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Dentro de una cripta cavada en uno de los muros, había un sepulcro de piedra de gran tamaño cubierto de relieves e inscripciones ilegibles. Entre el sepulcro y el muro había estrecho pasadizo, de un pie de ancho y del otro lado, a la misma distancia, una verja de hierro. En la parte interior la oscuridad era absoluta. Del lado de la verja quedaron los lugareños. Bermúdez, y en pos de él Obdulia, se perdieron de vista en el pasadizo sumido en tinieblas. Después de la enumeración de don Saturno, hubo un silencio solemne. El sabio había tosido, iba a hablar.

—Encienda usted un fósforo, señor Infanzón—dijo Obdulia.

—No tengo... aquí. Pero se puede pedir una vela.

—No señor, no hace falta. Yo sé las inscripciones de memoria... y además, no se pueden leer.

—¿Están en latín?—se atrevió a decir la Infanzón.

—No señora, están borradas.

No se hizo la luz.

Leopoldo Alas, *La Regenta* (I: 181-2)

Our epigraph comes from the closing scene of the opening chapter of Leopoldo Alas's *La Regenta* (1885). Here Vetusta's resident erudite, Saturnino Bermúdez, shows the local cathedral to a provincial couple visiting "la heroica ciudad" (I: 135) while he clumsily flirts with Obdulia Fandiño, the town's most scandalous citizen. This first chapter of *La Regenta* famously begins with all of Vetusta taking its daily siesta while it "descansaba oyendo entre sueños" (I: 136), as Fermín de Pas, canon theologian and vicar general, ascends the cathedral bell tower to survey his drowsing domain. The multiple symbolic functions of Vetusta's geography have received ample analysis in the rich scholarship on *La Regenta* (Turner; Oleza "Introducción"; Nuñez Puente; Nanfito; Iglesias Villamel; Gilfoil; y Vieira). Space indeed serves to organize *La Regenta* in metaphorical and narratological ways, but it also demonstrates the novel's engagement with processes of the unconscious. As we first meet Vetusta in a state of somnolence and then survey the city, we encounter three linked notions, which previous scholars have not connected: the city's semi-conscious state, its subterranean depths, and the erasure of the inscriptions within these depths. Obscurity, illegibility, erasure, and an unwillingness to illuminate the hidden recesses of the city's most important monument give the "cripta cavada" (I: 181) profound psychic resonance. Obdulia and Saturnino's flirtation there, which arouses

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without satisfying, links this underground space to the repressed sexual desire with which all Vetusta seethes.

The erased inscriptions in the crypt aptly reflect another entity residing in the depths of *La Regenta*: Fernando de Rojas's *La Celestina* (1499), which we propose as a fundamental, unconscious presence in Alas's novel. *La Regenta* is well known for its wide range of intertextual references, be they actual quotations from or allusions to earlier literary works. From Golden Age theater to Zorrilla's *Don Juan*, from *Don Quijote* and Fray Luis de León to the novels of Flaubert, Zola, Galdós, and *folletines*, *La Regenta* regularly foregrounds Spanish and European literature in its structure and story (Valis "*The Decadent*"; Sieberth "*Reading*" Mandrell; Sinclair; Sánchez; López Férez; y Livianos Domínguez). Yet beneath the novel's conscious intertextual references and allusions lies *La Celestina*, a text that haunts Alas's novel from within the crypt of Vetusta's unconscious and to which critics have yet to call attention.[1]

We use the term "unconscious" within a psychoanalytical framework. *La Regenta* has received insightful psychoanalytic interpretations from scholars who shed light on the novel's vibrant psychological landscape. Such readings focus, for example, on the "perverse voyeurism" of its characters (McKinney 70) or title character Ana Ozores's "mental dissociation" resulting from childhood trauma (Resina 233). Scholars discuss Ana's clear hysterical symptoms, linking them to both her repression of childhood trauma and the pathological behaviour of Vetusta as a whole (Sinclair; Labanyi "Galateas"; and Valis "Hysteria").[2] Among the most persuasive of these psychoanalytic interpretations is the work of Alison Sinclair, who carefully analyzes envy, perversion, and gendered language, making a strong case for reading *La Regenta* as "a hysterical text," an interpretation that extends the title character's neurosis to Alas's novel as a whole (37). Most importantly, Nuria Godón's in-depth study of masochistic contracts in the novel offers an excellent psychoanalytic reading that showcases the ways in which marriage and social contracts are parodied by Alas. Our interpretation of *La Celestina*'s haunting presence within *La Regenta* builds on this previous work. However, we argue that the hysteria depicted by Alas encompasses not only his characters and the novel's text, but also its web of intertextual references, which reaches beyond *La Regenta* and deep into the canon of Spanish literature to embrace *La Celestina*. Our expansion of the psychoanalytic reading of Alas's nineteenth-century novel requires that we briefly explore the notions of textual haunting and the unconscious before turning to the presence of Rojas's early-modern text in *La Regenta*.

