



Article

“Me Has Visto el Alma en los Ojos”: Hidden Passions in Spanish Golden Age Tragedy

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Abstract: The Spanish Golden Age tragedy is assembled around the conflict of passions, which does not find an adequate channel of expression in words because there are feelings that cannot be confessed if one wants to preserve life. However, such intense emotions cannot be hidden for a long time, either. The characters discover that the eyes speak in silence and cannot lie, so they appeal to their sincerity at crucial moments. Such examples can be found in the declarations of love addressed to inaccessible or forbidden women or in the narratives of women who report sexual assault or husbands who believe they have been dishonored. In this article, we will analyze all these circumstances to demonstrate that, if they contradict the lips, the eyes are the windows of the soul, and they speak a language that is as expressive as it is eloquent.

Keywords: Spanish Golden Age tragedy; Golden Age theatre; eyes; non-verbal language; silent languages; hidden passions; five senses; Calderón de la Barca; Lope de Vega; Guillén de Castro; Rojas Zorrilla; Enríquez Gómez

CRISANTO. ¿Pues cómo sin ti podré
vivir yo, si son imanes
los ojos, que tras ti llevan
todas mis felicidades?

*Los dos amantes del cielo*¹

Calderón de la Barca



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1. Introduction: The Language of the Eyes

Classical philosophy pointed out the importance of the eyes for knowledge. Heraclitus said that “the eyes are more accurate witnesses than the ears” (Cited by Mondolfo 2007, p. 42). Plato distinguishes in *The Republic* (VI, VII) between the eye of the soul—destined to know the intelligible word—and the eye of the body—destined to know the sensible word—(Prósperi 2016, p. 365), and uses the analogy eyes–light–sun to explain the path that leads to the contemplation of ideas. For his part, Socrates considers the eye, among all sensory organs, as the most similar to the sun, the image of good (Jank 2001, p. 126). According to Filo of Alexandria, contemplation of the word depends on sight, which stimulates thought and communicates with the soul (Hadas-Lebel 2003, p. 257). In his last work, *Orator*, Cicero defends the art of oratory and explains the qualities necessary to carry out a speech that is both eloquent and convincing.² Among those qualities, Cicero highlights the importance of non-verbal language, posture, gesture, and attitude, but also of countenance, described as a mirror to the soul, while the eyes become its interpreters. While one can alter one’s voice and control one’s hands and words, the gaze cannot be hidden (Cicerón n.d.).

Thus, the eyes became the perfect metaphor in the literature to explain the irrational nature of love: the fortuitous crossing of glances initiating an emotional relationship or dalliance due to the eyes’ ability to unveil the world around us; closing them leaves one in the dark, creating the opposite effect. Although the other senses render specific information, the sight creates an immediate anticipation linked to that “first impression” for which there

are no second chances.³ For this reason, troubadours of the Galician–Portuguese lyric movement blamed the eyes for being the cause of one’s state of unhappiness into which they had been immersed because they fell in love instantly, without the intervention of their own free will. It was enough to see that *senhor* “que eu por meu mal vi”⁴ [which I for my evil saw] and nothing would ever be the same again. The eyes proceed by guiding the heart and surpassing the mind, given that the path of physical attraction is irreversible and precedes moral virtues.⁵ As a result, gaze frequently defines the nature and destiny of love: if deviated or rejected, love is unrequited, while if crossed or returned, it becomes requited love, otherwise known to be the perfect kind of love as noted by Lope de Vega in *El caballero de Olmedo*:

D. ALONSO. (...)

Ojos, si ha quedado en vos

de la vista el mismo efeto,

amor vivirá perfeto,

pues fue engendrado de dos;

(I, vv. 21–24)⁶

And the rejection in *Los comendadores de Córdoba*:

DON JORGE. (...)

Pues viéndose en el cielo y paraíso,

y cargado de sol, dije: Teneos,

deseos locos, que me habéis burlado.

Vos quitasteis los ojos de improviso,

y cayendo conmigo mis deseos,

fue mayor el castigo que el pecado;

(I, vv. 824–829)⁷

The eyes act as interlocutors of poets and characters, who depend on them to make them responsible for their amorous passions or blame them for their misfortunes when the desired response is not met. Therefore, the eyes acquire a metaphorical value by being singled out; they stand out from the rest of the organs since the literature also attributes them with another unsuspected quality: eyes can speak in silence and say what is forbidden through the use of words. However, unlike the former, they cannot lie. A paradigmatic example of this quality is the dialogue in which Menón and Semíramis (*La hija del aire*, part 1, by Calderón) are forced to break off their relationship by King Nino and his sister Irene, who listen in hiding to the reasons for doing so. Manifesting a desperate emotional state because it is a hierarchical imposition contrary to his will, Menón begs Semíramis not to listen to his words but to look at his eyes.

MENÓN. [Aparte a ella]

Semíramis, aunque tengas

quejas de mí, y aunque ignoro

la ocasión, no te he de dar,

¡quién vio más terrible ahogo!,

satisfacciones, porque

no puedo. ¡Atiende a mis ojos,

hermoso imposible mío!

