

***Mal haya el hombre que en refranes fía.*¹**

Paremiology in the Literary Works of Antonio de Solís

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Abstract

Antonio de Solís y Rivadeneyra (1610-1686) authored a number of poems, *loas* and *comedias* that include numerous proverbs and refrains both in standard form, as found in the *refraneros* of the period, and in intentionally altered variants. Writing at a time when the use of paremias had become a stale convention, especially in the theater, Solís was able to infuse them with originality and humor by transforming them into something new by means of witty truncation, deconstruction and reconstruction. This study documents the presence of manipulated, or «deviant» paremias in the literary works of Solís and their functions as a rhetorical strategy to facilitate a privileged communication between actors and spectators, and to reinvigorate a much abused convention with new life and dynamism that at the same time questions the validity and reliability of the knowledge conveyed in proverbs and refrains.

Keywords
Paremiology.
Paremia.
Antonio de Solís y Rivadeneyra.
Spanish.

Resumen

Título: «Mal haya el hombre que en refranes fía. Las paremias en las obras literarias de Antonio de Solís».

Antonio de Solís y Rivadeneyra (1610-1686) fue autor de poemas burlescos y satíricos, *loas* dramáticas y comedias que incorporan un número sorprendente de proverbios y refranes, tanto en su versión normativa, según se manifiestan en los *refraneros* de la época, como en sus variantes intencionadamente alteradas. Habiendo escrito en una época en la que el uso de paremias había llegado a ser una convención muy trillada, sobre todo en el corral de comedias, Solís logró dotarlas de gran novedad y humorismo, transformándolas en algo innovador mediante su truncamiento, deconstrucción y reconstrucción ingeniosos. El presente estudio documenta la presencia de paremias manipuladas o anormales en la obra literaria de Solís y sus funciones como una estrategia retórica para facilitar una comunicación privilegiada entre actores y espectadores, y para revitalizar una convención frecuentemente abusada con nueva vida y dinamismo, al mismo tiempo que cuestiona la validez y fiabilidad de la sabiduría transmitida en proverbios y refranes.

Palabras clave
Paremiología.
Paremia.
Antonio de Solís y Rivadeneyra.
Español.

Résumé

Titre: « Mal haya el hombre que en refranes fía. Les parémies dans l'ouvrage littéraire de Antonio de Solís ».

Antonio de Solís y Rivadeneyra (1610–1686) est l'auteur de poèmes burlesques et satiriques, *loas* et *comedias*, parmi lesquels de nombreux proverbes et dictons dans leur version normative, propre des *refraneros*, et dans des variantes délibérément altérées. A une époque où l'usage de parémies n'était plus qu'une convention éculée, surtout dans le théâtre, Solís a su lui redonner vie avec humour et originalité, maniant avec esprit la troncation, la déconstruction et la reconstruction. Le présent travail examine la présence de parémies manipulées ou marginales dans l'ouvrage littéraire de Solís et leurs fonctions comme une stratégie rhétorique pour faciliter une communication privilégiée entre l'acteur et le spectateur, et aussi pour revitaliser une convention déjà souvent abusée avec un dynamisme nouveau, tout en remettant en question la validité et la fiabilité de la sagesse transmise par les proverbes et les dictons.

Mots-clés
Parémiologie.
Parémie.
Antonio de Solís y Rivadeneyra.
Espagnol.

¹ Antonio de Solís, *Amor y obligación*, f. 15r.

