

Grimalte y Gradissa's Doubling Through Mimetic Desire and the Elimination of Differences

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to trace the phenomenon of doubling and conversion in Juan de Flores fifteenth-century sentimental romance *Grimalte y Gradissa*. As Grieve showed in her study of San Pedro's romances, mimetic desire plays a preponderant role in the configuration of Flores' characters. There is a conscious effort from the author to show how doubling through mimetic desire and through the erasure of differences play a preeminent role in the tragicity of the romance. This study attempts to show the process that takes place in the characters psychoaffective lives that leads to their conversion into the Other.

Keywords: Doubling – Mimetic Desire – Conversion – Differences – *Grimalte y Gradissa*

¿No fui yo también contigo?
¿Y tú y yo no somos yo?

Gil Vicente

Introduction

Juan de Flores employs the trope of doubling as a narrative technique to enhance the dramatic effect in his fifteenth-century sentimental romance *Grimalte y Gradissa*. Doubling appears in the moments of greatest psychoaffective tension, which suggests that the author employs it as a conscious effort to augment the psychological depth of his characters. As the plot unfolds, the reader can perceive that Flores and his characters are malleable and duplicable both physically and affectively. The author himself declares to be a literary double of Grimalte.¹ However, Grimalte also becomes a double of Pánfilo, and as we will see, due to the popularity of Boccaccio's *Elegia di Madona Fiammetta* within the

¹ The prologue of Flores's *Grimalte* begins with the following caveat: "Comiença un breve tractado compuesto por Johan de Flores, el cual por la siguiente obra mudó su nombre en Grimalte" (89). All quotes come from Carmen Parrilla's edition.

fictional world of *Grimalte*, Pánfilo and Fiometa have a multitude of doubles. Despite the rippling effect of Pánfilo and Fiometa's identities, where all men and women see themselves through the mirrors of Boccaccio's protagonists, this study will narrow its epistemic scope in two specific cases: it will examine the causality and effect of Gradissa and Fiometa's doubling and of Grimalte and Pánfilo's doubling.

Patricia Grieve's chapter dedicated to the study of *Grimalte y Gradissa* offers an analysis of the role mimetic desire plays in the configuration of the sentimental romance and in human interrelations. Grieve argues that the genre of the *novela sentimental* is meant to be a *reprobatio amoris* both morally and for the sake of human survival because "love brings with it disaster" (78). As Girard pointed out, difference does not bring about conflict and violence. Rather, the loss of differences catalyzes violence. Attributed to Seneca, the familiarity-breeds-contempt motif was present in medieval Castile.² Grieve notes this imitative quality in *Grimalte y Gradissa*, which sets in motion the drama in the story: "For both Grimalte and Gradissa, imitation is a primary factor for their actions" (84). Gradissa sees herself as a specular reflection of Fiometa, and she perceives Fiometa and Pánfilo's relationship as the mirror image of her own relationship with Grimalte. After Grimalte decides to follow Pánfilo to his voluntary exile in order to atone for his guilt after Fiometa's suicide, Grieve notes an expansion of his role as imitator: "Whereas Grimalte's earlier imitations were of emotional, sentimental experiences, the imitation is amplified to include a manner of living which includes physical as well as mental degeneration" (89). Grieve concludes her study asserting that Fiometa ends up becoming an anti-model for Gradissa, thus saving her from "the pitfalls of mimetic desire" (92).

As Grieve points out, mimetic desire plays an important role in the configuration of Flores' characters. However, Flores' sentimental romance goes beyond mimetic desire and the imitation of mannerisms and physical appearance. Doubling bestows upon *Grimalte* a distinctive quality that showcases the level of literary sophistication in Flores' fictional works. Unlike Gradissa and Fiometa's doubling, Grimalte and Pánfilo's doubling has been acknowledged and commented upon. Whereas Gradissa and Fiometa's doubling is more subtle, Grimalte and Pánfilo's is so apparent that the reader can see their ontological selves converge to the point of fusing into one self. The merging of Grimalte and Pánfilo at the dénouement of the story prefigures the words of Juan de Segura's protagonist "Cativo," when he tells his beloved that he has merged into her: "Cuando más, que estoy en vos tan transformado, que soy otra vos" (36). Like the selfless Cativo, Grimalte turns into Pánfilo to become Pánfilo's second self. Carmen Parrilla argues that during the transitional process of atoning for his guilt in the distant wilderness of Asia, "Grimalte se hace otro yo" (28).

² In the early fourteenth century poem, *Libro de miseria del omne*, written in *cuaderna vía*, the poet attributes the precept to the Cordovan Stoic philosopher: "Séneca diz que desprecio nasce de familiaridad" (125d).

Grimalte y Gradissa, then, could be interpreted as an allegory of creating an alter ego, a double, with whom they identify, and they aspire to imitate and become.

Grieve notes the prominence of “the double” in romance. In particular, she points out the doubling of Arnalte and his sister Belisa in Diego de San Pedro’s *Arnalte y Lucenda*: “The double, a prominent figure in romance, appears in varied forms: twin, mirror image, antithetical character (often referred to as demonic double), or, simply, a character which embodies one or two traits recognizable as characteristic of another” (38). In Gradissa’s case, she feels that Fiometa is her specular image, and she overtly refers to Fiometa as a mirror in which she sees herself. In Grimalte and Pánfilo’s case, they are antithetical doubles, but through a sophisticated elimination of differences, they merge into oneness to share one life in two bodies. Although Grieve does not develop her analysis of the double further, she touches upon a literary trope that fifteenth-century Spanish authors deployed in order to enhance the dramatic tension of their poetic works.