(*La hija del aire*, 1ª, III, vv. 275–281)⁸

Likewise, and although the situation is the opposite, D. Álvaro (*El pintor de su deshonra* by Calderón) refuses to believe that Serafina—who got married after believing him dead—could belittle her feelings for him while her tears betray her.

SERAFINA. (...) don Álvaro, yo te amé
cuando imaginé ser tuya,
y pasando mi esperanza
desde perdida a difunta,
me casé: ahora soy quien soy.
Sobre esto tus quejas funda.

D. ÁLVARO. ¿Qué he de decir, si tú lloras?

SERAFINA. Engañaste, si lo [juzgas].
Si lloran, mienten mis ojos.

D. ÁLVARO. (...) ¿Son
las lágrimas por ventura
tan bien mandadas, que saben
obedecer?

(*El pintor de su deshonra*, I, vv. 1015–1034)⁹

It is not only the eyes and the lips that contradict each other; there are also other senses that battle with the gaze to complete the perception of the world, as it happens with hearing in the case of Narciso (*Eco y Narciso* by Calderón), locked up by his mother in a cave to prevent a prediction from coming true.

TIRESIAS. (...) En cinta estás: un garzón
bellísimo has de parir:
una voz y una hermosura
solicitarán su fin
amando y aborreciendo:
guárdale de ver y oír.”

(*Eco y Narciso*, I, p. 1965 b)¹⁰

Narciso will grow up isolated and ignorant. As a result, the first time he faces the world, he will feel overwhelmed by the presence of so many stimuli: “Ved algo, ojos/o no escuchéis tanto, oídos” (II, p. 1968 b) [See something, eyes/or do not listen so much to, ears]. He is amazed by the unexpected and instant attraction that he feels for Eco, which he translates with an image typical of amorous passion fire but used in an unprecedented way, as it will be drunk by the eyes.

NARCISO. (...) ¿cómo de una sed y otra
tanto has trocado el afecto,
que en vez que labios y oídos
beban agua y aire, has hecho
que beban fuego los ojos,
(*Eco y Narciso*, II, p. 1969 b)

2. Declarations of Love: The Prison of Silence

There are many instances, although with different intentions, in which Spanish Golden Age tragedies make use of the dilemma posed between the eyes and lips, which we could even categorize as a genre label.¹¹ Not only are the eyes and lips confronted by feelings of sincerity or honesty, but the impossibility of expressing one's feelings without such a confession can have fatal consequences, even as to put one's life in danger. Love comes at first sight, but at times, Cupid's arrow fails to strike the right person, who is surrounded by obstacles of various kinds that interfere with the relationship. An unsurpassable obstacle would be the one faced by Amón, who falls in love with his half-sister Tamar (*Los cabellos de Absalón* by Calderón), or Federico with his stepmother Casandra (*El castigo sin venganza*

by Lope de Vega). At times marriage even prevents a relationship from happening, such as the one Enrique VIII seeks with Ana Bolena (*La cisma de Inglaterra* by Calderón) or similar to the ones that the wives in the tragedies of honor wish to pursue with former admirers, as seen in the case of Mencía, Serafina or Leonor in *El médico de su honra*, *El pintor de su deshonra* and *A secreto agravio, secreta venganza*, respectively, all by Calderón; or even in the case of Elvira in *A lo que obliga el honor* by Enríquez Gómez, married by the king against her will.

DOÑA ELVIRA. Adiós,
 Que mis ojos van agora
 A destilar poco a poco
 El corazón, que se ahoga
 En un diluvio de agravios,
 Que anuncian trágica historia.
 (*A lo que obliga el honor*, I, p. 505 b)¹²

The guiding force of the different instances is always the same: the impossibility of revealing what one feels, the confinement of passions in a prison of silence that consumes the characters, and whose only key is words. Nevertheless, speaking compares to opening Pandora's box by releasing prohibited emotions that may only remain in the mind. Therefore, the only way to express such painful, divided and conflicting emotions is to resort to the eyes' sincerity, although mute in their expression. For this reason, Amón fears that his eyes might reveal his secret.

AMÓN. (...)
 Es tal, que aun de mi silencio
 vivo tal vez temeroso,
 porque me han dicho que saben
 con silencio hablar los ojos.
 (*Los cabellos de Absalón*, I, vv. 255–258)¹³

A secret that Tamar should never know, and yet it is precisely she who tries to wrest out the truth of it by referring to the functions of both organs, which is that they connect what one says with the emotions that are aroused.

TAMAR. (...)
 Hagan su oficio tus labios,
 harán el suyo mis ojos.
 Vea yo como tú sientes,
 verás tú como yo lloro.
 (*Los cabellos de Absalón*, I, vv. 357–360)¹⁴

However, shortly after, she resorts to the confusion between the senses in order to wake Amón abruptly from his amorous dream, rehearsed in a meta-theatrical scene in which he asks his sister to pretend to be his lady in order to gather the necessary courage to confess his love. Nevertheless, not even in a fictitious space does she agree to return his love.