The Entombed Unconscious

Saturnino's description of the crypt's inscriptions foreshadows Sigmund Freud's notion of the unconscious as articulated in his early work on hysteria, the diagnosis often given to Ana Ozores. As Freud explains in "The Aetiology of Hysteria" (1896), the archaeologist-analyst travels to "a little-known region" (the unconscious) to discover crumbled ruins (repressed material) that include "tablets with half-effaced and unreadable inscriptions" (192). The explorer-analyst must work to "clear away the rubbish, and beginning from the visible remains, uncover what is buried," that is, to interpret the patient's symptoms so as to construct her unconscious. If the archaeologist-analyst is fortunate, "the

numerous inscriptions, which, by good luck, may be bilingual, reveal an alphabet and a language, and, when they have been deciphered and translated, yield undreamed-of information about the events of the remote past" (192). For Freud and his followers, these deciphered inscriptions represent the unconscious, the location of repressed memories, thoughts, and traumas, as well as phobias, complexes, and neuroses. The contents of the unconscious receive their only direct representation in dreams, slips of the tongue, jokes, the psychological symptoms presented by patient to analyst, and, as we argue below, the sins described by penitent to confessor in the Catholic ritual of auricular confession.

As we know from "el arqueólogo" (I: 165) Saturnino's excursion through the cathedral, few effaced inscriptions come with built-in keys for their translation. The conscious mind actively resists excavation of the unconscious, much as Bermúdez vehemently refuses to illuminate the crypt. However, the analyst who successfully traces hysterical symptoms back to their cause inevitably discovers childhood sexual trauma buried in the patient's unconscious (Freud, "The Aetiology of Hysteria" 203). Once more, our epigraph confirms Freud's argument. As the cathedral tour comes to an end, Saturnino silences any conversation about the sepulcher's inscriptions with an improvised declamation from his own history of Vetusta. Nonetheless, the repressed sexual material described by Freud emerges in the furtive embrace and pressed hands that Saturnino, who "jamás había probado las dulzuras groseras y materiales del amor carnal" (I: 171), shares with Obdulia, which echo his adulterous longings for Ana.

As this reading shows, Bermúdez's tour through the cathedral literalizes Freud's archaeological metaphor, since the scene takes place in an actual crypt with inscriptions that remain unread in the novel. Thus, the end of Chapter I of *La Regenta* contains a metaphor for the novel's unconscious, forcing us to wonder precisely who or what lies inside the sepulcher bearing the indecipherable inscriptions.[3] The presence of actual corpses in the depths of Vetusta's Cathedral suggests that *La Regenta* is a cryptophoric text deeply invested in the fantasy of consuming and then entombing a lost love within the unconscious, so as to deny that very loss (Abraham and Torok 126). Such bodily incorporation preserves the lost love, i.e. the Other, "as a full-fledged person," allowing "the ghost of the crypt […]to haunt the cemetery guard, giving him strange and incomprehensible signals, making him perform bizarre acts, or subjecting him to unexpected sensations" (Abraham and Torok 130). The purple prose of Bermúdez's multi-volume history of Vetusta certainly represents "strange and incomprehensible signals" to his audience, while his description as "anfibio" (I: 168), his logorrhea, copious sweating, and "digestiones difíciles y sobre todo de perpetuos restriñimientos" (I: 169) seem suspiciously like the "bizarre acts" and "unexpected sensations" that occur when a ghostly Other haunts from within.

The sepulcher's location in the very heart of Vetusta suggests that Bermúdez's haunting is not limited to him alone but encompasses the entire city. The confession-box represents one of the many sites where this haunting occurs, since just as the cathedral crypt literalizes Freud's metaphor for the unconscious, so does auricular confession concretize the unconscious actions of repression. After all, the first confession we glimpse concerns none other than a woman who we later learn is named Celestina. Fermín sees her, "los ojos cargados de una curiosidad maliciosa más irritada que satisfecha; […] pegada al

confesonario lleno todavía del calor y el olor de don Custodio" (I: 167). The sensual pleasure that this as yet unnamed penitent has taken in confession, as well as the hint of future erotic satisfaction, connects her via confession to the ghost of repressed adulterous desire emanating from the crypt. Rather than exorcising this phantom, whom all of Vetusta unconsciously ventriloquizes, the ritual of confession becomes one more instance of haunting in *La Regenta*'s opening chapter, making no corner of Vetusta's cathedral safe from "las inmundicias de cierto gato que, no se sabía cómo, entraba en la catedral y lo profanaba todo" (I: 168). The same feline characteristics underlie Rojas's Celestina: cat-like stealth, bestial sexuality, and the ability to corrupt even the purest of places. Moreover, the basic paradigm of human interactions facilitated by Rojas's *alcahueta* drives the plot of *La Regenta* despite the fact that Alas never once mentions Rojas in the novel.

