



## Article

# “Alma, si ciega vas tras tus antojos”: Going Blindly through Seventeenth-Century Literature

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**Abstract:** Faced with the exaltation of sight as a perfect divine creation, so evident in the *Uso de los antojos* (1623) by Daza de Valdés, and faced with the satirical–burlesque tone of popular literature, dogmatic theology considered it inappropriate to praise a sense that deviated human understanding and made it difficult to comprehend the sacramental mysteries in depth. Through different fragments of literature produced in seventeenth-century Seville, we will see how the Church constructed, parallel to the scientific and popular discourses, a catechetical rhetoric that sought to deny physical sight and any device intended to enhance or restore it. The idea was to promote a knowledge of God guided by faith, allegorized as a blindfolded woman. Thus, we will see how the glasses and the blindfold capitalized two discourses that could feed back on each other and at the same time evidence the porosity of baroque literature towards the new advances in physics.

**Keywords:** blindness; blindfold; sight; *Antojos*; eyeglasses; spectacles; religious discourse; science; seventeenth-century literature; Seville

## 1. *Antojos* for Everyone!

The *Uso de los antojos para todo género de vistas* (Daza de Valdés 1623), by the Cordovan Benito Daza de Valdés, took up the Galilean theses set forth in the *Sidereus Nuncius* (1610) to deal with the health of sight and its improvement by means of “la invención admirable” of eyeglasses, to which he dedicates substantial chapters related to their structure, lenses, size, materials, etc. Considered the first treatise on physiological optics and optometry in the world, its initial folio already speaks of the eyes in positive terms that connect the organ with the astrological and spiritual:

Entre los sentidos humanos es el de la vista el más perfecto, y la fábrica de los ojos la más admirable en este abreviado mundo que es el hombre, como en el cielo lo son sus ojos el sol y la luna, porque son los ojos los soles del humano cuerpo, la hermosura y belleza del rostro, las ventanas del alma, el alegría y aseo de la naturaleza<sup>1</sup>.

The perfect human sense, beauty, joy, cleanliness. . . the optimism with which the treatise begins gradually strengthens to the point of vindicating the use of eyeglasses to correct numerous problems, something that deviated significantly from what was recommended by the most respected treatises in force up to that time. One of them was the *Oftalmodouleia* (1583), by George Bartisch, whose “objetivo primordial [. . .] fue demostrar que debemos protegernos y abstenernos de utilizar lentes y anteojos”, while explaining “la forma de evitarlos y cómo ‘curarse’ del mal hábito de haberlos usado”<sup>2</sup> (Jiménez Benito 2013, p. 251). Thus, Daza de Valdés’ advances were a definitive backing for the accommodation and social diffusion of the instrument in the seventeenth century, a consequence that was portrayed in this enigma by Dr. Juan de Salinas (c. 1562–1643): “Han sido bien recibidos/de Príncipes y Monarcas, /y el pueblo por medio de ellos/mil imposibles alcanza”, where, as González-Cano warns: “[el pueblo] puede llegar a ver cosas que son imposibles de ver



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normalmente (por la debilidad de la vista de quien precisa anteojos). Probablemente aquí la intención es también satírica, ya que no es frecuente, en la época en que el poema se escribe, que el pueblo alcance ningún imposible, en los terrenos económicos, social y político<sup>3</sup> (González-Cano 2004, pp. 41–42).

A side effect of the increasing popularity of *anteojos*—or *gafas*, *antiparras*, *quevedos*, *espejuelos*. . .—was their frequent intrusion into all kinds of editorial genres throughout the seventeenth century, sometimes drifting into the scatological, bordering on blasphemy or being full-on satire, as in the enigma of Salinas. The Sevillian literature of that century<sup>4</sup>, which was commercialized in the same market as the *Uso de los anteojos*, is useful to exemplify each one of these fishing grounds and as a plausible synecdoche of what was happening at a national level (López Lorenzo 2019, 2021; Peñalver Gómez 2023). Thus, for the eschatological drift we have a curious passage from the *Descripción de la máscara burlesca* (Becerra y Clarós 1683) that the students of the Colegio de San Hermenegildo of Seville organized in honor of St. Francis Xavier and under the pretext of celebrating the victory of the Catholic arms in the battle of Kahlenberg. The procession was made up of horsemen, musicians and mythological characters arranged in various quadrilles and chariots. In the first of them, which “venía vestido de una muralla” as a “fuerte Castillo”<sup>5</sup>, one could enjoy different figures, such as Mars and Vulcan, but also this mocking giant who, we believe, must have represented the fierce Polyphemus:

[. . .] en la testera de las mulas, vuelto hacia el público, [había] un cíclope que miraba por el ojo de unas nalgas postizas, con el antejo de un larguísimo tafetán de Medellín y este mote:

*No se me huyan a la sorda,  
porque, aunque más lo deseo,  
por este antejo no veo  
porque hace la vista gorda.*<sup>6</sup> (pp. 9–10)

It is well understood that the monster, in spite of the amusing dread he would cause, tries to calm the audience with this “No se me huyan a la sorda”<sup>7</sup> and pointing to his spectacled rectum, an image that inevitably evokes the famous poems of Quevedo. To top off the joke, he plays with the double meaning of “vista gorda”: in opposition to the “vista flaca”, or presbyopia, that Daza de Valdés addressed in his aforementioned study, and taking up the popular expression “hacer la vista gorda”, which meant then and today “Fingir con disimulo que no se ha visto alguna cosa”<sup>8</sup> (Real Academia Española 1726–1739, s.v. ‘hacer/hacer la vista gorda’). There was no way, in short, that the Cyclops could harm anyone in the courtship.

For the second tone, the one that enters sacred terrain, we will draw on the chapbook *Aquí se contienen cuatro romances famosos: el primero, de los amancebados; el segundo, en que se cuenta el modo con que las mujeres en sus conversaciones satirizan a todo género de gente, sin excepción de nadie; y los otros a diferentes propósitos, compuestos por Francisco Alfanteaga y Cortés* (Alfanteaga y Cortés c. 1680). Its fourth romance, “Si yo gobernara el mundo”, reads: “Ninguno trajera anteojos, / aunque le faltara vista, / pues con vidriera pienso / que los ojos son reliquias”<sup>9</sup> (vv. 77–80). The couplet transfers the glass lenses of the eyeglasses to the stained-glass windows of the reliquaries, letting the eyes mutate into the object of a devotion that should be avoided. The fine line between blasphemy and rhetoric of courtly love takes us back to passages well known in Hispanic literature, such as Calisto’s response to Sempronio’s “¿Tú no eres cristiano?”: “Yo melibeo soy y a Melibea adoro y en Melibea creo y a Melibea amo”<sup>10</sup> (de Rojas 2006, p. 26). But we will return to love and its connection with sight later on in the thread of various religious emblems.

