positive outcome. So, ultimately,

Zayas once again turns the focus from external or superficial qualities and calls on the reader to search for inner beauty and pure love.

In Zayas's foreword, she states that "quien tiene honra, da lo que tiene, cada uno hace como es" (*Novelas* 159) . While the scope of this statement is much grander, it is particularly applicable to these class-based romances. Don Carlos, in his honorable courting, gives Estela respect (even when he believes her dead) that the Italian count could not. Carlos offers Constanza what meager money he can, but more importantly, his love, and later, to prevent her dishonor, even offers his life. In turn, they are rewarded with a reciprocal love and presented as an exemplary relationship. Doña Isidora and Don Marcos do give what they do *not* have, while Don Pedro refuses to give what he does have and consequently is punished within the story. Doña Isidora and Don Marcos are left with nothing when they desired everything, and Don Pedro's money goes to the woman over whom he disowned his son.

Character Redemption

In many of Zayas's stories, the reader is left having to consider which characters are intended to portray good role models, and which are not. Most of the time, there is little question about who portrays which, although even the narrators at times cannot fully agree. However, in a select few cases, Zayas makes it absolutely clear which characters are pure and innocent. She does this by adopting religious themes or ideas, which in most cases also involve direct intervention in the action of the story by God. This literal *deus ex machina* could not make things clearer for the reader: if God says someone is innocent, and so should be given new life, who is the reader to question Him?

The one humorous example of this actually involves the Devil, instead of God. In "El jardín engañoso," Constanza tells Don Jorge the only way that she will leave Don Carlos, her husband, for him is if he can grow a garden overnight outside of her house. Obviously an impossible task by mortal men, Don Jorge turns to a demon for assistance, receiving the standard deal, "mándame el alma […] podrás cumplir a tu Dama su imposible deseo" (178). The moral though is not in this ill-fated decision; rather, it is seen during collection time. Constanza asks her husband to kill her to save her honor, but he instead wishes to kill himself to save her life and her honor. Don Jorge gives up his claim to Constanza to save Don Carlos's life. The demon reappears to one up the others, "no he de hacer menos yo que ellos; y así para que el mundo se admire de que en mí pudo haber virtud, […] yo te suelto la obligación" (180).

If a demon can, at times, have redeeming qualities, can any person be entirely evil? Redemption for anyone is possible, no matter their sin. This exerts an equalizing force upon all of Zayas's characters. Each character has the equal capacity to choose a virtuous or a sinful life as God has given him or her free will, and as well, each can be forgiven; thus all, in God's eyes, are equally able to choose right from wrong.

This concept of redemption can be seen in "El verdugo de su esposo," in which Don Juan deflowers Angeliana without fulfilling his vow to marry her, and then later attempts to seduce Doña Rosaleta, the wife of his friend, Don Pedro. Rosaleta informs Pedro of Juan's intents, and Pedro in turn invites Juan to his estate, Don Juan realizes his sin when he hears the Ave María while trying to escape from being killed in vengeance:

> al salir de la Ciudad tocaron al Ave María, que oyéndolo Don Juan, aunque divertido de sus amorosos cuidados, pudo más la devoción: y parando adonde oyó la campana, se puso a rezar, pidiendo a la Virgen María nuestra Purísima Señora, que no mirando la ofensa que iba a hacerle, le librase de peligro y le alcanzase perdón de su precioso Hijo. (263)

Thanks to the intercession of the Mother of God, Don Juan is obviously pardoned and then protected by Mary. As penance he asks Don Pedro and Doña Rosaleta forgiveness and devotes his life to God.

Zayas, in showing the reader these scenes of forgiveness, one from Hell and one from Heaven, shows the reader not just that anyone can be forgiven, but more importantly, that anyone can forgive. A man, a woman, a sinner, a saint, everyone's soul is made of the same substance.

Chapter 5: The Lessons for the Reader

Fray Pio states in his "Aprobación" that the *Desengaños* are "un espejo de lo que más necesita el hombre para la buena dirección de sus acciones" (*Desengaños* 5). Zayas intends not simply to show that people—men and women, blacks, whites and moors, rich and poor—are the same, but also to offer the reader, and presumably all these groups,[21] instructions on how to act. Because she demonstrates the spiritual equality of persons regardless of background, these instructions serve not only to inform people as men or women, but all people regardless of societal classification. In general, Zayas prefers the use of poetic justice so as to be subtler but more effective in her presentation of views.