San Pedro was well aware of the dramatic power of alter-ego characterizations, and he redeployed traits from one character to another. As Wardropper points out, Leriano and the Auctor (narrator) are doubles, and Robert Folger offers a critical analysis of the beginning of San Pedro’s *Cárcel*, where he demonstrates that Leriano and Deseo (the Wild Man) are true doubles: “Leriano and El Autor embody two sides of San Pedro’s character, the sentimental and the rational” (*Escape* 11). When we analyze Grimalte and Pánfilo’s doubling, we will note analogous processes of ontological syncretism, where one will represent “rationality” (the ego) and the other “irrationality” (the id). Michael E. Gerli observes the preponderance of doubling in Flores’ *Grimalte*, which extends from the conceptual to the characterological. For Gerli, reduplication impels Gradissa to commission Grimalte to attempt to reconcile Pánfilo and Fiometa:

From the outset of *Grimalte y Gradissa*, then, there is a redoubling effect, an ambivalence between literature and life, illusion and experience. As we read, however, the reduplication of representation takes even stranger turns as the character Grimalte, the declared alter ego of Flores who is himself modelled upon an author who had by the fifteenth century achieved the status of a literary character, is commissioned by his lady, Gradissa, to reconcile Panfilo and Fiometa, the fictive protagonists of Boccaccio’s *Elegia di Madonna Fiammetta* (60).

Gerli’s words “redoubling” and “reduplication” refer to the sense of duplicity caused by the convergence of Flores’ story and Boccaccio’s *Elegia*, which Weissberger called “the merging of fiction and reality in *Grimalte*” (66). Gerli only tangentially suggests the doubling of characters, so the purpose of this study is to explore that notion further. Gerli’s observation echoes Grieve’s in that mimetic desire impels Gradissa to send Grimalte to attempt a reconciliation of the Italian lovers. Gómez

Redondo points out the specular structure of Boccaccio's *Elegia*, formed by Fiammetta's mirror-like consciousness that allows female characters, like Gradissa, to become ontological/affective doubles of the Italian heroine.³ The specularity, at the symbolic or metaphorical level, plays a preeminent role in the architectural fabric of *Grimalte*, for, as Grieve notes, "each character speaks of a mirror," which unlike other forms of plastic arts, "normally renders an unaltered reflection of what exists before it" (91). Because each character is a metaphorical mirror within the text, and people stand "before it," the result is an unaltered reflection of one person onto the other. By placing themselves before a mirror-like subjectivity, the outcome is an affective and physical doubling, often achieved through mimetic desire (Gradissa-Fiometa) or by the elimination of differences (Grimalte-Pánfilo).

René Girard's Theory of Doubling Through Mimetic Desire

Girard studied the phenomenon of doubling through the epistemology of "triangular" desire. For the French critic, desire is a feeling prone to imitation and contagion that could lead to violence. Desire, however, also operates in a different way. It can abolish the differences between the competing wielders of desire and make them into doubles. In his *Violence and the Sacred*, Girard points out: "When all differences have been eliminated and the similarity between two figures has been achieved, we say that the antagonists are *doubles*" (159, Girard's emphasis). Girard's more forceful example of the elimination of differences is the ritualistic murder of Pentheus in the hands of the rapt Bacchantes in Euripides' *Bacchae*. Desire can simultaneously create doubles and breed violence. In his *The Theater of Envy*, Girard notes that mimetic desire can also create doubles or ontological desire—Girard defines "ontological desire" as the desire of a person to *be* the other person. Ontological desire is closely linked to envy and obliquely to jealousy because it is a desire to *be* the victor (the mediator) of the object of the desire (the beloved), which is a defining trait of Shakespeare's characters: "All Shakespearean characters want to *be* their victorious rivals" (*The Theater* 45). Ontological desire in mimetic theory creates true doubles, and Girard refers to Shakespeare's metaphor of "two cherries from the same stem" or the "twinned lambs" (*The Theater* 41).⁴ Even antagonists or antithetical characters can become doubles through the elimination of differences. This often takes place when characters obliterate individual

³ Gómez Redondo (243-257): "La *Fiammetta* aporta a la ficción sentimental un componente básico: la construcción de una estructura especular que persigue que las se contemplan en la superficie formada por la conciencia de Fiameta y asimilen su voz, los gestos y las reflexiones con que esta noble 'madonna' desciende, por una escala de agónico sufrimiento, hasta el fondo de su alma para demostrar los engaños que amor y fortuna han trastornado su existencia."

⁴ Girard adds: "*Doubles* is the term of mimetic theory for this relationship, which is not imaginary, as Lacan claims, but quite real, since it provides the basis for comic misunderstanding and tragic conflict."

differences and find common grounds. For Girard, the “monstrous double” can be found when “an ‘I’ and an ‘Other’ [are] caught up in a constant interchange of differences” (*Violence* 164). The scene in which Pánfilo and Grimalte meet in the wilderness of Asia represents an opposite example of this interchange of differences that results in the doubling of both individuals. In Flores’ *Grimalte*, doubling is mainly the result of the destruction of differences through mimetic desire.

Gradissa and Fiometa’s Doubling Through Mimetic Desire

In *Grimalte y Gradissa*, doubling could be best understood through the dialectics of desire. Through mimetic desire, Gradissa identifies with Fiometa to the extent that she feels the physical and affective pain of Boccaccio’s heroine. Often, it becomes difficult for the reader to bisect their *beings* that interweave like “two cherries from the same stem.” Gerli uses the term “*trompe-l’oeil* tableau” to characterize the metafictional abstraction that is at play in *Grimalte*, but the *trompe-l’oeil* is also representative at the ontological level, where the *con*-fusion of selves often deceives the eye.⁵ Gradissa does not have qualms about representing herself as an imitator of Fiometa because she longs to *be* her. Grieve notes the mimetic referentiality in *Grimalte* and *Gradissa*, who seem to strive to become someone other than who they are (84). The Auctor states Gradissa’s identification with Fiometa from the outset, as Grimalte confesses the incognito Fiometa when he finds her in the deserted locus near Florence: “Por la cual causa, venida su muy graciosa scriptura a la noticia de una señora mía llamada Gradissa, las ajenas tristezas tanto la apasionaron que ella no menos llagada que aquella otra [Fiometa] se sentía” (90-91). Critics generally take these words at face value to argue that Gradissa feels compassion for Fiometa, but Gradissa is far from being portrayed as an empathetic or a caring lady.⁶ Commenting on this sentence, Diane M. Wright suggests an affinity that goes beyond mere empathy, but she never openly brands them as doubles: “Gradissa, as the intended, ideal reader, identifies completely with Fiometa,

⁵ The most salient example in the romance is when Pánfilo abandons Fiometa, and Grimalte writes a stanza in which the reader cannot know who is speaking:

¡O llagado corazón!
 ¡Espantosa vida vía!
 ¡Cómo sufre la passion
 dolor de tanta porfía!
 ¡O triste sin alegría,
 malfadado!
 ¡Cuán amargo fue aquel día
 en que fue a ti enviado! (166).