Beyond scatology and perverse veneration, however, spectacles had permeated from very early on in the collective imagination to characterize petulant characters or those of presupposed distinction, as is reflected in multiple satirical testimonies of the time, in which an unsympathetic doctor or a false scholar brings out his glasses to examine closely

anything and everything<sup>11</sup>. The passage on the Seville academy that Vélez de Guevara inserts in section IX of *El Diablo Cojuelo* (1641) is often brought up. To gain access to the gathering, the Devil and Cleophas put on “dos pares de anteojos, con sus cuerdas de guitarra para las orejas” with which they “entraron muy severos en la dicha academia”<sup>12</sup> (Vélez de Guevara 1999, p. 106). It is in the festive atmosphere of the *vejamen de grado* and other school or academic acts that the caricatural value of the glasses, as intermittent props, is best appreciated. In the *vejamen* composed by Juan Antonio de Miranda (1653) for the celebration of degrees at the University of Seville, we read this amusing story that mocks the ignorance of the religious:

Y fue el caso que una buena mujer trajo un buleto de Roma para ordenar a un nieto suyo, y viendo que no podía abrirlo ni declararlo sino algún doctor graduado, llegose al Monasterio de S. Agustín. Y mostrándoselo al P. M. Fr. Juan de S. Agustín dijo: “Señora, este buleto viene en griego; nadie lo entenderá sino un maestro griego. En el monasterio de la calle de las Cabezas, de la Tercera Orden, vive el P. M. Franco, que es maestro griego. Él lo declarará”. Y habiendo llegado al dicho monasterio y avisado al P. M. Franco que traían allí unos breves, vino muy contento pensando que eran brevas, porque como no tiene diente ni muela le saben bien. Y viendo que era buleto, púsose los anteojos, estuvo grande rato por ver si lo entendía y, viendo que comenzaba el buleto con “*Innocentius...*”, dijo: “Hermana, este buleto no lo entiendo; él viene para los inocentes”<sup>13</sup>. (de Miranda 1653, p. 11)

As we can already see, the censure of this type of character is only the tip of the iceberg of a whole scathing criticism of various vices and social groups in which eyeglasses were implicated in one way or another. In *Los anteojos de mejor vista* (Fernández de Ribera 1979), by the Sevillian Rodrigo Fernández de Ribera, our object in question appears both to embellish the bizarre looks of Master Desengaño, in line with what we have just seen, and also to “reveal” reality by looking through it: from the top of the Giralda, the protagonists discover what is hidden beneath the appearances of men and women when they are examined under the glasses carved by Truth. These are, as we can see, manifestations of the growing diffusion and impact of an invention that went from improving vision to giving it real superpowers in fiction.

Then, faced with the exaltation of sight as a perfect divine creation that we had seen in the work of Daza de Valdés, and faced with the satirical–burlesque tone of popular literature, dogmatic theology considered it inappropriate to praise a sense that deviated human understanding and made it difficult to comprehend the sacramental mysteries in depth. Therefore, the Church constructed, in parallel with the discourses we have seen, a catechetical rhetoric that sought to deny physical sight and any device designed to augment or restore it. It was to enhance a faith-guided knowledge of God, for whom sight is altogether unnecessary: “*Ergo fides ex auditu, auditus autem per verbum Christi*” [So faith comes by hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ] (Rom. 10:17); or “*Est autem fides sperandarum substantia rerum, argumentum non apparentium*” [Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen] (Heb. 11:1).

## 2. Faith and the Blindfold

It is well known that the most common allegorical incarnation of Faith is the body of a blindfolded woman carrying a large cross:

Debido a que, tradicionalmente, nada necesita la Fe corroborar a través del sentido de la vista, las alegorías católicas de la Fe fueron representadas enceguedidas, con sus ojos cerrados, o bien cubiertos por un velo semitransparente. Es en España donde particularmente frecuentes son las imágenes de la Santa Fe y la Alegoría de la Fe católica, presentadas ambas con una venda que cubre sus ojos.<sup>14</sup> (Akerman 2016, p. 820)

Unlike other visual representations of her with a crown and/or chalice, that of the blindfolded woman is the one that infiltrated a series of Sevillian poems written in 1633, which we would like to dwell on for a moment. The work in which these texts were collected is *Fiestas solemnísimas y majestuoso octavario al profundo misterio del Santísimo Sacramento del Altar que su devotísima cofradía, sita en la Iglesia Colegial de San Salvador de Sevilla, hizo desde siete hasta catorce días del mes de agosto de este año de 1633, de Juan Álvarez de Alanís, presbítero capellán del coro de la dicha iglesia* (Álvarez de Alanís 1633). Within the section dedicated to the thirty-three hieroglyphs, sonnets and Latin epigrams composed by the author and exhibited on the day of the procession in Dados street—currently Calle Puente y Pellón (Collantes de Terán Sánchez et al. 1993, vol. I, p. 269)—we find number 17:

La Fe en hábito de mujer, vendados los ojos y cortadas las manos. *Sensus deficit.*

Cierre los ojos la Fe,

que en misterios soberanos

no sirven ojos ni manos.

*Soneto.*

La voluntad, que con afectos vanos,

perdida, corre la fragosa senda,

segura mal, que con rigor la ofenda

la ingratitud de términos humanos,

siga de los auxilios soberanos

el real camino, pues porque lo entienda

la ayudará la Fe, a quien se encomienda,

a ver sin ojos y a tocar sin manos.