AMÓN. (. . .)
 ¿Tenía más costa un gusto
 de fingir, que no un pesar?
 TAMAR. No, pero de la manera
 que tus labios y tus ojos
 confundieron tus enojos,
 persuadiéndote a que era
 yo tu dama, considera
 que en mí también confundidos
 al oírte mis sentidos,
 se equivocaron más sabios,
 respondiéndote mis labios
 a lo que oyen mis oídos.
 (*Los cabellos de Absalón*, I, vv. 539–550)

Tamar subtly removes from the equation the sense of sight, the key to falling in love, and replaces it with the sense of hearing, endowed with an objectivity that the other sense does not possess. Once the secret is confessed, Amón faces what he feared, rejection and, advised by a servant,¹⁵ he chooses to forcefully satisfy his desire, believing that he could thus free himself from melancholy. The result is unexpected: after the rape, the prince cannot bear the presence of his sister, and he wishes to lose his senses in order to erase her from his world.

AMÓN. ¡Quién, por no verte y oírte,
 sordo quedara y sin ojos!
 (*Los cabellos de Absalón*, II, vv. 1017–1018)

Tamar goes from being an “hermoso imposible” (I, v. 462) [impossible beauty] to being the “horror/de mi vida” (II, vv. 1004–1005) [horror/of my life], an unbearable image of the sin committed; and, although he insults her and orders her to be thrown out, it is he who ends up leaving, thus succumbing to the sinister side of beauty that is suddenly revealed. When he sees Tamar again and discovers her disguised as a *serrana*, he even wants to tear out his eyes so as not to have to look at her.¹⁶

AMÓN. (. . .)
 ¡Ay cielos! ¡Monstruo! ¿Tú eres?
 ¿Quién los ojos se sacara
 primero que te mirara,
 afrenta de las mujeres?
 Voyme y pienso que sin vida,
 que tu vista me mató.
 (*Los cabellos de Absalón*, II, vv. 1814–1819)

3. An Open Secret: Women without Honour, Violence and Justice

The behavior exhibited by men stands in stark contrast to the attitude adopted by women who have suffered any kind of sexual assault. Women appeal to their eyes to attest to the sincerity of their story so that they can corroborate that it was an action committed against their will. Amón intends to lose his eyes, and her eyes are the only thing Tamar has to expect to be believed when she asks for revenge.

TAMAR. (. . .)
 por los ojos vierto el alma,
 luto traigo por mi honor,
 suspiros al cielo arrojo,
 de inocencias vengador.
 (*Los cabellos de Absalón*, II, vv. 1166–1169)

The same happens to Isabel (*El alcalde de Zalamea* by Calderón), the daughter of the mayor Pedro Crespo, who was kidnapped by the captain and abandoned after fulfilling his sexual desire. She finds her father tied up on the mountain, but she does not free him until she is convinced that he believes in her innocence after an emotional account of what happened, in which she appeals to gestures of pain and shame to ensure that she is not responsible for her dishonor.

ISABEL. (...)

y si lo que la voz yerra,

tal vez el acción explica,

de vergüenza cubro el rostro,

de empacho lloro ofendida,

de rabia tuerzo las manos,

el pecho rompo de ira.

Entiende tú las acciones,

pues no hay voces que lo digan;

(*El alcalde de Zalamea*, III, vv. 191–198)¹⁷

However, when the aggressor is not known, the crime cannot be made public, making it impossible for revenge to be claimed. Despite this imposed silence, the eyes are unable to hide the feeling or state of distress, and in order to conceal the truth, tears are blamed on melancholy, which has no cause or purpose, unlike sadness. Under the meaningful title of *No hay cosa como callar* (by Calderón), Leonor appeals to the link between eyes and lips since neither of them should let us guess the violence suffered in the darkness of the night.

LEONOR. (...)

Toda melancolía

nace sin ocasión, y así es la mía;

que aquesta distinción naturaleza

dió a la melancolía y la tristeza;

y para ella, los medios son más sabios

llorar los ojos y callar los labios.

(*No hay cosa como callar*, II, vv. 65–70)¹⁸

These are women who do not choose their destiny because a sexual assault turns the course of their lives; however, neither do they usually initiate the love process, which begins with the gentleman's gaze, as the troubadours already had noted. Strangely enough, the two rival women in *El médico de su honra* describe falling in love in the same way.

D^a. MENCÍA. (...) Vuestra Alteza,

liberal de sus deseos,

generoso de sus gustos,

pródigo de sus afectos,

puso los ojos en mí:

es verdad, yo lo confieso.

(*El medico de su honra*, I, vv. 289–294)¹⁹

D^a. LEONOR. Puso los ojos, para darme enojos,

un caballero en mí, que ¡ojalá fuera

basilisco de amor a mis despojos,

áspid de celos a mi primavera!

Luego el deseo sucedió a los ojos

el amor al deseo,

(*El medico de su honra*, I, vv. 625–630)²⁰

Nonetheless, when it comes to love at first sight, women resort to the same image as men, as it happens in *Los comendadores de Córdoba* by Lope de Vega.

DOÑA BEATRIZ. ¡Que así de un mirar se imprima
tan fiero amor!
(...)
DOÑA ANA. Por don Fernando se van
los ojos, que me enloquece.
(*Los comendadores de Córdoba*, I, vv. 500–505)

4. The Soul in the Eyes: Clandestine Love Affairs

The eyes, intentionally or not, reveal the deepest feelings, which is why the male character also appeals to them in extreme situations. Unlike his wife, who associates love with a suitor before marriage,²¹ he sees honor and love as inseparable absolutes.