The Catholic Zayas

Zayas uses religion, specifically the Catholic faith, to demonstrate pious acts of her characters, and in turn, she offers a model to be followed by her readers. Lena E. V. Sylvania observes that "[t]he continual introduction of Catholic principles and religious fervor is characteristic of the work of this author [Zayas]" (30). In many cases, an act of reverence, be it a prayer or lament to God, or an emulation of Christ's life, places a

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[21] Admittedly, when Fray Pío says "el hombre," he could be referring to men only or to people in general, the former of which could result in substantially different interpretations of Zayas's intention—at least within the mind of this author. However, in this section it will be made clear that Zayas does indeed intend them to be universal instructions for both genders.

character in God's graces, and hence he or she is protected or otherwise given a better life.

Catholic theology places a great deal of emphasis on the recognition of one's faults and of subsequent asking for forgiveness. Several characters recognize the sins that they have committed, though often toward the end of the stories after everyone who is going to die or be otherwise sinned against has died. In "El verdugo de su esposa," Don Juan comes to a realization of his sins, and asks the Virgin Mary for forgiveness. Her intercession demonstrates that anyone can be forgiven. But Juan does not ask for help and then continue with his previous life. Instead, he reforms, devoting his life to God, for which God grants him a peaceful long life: "Buscó don Pedro a don Juan ya profeso para matarle, mas no lo permitió Dios, que la que le había guardado una vez, le guardó siempre, porque con licencia de sus mayores pasó a más estrecha vida, donde acabó en paz" (269). Zayas goes beyond merely demonstrating the equality of characters and is instead now passing judgement on Juan. As author, she rewards him for his new-found virtue by giving him a long and peaceful life, even in light of Pedro's trying to find him to kill him.

Zayas also alludes to Biblical narratives to show the reader what she believes is the right course of action. In "La inocencia castigada," Doña Inés appears to experience a passion, death, and resurrection mirroring that of Jesus. After a torturous life, she is confined to a tiny room, and, although physically alive, for all intents and purposes she is dead. Her six years imprisoned in the chimney are comparable to Christ's three days descended to the dead: during such time Christ's physical manifestation was in a cave not

unlike the space in which she was entombed. Once her burial site is uncovered by a female neighbor—her Mary Magdalene—news of her survival is spread quickly, although she tries to minimize its initial impact. Inés becomes, though, like the Risen Christ: more glorious than before, but not quite fully human as before. Jesus's human nature was gone, but his divine nature remained. Inés was still blind, and hence has lost some of her human, physical nature, but had become even more beautiful than before: "y después, que es [Doña Inés] de las más hermosas mujeres que hay en el Reino de Andalucía porque aunque está ciega como tiene los ojos claros y hermosos, como ella los tenía, no se le echa de ver que no tiene vista" (252). The eyes are not just for physical sight, rather they serve as a symbol of an intellectual vision: she is wiser to the way of the world.

The Queen Beatriz, in "La perseguida triunfante," finds herself similarly persecuted, after her husband's brother falls in love with her and tells the King that she had attempted to seduce him. The King has her eyes burned out, and she is left for dead in a forest. Like Don Juan, Beatriz implores God and the Virgin Mary to have mercy upon her and offers her suffering to them. A woman appears to restore her eyes and give her food to sustain her on her journey back home. Her continued faith in light of persecution keeps her safe, Mary continues to protect her against the sorcerer doctor. Both the story and the title allude to the Beatitudes, the eighth of which states that "[b]lessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5.10). The reader knows that Beatriz will be in Heaven because she has been persecuted not for any transgressive action of her own, but because

she refused to submit to her husband's brother. Hence it is clear in this story how Zayas intends for the reader to deduce the proper behavior from that of her characters by paralleling them with scripture with which her readers would be familiar.

Zayas uses another style of writing in the heavenly salvation of a character in "El traidor contra su sangre." Mencía marries Don Enrique, and when Don Alonso, Mencía's brother, finds out about it, he and his father, Don Pedro, decide to kill the both of them. Alonso stabs Mencía to death, leaving her bloody. She appears (as an apparition) to Enrique right before he too is stabbed and nearly killed. Enrique promises to devote his life to God if his life is saved. He becomes a friar and spends a year building a chapel in which Mencía shall be entombed. If that were all, the reader might judge Mencía an honorable person worthy of the labors Enrique has put in to build the chapel. But Zayas takes a further step by not simply making Mencía an innocent victim, but a saint: "que con haber pasado un año, […] estaban las heridas corriendo sangre como el mismo día que la mataron, y ella tan hermosa, que parecía no haber tenido jurisdicción la muerte en su hermosura" (348-9). Zayas combines two images as a powerful commentary on the innocence and saintliness of Mencía. While no process is explicitly declared, Mencía demonstrates three miracles, substantial enough that the Catholic Church could have pronounced her a saint. The first miracle was her apparition to Enrique, her second one the continual bleeding, and lastly her incorrupt corpse. Zayas shows the reader the saintliness of Mencía without needing to make it explicit. We know that she is a model character to follow because God himself in the *desengaño* deemed her so. As well, Enrique is a model for male characters in several ways. He offers to marry without a