INTRODUCTION

Antonio de Solís y Rivadeneyra (1610-1686), a dramatist in the school of Calderón de la Barca, was much more famous in his own time than he is today.² The Jesuit Joseph López de Echaburu y Alcaraz, in the *Aprobación* he penned for the posthumous *Varias poesías sagradas y profanas, que dejó escritas (aunque no juntas, ni retocadas) Don Antonio de Solís y Ribadeneyra* (1692), compiled by Juan Goyeneche, observed: «Fue Don Antonio milagro deste siglo. Cada palabra suya era vn concepto grande. En Prosa, y Verso resplandecía igualmente, con la pureza, y singular hermosura de sus Dichos, y Cláusulas. Vivirá en todos sus Escritos sin fin» (unpaginated). The uncredited author³ of the *Vida de Don Antonio de Solís y Ribadeneyra* [...] that prefaces this anthology of his poetic works places him in a sublime pantheon: «Assí viven aún, y vivirán los Aristóteles, los Sénecas, los Demóstenes, los Tulos, los Livios, los Homeros, los Uirgilios, los Garcilasos, los Lopes de Uega, los Góngoras, y assí también vive nuestro Don Antonio de Solís y Ribadeneyra, a quien no tuvo envidia, porque no le conoció la Antigüedad» (unpaginated).

Solís y Rivadeneyra was not a particularly prolific writer. Only eleven plays attributed to him as sole author survive, as well as a fragment of a twelfth that he left unfinished after entering the priesthood in 1667. In addition to the posthumous anthology of his poems mentioned above, he also authored the influential *Historia de la conquista de México, población y progresos de la América septentrional, conocida por el nombre de Nueva España* (1684), after being appointed as *Cronista Mayor de Indias*.⁴ In spite of a quite limited literary output, one aspect of his production that stands out is his consistent and often playful recourse to the popular wisdom transmitted through proverbs, refrains and other similar expressions commonly included in the *refraneros* of the period. In this study I explore the strategies utilized by Antonio de Solís to infuse his poetic discourse with originality by means of the incorporation of paremias in both his dramatic and poetic works.

1. THE PAREMIOLOGICAL TRADITION IN EARLY SPANISH DRAMA

The convention of incorporating paremias in Spanish drama can be traced back at least as far as the dramatic works of Gil Vicente, who, inspired by Renaissance Humanism's interest in popular culture from the oral tradition, initiated the vogue for sprinkling his dramatic discourse liberally with proverbs, refrains and other common popular expressions.⁵ The paremia serves many purposes in early modern drama, providing wisdom, moral authority, humor, and perhaps most importantly, an expressive flexibility that allowed the dramatist to make something new and original out of something old: «todo refrán, lejos de reducirse a una fórmula fija, como sucede con la frase hecha, se agiliza en cada nuevo contexto, convirtiéndose en un organismo vivo» (López Castro, 1996: 32).

² Serralta points out that: «Su comedia mitológico-musical *Triunfos de amor y fortuna* fue probablemente el estreno más sonado de todo el siglo XVII, ya que se mantuvo en la cartelera más de sesenta días consecutivos» (Serralta, 1986: 187).

³ The biography was included verbatim in the Francisco Foppens Brussels 1704 edition of the *Historia de la conquista de México*, where Juan de Goyeneche is listed as its author on the title page.

⁴ Sánchez Regueira adds to this list *El pastor Fido*, coauthored with Calderón and Antonio de Coello, *La renegada de Valladolid*, written in collaboration with Diego de Silva and Francisco A. de Montesser, the now lost *La restauración de España*, with the same two collaborators, 11 *loas*, 6 *entremeses* and 5 other compositions such as dialogues, *bailes* and *sainetes* (1984, I: 1).

⁵ For a typology of the different types of refrains included by Gil Vicente, see Postigo Aldeamil (1997: 501-504). The functions of the refrains of Gil Vicente are studied by López Castro (1996: 33-35).

2. TYPES OF PAREMIAS IN THE LITERARY PRODUCTION OF ANTONIO DE SOLÍS

I omit in this study a good number of paremias from the works of Antonio de Solís that are cited more or less in their standard form, but these are not in short supply. As one example to attest their presence, consider the extended metaphor developed by the *gracioso* Martín in *Amor y obligación* when Julia, the object of his affections, nags him to buy her a petticoat. He asks her in response if she has ever seen and heard the smooth workings of a properly wound clock? But if the same clock is wound too tightly, the consequences can be disastrous:

el tal reloj a perder
se echa luego con la carga
porque sus ruedas veloces
corren ya sin ley precisa. (Solís, 2011: f. 11v)