D. GUTIERRE. (...)

No te espantes que los ojos

también se quejen, señor;

que dicen que amor y honor

pueden, sin que a nadie asombre,

permitir que llore un hombre;

y yo tengo honor y amor.

Honor, que siempre he guardado

como noble y bien nacido,

y amor, que siempre he tenido

como esposo enamorado:

(*El médico de su honra*, III, vv. 15–24)²²

Nevertheless, when he has to choose between the two, by voicing with lamentations his suspicions of adultery, he does not hesitate to sacrifice passion, which he will gradually deny himself as he acquires a metaphorical identity: “médico de su honra” [physician of his own honor] for D. Gutierre (*El médico de su honra*)²³ or “pintor de su deshonor” [painter of his own dishonor] for D. Juan Roca (*El pintor de su deshonor*)²⁴. This new action will empower both protagonists to end their wives’ lives and allow them to restore their reputation, as D. Gutierre so vehemently expresses.

D. GUTIERRE. ¡Ahora, ahora, valor,

salga repetido en quejas,

salga en lágrimas envuelto

el corazón a las puertas

del alma, que son los ojos!

Y en ocasión como esta

bien podéis, ojos, llorar:

no lo dejéis de vergüenza.

(*El medico de su honra*, II, vv. 577–584)²⁵

Since the eyes are the windows of the soul, they should remain closed in order to prevent tragedy from occurring. Amón falls in love with his sister, Tamar, and Federico with his father’s wife, Casandra; they both know that their amorous passion must remain a secret because the woman they love is, literally, an “hermoso imposible” [impossible beauty] and out of their reach. Although their initial encounters begin the same way, their relationships progress and end differently: a verbal imprudence on the part of the prince will cause immediate rejection by Tamar; however, we do not know when Amón falls in love, but we know of the exact moment Federico falls in love with his stepmother. In

addition, we also witness his refusal to verbalize his feelings for her because shortly after meeting his stepmother, he demands his servant Batín to refrain from saying what they both think.

FEDERICO. No digas
 nada, que con tu agudeza
 me has visto el alma en los ojos
 (*El castigo sin venganza*, I, vv. 634–636)²⁶

Federico is aware that “de la lengua al alma/hay más que del suelo al cielo” (II, vv. 1242–1243)—“From tongue to soul there’s such a great distance” (II, v. 878)—and he persists in keeping quiet, although his anxiety does not go unnoticed by those around him. Batín is the first one to reproach Federico for his lack of concealment.

BATÍN. Pues mira como lo acierto:
 que te agrada tu madrastra
 y estás entre ti diciendo. . .
FEDERICO No lo digas; es verdad,
 pero yo, ¿qué culpa tengo,
 pues el pensamiento es libre?
 (*El castigo sin venganza*, I, vv. 977–982)²⁷

Afterward, it is Casandra herself who urges him to speak, giving him unmistakable indications that his words will be well received.

CASANDRA. (. . .)
 Las almas de las mujeres
 no las viste jaspe helado;
 (. . .)
 Dile tu amor, sea quien fuere,
 (. . .)
 Toma mi consejo, Conde,
 que el edificio más casto
 tiene la puerta de cera;
 habla, y no mueras callando.
 (*El castigo sin venganza*, II, vv. 1483–1501)²⁸

Finally, Federico declares to Casandra the forbidden passion that torments him, and they both decide to stop seeing and talking to each other to avoid falling into temptation.

CASANDRA. (. . .)
 Si remedio puede haber
 es huir de ver y hablar,
 porque con no hablar ni ver
 o el vivir se ha de acabar
 o el amor se ha de vencer.
 (*El castigo sin venganza*, II, vv. 1991–1995)²⁹

Federico, like Amón, is the character without a center, the “fronterizo” [on the frontier] in the words of Eugenio Trías (1988), confronted with a world of absolutes that prevents them from fulfilling their desires because the chosen woman is, a priori, unattainable. Every step forward leads not only to the satisfaction of that hidden passion but also to annihilation because the rules cannot be transgressed without being expelled from the social group. Amón’s unrequited love is satisfied by using violence to subdue Tamar and thus, as he believes, will stop his suffering. Federico, on the other hand, achieves the privilege of

requited love, but this is located, like Amón's love, outside of the law; thus, it results in both of their deaths. In the case of David's son, Absalón will kill his brother Amón at a banquet to avenge Tamar (*Los cabellos de Absalón*)³⁰, who ends up drinking the blood of the rapist who spilled hers³¹, and celebrates her return to society by alluding, significantly, to the gaze.

TAMAR. (...)

Ya podré mirar la gente

resucitando mi honor,

que la sangre del traidor

es blasón del inocente.

(*Los cabellos de Absalón*, II, vv. 1850–1853)

In Federico's case, however, the dishonor is kept secret. The Duke of Ferrara finds out about it from an anonymous paper, so he tricks his son into killing Casandra, the unfaithful wife, without knowing who she is. He then orders Federico to be killed for it so that it looks like a form of punishment and not revenge, which would be the same as making the crime public.