⁶ Alcázar López and González Núñez: “Gradissa, a su vez, no es ya la *dama-diosa*, compendio de virtudes divinas y humanas, sino una señorita neurótica y caprichosa; inhumana y mandona, que confunde al triste de Grimalte con uno de sus lacayos, y que, más que un enamorado servidor, lo que parece necesitar es un corresponsal en el extranjero o un correveidile” (34).

casting herself so perfectly into the role that she shares in Fiometa's pain" (233). Without intending to, Wright points out a phenomenological conceit that contemporary scholars of cognitive studies and Theory of Mind call "embodied empathy," which is the notion that readers are so moved by aesthetic identification that they put themselves "in the shoes" of fictional characters.⁷ Gradissa's identification, however, goes beyond mere empathy for Fiometa's pangs of love.

There is an inherent ambiguity in the above sentence that lends itself to multiple interpretations. On the one hand, Gradissa claims that she shares Fiometa's wounds of love, but let us remember that Gradissa is neither in love with Grimalte nor wounded by love. On the contrary, she is inflicting pain upon her lover by alienating him, sending him to a distant place to serve as procurer. At least toward Grimalte, she exhibits an unrelenting indifference, which reaches its logical conclusion with her unapologetic rejection toward the end of the story. Gradissa's heartlessness represents her most visible trait as a courtly beloved. Matulka's assertion that Gradissa exhibits qualities of Chartier's *belle dame sans merci* is not an understatement. Far from it, within the genre of the sentimental romance, Gradissa represents the closest example of Chartier's typological characterization. On the other hand, the second relative clause, if isolated, avers Gradissa's delusion (and illusion) of perceiving Fiometa as a mirror image of herself ("que [Gradissa] otra [Fiometa] se sentía"). The fact that Gradissa feels like she is *otra* Fiometa is not a deviance. Boccaccio's *Elegia* elicits such a powerful "ontological desire" that all peasant ladies whom Grimalte encounters in his quest to reconcile Boccaccio's lovers counterfeit Fiometa, each one assuring Grimalte that she is Fiometa. Just before Gradissa commands Grimalte to travel to Italy to reunite the parted lovers, she reiterates her self-projection onto Fiometa. She exhorts her lover to elicit their erotic-poetic union because "en sus males pensando, casi como ella las siento" (92). Gradissa simply reiterates Grimalte's previous statement. She feels Fiometa's pangs of love as her own. Although Gradissa's assertion could be interpreted as a hyperbolic asseveration to blackmail her lover and compel him to accept the dangerous quest she is imposing upon him, it is revealing that she feels Fiometa's pain. Gradissa continues to use discursive clues that indicate a perfect symmetry between their selves. In the same dialogue, she urges Grimalte to bring them together in order that "Fiometa le aya tal y tan prospero que yo me desee ser ella," (95). These words corroborate Gradissa's mimetic desire for Pánfilo, and as victor of her object of desire, Gradissa literally desires *to be* Fiometa. Gradissa sees Fiometa as her double, an alter-ego that needs to be rescued from her current state of despair, so the consummation of Fiometa's love will constitute a metaphorical fulfillment of Gradissa's own desire through her self-projected double. Gradissa's equating Fiometa to a mirror in which she will reflect herself reinforces this

⁷ For further readings on cognitive studies and Theory of Mind, see my study "The Afrenta de Corpes: Embodied Empathy in *Cantar de Mio Cid*" (Currently under review). See also *Cognitive Approaches to Early Modern Spanish Literature*. Ed. Isabel Jaén and Julien J. Simon.

interpretation: “Así que ella me será un espejo” (95). Gradissa, to return to Grieve’s assertion that mirrors reflect the objects before them, symbolically places herself before Fiometa (the mirror), and she sees her own image reflected on the Italian heroine. Marina Brownlee interprets Flores’ representation of the mirrors as the “narcissistic nature of language,” (*The Severed* 190), but mirrors can also be symbols of duplicity and/or multiplicity that project ontic and ontological entities onto the outer world, rendering them into doubles of the physical selves. Asserting that Fiometa is a mirror in which she sees herself amounts to confessing that, at some ontological level, the Italian heroine represents an extension of her own self.

The mirror is a symbol of duplicity and of Narcissus’ self-love. In the Middle Ages, as Giorgio Agamben notes, the mirror is the place where “*oculus videt se ipsum*” (84) [the eye sees itself]. When Gradissa tells Grimalte that she wants Fiometa to be the mirror in which she wants to see herself, it becomes apparent that, just like a specular reflection is an extension of the self, Gradissa perceives Fiometa as a distant part of her own self. For Gradissa, Fiometa is not simply a forlorn lady who lost her lover because Pánfilo realized that her moral integrity and her husband’s honor were above life itself. Through the lens of specularity, Gradissa perceives her as a re-duplication—or an extension—of herself, so she warns Grimalte to bring the Italian lovers together if he aspires to win her love. If Fiometa is the mirror (*espejo*) that will reflect Gradissa’s image, then Gradissa desires to become Fiometa through the *confusion* of selves, a process that also takes place with Grimalte and Pánfilo. Her aspiration, however, *to be* Fiometa in order to vicariously become Pánfilo’s beloved is self-delusional and immoral since Fiometa is married to another man. Fiometa and Pánfilo’s relationship will be an allegorical mirror, which will reflect her own relationship with Grimalte: “Así que ella me será un espejo de doctrina con que vea lo que con vos a mí conviene hazer” (95). This second mirror Gradissa refers to represents a mere reflection of the first mirror. Flores is placing mirrors before mirrors that duplicate and reduplicate images onto the outer world, and the end result is the multiplicity of Fiometas that Grimalte encounters in his quest to unite the Italian couple.