Alma, si ciega vas tras tus antojos,

anda como la Fe, y pues Dios reparte

bienes a que con ansia te provoca,

hoy, como a niña que eres de sus ojos,

un bocado de dulce quiere darte;

cierra los ojos bien y abre la boca.<sup>15</sup>

*Epigramma*

*Deficiunt oculi, lucent ubi mentis ocelli,*

*Nostra fides caesas desinit ire manus,*

*ut Dominus videat, Christique ut corpora tangat,*

*Non habet illa oculos, non habet illa manus.* (f. 23v)

In the hieroglyphic, whose *pictura* is described in the first words, there are a couple of elements that require a certain gloss. Essentially, the text follows, to the letter, the Tridentine catechism, which reminds us that

[...] el espíritu y la inteligencia deben prescindir totalmente de los sentidos. Porque, si los fieles se persuadiesen de que en este sacramento solo existe lo que perciben por medio de los sentidos, necesariamente incurrirían en la mayor impiedad; puesto que, no descubriendo con la vista, el tacto, el olor y el sabor otra cosa más que la especie de pan y vino, creerían que solo pan y vino había en el sacramento; débese, pues, procurar apartar todo cuanto se pueda las almas de los fieles del juicio de los sentidos<sup>16</sup>. (Plata 2010, p. 325)

The theological foundation is reinforced by another intertext alluded to at the beginning through the expression “*Sensus deficit*”, a fragment of the Eucharistic hymn *Pane Lingua*, composed by St. Thomas Aquinas for the feast of Corpus Christi: “*Et si sensus deficit,*

*ad firmandum cor sincerum sola fides sufficit*” [And if the senses fail, only faith is enough to strengthen the heart in the truth]. What is surprising in the presbyter’s poem is that Faith is not only presented to us without sight, but also with her hands chopped off, a detail to which the sonnet later refers: “to see without eyes and to touch without hands”. This iconographic preference of Álvarez de Alanís must be understood in relation to the Latin distiches of the foot, which comment on the passage of *John* 20: 26–31, when Thomas needs to touch the wounds of the risen Jesus in order to come out of his unbelief<sup>17</sup>. In this context, Faith makes her way without sight or touch in order to counter-exemplify the attitude of the apostle: to see God without eyes, to touch the body of Christ without hands. But, in addition to these questions, the sonnet presents two amphibologies that deserve to be broken down for their interaction with the scientific world. In the first place, we have the line “Alma, si ciega vas tras tus antojos”, where *antojos* would refer to the whims or irrepressible desires, to that lost will of the first quatrain. However, we cannot ignore the fact that at this time—as we have seen above—*antojos* was the common graphic variant of *anteojos*, an etymological reconstruction that took hold at the end of the seventeenth century to avoid paronymy:

la voz *antojos* tiene un paralelo semántico en *antojo* ‘deseo’, en un caso el objeto físico se pone ante los ojos para ver a través de él y en el segundo la realidad está delante de los ojos y provoca el deseo o su simple visión [. . .], de modo que el rasgo común entre ellos es ‘delante de la vista’<sup>18</sup>. (Gavara Gomis 1998, p. 205)

The emblem *Sic animi affectus* [Thus do the passions of the soul], from the first part of Juan de Borja’s *Empresas morales* (1581), is also very enlightening in this regard. Through an engraving of a pair of glasses, the ambassador instructs us about this ambivalence: “Porque como el que mira con antojos todo lo que ve le parece de la color que ellos son, y así le parecen las cosas grandes o pequeñas conforme a la hechura que ellos tienen, de la misma manera las pasiones y afecciones del alma hacen que todo parezca conforme a la pasión que la señora”<sup>19</sup> (de Borja 1581, f. 46v). Moreover, the play to which the voice itself is lent can be documented in many other passages of Hispanic Baroque literature (García Santo-Tomás 2015, p. 146). With this in mind, it is possible that Álvarez de Alanís also wanted to paint the soul in a certainly parodic image: wearing glasses and yet going blind. It must be admitted that this reading lowers the tone of the poem, precisely because it is crossed with an already popular and even humorous object, but that does not mean that the dyssemia could not have been used to accentuate a paradox and as a criticism of a context that considered spectacles to be the solution to the ills of sight, as the saying itself sanctioned, *Si no veo por los ojos, veo por los anteojos* [If I do not see with my eyes, I see with my glasses]<sup>20</sup>. The second set is more recognizable; we find it in the last tercet: “Hoy, como a niña que eres de sus ojos”. The first level of meaning that surely reaches the reader is that of the colloquial expression “to be the apple of one’s eye”, to express special affection for someone. We will agree that here the soul is the most precious thing that man has, because of its immortal and divine nature, and that God cares for it above all things. Now, in a literal sense, the apple of the eye was the pupil, from the Latin *pupilla*. A far from innocent choice, then, that complicates the scaffolding of isotopies: Faith is blind and guiding, while the soul is tempted by sight at the same time that it is a nuclear part of a “divine vision”. The sonnet concludes with a reference to the Eucharist, a “morsel of sweetness”, which the soul receives as it was taught to receive Communion: opening the mouth and closing the eyes. St. Teresa herself, in chapter 36 of her *Camino de perfección* (1583), reflects at length on the topic of the physical eyes versus the spiritual eyes, and exhorts the Christian to keep the same attitude when receiving Communion: “Mas acabando de recibir al Señor, tiniendo la mesma persona delante, procurá cerrar los ojos del cuerpo, y abrí los del alma y miraos al corazón”<sup>21</sup> (Teresa de Jesús 1983, p. 145).

All of this hieroglyphic 17 seems to be developing concepts threaded in a previous one, number 15. It is somewhat longer, since it begins and closes with Latin compositions

which we will dispense with in our analysis, but it gives clues as to where the desires that blind the soul are pointing:

Un pan sobre una mesa y en él unos ojos pintados:  
*Quid est fides nisi credere quod non vides? Aug. sup. Ioan.*  
 El pan con ojos es bueno,  
 pero no es en todo pan,  
 que, en este, ociosos están.  
*Soneto.*  
 Dar ojos al amor es torpe cosa,  
 pues cuando se le rinden los despojos  
 del tierno amante en dulces desenojos,  
 del crédito la paz nace gustosa.  
 La Fe también en la quietud reposa  
 sin ver del desengaño los antojos,  
 y así, por no informarse por los ojos,  
 de la verdad está la venda ociosa.  
 El pan del mundo, para que sea bueno,  
 ojos ha de tener, y mejor sabe  
 con lo aparente de que el mundo viste;  
 para con el del Cielo es pan moreno<sup>22</sup>,  
 que no ha menester ojos el süave  
 y blanco pan adonde Dios asiste.<sup>23</sup> (ff. 22r-22v)