La Celestina and *Alcahuetería*

The plot of *La Celestina* is simple yet leads to tragic consequences for almost all. Smitten with a girl named Melibea, the young nobleman Calisto suffers from love-sickness ("mal de amores") due to her unattainability.[4] Calisto's servant urges him to hire an infamous *alcahueta*, Celestina, to seduce Melibea. After a few calculated attempts, the old procuress excites Melibea enough to seek Calisto's company, in the process introducing us to the prostitutes and servants populating Celestina's milieu. Once Calisto and Melibea actually have sex, the story quickly spirals downward: Calisto falls to his death while escaping an assignation with Melibea; his servants kill Celestina in a dispute over money and are in turn hanged; and Melibea commits suicide, leaving her parents bereft. The play closes with the famous lament of Pleberio, Melibea's father, who lashes out at Fortune for so cruelly depriving him of joy. Immensely popular in its own time, Rojas's grim story represents an iconic text and has contributed to the Spanish lexicon in the word "celestina" ("persona que facilita o promueve de manera encubierta contactos con fines políticos, comerciales o de otro tipo," "Celestina").

Despite moments of humor and irony, critics unanimously agree that *La Celestina* depicts a dark world of corruption, hypocrisy, fear, and greed, in which love represents a purely physical pathology, mandated by nature and requiring sex as its cure (Maravall; Gilman; Dunn; Severin; Márquez Villanueva; González Echevarría; Rouhi; Snow; Folger; and Solomon). As Joseph Snow states, Rojas shows "up-close the smallness of spirit that shuts the door on acts of altruism, loyalty and grace" and obliterates the virtues of faith, hope, and charity in favor of "a more temporal trinity: egocentrism, cynicism and *cupiditas-concupiscentia*" ("The Sexual Landscape" 150). Elsewhere the same scholar states, rightly, that even language itself is debased in the work, serving only to "camouflage, to deceive, to pervert and distort" ("Darkness" 326). The body count at the end of Rojas's work inspires a deeply cynical attitude towards the manipulation, violence, and deprivation that members of Celestina's society must endure to survive.

As Rojas makes clear, *La Celestina* warns readers against old women who lure young people into sexual activity. Celestina plays the key role in uniting not only Calisto and Melibea, but also others through a masterful linguistic seduction that draws on her vast sexual repertoire. She tantalizes with alternately graphic and eloquent speech, assessing what might excite each of her listeners and tailoring her discourse accordingly. She takes

on, in turn, the role of master-teacher expounding the laws of Nature, defenseless old woman struggling to make a living, surgeon diagnosing and curing pain, and mother providing care and help. In each situation, she speaks with ease and flourish, commanding registers of humility, dominance, authority, and submission as needed. Her professional success arises from her ability to imagine and to articulate all possible erotic positions for both sexes. At the same time, Celestina's effortless construction of desire through language betrays a voracious sexual appetite, which leads to other characters' perception of her as grotesque. When taken with her marginal social position, her dealings with Satan, and her old and repulsive body, Celestina's audacity to speak openly about the taboo topic of sex causes her society's universal condemnation: "¡Quemada seas, alcahueta, falsa, hechicera, enemiga de honestad[!]" (95). In short, Celestina occupies a paradoxical position: her ability to cross social boundaries and thus to provide pleasure makes her indispensable, but she is shunned due to her old age, non-reproductivity, and socially unacceptable profession.

The role of the intermediary, on which Celestina relies for her livelihood, exhibits the same ambivalence as her character. Reviled yet utterly essential, her mediation represents a specific instance of triangulated desire, which we must distinguish from other types of three-way relationships in *La Regenta*, such as the Holy Trinity, Freud's oedipal triangle, or the literary paradigms offered by René Girard and Eve Sedgwick (Vidal Tibbits; Sinclair; Matthews; and Faúndez). Triangulation in *La Celestina* is of another kind altogether since the *alcahueta*'s mediation necessarily involves the commission of the sexual act and the financial gain that comes from commodifying sex. The sex instigated by the *alcahueta* never represents some higher feeling, such as romantic love or spiritual transcendence, but rather a hygienic means of relieving love-sickness, an ailment mankind shares with both animals and plants (Rojas 65). Consequently, the sex Celestina facilitates violates norms of social acceptability and represents *de facto* if not *per legem* adultery, and it requires someone who lies outside the realm of sexual desirability, like Celestina, for its commission. As Rojas's work vividly illustrates, the triangulation of *alcahuetería* classes individuals as either hyper-sexual or utterly non-desirable and treats sex simultaneously as a hygienic measure, a mercenary activity, and a violation of one of God's ten commandments with dangerous if not fatal consequences. Celestina represents the most complex and dynamic *alcahueta* of pre-modern Castilian literature. In addition to fleshing out the ambivalent figure of the *alcahueta*, Rojas's novel-play describes a cynical worldview in which the stakes of fulfilling sexual desire are no less than death, and the go-between acts as gatekeeper to both sexual pleasure and the grave.

Symptoms of *La Celestina*

Because Alas never mentions *La Celestina* among the many literary titles he cites, we begin our examination of the *alcahuetería* in *La Regenta* by searching for symptoms that justify our treatment of Rojas's work as a "subterranean" text (González Echevarría 10) in *La Regenta*.[5] The first symptom of *La Celestina*'s presence in the novel appears in the use of the word "celestina" and its synonym "trotaconventos" no fewer than eight times as damning terms for various female characters. The Marquesa de Vegellana, whose two homes provide Vetusta's most select coterie with opportunities for illicit sex, receives the appellation of "¡una...trotaconventos, es una Celestina!" (I: 575) from Gloucester, another

enemy of Fermín, while Fermín himself makes a similar observation: "¡Esa Marquesa es una Celestina de afición!" (I: 625). Elsewhere, the aging Cayetano speaks of Obdulia's time in Madrid, stating that for a certain Tarsila Fandiño, she "le servía de trotaconventos, digámoslo así" (I: 197). The gallery of minor characters surrounding Álvaro Mesía, the local don Juan, includes Amadeo Bedoya, known for "su arte para descubrir vírgenes en las aldeas y por sus buenas relaciones con todas las Celestinas del pueblo" (II: 97). Such direct references to Rojas's heroine and her literary grandmother show awareness of Rojas's work on the part of *La Regenta*'s characters and repeat its anti-*alcahueta* prejudice.