The last allusion to the mirror posits that if Fiometa and Pánfilo’s liaison fails, theirs will fail too because Gradissa believes that their relationships reflect each other. However, if Pánfilo and Fiometa’s relationship is a mirror, it is a shattered mirror that can never be mended because some pieces of the glass do not belong in the mirror, and Gradissa knows it well. Gradissa perceives Fiometa as a model of conduct that will determine her own future behavior. But by being married to another man, Fiometa and Pánfilo’s mirror is but a poor reflection of yet another broken mirror: Fiometa and her husband. Gradissa’s sophistic reasoning reveals the extent to which she projects her subjectivity onto Fiometa. This peripeteian moment marks what Weissberger calls Grimalte’s role-change from courtly lover to procurer due to “the intensity of his beloved’s identification with Fiammetta” (70).

Just before he departs for his quest, Grimalte utters a complaint in which he seems to conflate the identities of Gradissa and Fiometa into a unified ontological unit. Through the mechanism of dialectic and syntactic ambiguity, Grimalte couples both beloveds into one, hinting that Gradissa and Fiometa are not doubles but the same person. The forlorn lover laments that if he were as eloquent as Fiometa, he would not have to travel to Italy to woo her, i.e., Gradissa: “Que si Dios a mí de sus gracias alguna parte me diere, yo soy cierto que vos ya fuérades mía, sin aver de ir agora a los estraños reinos a conqueriros” (98). In this utterance, Grimalte posits a fascinating game of reflections. In the literal sense, he claims that he is going to Italy in order to gain Gradissa’s favor as beloved. But Gradissa lives in Spain, not in Italy. Hence his words seem to be figurative, rather than literal. Grimalte purports to be going to Italy to *conquerir* Gradissa as if his beloved were in Italy. Gradissa is not (literally) in the *estraños reinos*, but Fiometa *is*. By avowing that he is going to Italy to win Gradissa over, Grimalte is implying that Gradissa and Fiometa are one and the same person. There is a perfect equivalence in bestowing favors upon Fiometa and upon Gradissa. If Grimalte helps Fiometa achieve happiness, it translates into making Gradissa happy because there is a perfect ontological and affective synchrony between both ladies. Gradissa’s feelings go beyond “embodied empathy.” Gradissa feels that she is Fiometa, and she feels her pain as if she were Fiometa. Grimalte’s assertion is a more radical statement than Gradissa’s previous avowal, when she commands her lover to unite Pánfilo and Fiometa: “Así que con el adorne o guarnición de mis favores, id a ganar la vitoria, aquella con que ganáis la mía” (96). With this overt doubling, Grimalte begins his mission to unite Pánfilo and Fiometa.

Once in Italian territory, Grimalte stumbles upon a noble lady who is dressed as a pilgrim and is surrounded by a large entourage. As soon as Grimalte sees her, he intuitively recognizes Boccaccio’s heroine: “Y como aquel que en busca de cosas perdidas va... no menos a mí los semblantes de aquella me parecieron a los de quien yo buscava” (105). How can Grimalte identify Fiometa’s features (“semblantes”) after he has been searching for some years (“días y años”) and has travelled around the world meeting myriad ladies who claim to be Fiometa? Two possible answers come to mind: he either remembers Fiometa from her hubristic self-description in Boccaccio’s *Elegia*, or he sees Gradissa’s features in Fiometa, and he instinctively identifies her (them).⁸ Fiometa is represented as mirror that reflects Gradissa. Despite the numerous people in her entourage (“aparato pomposo”) and the spatial isolation, which prefigures the

⁸ Grimalte’s reaction to Fiometa is mirrored by Fiometa’s to Grimalte at first. Just like there are a multitude of Fiometas, there are also a multitude of Pánfilos in the villages and small towns they traverse. Unlike Grimalte, however, as soon as Grimalte approaches her, Fiometa knows that he is not Pánfilo. Fiometa does not see any physical traits of Pánfilo in Grimalte because they are antithetical characters: “Y no menos que yo, todos los caminantes por su Pánfilo juzgava; y después que yo a ella bien acercado y ella ovo entero conocimiento yo no ser aquel que su desseo buscava, y a la continua y muy usada tristura buelta... aquella conportó” (106).

wilderness in which Grimalte and Pánfilo will become true doubles, Grimalte singles Fiometa out. Even without revealing her real identity, Grimalte confides in her as if he knew he was speaking to the Neapolitan lady.

Gradissa is just one of a multitude of ladies purporting to be Fiometa. After reiterating Gradissa's ontological identification with Boccaccio's heroine, Grimalte complains to the disguised Fiometa that he is the object of ridicule from women in small villages who claim to be Fiometa: "Y muchas Fiometas en cada villa hallé, porque quien se quería fingir ella, bien se pasava sus tiempos escarneciéndose de mí" (110). Such a candid assertion suggests that Gradissa's ontological desire is not an anomaly but a manifestation of Fiometa's uncanny ability to make others see themselves through her mirror: "Such comments make us aware that Gradissa's identification with her fictional heroine [Fiometa] is not an aberrant or even isolated case" (Weissberger 72). Her self-identification—or even her *desire to be her*—, as Weissberger notes, is not a deviation. Fiometa is, in Girard's terms, a hypermimetic heroine whom ladies admire, pity and long to imitate. There are, as Grimalte laments, "muchas Fiometas," and Gradissa is merely one of them. Louise M. Haywood suggests that the peasant women mock Grimalte because he is seeking a fictional character, but her interpretation undermines Fiometa's uncanny influence as a mediator of desire and her ability to make others project themselves onto her. After Grimalte finishes his complaints, he reiterates Fiometa's corporality as a mirror, claiming that he will see her as his mirror: "Tomando a vos por espejo" (111). Although Fiometa is not a mirror, she does possess mirror-like qualities in which Gradissa, Grimalte and all ladies see themselves.