Passion cannot be revealed either when it is the husband who is in love with another woman, as happens to the Prince of Sicily in *Cuánto se estima el honor* (by Guillén de Castro), who laments "amar aborrecido" [hated loving] and "aborrecer amado" [loved hating], as he longs for Celia—in love with her cousin Alejandro—and disdains the Princess, who does not understand the reason for his disinterest in her. The Prince regrets not being able to go back and undo the process.

PRÍNCIPE. (...)

y tras esto no pueda

volver los ojos, deshacer la rueda,

y animando el despecho,

mudar el alma aunque reviente el pecho!

(*Cuánto se estima el honor*, I, p. 96 b)³²

Like Amón or Federico, he is aware that he cannot tell what is happening to him, "porque me cierra la boca/la que me lleva los ojos" [because she closes my mouth/the one that takes my eyes away], as well as the dichotomy between feeling and expression.

PRÍNCIPE. Palpitando el corazón

tengo el alma entre los dientes.

(*Cuánto se estima el honor*, I, p. 101 b)

Interrogated by the Princess, Celia explains how the Prince became so fixated with her by saying:

PRINCESA. (...)

¿Con qué le tienes tan loco,

que nunca yo pude atalle?

CELIA. Señora, con no miralle,

ni respondelle tampoco.

(*Cuánto se estima el honor*, II, p. 107 a)

5. Looks That Kill

However, if ignoring or not returning the suitor's visual attention can further unleash his passions, the gaze is at other times portrayed as dangerous or lethal as that of the basilisk.³³ This recurring image is used to represent jealousy or hatred, as Herod imagines to describe jealousy if it were to become tangible.

HERODES. (..)
 Ojos de basilisco le pusiera,
 que, con ser visto o ver, siempre matara;
 (*El mayor monstruo del mundo*, III, p. 164)

Furthermore, Amón employs the same metaphor to describe Tamar, whom he has ceased to love and who becomes the living memory of the sexual assault that he perpetrated on her and, thus, of his sin³⁴.

AMÓN. (..)
 Al basilisco retratas,
 ponzoña mirando arrojas
 y mi juventud maltratas,
 pues cruelmente me matas
 con tan mortales congojas.
 ¿Qué yo te quise es posible?
 (*Los cabellos de Absalón*, II, vv. 994–999)

The same thing happens to Anne Boleyn, the object of Henry VIII's passion that led him to divorce Queen Catherine, resulting in the final break with the Catholic Church that is known as the English Reformation or, in the words of Calderón, the Schism in England.

REY. Sin el respeto que pide
 la majestad, a la Reina. . .
 ¿A la Reina? ¡Qué mal dije!
 A esa mujer, a esa fiera,
 ciego encanto, falsa esfinge,
 a ese basilisco, a ese
 áspid, a ese airado tigre,
 a esa Bolena prended,
 y en el castillo invencible
 de Londres, que del palacio
 está enfrente, en noche triste
 viva presa.
 (*La cisma de Inglaterra*, III, vv. 2654–2665)³⁵

A woman can also describe herself as a basilisk when she intends to take revenge after the offence.

ROSIMUNDA. Pagarás, bárbaro rey,
 de una vez tantos delitos;
 que una mujer ofendida
 es áspid, es basilisco.
 (*Morir pensando matar*, II, vv. 1423–1426)³⁶

6. Conclusions: The Eyes Are the Windows of the Soul

It is a fact that looks do not kill, and neither do words, but actions do. Then, the eyes are no longer in contradiction with the lips but with the hands.

D. GUTIERRE. (..)
 ¿Quién vio en tantos enojos
 matar las manos y llorar los ojos?
 (*El medico de su honra*, III, vv. 407–408)³⁷

To sum up, taking into account the analysis of the afore mentioned tragedies, we can conclude that the impossibility of communication and of telling one's story³⁸ is a recurring motif in the Spanish Golden Age tragedy. The agonizing struggle between passion and reason within the individual should not be verbalized since acknowledging instinct and desire means transgressing the norm and causing catastrophe. Thought is free, but expression is not, although evil would have an end if it could be expressed. Thus, one lives in solitude, and one suffers in solitude.

Consequently, the eyes play an essential role in tragedies, since they initiate passions in an involuntary but irreversible way without the intervention of reason. They become mute but eloquent interlocutors whose sincerity is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, the eyes can communicate feelings that words deny, as happens to Menón when he is forced to break up with Semíramis. The eyes can also corroborate the veracity of the story of the raped women who seek to prove their innocence. On the other hand, the eyes are also unable to hide passions that should not come to light, passions that words try to restrain but which the tormented protagonists' entourage end up noticing because looks are more loquacious than speeches.

By falling in love with a forbidden woman, Federico and Amón know that words can free them from their distress, but they are also aware of their performative nature. That is that confessing an illicit love is equivalent to committing themselves. This act can turn their world upside down and have dire consequences, and therefore, they must abstain from speaking. However, the silence is equally unbearable.