The next symptom of *La Celestina* in Alas's novel comes from the unnamed "joven pálida con hábito del Carmen" (I: 167) whom, as mentioned earlier, Fermín sees leaving the confession-box in chapter I of the novel. The daughter of Santos Barinaga, who perishes of alcoholism shortly before the novel's climax, Celestina acts as the gatekeeper to her father's deathbed. In chapter XXV, we learn:

> Celestina, la hija de Barinaga, era una beata ofidiana, confesaba con don Custodio. […] El Magistral[…] [a]borrecía en aquel momento a Celestina. Recordó que era la joven que había visto días antes a los pies de don Custodio junto a un confesonario del trasaltar. Aquella tarde no la había reconocido. Tenía facha de sabandija de sacristía... de cualquier cosa. (I: 660-1)

As Fermín listens to Celestina and her father fight, he initially mistakes the sounds for "aprensión […] como si sonara dentro del cerebro" (I: 660). In addition to illustrating his frayed mental state, this misperception shows how Celestina shuttles between Fermín's conscious perceptions and unconscious fears. Alas's Celestina represents an instance of a barely effaced inscription in *La Regenta* that can easily be deciphered. De Pas's connection of the louse-like Celestina to the unnamed penitent shows in retrospect that Rojas's *alcahueta* has been present in Alas's novel from the very start.

The setting of *La Regenta*, the city of Vetusta, represents yet one more symptom of *La Celestina* that reaffirms the ubiquity of Rojas's work in that of Alas. The word "Vetusta" conjures up the Latin *vetula*, which signifies "old woman" or "*vieja*," a common form of address for Celestina and her ilk, as well as the title of a thirteenth-century Latin poem, *De Vetula*, on the wiles of old women. As this etymology suggests, Vesusta is a decadent and debauched space (Valis "*The Decadent*," Nuñez Puente; Nanfito; and Pérez de León). Despite the centuries separating Alas from Rojas, the ailments of Restoration-era Vetusta echo *La Celestina*'s urban setting, similarly saturated in hypocrisy and repressed sexual desire (Márquez Villanueva; Snow "The Sexual Landscape"; and Corfis). Yet one more symptom of the intertextual link between *La Regenta* and *La Celestina*, the uncanny similarity of the two works' societies invites us to explore more evident signs of Celestinesque *alcahuetería* and its consequences in Alas's novel.

Vetusta's Legion of *alcahuetas*

Virtually all of *La Regenta*'s characters exhibit some aspect of Celestinesque procuring as they push Ana towards adultery either deliberately or unwittingly. This fracturing of Celestina into a variety of *La Regenta*'s characters makes the process of detecting the overarching pattern of *alcahuetería* in the novel similar to the reading process described by Freud in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (211-260): if we uncover the ways in which the manifest content of *La Regenta* condenses and displaces its latent content emanating from *La Celestina* in the cathedral crypt, we recognize the hidden desires that drive Vetusta.

The displacement of *alcahuetería* throughout the novel's cast of characters helps to explain two peculiar features of *La Regenta* in contrast to other nineteenth-century novels of adultery. First, no character—with the exception of Ana's maid, Petra—manages to have sex without the intervention of multiple go-betweens. Even the oversexed Obdulia fails to seduce Fermín on her own, while Mesía's multi-year campaign against Ana's virtue only succeeds after most of Vetusta has shoved her into his waiting arms. Second, playing the role of *alcahueta* removes characters—once again, with the exception of Petra—from the realm of sexual desirability in the novel. We see this pattern most clearly in Visitación, the first person in the novel to foment Álvaro's illicit desire deliberately, and Petronila Rianzares, who unintentionally facilitates Fermín's most passionate conversations with Ana in her religiously oriented salon. Even Mesía, whose countless affairs inspire the envy of Vetusta's gentlemen, makes little headway with Ana when relying solely on his own skills of seduction. Unlike Emma Bovary, Anna Karenina, and Effi Briest, who break their marriage vows with little, if any, prodding from others, Ana Ozores's adultery requires that virtually every other character in the novel act as her *alcahueta* so that they collectively drive her to her demise.