dowry, showing that material wealth is not extremely important to him. After she dies, he does not find another woman, but remains chaste as a monk, and of course, devotes his life to God.

Witchcraft and Sorcerery

Not all of Zayas's religious allusions are given as models for emulation. Zayas provides counterparts to show how not to approach life. All of the stories in the previous section have positive religious messages, either showing that the innocent will be saved, how God is willing to protect all (even sinners), or how to live a virtuous, godly life. At times providing contrast within these same stories, Zayas also includes numerous instances of witchcraft and demons. If her writing is considered to be an example for her readers on how to live, then the inclusion of witchcraft and Faustian pacts is an model of how not to live.

Examples of witchcraft, sorcery, and magic range from the trickery of Doña Inés's false conjuring in "El castigo de la miseria" to the very real presence of the Devil in "El jardín engañoso," where he builds a garden in exchange for Don Jorge's soul. In "La perseguida triunfante," the Devil also makes an appearance posing as a learned old man fighting a celestial battle on earth through Beatriz and Federico. There are only two true mortals with magical powers, Lucrecia in "El desengaño andando y el premio de la virtud," and the Agareno in "La inocencia castigada," both of whom rely upon trinkets to hold their power.

Lucrecia is an enchantress. Her friend Doña Juana is in love with Don Fernando, but he puts off any marriage, feigning his mother's disapproval. Lucrecia decides that

she wants Fernando for herself, and uses her powers to take him from Juana, occasionally at rather inopportune moments for him and Juana: "Lucrecia se valia de mas eficaces remedios, porque acontecia estar el pobre caballero en casa de doña Juana, y sacarle de ella, ya vestido, ya desnudo, como lo hallaba el engaño de sus hechizos" (111). Fernando marries Doña Clara, but after her father leaves her without money, he abuses her. Lucrecia, with a new opportunity to take Fernando for herself, returns to her enchantments, until Clara discovers her spell and breaks it. Lucrecia kills herself after cursing Fernando to a prolonged death.

There is a clear difference in the fate of Lucrecia and other characters who are faithful to God. Not only does the man she desires die, but she kills herself—a mortal sin which assures her a place in Hell. Because of her afterlife destination, the reader understands that her actions are reprehensible, rather than praiseworthy.

There is one other minor character in the story, a student of Alcalá, who, though minor, also uses magic. Juana goes to him at the suggestion of a friend when trying to determine out what the causes of Fernando's disattraction to her could be. He gives Juana magical rings to use, but after she uses them, she in turn gives them her maid who wears them before returning them to the student. The demons who inhabit the ring chastise and castigate the student: "le dejaron ya por muerto […] casi espirando […] el pobre no estaba para decir quién ni dónde lo habían de llevar" (112). As innocently intended as his magic may have been, it comes from demonic forces, and is not something that should be trifled with, and Zayas makes that clear by showing that even the very learned student could not completely control the evil source of his magic.

Two other characters in Zayas's works also form accords with demons. In "La perseguida triunfante," after King Ladislao has his wife exiled to a remote forest, he comes to feel he might have been wrong. Motivated by both lust and bloodlust, Federico, whose lie had resulted in her persecution, looks for the former queen but is unable to find her. A man known simply as *el doctor* comes to assist him in his search, on the condition that he reveal his assistance to no one. At this point the reader should have recognized with whom Federico is dealing. Not to be able to confess to anyone (not even a priest) means that the sin that is to follow will remain with him for the rest of his life unto his judgement; thus the small act of keeping quiet sends his soul to Satan, and the real goal of the man is apparent. In this way Zayas is able to accomplish two things. The reader recognizes, first, that Federico is dealing with the Devil himself, and, second, that hiding sins is always worse than confessing to them.[22]