The appropriateness of this common set phrase to the situation at hand is clarified by Correas: «*Echarse con la carga*. Por acabarse de enojar con efecto; dar con todo en tierra, perdiendo la paciencia y sufrimiento: comparación de la bestia, que se echa con la carga por no poder sufrirla ni llevarla» (1627 = 2000). Martín, like the clock, has reached his breaking point with Julia's constant demands for gifts. The technique of using a paremia as a sort of gloss to an *exemplum*, which is the case here, has been studied by Pilar Vega, who observes that: «El nexo [...] entre proverbio y acción deriva en última instancia de la complementariedad entre ejemplo y proverbio. El proverbio [...] glosado por el ejemplo recibe su actualización. El ejemplo resulta, una pequeña viñeta del proverbio, una representación de su operatividad y normativismo [...] y un tipo de glosa o aplicación» (Vega, 1993: 104).

Claude Reynes has used the rather unfortunate (in my view) term «falsos refranes» to characterize an important phenomenon in the literary development of paremias: «Cuando se quiere desviar o imitar refranes se puede utilizar diferentes métodos según el propósito que se busca a través de esas manipulaciones» (Reynes, 1997: 531). I prefer to deem these intentional manipulations as *deviant* paremias, in the sense that they intentionally deviate from the norm, but on many levels still respect their models. A great number of paremias are binomial (*bimembres*, in Spanish terminology), in the sense that they form a two-part mutually dependent equation. And this equation becomes so well-known over the course of time that it constitutes a communal locution deeply engrained in the collective conscience, to the extent that the mere mention of one of the constituent parts (usually the first) automatically triggers the mind to provide the missing half. In many instances, even when the paremia is *deviant* in that it is evoked obliquely by means of one or two key words, or is intentionally altered to adapt to the particular circumstances of its new context, the association is deep enough to provoke the receptor to conjure up the locution. For example, the utterance «A stitch in time» is so thoroughly imbued in popular culture with the termination «saves nine» that almost any native speaker of the English language would immediately provide the missing second half mentally if a speaker uttered only the first. But more obliquely, if an interlocutor were to state playfully: «Well, I laughed first, and it was none the worse», an attentive receptor in most instances would understand that it was a pun on the paremia «He who laughs last, laughs best». By punning on an existing paremia, or altering it, as Reynes has pointed out: «El refrán ya no pertenece a una conciencia colectiva, a la sabiduría popular sino a un individuo preciso» (Reynes, 1997: 532). What is more, the spectator in the audience who is able to decipher such coded language will also feel more engaged with the performance and perhaps more complicit with both the actor who uttered the expression and the poet who crafted it.

3. DEVIANT PAREMIAS IN THE SATIRICAL POETRY OF ANTONIO DE SOLÍS

We will begin our review of the presence of deviant paremias in the works of Solís by examining their utilization in his poetic works. Satirical and burlesque poetry in particular is a fertile domain that is highly receptive to proverbial discourse due to its ludic nature. In the «*silva burlesca*» *Hermafrodito, y Samalcís*, Solís starts off by evoking the first half of a common refrain as a springboard for a pun on the poet Ovid's surname, Nasón/large nose:

al gran poeta Ovidio,
a quien, no lo Nasón, lo culto embidio;
que dexando el refrán, Villa por Villa,
Nasones por Nasones, yo en Castilla. (Solís, 1692: 255)

The poet is playing here on the refrain *Villa por villa, Valladolid en Castilla, y Carmona en Andalucía; rincón por rincón, Alcañiz y Catalayud en Aragón*.⁶ The description of Hermaphrodite continues on with extended wordplay that evokes at least three other partial paremias that an astute reader would have no trouble reconstructing:

En fin, era el Rapaz vn pino de oro, y a puto el pobre, en vno, y otro Coro, le servían las Ninfas: mas cansado de estar siempre enninfado, para buscar su vida, por esos trigos, ⁷ o cebadas, ciego	las que llaman tomó de Villadiego. ⁸ [...] y vamos passo a passo, o tranco a tranco, que en Silva que es, no Parque, ni Florida, tanto anda el Lector cojo, como el manco. ⁹ (Solís, 1692: 257)
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Satirical poems such as this are intended as a tour de force to showcase the poet's wit, and the playful twists on the paremias we have seen represent just one tool in the poet's arsenal of rhetorical devices to use figurative language for the purpose of hyperbolic humor.