Grimalte and Pánfilo Doubling Through the Elimination of Differences

In his analysis of San Pedro's *Cárcel de amor*, Folger argues that Leriano and Deseo are doubles by ego decomposition. Leriano's subjective "I" decomposes into an external "I" (*Escape* 119), i.e., Deseo represents the atavistic irrationality of Leriano. The tandem Leriano-Autor mirrors Grimalte-Johan de Flores, and the Deseo-Leriano parallels the Pánfilo-Grimalte. San Pedro's allegorical personification, Deseo, and Pánfilo (both overtly associated with the figure of the *salvaje*) represent the irrational, the animalistic. Leriano and Grimalte (the archetypes of courtly love values) embody the positive traits of reason and civilization. Hence Deseo becomes a complement and a foil of Leriano as much as Pánfilo complements and foils Grimalte. Since Flores is Grimalte's true double, the doubling of Grimalte and Pánfilo represents the fusion of the triad—Flores-Grimalte-Pánfilo—into one. Lacarra notes the importance of the characters' doubling for the interpretation of *Grimalte*, inviting the reader to ask himself how the identification happens (228). The purpose of this section is to trace the way in which this doubling takes place, and going beyond mere doubling, to explore how their ontological *con*-fusion occurs. Since critics generally agree that Flores fashions Grimalte as his literary alter ego, we will not be addressing their *doubleness*. The focus will be on

the merging of Grimalte and Pánfilo, which begins with the process of eliminating differences through mimetic desire and ends with an ontological doubling in the *locus terribilis* of Asia.

After his first meeting with Fiometa in the deserted place near Florence, Grimalte mimics Pánfilo's (perceived) desire, falling in love with Fiometa (see López González's "Falling in Love"). Pánfilo becomes a model/rival/obstacle for Grimalte, just like the Florentine lover had become for most men who read the *Elegia* within Grimalte's diegetic world. The fusion of characters begins with dialectic identifications, and then moves to the ontological degree. Perhaps without intending to con-fuse them, Gradissa treats them as if they were the same person. Just before Gradissa commands Grimalte to travel to Italy to unite Boccaccio's autonomous characters, she prophetically tells Grimalte: "Cuando entera vuestra me ayáis, soy cierta que seréis a mí un Pánfilo a Fiometa" (93). The literal meaning is fairly forthright. She fears that if she corresponds to Grimalte's love, he will behave like Pánfilo did by rejecting Fiometa. There is no doubt that Grimalte interpreted Gradissa's words as such. However, the syntactic ambiguity fuses the two lovers into one. Being an avid reader, Gradissa exhibits a keen intelligence, so her words can be understood as a conscious double entendre: "Seréis... un Pánfilo." The irony is that at the end, Grimalte does become "un Pánfilo."

Like he does in his *Grisel y Mirabella*, Flores plays with (tragic) irony throughout the romance,⁹ and Fiometa's incapacity to recognize Pánfilo prefigures his receding into bestiality in the wilderness of Asia. After their fleeting sexual encounter and Pánfilo's subsequent rejection, Fiometa finds herself running headlong into suicidal despair. During her last moments of mental lucidity—before wrath blinds her reason—, Fiometa seems to slowly abandon herself to self-misrecognition, which she projects outwardly toward Pánfilo. In a momentary loss of consciousness, Fiometa bursts out against Pánfilo: "Ya muy tarde me viene el conocimiento de quién tú eres; no sé quién eres tú" (156).¹⁰ Her blatant contradiction of knowing who he is and *not* knowing who he is attests to the ontological instability in Flores' *novela*. But the most tragic of all ironies comes when Grimalte explains to Fiometa his erotic torture, and in an utterance that would be linked to his attempt to replace Pánfilo in his penitence, he complains: "Así que por las faltas ajenas fazía yo la penitencia" (109). Even before their doubling, Grimalte is atoning for Pánfilo's sins as if the Florentine lover were his mischievous evil

⁹ See for example when Pánfilo warns Fiometa of her damnation and his *seeing* her "*perdición*" while he is trying to dissuade her from loving him: "¡O quién fuera ya muerto, por que los adivinados males de ti no viese asecurar, o del todo fuera del justo conocimiento, que no mire abiertamente tu perdición!" (159). The irony is that after Fiometa kills herself, he literally sees "abiertamente" her damnation, while the demons torture her.

¹⁰ Her lack of recognition is a way to coerce him to return to her, but it also harks back to the instability of Pánfilo's (and Fiometa's) ontology. Just a little before, she had complained to him about his duplicitous being: "No es posible que tú mi Pánfilo eres, ni tales cosas él a mí pudiese dezir, mas antes pienso que otro que assí se llama" (154).

twin. When Grimalte visits Pánfilo to request that he return to Fiometa, he informs the Florentine lover that his reputation is so deteriorated that not even the most despondent of men would want *to be* Pánfilo: “No siento ninguno tan abatido que se quisiese ser vos” (136). The irony is that Grimalte wants *to be* Pánfilo, and he effectively *turns into* Pánfilo and atones for Pánfilo’s sins.

In his seminal study on romance, Northrop Frye identifies the trope of the double with the theme of descent. Doubling, according to Frye, is associated with the figure of Narcissus or of twins: “At lower levels the Narcissus or twin image darkens into a sinister *Doppelgänger* figure, the hero’s shadow and the portent of his own death or isolation” (77). In *Grimalte*, the sinister *Doppelgänger* is Pánfilo who is both the shadow and a prefiguration of Grimalte’s demise in the wilderness. It is not until Fiometa dies that Grimalte experiences a feeling of ego decomposition when he describes his shadow as an alterity, a monstrous Other that frightens him: “Me vi con soledad tan solo que la sombra de mí mesmo me spantava” (183). Grimalte’s otherness is underscored syntactically by the tautological emphasis on his *lonely* solitude (*con soledad tan solo*). The reflective verb *to see* (“me vi”) reinforces his experience of alterity, for he is simultaneously the subject and the object of his gaze. He is at the same time the “I” and the “Other.” His shadow comes out of himself as a second Ego to terrify him. This monstrous Other that frightens him is a symbol of his animalistic/evil inner self, which represents an extension of himself and will later take an anthropomorphic form in Pánfilo (like Leriano’s animalistic/evil inner self decomposed into Deseo), and the wilderness represents an extension of his inner bestiality.