Don Jorge deals with a similar fate in "El jardín engañoso," although he is spared the condemnation that Federico and and Lucrecia are assured. Doña Constanza, already married, gives Don Jorge one chance to take her away from Don Carlos, her husband: he must build a garden outside of her house overnight. Recognizing the mortal impossibility of this, he sells his soul to the Devil in exchange for help. Satan follows through and Constanza is faced with the reality that she must now break a vow, either to her husband

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[22] One of the most commonly cited pairings of stories in Zayas's work is that of "El verdugo de su esposa" and "La inocencia castigada." In the former, the wife is killed after telling her husband of his friend's attraction to her, and in the latter, the wife is killed for having kept quiet about the same thing. Critics point to its showing that wives in such a circumstance are in just as poor a position no matter whether they keep quiet or speak out. Given Zayas's religious borrowings, it would appear that the more proper action is to inform the husband of his friend's dishonor. Either way, the wife would die; she will go to heaven if she dies innocently, but will likely go to hell otherwise.

or to Jorge. Instead, she opts for suicide to save both her and her husband's honor. Carlos offers to kill himself to save her life and her honor. Jorge, realizing his mistake, releases Constanza from her promise, and he in turn is saved from eternal damnation when the Devil makes an uncharacteristic debt forgiveness. So through the Faustian pact, Zayas is able to show both sinful and pious actions that are clear to the reader. Jorge violates the ninth commandment's prohibition against coveting one's neighbor's wife (Deut. 5.21), and as a final consequence, finds himself owned by the Devil. However, he reforms, and for his conversion, is saved, as he is now free from the Satan.

Not all witchcraft in her stories is actual witchcraft, however. In "El castigo de la miseria," both the reader and Don Marcos are reminded of the nature of Marcela/Inés, when at first she suggests they use magic to conjure a sprit to prove her innocence, but then stages the entire event. It is certain reprehensible to claim God at one's side when He is not, but another thing entirely to claim that a demon that does not even exist will support one's story. So in essence, she commits two sins, persuading others to summon demons and of course falsifying the conjuring itself.

Previously mentioned in Chapter 4, Agareno functions more as an enabler of malicious activities, rather than one who commits them himself. As such, he is more of a tool for Don Diego and less of character proper in "La inocencia castigada." Don Diego seeks out Agareno for help in seducing Doña Inés, and is given a wooden figure of Inés with a candle on the top of its head. When Diego lights it, Inés comes to him and serves him as a love slave. The reader knows that Diego's lust for Inés is unworthy of emulation both because of the sorcery involved and what happens to Diego at the end of the story

after further mistreating Inés: execution. Diego, executed without confessors and with the stain of black arts on his soul, presumably goes to Hell.

Laura, in "La fuerza del amor," becomes desperate after her husband, Don Diego, begins to stray from her toward Nise, only two years into their marriage. Laura turns to an enchantress for help, who gives her various instructions for how to win back Don Diego. However, the reader knows early on what her true intent is: "la taimada hechicera … quería entretener la cura, para sangrar la bolsa de la afligida Dama, y encubrir su enredo" (104). Thus Laura is punished financially, in addition to the condemnation of her soul, although she does save it later by repenting and entering a convent.

By considering the end results of these acts of magic, the reader may draw two conclusions: if the witchcraft is real, then one should not consort with its cohorts, but even if it is a trickery, one should not be any less careful. It is with these assumptions that Zayas's warnings come through very clearly. However, while one's soul may not be on the line if the magic is not real, as seen in both Don Marcos in "El castigo de la miseria" and Laura in "La fuerza del amor," one's finances most certainly are.

While the use of magic is spiritually dangerous, one of the most damning things a character can do in Zayas's novels is lie. Characters from all backgrounds in Zayas's novel lie and form perhaps the primary motif in her works. I will discuss only the most exemplary of the lies found in Zayas's works: treating all of them is beyond the scope of this thesis.

The primary immediate consequence of a lie typically is that a relationship will be destroyed as a result of the doubt placed in the mind of the person who is deceived. For

example, in "La perseguida triunfante," after all his efforts fail, and he is in fact imprisoned for attempting to seduce the Queen while the King is away, Federico opts to tell King Ladislao that it was not he that had been trying to seduce Beatriz, but rather Beatriz who had been trying to seduce him. The lie does not take long to perpetuate itself, as Ladislao immediately has Beatriz sentenced to exile where she will surely die. Federico benefits from his lie temporarily, being saved from certain execution for betraying the king, but toward the end of the desengaño, as he lies dying, the only person who can save him is the very person he had damned with his lie. Fortunately for him, Beatriz's nature is not as malicious as his, and she saves him.