The deconstructing and reconstructing of a proverb or refrain in the service of humor and wit¹⁰ is evident in a number of the satirical poems of Antonio de Solís. For example, «A vna Dama, que se confessó, estando enamorada, y estando su Amante pelado» is noteworthy because the process of unpacking the paremia and then recasting it with a new twist is laid bare for the reader to appreciate:

Paz de todo el año, son las guerras de por San Juan, Dize el refrán; y el refrán Tiene su cuenta, y razón: Mas para la confesión,	Aunque yo soy vn tamaño, Me acuerdo aora, que antaño Hize vn refrán deste modo: Las pazes de Casi-modo, Lo son para todo el año. (Solís, 1692: 146)
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Even here however the poet introduces a deviation on the standard form of the paremia, which reads: *Las riñas de por San Juan son paz para todo el año* (Correas),¹¹ before he puns on

⁶ This is the version of the refrain found in Vallés. Correas registers several other variants of the paremia.

⁷ Correas: *Irse por esos trigos de Cristo, o fuese, o dio, por esos trigos de Cristo*.

⁸ Correas: *Tomar las de Villadiego*.

⁹ Correas: *Camino de Santiago, tanto anda el cojo como el manco*.

¹⁰ This type of deconstruction or «ruptura de la frase hecha» has been studied by Le Bigot (1993: 151).

¹¹ The explanation that Correas provides for this refrain is quite detailed, and hints at the reality that many people use proverbs and refrains without really knowing what they mean: «Este refrán le saben y dicen todos, chicos y grandes, y ninguno he visto que sepa su sentido y aplicación. Quiere decir que al principio de los conciertos se averigüe todo bien, y entonces se riña y porfíe lo que ha de ser, y resultará paz para

it. Low Sunday or Quasimodo Sunday (also known as Divine Sunday), in its association with St. Faustina, holds that those faithful who confess and partake of the Holy Eucharist on this day will be rewarded by Jesus with full remission of their sins.¹²

4. DEVIANT PAREMIAS IN THE DRAMATIC LOAS OF ANTONIO DE SOLÍS

Another fertile ground for the proliferation of refrains and proverbs is the dramatic *loa*, a genre occasionally cultivated by Solís.¹³ As was the case for satirical poetry, the *loa* was envisioned as an opportunity for a dazzling display of wit, as Lectura explains to Carvallo in the *Cisne de Apolo* (1602):

[...] le llaman loa por loar en él la comedia, al auditorio o festiuidad en que se hace. Mas ya le podremos assí llamar, porque han dado los Poetas en alabar algunas cosas como el silencio, vn número, lo negro, lo pequeño y otras cosas en que se quieren señalar y mostrar sus ingenios, aunque todo deue yr ordenado al fin que dixe, que es captar la beneuolencia y atención del auditorio. (Carvallo, 1602: f. 126r)

Thus, in the clever *loa* that Solís composed for his comedy *Las Amazonas*, the personification of el Teatro warns Comedia (gran reyna del Mentidero), of the rebellion mounted by los Entremeses, a mob spearheaded by Juan Rana, determined to violate all of Comedia's traditional precepts. Juan Rana comes onstage with his followers to the sound of martial drums (*caxas*), determined to present a *memorial* (*cartas*) to Comedia. One representative of the Entremeses thus delivers a pun that plays off a well-known refrain: «Hazed alto, y hablen / cartas y callen caxas» (Solís, 1692: 174). The paremia, of course, is *Callen baruas: y hablen cartas* (Vallés), a refrain registered as early as the fifteenth century *Seniloquium. Refranes que dizen los viejos* (*Callen barbas et fablen cartas*), a work compiled by Diego García de Castro.¹⁴ In both cases the intent is to emphasize the authority of the written word, or document.