Pánfilo’s penitence in the wilderness has literally turned him into a beast, with all the external features of an animal. As Deyermond notes, the state of being a savage is an intrinsic element of courtly love (28). The Wild Man and the courtly lover represent two faces of the same coin, and Torrellas’ savage torture in Flores’ *Grisel y Mirabella* by courtly ladies in the very locus of courtly love attests to the polarity of savagery and courtly ethos. In the last scenes of the *Grimalte*, Flores turns Pánfilo into an *hombre salvaje*, and Grimalte retains some traits of a courtly lover, representing them as demonic doubles by antithesis. To use psychoanalytic terms, Grimalte and Pánfilo incarnate the fusion of the ego and the id that makes a whole. Grimalte’s courtly love identity, however, will be overridden by his new bestial identity that will place him on the same physical and ontological plane of reality as Pánfilo, converting him into his twin double.

After Grimalte’s dogs dig Pánfilo out of his cave like a wild beast, Grimalte attempts to initiate a conversation with him. But he finds that along with his humanity, Pánfilo has also forsaken his tongue. He resembles a wild animal and acts like one. Pánfilo’s outlandish appearance has led critics to perceive him as being mentally unstable. His behavior is not of a rational being but of a beast. In such spatial economies—outside the realm of civilization and human contact—the social self is predestined to fade and to be superimposed by a wild self, one deprived of reason and discourse. The idea of talking to a brute does not prevent Grimalte from speaking his

mind to the man he blames for his own misfortunes. Now an old man and without a glimpse of hope to gain Gradissa's love, he aspires to replace Pánfilo in his atoning penitence. With a blend of humility and submission, Grimalte tells him that he is the heir of his sufferings: "Pídote que me prestes parte daquela fuerça, que yo así como tú la conporte. La cual, yo así como mía por justas razones te la demando, porque de tu padecer yo traigo título de legítimo heredero" (212). Grimalte is begging Pánfilo to bequeath his atoning post to him, beseeching him to give him spiritual and psychological strength as if Pánfilo were a saintly figure and his spiritual counselor. The idea of being Pánfilo's heir is an echo of Grimalte's consoling words to Fiometa after the latter had despaired of her life. "¿Por qué razón avía yo de ser eredero de tus passiones?" (180).¹¹ More than an heir, Grimalte comes to be the complement of Pánfilo's self. After he realizes how fatuous and painful courtly love can be, since he witnessed Fiometa's degrading self-immolation, Grimalte begins to identify with "Pánfilo en su vida de pena y desesperación" (Walthaus 10). He comes to fill the ontological gap in Pánfilo's empty life, and his loss of language is a symbol of the psychosocial void in Pánfilo's altered self. Pánfilo's language is a metonym for his social and courtly love persona. Discourse is the very manifestation of reason and civilization. Grimalte, however, has spent most of his life trying to find Pánfilo—first in order to reunite him with Fiometa, and now in order to replace him in atoning for his sins. Grimalte seeks Pánfilo throughout the world with the same eagerness with which a son looks for a long-lost father. Grimalte's confession that he is Pánfilo's "heredero" invites the reader to interpret Grimalte's obsession in finding Pánfilo as if they were relatives. Father to son, as Lope de Vega suggests with his ingenious allegory of mirrors and nature, is a link of doubling,¹² and it harks back to Grieve's observation that Arnalte and his sister are doubles of each other.

Grimalte's claim to be Pánfilo's heir is at best presumptuous. As critics point out, they are nothing like each other (Brownlee, *The Severed* 187). If anything, they are antithetical characters, and Grimalte knows it: "Y por esto, mira si tengo causa, pues tú fueste de amiga muy amado, y yo de la mía aborrescido" (212). Grimalte's asseveration that he was rebuffed is ambiguous. The reader never knows if he is referring to Gradissa or to Fiometa, but we know that he is not loved by any of the two. Grimalte and

¹¹ In Waley's edition, the utterance is not within question marks. Rather, it is an assertion: "Porque de tu padeçer yo traygo título de legitimo heredero" (68).

¹² In a dialogue between Teodora, Dorotea's mother, and Gerarda, Lope de Vega describes the moral and ethical referentiality between parents and children. In Gerarda's deceptive discourse, Nature functions as a mirror that projects the image of the mother onto the daughter. Hence Teodora tells Gerarda that Dorotea is not to blame for being the true image of her mother since Nature (the mirror) cannot reflect another image. Gerarda, who has been employing reticent circumlocution to declare to Teodora her daughter's purported immoral flirtations with the young Fernando, tells her: "Si el hijo retrata al padre en las costumbres, perdónele porque le parece; si no, bien puede quebrar el espejo, pues que no le retrata, que cuando vos érades moza, lo mismo hacíades con el cristal que no os hacía buena cara" (102).

Pánfilo's love stories are opposed. Throughout the story, Pánfilo is represented as a cynical womanizer and Grimalte, as the Stanza with the unidentified voice shows (166), is often shown as womanized. Their differences are so emphasized that even Grimalte recognizes and accepts his inferiority. Perhaps in the saddest utterance of the *novela*, Grimalte begs Pánfilo to abandon *his* post (self) so that he can take his place:

Y si querrás dezir que por no conoscer otro dueño sino a ti, la posees, agora que yo vengo non te puedes escusar, salvo que, dexándolo mío, libre y en paç te buelvas a tus buenas andanças. Y tórnate a tu tierra a resucitar los muertos por tu ausencia, que yo a la mía no me conviene tornar, pues los sanos adolecen con mi vista (212).