The idea of immediate gratification but with a punishment further down the road is also evident in "Tarde llega el desengaño." The black slave tells Don Jaime that his wife, Doña Elena, is cheating on him with a visiting cousin when the cousin rejects her advances. The immediate result is that the cousin is put to death and Elena enslaved, while the black slave is given all the luxuries previously afforded to Elena. She confesses much later, and receives her punishment: "tres ó cuatro puñaladas, ó las bastantes para acelerar mas presto la muerte" (288). Both for her and Federico, the lie was a short-term solution to their situation, but one which eventually came back to haunt them: an obvious lesson directed to the reader.

Other lies produce quite immediate and grave reactions. In "Estragos que causa el vicio," Don Dionís marries one woman, Doña Magdalena, and, though not in name or title, essentially marries her sister, Doña Florentina, as well. He and Florentina agree to marry once Magdalena dies; obviously, as the maid points out, both the women have

about the same chance of dying first, so they plot to have Magdalena killed. The maid does this with in a single brief conversation: "[ella] dijo a D. Dionís que su esposa le quitaba el honor, porque mientras el no estaba en casa, tenía trato ilicito con Fernandico" (428). Infuriated, Dionís plots his revenge, which ends in the deaths of Fernandico, Magdalena, two pages, three slaves, and three maids, including the one who had organized the plot. The lie had a single intended result which was to cause Dionís to kill Doña Magdalena. The reader sees that the result ballooned from its intended result—in part a lesson unto itself—and results in the deaths of ten people. Florentina escapes punishment only by reforming her life and entering the convent.

Forged Letters

Another type of deception related to the oral lies already discussed is the forged letter. Using letters to lie serves multiple purposes: they are concrete and atemporal, so one cannot simply claim not to have said something; they are impersonal, as one does not read them to the recipient in person; and they can be intercepted or forged, as their delivery is not immediate. As well, their traditional inclusion as part of courtly romances makes them both convincing and effective to the reader as a narrative tool.

In "El imposible vencido," Doña Leonor and her childhood friend and neighbor, Don Rodrigo, promise marriage to each other. Rodrigo's parents send him away to court in order to prevent the marriage. Leonor promises to wait for him for three years, hopeful that after that time he would be deemed worthy by her parents, Four years pass and she becomes so heartbroken that her parents see only one solution: have her give up on Rodrigo in favor of Alonso. To do this, they convince Rodrigo's parents that he has

married, and thus absolve her of her troth to Don Rodrigo, by sending a letter to his parents:

> ordenaron entre los dos [Leonor's parents] una carta, poniéndola en nombre de un criado que D. Rodrigo había llevado, y ellos conocían, en que le avisaba, como su señor se había casado con una señora Flamenca muy rica, y hermosa, cuyo dote había venido a su propósito. Esta carta se dio a los padres de Don Rodrigo, los cuales aunque no la tuvieron por muy cierto, por no avisarles su hijo de ello; con todo esto la divulgaron por la Ciudad. (151)

All the elements that make the letter a unique type of deception may be found in this one. Because it is not presented in person, Leonor's parents are able to disguise the source, and although Rodrigo's parents question the veracity of the content, there is no indication that they distrust its authenticity. The letter's existence, as well as its contents, spread through the city due in large part to its having been a letter. The written word carries an authoritative feel, real or imagined, that the spoken word does not.

The concreteness and atemporality of letters is most evident in "La perseguida triunfante." Queen Beatriz lives under the name Rosimonda and lives with a German duke to escape Federico, whose false testimony had caused the king to exile her. While there, she is located by the doctor hired by Federico to find her. In order to have her condemned to death again, the doctor leaves notes in the sleeves of Rosimonda/Beatriz's clothes, and convinces the duke that she is planning to kill him; soon after he finds the letter and her punishment is exactly the same.

The letters become crucial to the case of the doctor, constituting a written record of the alleged plot to kill the duke. Beatriz can offer no defense as the evidence is supposedly irrefutable, especially given that it was found in her sleeves.

In the first novela, "Adventurarse perdiendo," Don Félix and Doña Jacinta are in love, though Doña Adriana is also in love with Félix. After he rejects Adriana, she tells Jacinta's father of their romance, and the couple has to leave. Her father and brother encounter Don Félix one day and attack him, but Félix kills Jacinta's brother and leaves for the war in Flanders, and Jacinta returns to live with her father. Félix writes to her often, but her father keeps the notes, and then gives her a forged one telling her that he has died.