The *Loa para una comedia doméstica que se representó en casa de los Excelentísimos Señores Condes de Oropesa* also makes use of proverbial punning as a means to capture the good will of the audience. Spanish Golden Age *loas* were sometimes metadramatic in nature. Quite often delivered by the impresario of the acting troupe, or *autor de compañía*, the *loa* on occasion bemoaned the defects of the performers as a concession to the topos of false modesty. Such is the case in the *loa* under consideration, where the actress Inés Varela¹⁵ downplays the talents of her troupe by punning on a common refrain:

todo el año, como se prueba con el otro refrán *Quien destaja no baraja*. Tuvo principio de las casas que se alquilan, y de los mozos que se escogen y entran con amos por San Juan» [...].

¹² Some other poems by Solís that follow this pattern of punning on well-known paremias include: «Zelos de vn Xaque, y satisfacción de vna Marca» (Solís, 1692: 122); «Oración muy deuota para la Agonía de la Academia» (Solís, 1692: 49) and «A vn Disciplinante, que açotándose a instancia de vna Dama, y no pudiendo sacar sangre, degolló vn perro de caça, para formar la llaga» (Solís, 1692: 70).

¹³ Solís was apparently much in demand for his *loas*. He composed them for the company of Antonio de Prado, and for works by Francisco Antonio de Monteses and Calderón de la Barca (Serralta, 1986: 63, 85, 98).

¹⁴ The manuscript attributes the work simply to a Dr. Castro. For the evidence linking this figure to Diego García de Castro, see the introduction to the edition of the *Seniloquium* prepared by Fernando Cantalapiedra and Juan Moreno, who date the work around 1478-1480 (2006: 41).

¹⁵ I have not found this actress registered in DICAT or in Rennert's *Spanish Actors and Actresses Between 1560 and 1680*.

Porque nuestra Compañía
es, Señores, de aquellas,
por quien dizen los refranes,

que andar solo, más valiera,
que con malas Compañías. (Solís, 1692: 249)

The standard form of the *paremia* is *Más vale / solo: que mal acompañado* (Vallés; Blasco de Garay's version is: *Vale más ser solo, que mal acompañado*). The same Inés de Varela continues on to allude to another *paremia*, in the broad sense of the term, in characterizing the talents of her fellow actors:

Señores, esto no vale,
que es papilla manifiesta;
y en vez de probar aquí,

si bien, o mal representan,
averme echado la Loa
por debaxo de la cuerda. (Solís, 1692: 251)

Correas explains the meaning of the set phrase *Por debajo de la cuerda* thus: «Dícese quando se juega a la pelota en un corredor puesta una cuerda, y pasa la pelota por debajo; y así en otras cosas: echar faltas por debajo de la cuerda». The *Diccionario de Autoridades* (1729) explains further: «Frase adverbial que expresa el modo de hacer alguna cosa por medios reservados y ocultos, para lograr con más seguridad el fin que se desea». It is thus akin to the English expression of «sweeping something under the rug» or getting something accomplished «under the table». The clever display of wit that results from the manipulation of common *paremias* is almost always in the service of humor in the dramatic *loas* of Solís.¹⁶

5. DEVIANT PAREMIAS IN THE COMEDIAS OF ANTONIO DE SOLÍS

Like any other dramatist following in the footsteps of Lope de Vega and Calderón de la Barca, Antonio de Solís was encumbered by the burdensome weight of convention, and had to balance audience demand for the repetition of popular plots, characters, stylistic devices and spectacular effects, with the quest for originality and innovation.¹⁷ One of those conventions that Solís inherited from his predecessors was the taste for proverbs, refrains and other common popular expressions, a phenomenon evident in an extraordinary number of Spanish Golden Age

¹⁶ This same phenomenon is present in the dramatic *mojigangas* of the Golden Age. See on this topic the studies of Buezo (1993 and 1997).