We could cite any of the novel's main players as examples of *La Regenta*'s condensation and displacement of *alcahuetería*, but the triad of Paula, Fermín, and Petra provides the most powerful illustration of the barely effaced inscription of *La Celestina* acting as the novel's unconscious. In addition to ending up under the same roof at the novel's end, these three represent the novel's only stable triangular relationship, enacting together the full range of Celestinesque activities. In fact, Fermín's mother, the domineering Paula, uncannily resembles a socially acceptable version of Roja's reprobate heroine.[6] The madame-like Paula procures young women from the country for her son, training them to serve and transforming her house into a private brothel: "Las escogía ella cuando iba por el verano al campo. Las conservaba mucho tiempo. La condición de dormir cerca del señorito, por si llamaba, se les imponía con una naturalidad edemíaca. Ni las muchachas ni el Magistral habían opuesto nunca el menor reparo" (I: 489).

Much like Celestina, Paula's background is "violent, entangled, a struggle for social betterment via the route of sexual compromise and astute manipulation" (Sinclair 183). The dingy tavern she runs before coming to Vetusta has all the markers of a run-down brothel, where Paula learns to "explotar los brutales apetitos" (I: 643) and to profit from her clients' "lujuria animal" via "aquel tráfico repugnante" (I: 644-5). Like the infamous house of Celestina, Paula's tavern creates a profitable mixture of people, alcohol, and sex on the margins of society. Her violent past, similar to that of Celestina, has familiarized

Paula with poverty and deprivation, taught her the value of other people's opinions, endowed her with eloquence, and convinced her that the only motivations for human behavior are money and sex. Unlike Celestina, however, Paula uses her hard-won worldly wisdom to launch herself and Fermín from the precarious edge of society into its center by blackmailing their way into the Catholic clergy.

Paula clearly embodies Celestina's role of the all-seeing and all-knowing mother, as her awareness of and dependence on the gossip in Vetusta suggests: "'Lo sabe todo,' pensó el Provisor" (I: 629). Although she explicitly warns her son of the threat his relationship with Ana poses to his own aspirations for churchly power and hers for financial gain, Paula inadvertently reinforces Fermín's confused sexual attraction to Ana by daring to speak of it aloud before he fully realizes its intensity and extent (I: 505). As a result, Paula not only provides a hygienic sexual outlet for Fermín in their home, but also unwittingly whets his appetite for Ana even as she forbids their liaison. Celestina's "madre" qualities play out on both conscious and unconscious levels in Paula's biological bond with her son, allowing her to stand on the shoulders of the early-modern *alcahueta* and to give her trade a veneer of Restoration respectability.

While Paula's haunting by *La Celestina* seems self-evident, the multiple ways in which her son Fermín embodies Roja's *alcahuetería* are more covert. De Pas's clearest connection to procuring comes from his prominent role in the church, where he, like Celestina, bears many names—Provisor, Magistral, De Pas, Don Fermín, and padre—which reflect his different roles in Vetustan society. Moreover, the Catholic church in which he performs these roles exhibits the same intertwined obsession with power, money, and sex that characterizes *La Celestina*. Consequently, much of Fermín's daily business smacks suspiciously of procuring for his own profit. For example, early in the novel we learn that he convinced the wealthy Carraspiques to put their daughter Rosita into a convent (chapter XII), while later De Pas blatantly plans "un proyecto: casar a Olvido con quien él quisiera" (I: 564). Operating under his mother's all-seeing eye, he runs Vetusta's cathedral in much the same way as Celestina does her brothel: "sin pensarlo, contra su propósito, se encenagó como todos los días en las complicadas cuestiones de su gobierno eclesiástico, mezcladas hasta lo más íntimo con sus propios intereses y los de su señora madre; […] se disfrazaba allí la eterna cuestión del dinero" (I: 559). The phrases "sin pensarlo" and "contra su propósito" suggest that Fermín is not fully conscious of the tyranny of "su señora madre," who has emasculated him by putting him in the skirts of a priest and made him the most powerful go-between in Vetusta. As with Rojas's *alcahueta*, Fermín's mantle is kissed and worshipped, and no negotiation takes place without his involvement. Because so many women confess to him, he is privy to all of the city's shameful secrets—"El Magistral conocía una especie de Vetusta subterránea: era la ciudad oculta de las conciencias" (I: 481)—a situation that recalls Celestina's power over her unnamed city: "Todas me obedecían, todas me honraban, de todas era acatada, ninguna salía de mi querer, lo que decía era lo bueno, a cada cual daba cobro, no escogían más de lo que yo les mandaba" (I: 150-1).

Fermín's less than conscious *alcahuetería* within the church affords him a heady experience of both worldly power and barely concealed lust, as we witness in his interactions with the "beatas" learning the catechism under his tutelage. The young girls, whom he views as

roses, link both to the Carraspiques' cloistered daughter Rosita and to Ana, whose passionate letter De Pas reads before plucking a dew-covered rosebud, biting into it, and then going to instruct "aquellas rosas que eran suyas" (II: 266). As he gazes at the pubescent girls, Fermín assesses their physical desirability, noting "esos capullos de mujer" (II: 265), "los misterios fisiológicos por que estaban pasando" (II: 266), and "la obediencia ciega de mujer […] el símbolo del fanatismo sentimental" (II: 266-7). Fermín's lustful and possessive gaze on his young trainees has his mouth "hecha agua engomada" (II: 269), providing an eerie echo of Celestina's lascivious reminiscences. The rush of power De Pas experiences, as he arrogantly surveys the "beatas," recalls the initial scene of El Magistral's view of Vetusta from atop the cathedral bell tower. Moreover, it places him, like Celestina, in the positions of both madame and client relative to his young charges.