Had he not sent this letter, Félix's and Jacinta's lives might have been quite different indeed. He would have married Jacinta without requiring a papal dispensation made necessary by her having been a nun. Instead, she needed the papal dispensation which required her and Félix to not cohabit for a year, during which time he goes off to war again and dies. Jacinta subsequently meets the easily-bored Celio who later leaves her. She is robbed while trying to follow Celio, and then she meets Fabio, the character who narrates most of the story.

As with oral lies, the false letters cause great harm to the characters, and furthermore, give little immediate benefit to their perpetrators. When Rodrigo's parents learn that he is already married, they become the subject of gossip, and Leonor's parents suffer from her constant lamentations. Jacinta enters a convent, and is forced to break her sisterly vows when Félix returns home. The primary difference is that these forged letters

protect the sinners from major consequences, while the innocents are punished, although they are not directly intended to be the victims.

"El juez de su causa"

Numerous critics note Zayas's tendency to use binary oppositions in her work, presenting to the reader two characters who have one primary difference. It is through that difference that a variety of lessons on society, God, and humanity may be inferred. Some critics, such as Boyer, point to "La esclava de su amante" or "El verdugo de su esposa" as the best examples of Zayas's style because of the excess of violence toward and oppression of the female characters. When one considers Zayas as a Baroque author with a didactic purpose or a social critique, though, the work that best exemplifies Zayas's style is "El juez de su causa."

Zayas presents four different oppositions in the novela, all of which can instruct the reader to better him- or herself. Don Carlos contrasts with the Italian count with regards to nobility. Claudia and Doña Estela vie for Don Carlos, and in turn represent opposite characterizations of a woman. Xacimín and Amete are two very different Moors. Doña Estela and Don Carlos are, as far as all of their comrades know, both male soldiers.

"El juez de su causa" is the story of Don Carlos and Doña Estela, who after Carlos's courting of her, fall in love. Claudia is also in love with Don Carlos, though he is unaware of her feelings. She hires herself out disguised as a male servant named Claudio. Carlos and Estela decide to elope, but Claudio, learning of the plans, hires Amete, a Moor, to capture Estela on the eve of elopement. Amete does so, but with a

caveat: he also captures Claudia and makes her his wife. He tries to force Estela to marry him as well, but she refuses, remaining chaste for Carlos. Amete takes both of them to Fez, while Carlos is confronted in Spain by the family and town of Estela, who charge him with murder. He subsequently avoids trial by enlisting in the Holy Roman Empire's army. The Prince of Fez, Xacimín, finds Amete trying to beat Estela, and stops him. Xacimín houses Estela in his palace until she is better, and then sends her off with a group of Christians, with whom she flees to the Holy Roman Empire, disguising herself as a male soldier. She climbs the ranks until she becomes general of the army, duke, and ultimately viceroy. While in the army, by chance, she sees Carlos, and makes him her secretary. They develop a close friendship, yet Carlos never recognizes her. One day, Carlos is summoned to court in Spain to be tried. Estela, a personal friend of the emperor, asks him to let her be the judge of Carlos's trial, and he agrees, thus providing the title of the story. In the trial, he admits he has no evidence to support him, when suddenly Estela reveals herself as the supposedly murdered lover. Estela and Carlos finally marry, with her ducal title of transfering to Carlos.

The two women in Carlos's love life are complete opposites, both in personality and function in the story. Zayas describes Estela as a "Dama ilustre, rica, y de tantas partes, gracias, y virtudes" (158), a perfect woman of her time. Claudia, however, is described as "una Dama de más costumbres, y medianamente rica" (158), that is, a less than virtuous woman. Whereas Estela is passive, waiting for Carlos to court her, Claudia is active, trying to impress Carlos in the same way that Carlos attempts to court Estela.

What can be learned from Estela and Claudia in "El juez de su causa"? One key difference is their faith. Claudia, after being captured by Amete, converts to Islam and becomes another wife for his brother. The haste with which she converts demonstrates what little importance she finds in her former society's values, prefering instead to do what is necessary in the moment to advance her own selfish goals; this attitude in life ultimately leads to her execution. Estela does not convert. She holds firm to her values, even though it leads to Amete's beating her regularly. Because of her Christian identity, Xacimín allows her to return home with other Christians. Later, as general in the army with Carlos as her secretary, Estela imposes upon him the same firmness to values that she had, which ultimately leads to a salvaged relationship and a happy ending. Zayas makes it clear through these characters that one should hold fast to one's values and, more specifically, Christian values. If one does, the reward is clear, if not, the consequence is severe.