The *pictura* in this case is the bread with painted eyes and accompanied by a motto that rescues the comments of St. Augustine on the Gospel of St. John. While in the previous sonnet there was doubt about the dyssemia of *antojos*, here the use of the polysemy of *ojos* is clear and meridian. Indeed, the “bread of the world” should have eyes that make it spongy; that is, “ampollas o huecos que tienen dentro de sí el pan, el queso y otras cosas cuando no están muy macizas y sólidas”<sup>24</sup> (*Real Academia Española 1726–1739*, s.v. ‘ojos’), but the bread of the Eucharist does not need our eyes, as we have already seen. And here that Faith and its great antagonist, worldly love, reappear. The second quatrain presents the already familiar allegory, but with an original twist regarding the blindfold: since Faith does not allow herself to be guided by physical sight, her spiritual gaze transcends the eyes and the band itself, which is now completely unnecessary or useless—“la venda está ociosa”—in a clear echo of the “ociosos” eyes of the opening couplet. As in the previous sonnet, “del desengaño los antojos” (v. 6) arouses our suspicions as to whether the dyssemia of the second noun is again being used to attack the object-passion. But, before this peculiar turn of the screw in the use of the blindfold, Álvarez de Alanís introduces the real enemy in this moral struggle: “Dar ojos al amor es torpe cosa”. Aristotelian hylomorphism and the theory of love established that through the eyes certain rays or particles went out and came in, which finally settled in the hearts to ignite ghosts and images that nourished a certain igneous mood (passion). Suffice it to recall Garcilaso’s sonnet VIII—“De aquella vista pura y excelente/salen espíritus vivos y encendidos”<sup>25</sup> (*de la Vega 2020*, p. 190)—and its Herrerian gloss—“I la origen del amor [. . .] nace de la vista”<sup>26</sup> (*de Herrera 2001*, p. 336)—or the famous passage from *La dama boba*—“Destos mis ojos/saldrán unos rayos vivos, /como espíritus visivos, /de sangre y de fuego rojos, /que se entrarán por los vuestros”<sup>27</sup> (*de Vega 2006*, pp. 94–95)—to calibrate the validity of the topic of love born of sight. Thus, “Dar ojos al amor” means not only to pay attention to it, but also to put at its disposal the sensory organs that allow it to sprout. Courtly poetry, with its frequent *descriptio puellae*, gave extreme importance to the eyes to encode the sentiment, as can be read in hundreds

of romances revitalized in the seventeenth century. In the anthology *Primavera y flor de los mejores romances* alone, so successfully compiled by Pedro Arias Pérez in 1621 (Arias Pérez 1621)—and with Sevillian editions in 1626 and 1637—we find seven *letrillas* that open with precisely this motif in the mouth of an enamored and/or jealous interlocutor: “Ojos verdes, ved qué error”, “Hanme muerto unos ojos”, “Ojos negros de mis ojos”, “Esconde tus ojos”, “Cuando quiero ver tus ojos”, “Bien podéis, ojos, buscar”, or this “Ojos, cuyas niñas bellas” that plays with the hackneyed antithesis *alumbrar/cegar*: “No sois [ojos] sol, aunque abrasáis/al que por veros se encumbra, /que el sol todo el mundo alumbrá, /y vosotros lo cegáis” (vv. 5–8)<sup>28</sup>. Regarding these last verses it is good to recall the correspondence between the amorous self and the god Cupid, very well summarized in the following words of Lezcano Tosca: “Al igual que Cupido es ciego (se le representa con una venda en los ojos) y lanza sus flechas sin saber a qué corazones alcanzan, el yo poético de la lírica petrarquista hereda la ceguera del Dios del Amor”<sup>29</sup> (Lezcano Tosca 2004, p. 391). An allegorized Love with a blindfold, as opposed to, as Álvarez de Alanís told us, a clairvoyant Faith that does without. Love and Faith, then, end up facing each other conceptually, but with figurations and paradoxes that bring them closer than expected when it comes to warning the Christian of the evils of trusting in sight.

That same year of 1633, the Iglesia Mayor de Santa Cruz de Écija celebrated the octave of the Blessed Sacrament with a literary joust, described in the *relación* that the alderman Diego de Mendoza y Salinas made of the festivities (de Mendoza y Salinas 1633). Rodrigo Álvarez Laureano competed in the contest with two sonnets that gloss “Cuando la vista no, la fe de cúa”. The poems, which earned him fourth place, once again underline the denial of body sight in favor of the knowledge engendered by faith and soul sight:

*Soneto.*

Hombre, aqueste que ves de amor portento,  
la que miras, de Dios obra infinita,  
pues a accidentes breves se limita  
en aqueste inefable sacramento,  
no tu vano discurso pide atento,  
ni la vista del cuerpo solicita;  
de Dios en la Palabra se acredita,  
consistiendo en la fe el conocimiento.  
Que es substancia de pan habrá inferido  
la vista, de apariencias siempre amiga,  
mas la fe te dirá que ya no es suya;  
pregúntale a ella, pues, si no has sabido  
de cúa substancia es, porque te diga,  
cuando la vista no, la fe de cúa.

*Del mismo.*

No ambigua la razón des al sentido  
del pan que miras, ¡oh, discurso humano!,  
fiado a lo que ves, crédito vano,  
que es el más perspicaz siempre fallido.  
De accidental candor mira vestido,  
¡oh, amor!, cuanto inefable soberano,  
al que en tres dedos de la diestra mano  
la máquina del mundo ha suspendido.  
No a la vista del cuerpo tu ignorancia

crédito dé si la verdad desea;  
 el sentido falaz no te concluya,  
 pues del que miras pan no es la substancia:  
 dé la vista del alma cúa sea,  
 cuando la vista no, la fe de cúa.<sup>30</sup> (ff. [20]r–[21]r)

Both poems are articulated around the conceptual opposition between accident—“*accidentes breves*”, “accidental candor”—and substance—“*substancia de pan*”, “*no es la substancia*”—already forged in Aristotelian metaphysics and later reworked in the scholastic syntheses of several Church Fathers, such as St. Thomas (Legorreta Rangel 2018), although this dichotomy is also linked to the verse from *Hebrews* 11: 1 quoted above. Thus, Faith reveals that the substance or absolute foundation of the physical bread of the Eucharist is not the baked dough, but the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, while the sense of sight only registers the accidents of matter and form of such an object, its mutable appearance. On the other hand, the periphrasis “*al que en tres dedos de la diestra mano*” recreates the iconography of the classical Pantocrator, creator of the universe, with his right hand in the action of blessing. His three raised fingers—thumb, index and middle one—were also a common way of codifying the Holy Trinity, so that the poet did not miss the opportunity to touch on other theological mysteries that could deepen the didactic character of his text.