The line between *alcahueta* and client that Fermín unconsciously blurs as he drools over the "beatas" reappears in his tortured passion for Ana Ozores. As "Magistral" of Vetusta, De Pas is a master of eloquence, articulate and seductive in both oral and written language (Outes-León 2010), and he structures his intimate encounters with Ana deliberately as confessions in which he uses his linguistic prowess not merely to instruct, but to excite, to tantalize, and to command obedience, all the while concealing his desire. Fermín's eloquence represents his most salient and seductive talent and parallels that of Celestina in its power to persuade others yet inability to provide him with that which he actually wants, be it authentic religiosity or Ana's body. His *alcahuetería* aims to bring Ana closer to the church and therefore to him, but even Ana does not fail to glimpse its proxenetic qualities when, after the Semana Santa procession, she writes to him that the experience made her feel like a prostitute (II: 449).

Unlike Celestina, Fermín cannot voice his desire openly, making his eloquence a form of falsehood (Sieberth, "*Reading*" 22). He cannot speak of "lujuria" with the relish of Celestina; instead, he must instruct Ana away from adultery with his words, while drawing her towards it with his "voz dulce," "con unas palabras muy elocuentes," and the "fluir de palabras dulces, nuevas, llenas de una alegría celestial" (I: 421-422). Until quite late in the novel, Ana fails to discern Fermín's deceptive tactics or lust, whose repulsive force ultimately pushes her closer to Álvaro's embrace. In other words, De Pas's *alcahuetería* with Ana on his own behalf has the contrary effect of placing him among the legion of go-betweens responsible for uniting Ana with Mesía. Nonetheless, Paula and Fermín, Vetusta's most powerful and supposedly upright citizens, become permutations of Rojas's bawd, delivering perhaps the harshest critique of the Catholic church in *La Regenta*.

Petra's embodiment of the *alcahueta* differs from that of Paula, Fermín, and all other characters in *La Regenta*, since even though she acts as an *alcahueta*, she maintains her desirability and initiates sexual relations on her own behalf. As part of Vetusta's working class, Petra profits from "aquella voluptuosidad andrajosa" (I: 434) of the "costureras, chalequeras, planchadoras, ribeteadoras, cigarreras, fosforeras" (I: 431), whom Ana notices and envies while returning from the spring of Mari-Pepa. Petra belongs to yet inverts the literary tradition of the "doncella," who acts as her mistress's go-between, letter-carrier, and confidante in romances of chivalry and Golden Age texts. Both Álvaro

and Fermín seek her favors in their affairs with Ana. Fermín's explicit plan to possess Petra—"a él le convenía tener de su parte a la doncella de la Regenta, hacerla suya, completamente suya" (II: 467)—results in their sexual liaison, while Álvaro recognizes the need to have sex with her (II: 523). Her willingness to play along with both men notwithstanding, Petra subverts the traditional model of the "doncella" by disdaining her mistress while she facilitates Ana's liaisons, subordinating chivalric love to the mercenary sexual agenda of *alcahuetería*.

Petra's manipulation of the role of "doncella" represents the fullest embodiment of the ghost of *La Celestina* in Alas's novel. Her sudden prominence towards the end of the novel and the foregrounding of her point of view signal the full return of the repressed paradigm of *alcahuetería* from Rojas's novel-play. Petra's ability to enact the entombed contents of Vetusta's unconscious comes as no surprise, since her overt sexuality functions as the physical expression of Ana's repressed desires. Much as Celestina articulates for Melibea the contradictory sexual drives and erotic anguish that she herself cannot speak, Petra experiences what Celestina terms "la pena y pasión" (156) of actual sex, while Ana suffers repeated attacks of hysteria.

Petra's ability to act on the very desires that Ana represses comes to light early in the novel during their excursion to the spring of Mari-Pepa. As Ana sorts through her muddled thoughts in the wake of first confessing to De Pas, the maid runs to an impromptu assignation with her cousin Antonio. When Ana's contemplation ends, she notices her solitude and in vain cries Petra's name as a toad stares at her: "La doncella no respondía. El sapo la miraba con una impertinencia que le daba asco y un pavor tonto" (I: 429). At the very moment Ana feels the toad's repugnant gaze, Petra returns, her sweating body displaying all the signs of "pasión" fulfilled. For her mistress, Petra's vibrant sensuality and openly expressed libido are the equivalent of a repulsive toad that must be repressed, causing the ongoing "pena" of Ana's hysterical symptoms. Petra quickly learns to interpret these somatic symptoms and to manipulate Ana to her own benefit. For example, when she overhears her mistress talking and moaning in her sleep, Petra refuses to tell Ana much, instead revealing frightening yet tantalizing pieces of the nightmare in which she detects a lie: "Ana comprendió que Petra mentía […] Calló y procuró ocultar su confusión" (II: 116-117). Ana's compulsion to hide the clearly sexual contents of her nightmare, as well as the onset of a migraine, indicate a hesitant foray into her own unconscious via Petra. The "doncella" ultimately uses her access to her mistress's unspoken desires to engineer Ana's fall, which in turn leads to Víctor's death and Álvaro's exile from Vetusta.