Estela is not courted just by Carlos, but also by an Italian count who, by his title, outranks Carlos. Estela falls in love with Carlos, but her parents, eager to see their daughter's status rise, arrange for her to wed the count. Her parents have not thought about what might be best for their daughter's heart, but rather what best helps her (and their) social status. This is the crux of the opposition between Carlos and the count: social status within the aristocracy. Because of the detail that Zayas uses in describing Carlos's courting of Estela and the end result of her choice, Zayas's views on the matter are clear: it is more fruitful to marry for love and by one's own choice than to be forcibly wed to another for social status. This is even more poignantly shown by Estela's status at

the end of the novel: had she married the count, she would simply be a countess; instead she has a much higher rank thanks to her choice.

Golden Age literature is not generally thought of as portraying Moors in a positive manner, and Amete certainly fits the stereotypical role: he is a sorcerer, has several wives, abuses women, and owns slaves. Furthermore, within the context of "El juez de su causa," Amete is more than simply a Moorish character. He is the embodiment of Spanish views on Moors and Muslim culture, that is, diabolic. But more specifically, he takes on the role of Satan himself, not in the somewhat humorous manner of "El jardín engañoso," but in a far more traditional role of the Devil. He tempts Claudia at her weakest moment, and, in exchange for the standard signing away of one's soul, agrees to get rid of Estela. True to his diabolic form, he betrays her, and captures not just Estela but Claudia herself, demonstrating his power over her destiny and soul.

Xacimín embodies the Spanish view of God, the total opposite of Amete, except for one key detail: he too is Moor. When he sees Amete and Claudia mistreating Estela, he saves Estela, though he injures himself in the process. He treats her wounds, and gives her money to return home to her kin. Furthermore, Xacimín judges and punishes Amete and Claudia, damning them to execution by means appropriate to their crime.[23]

While both Amete and Xacimín are Moors, they form almost a retelling of the Parable of the Good Samaritan, a well-known Biblical passage to both contemporaneous and contemporary readers. Estela is attacked, and even her own countryman Claudia does nothing to help her, prefering to better her own situation rather than to help Estela.

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[23] Claudia desires a man throughout the story, and is executed by impalement, a punishment with obvious sexual overtones.

Instead, it is Xacimín, Prince of Fez, whose people are loathed by Spaniards, who treats her wounds, and provides her the means to travel back to Spain.

Zayas bases the characters of Xacimín and Amete on polar opposites of Christian theological ideals. The seventeenth-century reader doubtlessly would have noted the comparison made by the narrator, Doña Estefanía. Of course, what makes this comparison even more poignant is that Xacimín and Amete are Moors. Some Moors present the virtues of the ideal Christian while others embody that which would be considered diabolic by Christian theology. The reader can reach many conclusions from this opposition. Just as with Christianity, there are good Muslims and bad Muslims. But more important given the time period, is simply that there *are* good Muslims. The reader comes to trust Xacimín and it is possible upon meeting a Moor his or her opinion or reaction might be different after having read Zayas's novela.

Furthermore, while Vollendorf mentions that the ending of "El juez de su causa" is the ultimate example of the machismo in Spanish culture because all of the titles and wealth that Estela had accumulated in her time as general transfered to Carlos, the text indicates that not all was transfered. In fact, while Carlos does indeed obtain the title of Viceroy which Estela had previously held, Estela obtains an even higher rank in exchange when the king hears of everything that has transpired as he "no acababa de creer que fuese así, y respondió a las cartas con la norabuena, y muchas joyas. Confirmó a Estela el Estado que la dió, añadiéndola el de Princesa de Buñol, y a Don Carlos el Ábito, y renta de Estela, y el cargo de Virrey de Valencia" (170). Carlos surely deserves, from a modern

point of view, a certain sum for having been chased after for a crime that never happened, and the title of Viceroy, as already mentioned, is lesser than Princess.

It is possible to obtain a very full understanding of Zayas's style in "El juez de su causa." Her standard literary resources of baroque oppositions, gender play, and racial play all figure in the story, thus making it the best example of Zayas's style.