Verses of similar theological content follow one another in the opuscle. For example, from the pen of the scholar Joan de Santander, just after, we read: “*Los Sentidos están en competencia/sobre cuál de los cinco fue el culpado*” (f. [21]r, vv. 1–2), a dispute that is immediately resolved with “*La Fe, que de la culpa quiere parte/por los argumentos que se multiplican, /reprueba que a la Vista se atribuya [la culpa]*”<sup>31</sup> (f. [21]r, vv. 9–11). And a don Antonio Hurtado de Mendoza, homonym of the “*Discreto de Palacio*”, participates with a single sonnet that begins with: “*Ojos humanos, que pasáis altivos/la esfera de mirar, batid el vuelo*”<sup>32</sup> (f. [21]v, vv. 1–2). It is interesting to see how all these cases converge and deviate slightly from the loa composed by Lope de Vega for the auto *Las bodas entre el Alma y el Amor divino*, performed in 1599. There, the five senses try to shoot their arrows at the divine bread without any of them succeeding in hitting the target. Lope’s text, in turn, will serve as the basis for another loa that Calderón will compose around 1651 for the premiere of *La semilla y la cizaña*, which will be expanded and reused years later to open the auto *La vida es sueño*, in 1673. As Plata summarizes, the doctrinal core of this last loa is “*la incapacidad de los Sentidos para percibir en el pan el cuerpo de Cristo, y la preeminencia del Oído, que, ayudado por la Fe, es capaz de comprender el misterio de la transustanciación*”<sup>33</sup> (Plata 2010, p. 325). Rounding off the connections between the loas and the poems of Écija, we have the “*vano discurso*” and the “*discurso humano*” in two sonnets by Álvarez Laureano, which seem to find their echo in Calderón’s loa through the character of the *Discurso*, a gallant who, despite his initial doubts, will register the shots of each sense. On the other hand, neither in Lope’s nor in Calderón’s text, the sense of sight is censured or blamed more heavily than the others. In the poems of 1633, there is an explicit campaign of denial of the eyes when it comes to comprehending the mystery of the Sacrament, the incarnation of the body of Christ in the form of bread.

We do not know if Daza de Valdés’ treatise and the “*creciente fascinación por las lentes como instrumento de poder y de progreso*” (García Santo-Tomás 2015, p. 48) influenced a greater vehemence of ecclesiastical antagonism, or if it all responds to an over-exertion of Catholic dogmas related to the conflicts with the Protestant countries of the North, which denied transubstantiation. Nor are we sure if the emphasis has something to do with the inquisitorial trial of 1633 against Galileo, whose resolution was spread from Rome that same summer throughout most of Europe. After all, *anteojos* or *anteojos de larga vista* were other documented names for the telescope, an object inescapably associated with the Italian astronomer<sup>34</sup>. That the poems seen in 1633 speak indirectly of the censorship of the Roman Holy Office is a mere hypothesis; what is clear is that Faith, allegorized with blindfolded eyes, was well suited to flag a discourse against the new acts of looking, especially if any



of them dared to enter the celestial sphere. The first sonnet by Álvarez Laureano already warned us: “de Dios en la Palabra se acredita, /consistiendo en la fe el conocimiento”.

Now that we are beginning to see how the theme is spattered in some theatrical texts, it would be opportune to recover the beginning of *Judith y Holofernes* (de la Torre Farfán c. 1660), an unpublished comedy by Fernando de la Torre Farfán, a canon and fundamental poet of Seville’s Low Baroque period. Among his autograph manuscripts preserved in the archives of the Cathedral of Seville, we have this Old Testament comedy of more than three thousand verses, although some folios are missing and we know nothing about its possible staging. What the sixth chapter of *Judith* summarizes about Achior becomes the starting point of this original play, full of symbols that, *mutatis mutandis*, appeal to what has been explained so far. To oversimplify, Achior was an Ammonite mercenary who advised Nebuchadnezzar’s troops not to attack the people of Israel, since they had the help and strength of a fearsome god. Unfortunately, his warning did not go down well with the Assyrians, who decided to leave him prisoner near Bethulia, at the mercy of the Hebrews. This is how the story continues in the biblical book:

Como los honderos lanzaban piedras contra los hombres de Holofernes para impedirles la subida, estos retrocedieron hacia la falda de la montaña, ataron a Ajior y lo dejaron allí tendido. Después regresaron a la presencia de su jefe. Los hijos de Israel bajaron de su puesto y encontraron a Ajior. Lo desataron, lo llevaron a Betulia y lo presentaron a los jefes de la ciudad, que en aquel tiempo eran Ozías, hijo de Miqueas, de la tribu de Simeón; Jabris, hijo de Gotoniel, y Jarmís, hijo de Melquiel [. . .]. Después animaron a Ajior y lo felicitaron calurosamente. Al acabar la asamblea, Ozías lo invitó a su propia casa y ofreció un banquete a los ancianos. (*Jud.* 6: 12–21)

Then, Farfán’s text begins with this scene in which Achior will be tied to a tree with his hands bound and blindfolded:

Estará el teatro en forma de muro y coronaralo Ocías, príncipe y sacerdote de Bethulia, Manasés y algunos soldados. Y al mismo tiempo, abajo, por un palenque, entrarán Tisafernes, capitán de los asirios, Orontes y otros soldados que traigan a Aquior, capitán de los amonitas, atadas las manos y vendados los ojos. Esté en el teatro dispuesto un árbol donde lo aprisionen<sup>35</sup>. (f. [2]r)

The bound hands and the blindfold are, as we can see, details added by the playwright of his own making. At first glance, no one would infer a symbolic link with faith and the struggle of the senses, especially when there is another seventeenth-century comedy with a similar beginning. We are referring specifically to *Persiles y Sigismunda*, a theatrical adaptation made by Rojas Zorrilla between 1632 and 1633 from Cervantes’ novel (de Rojas Zorrilla 1636). In it, the protagonist enters the scene captured by the barbarians of the island of Tile, or Tule, and in a manner similar to that of Achior,

Después de haber tocado un clarín, se corra el pabellón y aparezca un monte con los ramos que se pudiere; y por un lado, al son de una trompa ronca, bajen todas las mujeres con flechas y arcos, y detrás de ellas, Sigismunda, en traje de hombre, con los ojos vendados y las manos atadas a la espalda; y por otro lado del monte, bajen Bradamiro con barba roja, vestido de pieles, Corsicurvo y dos bárbaros, con flechas, arcos y plumas, y detrás de ellos, Persiles, vestido pobremente, los ojos vendados, las manos ligadas atrás; y en bajando, los ate Corsicurvo<sup>36</sup>. (Escudero Baztán 2019, p. 92)