In conclusion, the eyes are the windows of the soul, and opening them can save a woman when it comes to justifying her dishonor, but they can also annihilate the character if they reveal what should remain confined in the imagination. Although, as Casandra says, it is no offense to think the offense (*El castigo sin venganza*, II, vv. 1579–1581), sight is still the turning point between the heart and the lip, the beginning of the path that can lead to glory or to tragedy, given that once love enters through the eyes, the words can deny or confirm it. Nevertheless, free will and one's behavior will fail to prevent the senses from releasing those passions that should remain hidden because they are clandestine and forbidden. However, even though they are aware that their life depends on it, characters will not give up on making what they have imagined to be a reality.

CASANDRA. (...)

que no hay tan grande imposible

que no le juzguen visible

los ojos del pensamiento.

(*El castigo sin venganza*, II, vv. 1559–1561)³⁹

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Notes

- ¹ CRISANTO. Stay, I cannot live without thee./Or, if thou will go, the magnet/Of thine eye must make me follow./All my happiness is anchored/There (I, p. 49). *The Two Lovers of Heaven: Chrysanthus and Daria. A drama of early Christian Rome*, translated by Denis Florence MacCarthy (Calderón de la Barca 1870). I add the English translation of the plays when I have located available editions.

- 2 “¿Y cuánta dignidad y gracia no añade al semblante, y sobre todo la expresión de los ojos, que son intérpretes del alma, y que ora mostrarán alegría, ora tristeza, según las cosas de que se trate?” (*Orator*, XVIII, 60, p. 34), www.historicodigital.com (accessed on 5 March 2023) [And how much dignity and grace does it not add to the countenance, and above all the expression of the eyes, which are interpreters of the soul, and which now show joy, now sadness, depending on the things in question?]. All translations in square brackets are my own, unless otherwise stated.
- 3 In fact, the idea of love starting at the vision of beauty is originally Platonic, by which eyes irradiate some sort of rays that reach out to “touch” objects in order to return a mould of their shapes up to the optical nerves to the brain. Later documented in medical treatises (Galen, Constantine the African’s *Viaticum*, Gerard Du Berry, Arnau de Vilanova’s *Liber de amore heroico*, Bernard of Gordonius’ *Lillium medicinae*), *aegritudo amoris* or *amor hereos*, that is, unrequited love, was defined as a kind of infection or humoral imbalance caused by an image of a beautiful woman installing into the brain and causing its malfunctioning. “It was in the therapy for acute cases of lovesickness that medieval medical theory’s misogynist tendency arose. Therapies that attempted to denigrate and abjectify women were originally highly specialized treatments for the very specific pathological conditions associated with *amor hereos*” (Solomon 1997, p. 63). Green (1964) considers *amor hereos* as an affliction related to aristocracy, and Lacarra Lanz (2015) points out that the name indicates its classification as a disease of the nobility in medieval medical texts. “As Andreas Capellanus explained, love ‘arises not from any action, but solely from the thought formed by the mind as a result of the thing seen’. Once the figure of the beloved is erotically formulated in the mind, the lover begins to desire that figure” (Solomon 1997, p. 52).
- 4 Roy Queymado, “Senhor, que Deus mui melhor parecer”, edited by Alvar and Beltrán (1989, v. 7, p. 244), where you can find many examples. See Saraiva and Lopes (1996), Gavilanes and Apolinário (2000) and Pena (2002).
- 5 For Plato, love comes from the perception of beauty, so it is an external cause that enters through the eyes and its memory floods the soul with joy: “y si adora al que posee la belleza es porque solo en él encuentra alivio a los tormentos que sufre” (*Fedro o de la belleza*, Platón 1871, vol. 2, p. 300) [and if he adores the one who possesses beauty, it is because only in him does he find relief from the torments he suffers]. Later, the soul transcends forms, sees beyond the apparent and approaches the Idea or God. Consequently, the beauty of the soul is more valuable than the beauty of the body (*El banquete*, Platón 1993, p. 95).
- 6 Edited by Joseph Pérez (Vega 1970). For the reception of the classic image of requited love in the theatre, see Serés (1996, pp. 304–6).
- 7 Edited by Biblioteca Castro (Vega 1993). In www.artelope.uv.es (accessed on 28 February 2023).
- 8 www.cervantesvirtual.com (accessed on 28 February 2023).
- 9 Edited by Ángel Valbuena Briones (Calderón de la Barca 1970).
SERAFINA. (...) Ay, long and truly loved you. When all hope/Of being yours with your reported death/Had died, then, yielding to my father’s wish,/I wed another, and am—what I am./So help me Heaven, Alvaro, this is all! ÁLVARO. How can I answer if you weep? SERAFINA. No, no,/I do not weep, or, if I do, ‘tis but/My eyes,—no more, no deeper. (...) ÁLVARO. You make the fount of tears to stop or flow/Just as you please? (p. 29). *The Painter of his own Dishonour*, freely translated by Edward Fitzgerald (Calderón de la Barca 1906b).
- 10 Edited by Ángel Valbuena Briones (Calderón de la Barca 1959, vol. I).
- 11 See Álvarez Sellers (1996). See Álvarez Sellers (1997) for the general analysis of the plays.
- 12 Edited by Ramón de Mesonero Romanos (Enríquez Gómez 1858, vol. I).
- 13 Edited by Evangelina Rodríguez Cuadros (Calderón de la Barca 1989b, 1999).
- 14 Mariene (*El mayor monstruo del mundo* by Calderón) also highlights the correspondence between the function of lips and eyes when she asks her husband, the Tetrarch of Jerusalem, to stay away from her: “vivamos a morir juntos,/mas teniendo por forzoso/que en tu vida ni en mi vida/me has de mirar sin enojos,/me has de hablar sin sentimeintos,/me has de escuchar sin oprobios,/ver sin suspiros los labios/ni sin lágrimas los ojos” (III, p. 162). Edited by José María Ruano de la Haza (Calderón de la Barca 1989a).
- 15 JONADAB. (...) amor/más quiere fuerza que maña./AMÓN. Mi media hermana es Tamar./JONADAB. Yo digo lo que yo hiciera,/si fuera mi hermana entera,/llegado a encolerizar. (*Los cabellos de Absalón*, I, vv. 579–584).
- 16 However, Amón does not have the courage of Oedipus, who rips out his own eyes when he realizes his sin: he has killed his father and married his mother (*Oedipus the King*, by Sophocles). Freud (1919, pp. 297–324) illustrates his theory of the sinister with Hoffman’s story *Der Sandman*, and concludes that the fear of losing one’s eyes, the fear of going blind, is a frequent substitute for castration anxiety. In my opinion, this could be explained because not seeing is the only way to avoid desire.
- 17 Edited by José María Ruano de la Haza (Calderón de la Barca 1995).
—But my tongue will not utter what I must weep in silence and ashes forever! Yet let these quivering hands and heaving bosom, yea, the very tongue that cannot speak, speak loudest! (pp. 293–294). *The Mayor of Zalamea*, freely translated by Edward Fitzgerald (Calderón de la Barca 1906a).