At this point in *La Regenta*, Petra comes fully into her own, underscoring the damage done by the return of the repressed. The shift in focalization from the novel's main characters to the working-class maid reveals all the shoddiness of Vetusta's moral fabric and allows the narrator to fill the printed page with nouns and adjectives describing the vices of the city's upper class: "vil metal," "ambición," "guapetona," "orgullosa," "hipócrita," "idiota," "vanidad," "lujuria," "endiablada," "venganza" (II: 517). When viewed through Petra's eyes, Ana and Álvaro's affair quickly descends into slapstick: "Lo mejor era que el señorito saltase por la pared. Justamente don Álvaro tenía las piernas muy largas" (II: 519). Much as Celestina's vantage point reveals the lucrative moral weakness of her social

superiors, Petra's prominence at the end of *La Regenta* foregrounds the link between desire and profitability, lowering the caché of the former in the service of the latter. Petra, a great granddaughter of Celestina, manages to expose the hypocrisy of her masters, to debunk their grand notions of seduction and love, and to profit from *alcahuetería* without punishment. In fact, she earns the reward of improving her social station when she takes Teresina's place in the household of Paula and Fermín. This final shift in all the novel's triangulated relationships also has the effect of placing Petra under the tyrannical control of Paula and thereby repressing *alcahuetería*, once again, within the crypt of Vetusta's unconscious. With her former dominance reestablished at the novel's end, Paula represents *La Regenta*'s ultimate *alcahueta*—a mother who procures for her own son—giving the reader a parting vision of a go-between whose perversity and grotesqueness exceeds even that of Rojas's Celestina.

Conclusion

The return to stability at the end of *La Regenta* brings us to the question of Ana Ozores's place among Vetusta's legion of *alcahuetas*, as well as her peculiar fate. If others in the novel incarnate the go-between, then Ana most closely approximates Rojas's love-sick Melibea in her desperate need for a cure for "mal de amores." Despite the four hundred years separating them, Ana exhibits the same sleeplessness, hypersensitivity, and mood swings as Rojas's young lovers. Her husband Víctor's neglect and impotence exacerbate her already hysterical condition, causing the same combination of mental anguish and physical pain from which Melibea suffers in *La Celestina*. Instead of pleasure, Ana recalls "un dolor irremediable que ni siquiera tenía el atractivo de los dolores poéticos; era un dolor vergonzoso" (I: 460) when she thinks of her sexless honeymoon with Víctor. However, her position is worse than that of the unmarried Melibea, since the married Ana should have a legitimate outlet for her sexual impulses and no need of an *alcahueta* to eliminate her "mal de amores." Ana's passionless marriage denies her this lawful source of sex, forcing her to sublimate her natural desire for love and a child into a yearning for spiritual transcendence, which proves impossible under Fermín's self-interested guidance.

Ana's physical beauty, virtue, and genuine religiosity at the novel's start make her an anomalous outsider in Vetustan society, as well as a screen on which the city's citizens project their repressed desires. By the end of *La Regenta*, she has become a scapegoat occupying a position oddly similar to that of Celestina. Like Visitación, Vetusta "[a]dmiraba a su amiguita, elogiaba su hermosura y su virtud; pero la hermosura la molestaba como a todas, y la virtud la volvía loca. Quería ver aquel armiño en el lodo" (I: 410). The city's legion of *alcahuetas* haunted by *La Celestina* do just this, "procurar que Ana fuese al fin y al cabo como todas" (I: 410). By pressing Ana into the affair with Álvaro from all sides, Vetusta's residents deprive her of beauty and virtue, and absorb her into the city's grotesque landscape, where she becomes yet one more perverse body linked through mercenary sex.[7] The "filth and lasciviousness" (Rich 512) originally associated with Obdulia's repellent appetites, Visita's dirty underclothes, and the Marqués de Vegallana's binging and purging ultimately sully Ana. We see this most clearly after Fermín menacingly approaches her in the novel's closing scene in the cathedral, when Ana falls unconscious to the floor where the acolyte Celedonio "inclinó el rostro asqueroso sobre el de la Regenta y le besó los labios" (II: 598). With this kiss, the

revulsion associated with Celestina's own body (Rojas 60) invades Ana Ozores in the form of nausea and delirium, and Vetusta consumes Ana's beauty and virtue so that they too can be buried in the cathedral crypt.