His words are fraught with diffidence and self-loathing. Despite Pánfilo's animality and Grimalte's sophistication and upholder of civilized, courtly love values, Grimalte addresses Pánfilo from a locus of inferiority. Grimalte begs Pánfilo to return to civilization because he can give health to the sick (his father), while Grimalte sickens the healthy (Gradissa). Grimalte describes Pánfilo as Christ-like, capable of bestowing health upon the sick and life on the dead, while he represents himself as a baneful agent, whose mere gaze, like the mythological basilisk, provokes ailments (“*adolecen* con mi vista”). It is a literal juxtaposition of good and evil, and it is this perfect asymmetry of their selves that makes them, like opposing poles of a magnet, unite into oneness. Some critics read the two outcasts' asymmetric courtly love success as a paradox,¹³ but the real paradox is that two people with such a great *degree* of difference would become so alike to the point of becoming one.

Pánfilo is not swayed by Grimalte's self-loathing discourse. For Pánfilo, Grimalte is still a pathetic lover who seeks to avenge his lack of erotic success on him—the successful one. They are different physically and psychologically. As far as Pánfilo is concerned, Grimalte is trying to discharge his frustrations and lack of romantic success on him. After all, Grimalte inhumanely set the dogs on him, highlighting a clear division between his *humanity* and Pánfilo's *animality*. These extreme differences represent the reason Pánfilo does not open up to him. If Grimalte wants to make Pánfilo open up to him, he has to obliterate those marked differences in order to convince Pánfilo of his sincere *con-version*.

To destroy their dissimilarities, Grimalte forsakes bestial violence against Pánfilo. His fierce dogs are not mentioned again in the story. He also abandons rational discourse in favor of mimesis. The Spanish lover begins to transform into Pánfilo by imitating his demeanor and his actions. Grimalte describes how he divests himself of his

¹³ See Regula Rohland-Langbehn: “Ello se ve en la paradoja planteada por Grimalte—‘ell era rogado y desdenyava, y yo sirviendo, desagradado.’—que muestra la condición semejante de ambos después de que sus condiciones en la pareja fueron opuestas” (135).

clothes (and self), a symbolic rejection of his *humanity* and of civilization to embrace his—and Pánfilo's—*animality*:

Por ninguna destas palabras y otras muchas, Pánfilo callando, con sospiros me satisfaze. Yo, viendo que ninguna cosa me satisfazía en mi demanda con respuesta, ove conoscimiento que voto tenía fecho de no hablar; al cual por no fatigar más de lo que él se fatigava, del razonar con él me retruxe, y fueme a lo más espeso d'aquel bosque, donde de mis vestiduras me despoxe. Y comencé tomar posesión de aquel tan triste bevir y morada. Y las manos puestas por el suelo en la manera que él andava, seguí sus pisadas tomándolo por maestro de mi nuevo oficio. Pero él, cuando me vido tornado a su presencia guarnido de su librea, tan grande pena le dio mi ábito, por ser al suyo conformado, que rompió el silencio que tenía de su voto; más con los ojos llorando que con palabras mostróse quejar de mí, y comencóme así a dezir (215).

Why does Grimalte feel compelled to walk to a hidden place to undress himself when save for Pánfilo, who is closer to an animal than a human, there is no other person around? Grimalte's walk to the thick bushes to remove his clothes is a symbolic pilgrimage to conversion, and his nudity symbolizes his vows of faith and his liminal entrance into a sincere transformation. Like pilgrims who retrace the steps of the saints in the physical journey to the shrine—a journey that could also be explained spiritually from sinfulness to holiness—, Grimalte *retreads* Pánfilo's footsteps, which marks the entrance into his very subjectivity ("seguí sus pisadas"). Unlike Pánfilo's asceticism, Grimalte's action does not have hints of religious parody. It is, above all, a literal conversion into Pánfilo, embracing both his worldview and his ascetic way of life. More than mimicking or sharing his behavioral habits, Grimalte converts his self to Pánfilo. Along with his clothes, Grimalte also abandons his self to enter into Pánfilo's self, a union that will give him access to Pánfilo's subjective consciousness.

As Pánfilo gazes upon Grimalte's dehumanization, turning himself into a wild beast, he cannot help but recognize himself in Grimalte. He sees him as if he were looking into a mirror, so he is unable to restrain his tears. The very impression of seeing his own animality in Grimalte provokes an uncanny feeling that makes him break his oath never to speak again. Sharing his very own life, purpose and misery, Pánfilo and Grimalte become two bodies with one soul, a *topos* that Flores himself could have read in Piccolomini's *Historia de duobus amantibus*—a recurrent leitmotif in Flores' time.¹⁴

¹⁴ Piccolomini says after Lucretia and Euryalus are about to depart from each other for good: "Et hic sane non errant spiritus duo, sed, quemadmodum inter amicos putat Aristophanes: unius animae due corpora facta erant. Itaque non recedebat animus ab animo, sed unicus animus seindebatur in duos, tum cor in partes dividebatur; mentis pars ibat et pars remanebat et omnes invicem sensus disgregabantur et a se ipsis discedere flebant" (232). See Delicado's *Lozana Andaluza*: Diomedes, Aldonza's lover,

Hence it is not a coincidence that Pánfilo's first words refer to their doubling: "Y buscó a vos mi fortuna que me acompañádes, con que doblados fuesen mis males, paresciéndole que los passados, ya por la luenga usança avía convertidos en hábitos, y los hábitos en propia naturaleza" (216). Pánfilo accepts his companionship, but he also speaks about his "doblados... males." The word "doblados" is fraught with symbolic significations. Pánfilo's *males* are doubled, but he is also doubled, and because he suddenly feels the physical presence of an alter ego, his "doblados males" represent a manifestation of this duplicity.