- 18 Edited by Ángel Valbuena Briones (Calderón de la Barca 1973).
- 19 Edited by Ángel Valbuena Briones (Calderón de la Barca 1970).
(...) Your highness/Liberal in all your fancies—/Generous in all your pleasures—/Prodigal of your affections—/Placed your eyes on me: I know it—/It is true, and I believe it (p. 296). *The Physician of His own Honour*, translated by Denis Florence M'Carthy (Calderón de la Barca 1853, vol. I).
- 20 His glances turned on me, to cause my ruin;/A cavalier—ah! would that love's slow sting/Were as the basilisk's for my undoing./Or jealousy's green serpent to my spring./To looking fondly, soon came fond pursuing,/To fond pursuing, love on rapid wing. (*The Physician of His own Honour*, vol. I, p. 311)
- 21 D^a. MENCÍA. Nací en Sevilla, y en ella/me vió Enrique, festejó/mis desdenes, celebró/mi nombre. . . , ¡felice estrella!/Fuése, y mi padre atropella/la libertad que hubo en mí:/La mano a Gutierre di,/volvió Enrique, y en rigor,/tuve amor, y tengo honor./Esto es cuanto sé de mí (*El medico de su honra*, I, vv. 565–574).
I was born/In Seville. There Enrique saw/And loved me, by the potent law/That rules the world; subdued my scorn,/And, like a star that doth adorn/The brow of heaven, upraised my name/First in the lover's lists of fame./My father, by abuse of might,/Restrained and trampled on my right/Of choice, and gave, short time ago,/My hand to Gutierre. Lo!/The prince returns: my heart is pained—/Love I have lost, and honour gained./And this is all even I do know. (*The Physician of His own Honour*, vol. I, p. 307). Serafina (*El pintor de su deshonor*) and Leonor (*A secreto agravio, secreta venganza*) got married after believing D. Álvaro and D. Luis dead.
- 22 Wonder not then, my lord, these eyes/Of mine are neither cold nor dry:/Tis said that they whose bosoms prove/Worthy to feel the joys of love,/Or those of honour, still more deep—/Have the proud privilege to weep/Their sorrows, and no man reprove:—/Honour and love have both been mine—/Honour which I have always worn/As being a noble and well born;—/And love, which lately thou didst twine/My marriage, in those bonds of thine: (*The Physician of His own Honour*, vol. I, p. 370).
- 23 D. GUTIERRE. [Ap.] Pues médico me llamo de mi honra,/yo cubriré con tierra mi deshonor (*El medico de su honra*, II, vv. 1031–1032). I called myself Physician of my Honour./And in the earth shall bury my dishonour. (*The Physician of His own Honour*, vol. I, p. 369).
- 24 D. JUAN. (...) ya que ultrajes de mi honra/quieren que pintor me vea,/hasta que con sangre sea/el pintor de mi deshonor. (*El pintor de su deshonor*, III, vv. 677–680). Without translation by Fitzgerald, p. 70.
- 25 Now, oh! now's the moment, valour,/That the soul its wail repeating,/Tombd in burning tears and sighs,/Cometh to the open portals/Of the soul, which are the eyes: —/And indeed, on this occasion,/Eyes, you fitly melt in weeping,/That you may wash out my shame!—(*The Physician of His own Honour*, vol. I, p. 353).
- 26 Edited by A. David Kossoff (Vega 1989).
Say nothing, for your quick intelligence/Has seen my soul's desire and flatters me. (I, vv. 446–447). *Punishment without Revenge*, translated by Elizabeth Power, www.emothe.uv.es (Accessed on 14 March 2023) (Vega 2014).
- 27 BATÍN. I'm right to say you fancy your stepmother/And that is why you say these things to me./FEDERICO. Don't say it! It's true but I'm not to blame/If my imagination runs its course. (*Punishment without Revenge*, I, vv. 679–682)
- 28 The souls of women do not wear cold jasper; (II, v. 1038) (...) Declare your love, and be she who she may, (II, v. 1043) (...) Take my advice, dear Count, speak up at once/Don't hold your tongue, for the purest fortress/Of all has entrances made out of wax. (*Punishment without Revenge*, II, 1049–1051)
- 29 If there can be a remedy for this/It is not to attempt to see and talk,/Or otherwise our lives will have to end/Or our love will have to be overpowered. (*Punishment without Revenge*, II, vv. 1413–1416)
- 30 ABSALÓN. La comida has de pagar/dándote muerte, villano./[(Dentro.)]/AMÓN. ¿Por qué me matas, hermano?/[(Dentro.)]/ABSALÓN. Por dar venganza a Tamar. (*Los cabellos de Absalón*, II, vv. 1830–1833)
- 31 ABSALÓN. Bebe su sangre, Tamar;/procura en ella lavar/tu fama, hasta aquí manchada; (*Los cabellos de Absalón*, II, vv. 1839–1841).
- 32 Edited by Eduardo Juliá Martínez (Castro 1925).
- 33 “Combinación de ave y reptil, con cabeza y garras de ave y cuerpo de serpiente. En el cristianismo representa al diablo o al Anticristo, una de las cuatro apariencias del diablo” (Cooper 2000, p. 20) [Combination of bird and reptile, with the head and claws of a bird and the body of a snake. In Christianity it represents the devil or the Antichrist, one of the four appearances of the devil]. S. Augustin writes that the basilisk is king of serpents as the devil is king of demons. Among mortal sins it symbolizes lust (Biedermann 1993, p. 66). “Representaría al poder real que fulmina a quienes le faltan al respeto; a la mujer casquivana que corrompe a quienes de antemano no la reconocen y no pueden en consecuencia evitarla” (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 2015, p. 180) [It would represent the real power that strikes down those who disrespect it; to the capricious woman who corrupts those who do not recognize her in advance and cannot consequently avoid her].