In Rojas Zorrilla’s plot development, action and the use of means prevail, as befits an adventure play designed to be performed in a palace (Escudero Baztán 2019). Thus, if the blindfolded Sigismunda and Persiles could touch a symbolic level, it would be logical to think first of the pair of *ignorance–anagnorisis*, typical of the Byzantine genre, and only then of other hermeneutic extensions. With Farfán’s work, however, we enter the religious sphere from beginning to end, since the text is a clear Marian defense, which probably embellished

the rejoicing of the city in 1662 as a result of the papal brief granted in 1661 in favor of the mystery of the conception of the Virgin Mary without the stain of original sin. Both its biblical source and its support of the *sine labe concepta* lead the reader towards devotion and piety; hence, in Achior's blindfolded eyes and bound hands, one might suspect other messages more akin to ecclesiastical anti-sensory sophistry, without intending to undervalue the intrigue that this dramatic resource would generate. In particular, we believe that the process that goes from the untied bandage and the reception of the Ammonite in Bethulia, to seeing him fight with the Hebrews and finally embrace Jehovah, can be read as an allegory of a "depaganisation", that is, a conversion that takes him from walking blindly to seeing the light of God. Similarly, on the second day, when Achior leaves Bethulia to see his beloved Chlorilene again, he will wear a new band over his eyes, suggesting a (temporary) distancing from Jehovah and a reunion with his pagan past. In this reading, the blindfold speaks to us of 'spiritual blindness' rather than blind faith, reversing the values we had previously broken down. The blindfold is no longer a positive element that represses sight in order to guide the soul toward the divine spheres, but a metaphor for the blindness of those who do not know God. If we add to all this, Stratton's (1988) hypothesis about a canvas by Zurbarán with the Immaculate Conception guarded by two half-length allegories—a figure with an anchor on the right, and another on the left with the Virgin's mantle over her eyes—the motif of the blindfold and spiritual blindness in Farfán's comedy gains even more strength:

Tradicionalmente, en la iconografía eclesial la figura con los ojos cubiertos representa la Sinagoga y la ceguera de los judíos ante la divina presencia del Cristo encarnado. Aquí, la «venda sobre los ojos» probablemente represente la ceguera de los maculistas ante la revelación de la Inmaculada Concepción<sup>37</sup>. (Stratton 1988, n.p.)

It could also be contested to Stratton that the two allegories in the painting are nothing more than very personal versions of Faith and Hope, but, even so, the blindfold would still operate within what has already been said: either to urge us to distrust the senses, or to describe blindness, i.e., "ignorancia, pasión o afectos desordenados"<sup>38</sup> (Real Academia Española 1726–1739, s.v. 'ceguera').

Surprisingly, sometimes blindness is not only of sight, but also of hearing. We would like to end this tour with a brief note based on the striking title with which Jerónimo Guedea Quiroga baptized his praised treatise against comedies: *Memorial, dádiva, y petición al excelentísimo señor don Pedro Manuel Colón de Portugal [. . .]. Rayo de la luz del desengaño, reducido a metro serijocoso, sin dejar de ser prosa, para deleitar aprovechando a los que ciegameamente sordos no escuchan, ni atienden las voces de Dios, y no ven, a tan divina luz, el error de su ceguera, aprobando y defendiendo las comedias, sus representaciones y teatros* (Guedea Quiroga 1683). Spiritual blindness in this case is an already standardized or "ossified" vice with no obligatory connection to sight. Thus, the blindly deaf do not attend to divine words just as those blind of eyes live in shadows. Blindness as a general 'deviation', then, could serve the fin-de-siècle moralists to attack the two main organs through which, according to them, the theatre depraved the human soul: "Y la comedia es veneno/que por los ojos y oídos/se come; díganlo tantos/cómicos que la han comido"<sup>39</sup> (Guedea Quiroga 1683, [f. [4]v]). It is evident that not all sectors of the Church subscribed to this radical preaching against the scenic arts and their potential perversion, but we do not cease to be amazed by the extremes to which blindness, now without a blindfold, was manipulated to denounce sin in its full extent and extrapolated to other bodily senses.

### 3. Conclusions

It is time to recapitulate and qualify what has been said so far. The literature of the seventeenth century was permeable to the scientific advances of the time, even if it did not reflect names and concrete facts with which we can establish direct correspondences. The incorporation of eyeglasses in passages of various editorial genres is evidence of this

receptivity, both on paper and in a society that was slowly disaffirming itself of the old physics. However, just as the gadget was incorporated into satire, the Church kept it at bay in its catechetical texts in order to downplay the development of sight and emphasize faith as a way of knowledge. Thus, in contrast to the eyeglass, another symbol of spiritual vision and blindness was forged: the blindfold, which adorned the allegory of Faith in not but a few pious poems and in some characters of the religious theatre. There is no doubt that the blindfold had different semantic implications according to its context and use, and it could have been a positive aid as well as a metaphor with negative connotations. As we have seen, it is an aid for the Christian who is misled by appearances and desires, especially when Love, the peculiar nemesis of the Faith, crosses his path. At such a juncture, the blindfold restrains the sense of the body and facilitates the approach to God and the understanding of the sacraments. But it could also operate as a metaphor for the spiritual blindness in which live those who do not know God, such as Achior the Ammonite and those who denied the mystery of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. The eyeglasses and the blindfold, then, capitalized two parallel discourses that could feed back on each other—and the dyssemia of *antojos* is proof of this—without necessarily arising within a cause-and-effect dynamic. It should not be concluded that the ecclesiastical biosemiotic discourse was an adverse reaction to the enthusiasm generated by the progress of ophthalmology—its origins are probably to be sought in Renaissance Platonism and the post-Tridentine hangover—nor that it opposed the scientific and popular in a Manichean manner, since the way in which the Church and religious works treated sight and its revelatory power was fragmented into multiple traditions and uses. Let us remember that the treatise of 1623, with which we have begun these pages, was written by a notary of the Inquisition. Moreover, one of the paths that vision took in the pious context, far from denying eyeglasses, embraced it, correctly directing it to the reading and study of the Holy Scriptures. The positive treatment given to lenses made the artifact a convenient and useful tool for meditating on the Word of God, so that both motifs, spectacles and the Bible, were grouped together in the iconographic construction of some saints and Fathers of the Church, in which their erudition and reading fervour were praised. To illustrate this point, we can use the symbolism that the Church used to portray the penitent Saint Jerome. In the *Canción del gloriosísimo cardenal y doctor de la Iglesia san Jerónimo* that Fray Adrián del Prado composed around 1628 (Prado 1628), although with numerous renditions throughout the century, these verses could not be missing, in which the glasses are mentioned among the effects that adorn the cave where the hermit lives:

Tiene este crucifijo por calvario  
 un roto casco de una calavera,  
 que cuelga de la cruz con un vencejo,  
 en cuya frente aqieste relicario  
 tiene engastado: «Soy lo que no era,  
 y serás lo que soy, mísero viejo».  
 Debajo de este espejo,  
 en la tierra caído,  
 tiene un bordón torcido,  
 un libro y los antojos en su caja [...] <sup>40</sup>. (vv. 239–48)

It is probable that the song of the Hieronymite friar is an ekphrastic exercise based on a canvas that we have not been able to identify; in any case, the inclusion of eyeglasses in the plastic representation of the Father of the Vulgate was very common and widespread between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. We could continue this search for lenses among the saints of the Church and look, for example, at the pair worn by St. Philip Neri when he celebrated Mass, nowadays kept in the reliquary of Santa Maria in Vallicella (Chiesa Nuova) in Rome, but what has been said already gives a good idea of the way in which the object found its legitimate place in a catechetical discourse. In short, we are

faced with a blindness that dialogued with the advances of its time, even if it had been conceptualized centuries before and within other coordinates where love perhaps caused greater havoc to the Church than two lenses on a nose.

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## Notes

- 1 "Among the human senses, that of sight is the most perfect, and the workmanship of the eyes is the most admirable in this abbreviated world that is man, as in heaven are his eyes the sun and the moon, for the eyes are the suns of the human body, the beauty and loveliness of the face, the windows of the soul, the joy and cleanliness of nature".
- 2 "the primary objective [...] was to demonstrate that we should protect ourselves and refrain from wearing glasses and spectacles". // "how to avoid them and how to 'cure' the bad habit of having used them".
- 3 "They have been well received /from Princes and Monarchs, /and the people through them/a thousand impossibilities attain". // "[The people] can see things that are impossible to see normally (because of the weak eyesight of those who need glasses). Probably here the intention is also satirical, since it is not frequent, at the time when the poem was written, that the people reach any impossible, in the economic, social and political fields".
- 4 That is, printed between 1601 and 1700 in the current province of Seville and/or by Sevillian authors.
- 5 "came dressed in a wall" // "a strong castle".
- 6 "[...] in the front of the mules, turned towards the public, [there was] a cyclops looking through the eye of some false buttocks, with the eyeglass of a very long taffeta of Medellín and this mote: Don't run away from me silently, /because, although I desire it more, /I can't see through this glasses/because it turns a blind eye".
- 7 "A la sordina: modo adverbial, que vale 'silenciosamente', 'sin estrépito, y con cautela'. Algunos dicen 'a la sorda', o 'a lo sordo'" (Real Academia Española 1726–1739, s.v. 'sordina').
- 8 "Pretending not to have seen something".
- 9 "If I ruled the world", reads: "No one would wear glasses, /even if he lacked sight, /for I think with glass/that the eyes are relics".
- 10 "Are you not a Christian?": "I am Melibeo, and Melibea I adore, and in Melibea I believe, and Melibea I love".
- 11 "La sátira es un lenguaje que se presta a la perfección para este tipo de problemática, en la medida en que capta como ningún otro género los miedos y sospechas del ciudadano de a pie ante todas las novedades del ámbito científico" (García Santo-Tomás 2015, p. 50).
- 12 "two pairs of glasses, with their guitar strings for the ears" with which they "entered very severe in the said academy".
- 13 "And it was the case that a good woman brought a papal bull from Rome to ordain one of her grandchildren, and seeing that she could not open it or declare it except to a qualified doctor, she came to the Monastery of St. Augustine. John of St. Augustine said: 'Madam, this document is in Greek; no one will understand it except a Greek master. M. Franco, who is a Greek master, lives in the monastery of the Third Order on Calle de las Cabezas. He will declare it'. And having arrived at the said monastery and having told Fr. M. Franco that some briefs were being brought there, he came very happy thinking that they were figs, because as he has neither tooth nor molar they taste good to him. Seeing that it was a papal bull, he put on his spectacles and spent a long time trying to see if he could understand it, and seeing that the text began with "Innocentius... ", he said: 'Sister, I don't understand this bull; it comes for the innocents'".
- 14 "Because, traditionally, nothing of the Faith needs to be corroborated through the sense of sight, Catholic allegories of the Faith were represented blindfolded, with their eyes closed, or covered by a semi-transparent veil. It is in Spain where particularly frequent are the images of the Holy Faith and the Allegory of the Catholic Faith, both presented with a blindfold covering their eyes".
- 15 Faith in a woman's habit, blindfolded and with her hands chopped off. *Sensus deficit*. May close the eyes Faith, for in sovereign mysteries eyes and hands are of no use. *Sonnet*. The will, that with vain affections, lost, runs the rough path, sure evil, that with rigor offends her the ingratitude of human terms, may follow with the sovereign help the royal road, and so that she understands it Faith will help her, to whom she entrusts herself, to see without eyes and to touch without hands. Soul, if you go blindly after your whims/glasses, walk as Faith walks, and since God distributes goods to which He provokes you with eagerness, today, as the apple of his eye, He wants to give you a morsel of sweetness; close your eyes tightly and open your mouth.
- 16 "[...] the spirit and the intelligence must totally dispense with the senses. For if the faithful were persuaded that in this sacrament there is only what they perceive by means of the senses, they would necessarily incur the greatest impiety; since, not discovering by sight, touch, smell, and taste anything other than the kind of bread and wine, they would believe that there was only bread and wine in the sacrament".

17 We also note a concomitance of the last verse “*Non habet illa oculos, non habet illa manus*” with another that the Latinist James Duport (Duport 1662) inserted in his epigram “*In Festo S. Thomae Apostoli*”, collected in *Canticum Solomonis: nec non epigrammata sacra*, Cambridge: John Field, 1662, p. 18. If we support the former, we would not be able to say who influenced whom, since we do not know the actual date of composition of the English epigram.

18 “[...] the voice antojos has a semantic parallel in antojo ‘desire’, in one case the physical object is placed before the eyes to see through it and in the second the reality is in front of the eyes and provokes the desire or its simple vision [...], so that the common feature between them is ‘in front of the sight’ [...]”.