Now that he has a true double, now that their differences have been destroyed, now that Grimalte has become a second self, Pánfilo has to suffer for both of them. The word "convertidos" also hints at Grimalte's conversion. He has converted into an animalized Pánfilo. The theme of descent and doubling, as Frye noted, is attested in this descent into animality in order to fashion himself, as Parrilla noted, "otro yo." Grimalte has to descend to the lowest of human atavism to become a shadow of his courtly self. Grimalte divests himself of his noble persona to be at the same level of bestiality, which is a tacit statement of his rejection of courtly love values. Matulka notes that Pánfilo refused to speak until he recognized that Grimalte was sincere in his intention to share his existence (290). Like Matulka, Brownlee argues that only after Pánfilo is certain of "the truth-status of his *words* by his *action* that Panfilo break his silence" (*The Severed* 187, emphasis added). Matulka points out that Grimalte "decides to go in search of Pamphilo, and to share his life" (249). This idea of both men sharing one life is so important that Matulka feels compelled to reiterate the same idea: "He has made a vow of perpetual silence, and it is not until Grimalte gives signs of sharing his savage life that Pamphilo speaks to him, his voice choked with tears, and heart-rending in its humility" (250). When Matulka refers to Grimalte "sharing [Pánfilo's] life," she likely refers to sharing his experiences, his time and the spatial economy. However, Grimalte also shares his life with Pánfilo. Or rather, Grimalte and Pánfilo share one life. What is at stake in this symbolic act of pilgrimage and conversion is Grimalte's ontological union with Pánfilo, who agrees to *share* his self by accepting Grimalte as his double.

Grieve points out that "Grimalte self-indulgently permits himself to become a double of Pamphilo, living in exile to pay for Fiometa's death and to prove his loyalty to Gradissa" (92). Perhaps it is Pánfilo who allows Grimalte to become his double, for it is Pánfilo, from his locus of animality, who can accept or reject Grimalte's company. Rina Walthaus called attention to the fusion between the two penitents, and she notes their union, which seems to imply convergence at the physical and ontological levels: "La unión de los dos significa un cambio positivo en la historia: la esperanza de una solución para ambos" (13). They unite and become one, but their union does not resolve their existential crisis. Far from offering a solution to Pánfilo's self-destructive quandary,

pronounces these words to explain the sudden falling in love between the Lozana and himself: "*Ecco adonque due anime in uno core*" (42).

Grimalte adds another layer to his already excruciating existence. Even the self-loathing Pánfilo admits that Grimalte's presence in the wilderness adds more pain to his life. Instead of suffering for and by himself, now he has to suffer for the two of them (*doblados males*). This unification, however, allows Grimalte to share what the narrator describes as "visiones" of demons punishing Fiometa for her suicide.

In Boccaccio's *Elegia* Fiammetta had threatened Panfilo to torture him with hellish apparitions after her death if he did not comply with her desire, a threat that Fiammetta did not intend to carry out. After she kills herself, Flores forces her "to make her words accord with her actions" (Brownlee, *The Severed* 17). Fiometa's promised punishment was meant to be a subjective phenomenon, an occurrence that would take place in Pánfilo's mind and not in the *real* world. In other words, the hellish apparitions of the devils inflicting pain upon Fiometa ought to be a *vision* ("visiones"), and not an objective scene that took place in the wilderness for anyone to see because it would be tantamount to allowing the dead to inhabit the world of the living. Moreover, the narrator underscores that the punishments are being executed by fire so that "la escuredad de la noche" turned into "grandes claridades" (218). If these events took place in the physical world, the entire wilderness would be reduced to ashes. Hence, it is unlikely that Flores wrote the scene of Fiometa's torments thinking that it would take place in the landscape of Asia. Rather, the devils' punishments were meant to take place in Pánfilo's imagination as penance for rejecting his beloved. By allowing Grimalte to partake in these *visions* that take place thrice a week in Pánfilo's head, Pánfilo accepts Grimalte's conversion into himself, so the line between the internal and the external subjectivity is blurred, and with it, the barrier between the subjective and the objective.

It is in the experiencing of these visions that we can identify Grimalte and Pánfilo's doubling: "El pasaje, por su calidad descriptivo, es diferente al resto del conjunto narrativo; en él destaca Grimalte su identificación con el penitente, adquiriendo la capacidad de experimentar los padecimientos de aquél" (Parrilla 36-7). Grimalte converts into Pánfilo to become one person in two bodies. Both men share a centrifugal trajectory from courtly love agents—underscored by the success of one and the failure of the other—to beast-like *salvajes* walking on all fours and blending in with the flora and the fauna of the wasteland. Folger underscores the physical resemblance of both penitents: "At night the 'twins' witness the 'spantables visiones...' which have been haunting Pamphilo" (*Escape* 95). Like the two-pronged flame, which conceals Ulysses and Diomedes in Dante's *Comedia*, Grimalte and Pánfilo seem to share an ontological self that enables them to observe phenomena that only one is supposed to experience.

In conclusion, *Grimalte y Gradissa* is a story in which doubling plays a preponderant role in the configuration of the characters. Gradissa and Fiometa become doubles through the literary mechanism of mimetic desire, and Grimalte and Pánfilo fuse into one by means of eliminating their differences. In Girard's study on Shakespeare's *A Midsummer's Night's Dream*, he points out that "Helena wants to be

'translated' to Hermia.... [translated] links the ontological desire of the four lovers to the mythical metamorphoses of the midsummer night" (*A Theater* 43). Like Helena, Gradissa wants to be *translated* into Fiometa, but her ontological translation is only on the condition that Fiometa can fulfill her desire for Pánfilo. Gradissa envies Fiometa's desire for Pánfilo and she mimics it. However, because she is unable to act "against the grain," Weissberger notes, she cannot travel to Italy to satisfy her desire. Gradissa projects herself onto Fiometa in order to *be* with Pánfilo (vicariously). Hence her identification with Boccaccio's heroine is not merely empathetic but ontological. Like Gradissa, Grimalte also mimicked Pánfilo's desire, but he was never able to compete against Pánfilo's mastery in the game of courtly love. Therefore, they remained demonic doubles. They were symmetrically opposed to each other. One was manly, the other unmanly; one was a womanizer, the other feminized; one gave health, the other sickness; and one was loved, the other rebuffed. This marked opposition was attenuated by Grimalte's desire to *be* Pánfilo, despite the latter's hostility. Grimalte's *conversion* into Pánfilo, where his removal of clothes served as a symbol of his sincerity and faithfulness, allows him to obliterate the differences and to become one self in two bodies. In writing *Grimalte*, Flores successfully *converted* and redoubled his Grimalte and Gradissa into Boccaccio's autonomous and unruly Panfilo and Fiammetta.

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