Conclusion

The history of Zayas criticism is a seemingly ever-changing one. During and for a time after her lifetime, critics received her extremely favorably, praising the value her literature had for men. Sometime afterwards, because of her graphic depictions of topics morally unacceptable to later society, interest in her works fell. In the twentieth century, critics rediscovered her works and focused on issues such as sexuality, feminism, and gender issues. A most important focus was the violence shown toward women by men, and while a few critics, most notably Susan Griswold, tried to further Zayas studies by shifting focus to other themes, the critical community as a whole has tended to continue producing investigations with similar emphasis. There is a need for further studies of Zayas literature that do not revolve around Zayas as a woman, or her supposed feminism. Doing so does not devalue the previous work, rather it should expand upon it and enrich our understanding of Zayas. Stacy Aronson, as an example, has examined otherness, but only inasmuch as it applied to raped women, a new approach but on a common theme with a common conclusion within the world of Zayas. Zayas's work includes many other examples of otherness and marginalization that have rarely, if ever, been treated, such as those explored in this thesis: race, sexuality and class.

Race is an issue that often appears in Golden Age literature. The Spaniards had near continual contact with the Moors and increasingly with blacks. Zayas intentionally uses these characters to show that what is valuable in a person is not his or her race, but

rather how he or she goes about his or her life. More work can be done on Zayas's depiction of race beyond of this idea of basic human equality; for example, a study of how the minority characters view white, Christian Spaniards might shed further light on how hegemonic writers viewed, and felt they were viewed by, minorities.

A quality that can be found in literature from almost any time period is class. From the Bible to modern literature the interplay between haves and have-nots has played a major part in major works. Zayas uses class as another way to highlight her belief in the equality of persons, even if their status might be unequal: poor or rich, each was capable of being either a good or bad person. Further work could be focused exclusively in the presentation of upper- or lower-class characters by Zayas.

Studies examining homosexuality are becoming more common, and Zayas's explicit mention of homosexual activity is noteworthy especially in light of censorship in the Golden Age. Besides that, her use of disguises toys with the possibility of homoerotic relationships, even if in reality, they were in fact heterosexual. Combined with other studies on homosexuality in the Golden Age, studies on homosexuality in Zayas's works could become quite important especially in light of her popularity as an author.

There are still other marginal character types that Zayas uses to describe otherness, such as nationality, and age. Again, further research into these types would be useful in describing Zayas and her goals as an author. As I have noted before, a very close reader-response criticism would have been out of the scope of this thesis; however, it would be beneficial for all Zayas critics.

Critics have begun investigating more into Zayas's style and narrative techniques, something especially noted in articles treating her as a Baroque author. The reader-response approach applied here demonstrates how her writing tended to demonstrate to and convince the reader of the moral importance of an individual's own actions, regardless of race or social status. This reveals an extremely important aspect of Zayas: she is not, in fact, as liberal as previous critics might have thought. Her writing subscribes to Catholic teachings and Biblical premises, even if not all of her contemporaries followed these same ideas.

Ultimately, the most important idea that a Golden Age reader would infer after having read *Novelas amorosas y ejemplares o Decamerón español* and *Segunda parte del Sarao y entrenimientos honestos* is, at its heart, a Christian ideal: all people are created equal spiritually, it is not who they are but what they do and how they do it that decides their fate.

Zayas expends much effort in laying the foundations for each story and, more importantly, its characters. These characters, while from many varied backgrounds, are presented as equals, that is, they are neither condemned nor praised by Zayas until they take an action that she approves or disapproves. Zayas places her characters into binary oppositions in order to give the sense of poetic justice. To use "Juez de su causa" as an example, the one half of the binary oppositions, including characters such as Claudia and Amete are executed in the end due to their deceit and the reader is hence turned away from following their actions. The other half, exemplified by Xacimín, Estela, and Carlos, is rewarded and become models for the reader to emulate. The binary oppositions in

Zayas's work support her view of poetic justice. Mencía's brother, Don Alonso, and husband, Don Enrique, in "El traidor contra su sangre," treat her completely differently. Alonso cares more about money than his sister's happiness; as a result, he loses both her and his own life. Enrique, forever faithful to Mencía, devotes his life to her and to God, becoming a monk assuring his place in Heaven. In "El prevenido, engañado," it is the repentent Serafina and her innocent daughter Gracia that end happily, while the other women continue their life of sin with their end left for the reader to decide. The ever-faithful Félix is sharply contrasted with Celio who is unfaithful to both Jacinta and God in "Adventurarse perdiendo." These and all other oppositions provides the reader with the opportunity to learn what to do or what not to do in his own life by interpreting and understanding the poetic justice that Zayas employs with didactic intent.

It is my hope that this thesis has contributed to an understanding of Zayas's position on gender, race, and class relations: these have nothing to do with a person's ability to be good or bad. That said, one's own actions do affect one's status as a good or bad person. Magic and deception make short paths to Hell, while prayer and reconciliation save one's soul.

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