- 34 Tamar was not surprised by the prince's rejection after the rape, and this is what she stated before the Court when she went to demand revenge: "Aborreciome ofendida: /no me espanto; que al fin son/enemigas declaradas/la esperanza y posesión" (*Los cabellos de Absalón*, II, vv. 1202–1205)
And the same happens in *No hay cosa como callar*: D. Juan, after his sexual assault to Leonor—who does not know who did it –, loses all interest in her:
DON LUIS. Pues/¿qué medio hay para olvidar/una hermosura? DON JUAN. Alcanzar/esa hermosura. Esta es/la cura, Don Luis, más cuerda;/porque ¿quién tan importuna/pasión tuvo, que de una/lograda ocasión se acuerda? (*No hay cosa como callar*, II, vv. 475–482)
- 35 Edited by Francisco Ruiz Ramón (Calderón de la Barca 1981).
- 36 By Rojas Zorrilla; edited by R.R. MacCurdy (Rojas Zorrilla 1961).
- 37 Who ever saw a grief like this arise/That hands must kill while tears bedew the eyes! (*The Physician of His own Honour*, vol. I, p. 386). Curiously, Cipriano (*El mágico prodigioso* by Calderón) sells his soul to the devil in order to this help him to understand a definition of God by Pliny that combines eyes and hands:
DEMONIO. Ese es un lugar que dice/(bien me acuerdo) estas palabras:/"Dios es una bondad suma,/una esencia, una sustancia,/todo vista y todo manos" (*El mágico prodigioso*, I, vv. 167–171).
Edited by Bruce W. Wardropper (Calderón de la Barca 1985).
I remember; I have the words at hand./"God is all goodness, one essence, one being;/One substance—all powerful, and all seeing" (I, p. 9). *Justina*, translated by J. H. (Calderón de la Barca 1848).
- 38 As says María Zambrano (1989, pp. 15–16):
Se puede morir aún estando vivo; se muere de muchas maneras; en ciertas enfermedades, en la muerte del prójimo, y más en la muerte de lo que se ama y en la soledad que produce la total incompreensión, la ausencia de posibilidad de comunicarse, cuando a nadie le podemos contar nuestra historia. [You can die while still alive; you can die in many ways; in certain illnesses, in the death of others, and even more so in the death of what is loved and in the loneliness that total incomprehension produces, the absence of the possibility of communicating, when we cannot tell our story to anyone.]
- 39 For there is nothing so impossible/That the eyes of the conscience can't peruse. (*Punishment without Revenge*, II, vv. 1097–1098).

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