The framing of *La Regenta* as a whole by the character of Celedonio brings us back to Saturnino Bermúdez's original venture into Vetusta's unconscious. Not only do the first two syllables of Celedonio's name echo those of Celestina, but he also condenses all of the hypocrisy, perversion, and grotesqueness of *alcahuetería* once displaced in other characters. The detailed description of Celedonio in chapter I suggests that he, like Celestina, represents a character on the threshold between man and woman, sexual and nonsexual: "ya sabía ajustar los músculos de su cara de chato a las exigencias de la liturgia […] imitando a muchos sacerdotes y beatas que conocía y trataba. Pero, sin pensarlo, daba una intención lúbrica y cínica a su mirada, como una meretriz de calleja […] Celedonio en su expresión de humildad beatífica pasaba del feo tolerable al feo asqueroso" (I: 148).[8]

Recalling Celestina's description of the sleezy eroticism of the fifteenth-century church, whose respect she remembers with glee—"desde obispos hasta sacristanes. En entrando por la iglesia, veía derrocar bonetes en mi honor, como si yo fuera una duquesa" (Rojas 151)—the portrait of Celedonio also emphasizes the actual presence of illicit sex inside its nineteenth-century counterpart: "en el acólito sin órdenes se podía adivinar futura y próxima perversión," appearing as "hembra desfachatada, sirena de cuartel" (I: 148). Unsurprisingly, the kiss Celedonio gives Ana at the novel's end represents "una perversión de la perversión de su lascivia" and makes her imagine "sentir sobre la boca el vientre viscoso y frío de un sapo" (II: 598). The recurring image of a toad first appears during Ana's reflections at the spring of Mari-Pepa discussed above. However, it is foreshadowed by the description of Bermúdez, the gatekeeper of Vetusta's unconscious, as an "anfibio." Celedonio's toad-like kiss transforms Ana, who valiantly resisted *La Celestina*'s haunting until her affair with Álvaro, from Melibea and the untouched object of Bermúdez's sexual longing, into yet one more embodiment of Rojas's *alcahueta*.[9] After haunting all the novel's other characters, Celestina finally enters Ana's semi-conscious body lying only a few feet from the same crypt with whose erased inscriptions our venture into Vetusta's unconscious began.

Ana Ozores falls prey in *La Regenta* to a vision of space, desire, and the body that emanates from Rojas's *La Celestina.* Once we recognize the ways in which the mediation practiced by the early-modern *alcahueta* has been condensed and displaced throughout Alas's Restoration-era novel, we realize that the very identity of Vetusta and its inhabitants is inextricably linked with *alcahuetería* and that the city crushes, through its *alcahuetería*, the only character to understand love as not merely a mercenary transaction or hygienic activity, but an opportunity for intimacy and spiritual transcendence. The beautiful and virtuous Ana threatens the ghost buried in Vetusta's unconscious, which brings Celestina out of the cathedral crypt so that she can draw Ana into the city's perversity and depravity through the adultery she eventually commits. The phantom haunting the city of Vetusta from inside the cathedral crypt is none other than the *alcahuetería* narrated by Rojas in *La Celestina*, and the hysteria that other critics have located in the novel's characters and text reaches far beyond to its intertextual relationship to earlier Spanish literature. Viewed from this perspective, *La Regenta* delivers

its most scathing critique not to wives who betray their marriage vows, but to a society and church that have failed to learn the dark lessons of *La Celestina* and, instead, have entombed this iconic text in their unconscious so that Rojas's novel-play haunts and destroys the rare few who seek love, hope, and spiritual redemption.

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Notes

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[1] Germán Gullón and Joan Oleza mention *La Celestina* among the texts on which Alas relied while writing *La Regenta*. However, neither provides substantive analysis of the relationship between the two works (Gullón, *La novela* 144, and "El valor cultural" 367; Oleza "Clarín").

[2] Critics have written much about Ana's illness as a depiction of nineteenth-century theories of hysteria; for example, how Ana's body functions as a screen for contemporary medical ideas (Labanyi *Gender*, 219). Rojas's text exhibits a similar dialogue with the medicine of his time, which linked "love and medical discourse" (Corfis 115; see also Solomon and Folger).

[3] Although our reading of *La Regenta* employs much of the terminology adopted by the "spectral turn" in the Humanities and Social Sciences of the 1990s, we do not engage the substantial body of scholarship inspired by Jacques Derrida's *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International* (1994) since it diverges from our argument.

[4] Initially, Rojas's work had the title *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea*, but it came to be called *La Celestina* due to the go-between's prominence (Gerli 10).

[5] González Echevarría contends that *La Celestina* "is the most suppressed classic in Spanish literary history" (7). Although we question the assertion that Rojas's play represents a "subterranean classic" (10), the notion proves apt for our analysis of *La Regenta*.

[6] Sinclair offers an astute reading of Fermín's relationship with the "terrible, omnipotent" Paula (180), in which the scholar demonstrates Fermín's repetition of the mother/infant dyad with Ana, so that he may use her "as his perverse object in a self-created, non-oedipal triangle" (178).

[7] We endorse neither a moralist nor an uncontested meaning for "perversion" and the distinction between "normal" and "abnormal" sexual behavior. Our use of judgmental terms in reference to sexuality reflects the moral universes of *La Celestina* and *La Regenta* accurately.

[8] To quote Mary Gossy on Celestina's composite identity: "Being a wise woman means being between—between sexes […] between classes […], between the oppositions set by the culture […] This lack of submission to the rigidities of orthodox culture is what makes Celestina evil" (37-8).

[9] As Stephanie Sieberth argues, the toad allows *La Regenta*'s narrator to "convey the underlying content of Vetustan discourse, its 'inmundicias,' without having to describe them directly" ("Kiss and Tell", 98).

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