19 “For just as he who looks through spectacles sees all things as they appear to him by the color of the lenses, and things great and small appear to him according to the workmanship they have, so the passions and affections of the soul make all things appear according to the passion that rules them”.

20 Juan de Iriarte includes it among his Castilian proverbs (de Iriarte 1774), with Latin translation: “*Si non fas oculis, per vitra ocularia cerno*” (206). For more sayings or expressions of popular language with the voice *ojo*, see Fernández Dueñas (2004, 2005).

21 “But when you have finished receiving the Lord, having the same person before you, try to close the eyes of the body, and open those of the soul, and look into your heart”.

22 The verse of the *princeps* reads: “pero con el del Cielo”. However, the verse means that, compared to that of Heaven, the bread of the world is brown or black (which is considered of poorer quality than white). It is possible, therefore, that the initial “pero” is an erratum for *para*, since *para con* was the form used to express the meaning required by the passage.

23 A loaf of bread on a table and on it painted eyes: Quid est fides nisi credere quod non vides? Aug. sup. Ioan. Bread with eyes is good, but they are not in all bread, for, in this, idle eyes are. *Sonnet*. To give eyes to love is a clumsy thing for when the spoils of the tender lover are surrendered of the tender lover in sweet disenchantment, from credit peace is gladly born. Faith also in stillness rests without seeing the desires of disillusionment, and so, for not being informed by the eyes, the blindfold is idle from the truth. The bread of the world, to be good, must have eyes, and it tastes better with what the world is apparently clothed with; but, in comparison to the bread of Heaven, it is brown bread; for eyes are not needed in the soft and white bread where God attends.

24 “blisters or holes inside bread, cheese and other things when they are not very hard and solid”.

25 “Out of that pure and excellent sight/come out living and burning spirits”.

26 “And the origin of love [...] is born of sight”.

27 “From these my eyes/will come out living rays, /like living spirits, /of red blood and fire, /that will enter through yours”.

28 Against this Petrarchan tendency, there was a whole current of religious literature that divinized the topic in compositions in which a biblical woman or the child Jesus, for example, substituted for the beloved. See Lope’s song to the beautiful Rachel in *Pastores de Belén* (1614): “A tus divinos ojos, /que si los viera el sol quedara ciego, /rindieron sus despojos, /su fuerza el tiempo y el amor su fuego” (de Vega 2010, p. 301), or one of the many villancicos that Álvarez de Alanís himself composed for the Christmas matins sung in the Church of El Salvador in Seville: “Niño Dios, vuestros ojos divinos/cielos y soles con lágrimas son: /como cielos llueven aljofar, /como soles dan rayos de amor” (Álvarez de Alanís 1634, [f. [2]v]). We cannot dwell now on this production, but it would certainly deserve an independent and conscientious study.

29 “Just as Cupid is blind (he is represented with a blindfold over his eyes) and shoots his arrows without knowing which hearts they hit, the poetic self of the Petrarchan lyric inherits the blindness of the God of Love”.

30 *Sonnet*.

Man, this that you see of love portent,  
that which you beholdest, the infinite work of God,  
for it is limited to brief accidents in this ineffable sacrament,  
not your vain speech asks attentive,  
nor does the sight of the body sollicit;  
of God in the Word is accredited,  
consisting in faith the knowledge.  
That substance is bread may have inferred  
the sight, always a friend of appearances,  
but faith will tell you that it is not any longer;  
ask her, then, if you have not known  
of what substance it is, because she will tell you,  
when sight does not, faith of which.

*By the same author.*

Do not give ambiguous reason to the sense  
of the bread you look at, oh, human speech!  
trusting to what you see, vain credit,  
which is the most perspicacious, always failed.  
Of accidental candor look dressed,

oh, love, how ineffable sovereign!  
 at who, in three fingers of His dexterous hand  
 the machine of the world has suspended.  
 Not to the sight of the body your ignorance  
 credit give if truth it desires;  
 the fallacious sense conclude you not,  
 for what you beholdest bread is not its substance:  
 give to the sight of the soul whatsoever it be,  
 when the sight is not, the faith of which.

31 “The Senses are in competition/over which of the five was at fault. [...] Faith, which wants part of the blame/for the arguments  
 that multiply, /reproves that Sight should be blamed”.

32 “Human eyes, that pass haughtily/the sphere of gazing, take flight”.

33 “the inability of the Senses to perceive the body of Christ in the bread, and the preeminence of the Ear, which, aided by Faith, is  
 able to understand the mystery of transubstantiation”.

34 It is not unusual that in an era “de constantes superaciones sobre lo ya existente, los anteojos se confundieran con los catalejos  
 y que, en ocasiones, los catalejos apenas se diferenciaron de los telescopios” (García Santo-Tomás 2015, p. 43). See also  
 (Nader-Esfahani 2016, 2021).

35 “The theater will be in the form of a wall and crowned by Ocias, prince and priest of Bethulia, Manasseh and some soldiers. And  
 at the same time, below, by a palisade, shall enter Tishaphernes, captain of the Assyrians, Orontes and other soldiers who shall  
 bring Aquior, captain of the Ammonites, bound and blindfolded. Let there be in the theater a tree where they will imprison him”.

36 “After a bugle has been blown, the canopy will be lowered and a mountain will appear with as many branches as possible; and  
 on one side, to the sound of a hoarse horn, all the women will come down with arrows and bows, and behind them, Sigismunda,  
 in a man’s costume, blindfolded and with her hands tied behind her back; and on the other side of the mountain, down will come  
 Bradamiro with a red beard, dressed in furs, Corsicurvo and two barbarians, with arrows, bows and feathers, and behind them,  
 Persiles, poorly dressed, blindfolded, hands tied behind his back; and on their way down, Corsicurvo binds them”.

37 “Traditionally, in ecclesial iconography, the figure with covered eyes represents the Synagogue and the blindness of the Jews  
 before the divine presence of the incarnate Christ. Here, the “blindfold over the eyes” probably represents the blindness of the  
 Maculists before the revelation of the Immaculate Conception”.

38 “ignorance, passion or disordered affections”.

39 “And comedy is poison/that through the eyes and ears/is eaten; say so many/comedians who have eaten it”.

40 This crucifix has for a calvary  
 a broken helmet of a skull,  
 which hangs from the cross with a swift,  
 on whose forehead this reliquary  
 has engraved: “I am what I was not,  
 and you will be what I am, miserable old man”.  
 Beneath this mirror,  
 fallen on the ground,  
 there is a crooked staff,  
 a book and the spectacles in their box [...].

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