¹⁷ Solís pokes fun at theatrical conventions of the Golden Age with great frequency. In his very first play, *Amor y obligación*, Martín comments:

Verás,
como le doy con la treta
antigua de la justicia,

y el hombre muerto aquí cerca
que es vn secreto prouado
para aprieto de comedias. (Solís, 2001: f. 5v)

In *El doctor Carlino*, the title character urges his interlocutor to be brief with:

Aquí podéis proseguir
vuestra relación Don Diego,
y hazedla sucinta os ruego,
porque yo en llegando a oír

relaciones dilatadas,
si no puedo con el dueño,
por lo menos con el sueño
me daré de cabeçadas. (Solís, 1681: 233)

And to cite just one more example of the many that could be adduced, in *La Gitanilla de Madrid*, Julio laments the stereotypical role played by servants onstage:

que ya diz que está de Dios,
que en la comedia el criado
ha de ser busca remedios
para qualesquier fracasos,

y assí, siguiendo los passos
de nuestros antecomedios,
vista vuestra causa, digo, [...] (Solís, 1681: 322)

plays.¹⁸ As González Martín explains: «Los humanistas y literatos de los siglos XVI y XVII percibirán claramente la íntima relación existente entre refranes y literatura e intentarán recopilar el mayor número posible de ellos y otros aprovechar los elementos poéticos del refrán para insertarlos en las obras literarias» (1997: 282).

The paremias found in the full-length dramatic works of Antonio de Solís are sometimes cited in their standard forms, as found in the *refraneros* of the period,¹⁹ while at other times they are *deviant* (like the ones already cited from his poems and *loas*) in the sense that they are intentionally altered by means of truncation, deconstruction and reconstruction, to make something new and fresh out of an old saw that might otherwise have been viewed as trite and stale. The same proverbs and refrains that at first seem witty and clever can easily devolve into clichés when overused. The corpus of plays that I have examined includes eleven original plays by Solís and a fragment of another play that he left unfinished when he entered the priesthood.²⁰ All of the plays examined, with one exception, (*Triunfos de amor y fortuna*) feature a number of paremias. I will focus here on only those instances where the paremias are presented in deviant versions, as defined above.

Since paremias convey traditional wisdom passed down from generation to generation through the oral tradition, it is not surprising to find many of them uttered by *graciosos* and other members of the lower social class in Spanish Golden Age *comedias*. The *gracioso*, especially, was renowned for his wit, and as such, the *deviant* paremia would be a natural fit for his role in the play. A very clear example of the *gracioso* who puns on a well-known refrain by altering just one word appears in *La más dichosa venganza* when Camacho responds to his master's query about what he is doing in the *prado*: «Aquí en el prado / paciando tus errores, / que pacen justos oy por pecadores» (Solís, 2011: f. 24). Camacho is of course making a wordplay based on the refrain *Pagan justos por pecadores* (Vallés). We find different strategies in a pair of examples from *Amparar al enemigo*. In the first instance, the paremia is turned inside out for comic effect when Muñoz expresses his misogyny by punning on the standard paremia, *Al enemigo que huye, [hazelle] la puente de plata* (Correas), which counsels one to facilitate the retreat of the enemy. By negating the veracity of this refrain, Muñoz calls into question the essence of the paremia as a universal truth or maxim. As the servant Elvira leaves the house, he locks the door to prevent her return with this comment:

que a la muger que se va,
si mal no me acuerdo yo,

¹⁸ As I have noted elsewhere: «José de Jaime Gómez and José María de Jaime Lorén have documented 329 Spanish literary works from the 16th-18th centuries that feature paremias as their titles, and practically all of them are plays, representing 365 different authors. These critics highlight the: 'astucia de muchos autores para situar a la cabecera de sus obras refranes y dichos sentenciosos que sirvieran de reclamo, de gancho para atraer a sus representaciones la mayor cantidad posible de público'. But paremias were not only exploited for the titles of Golden Age plays. Although they were incorporated systematically into the dramatic text by most major playwrights, their presence and function remain largely undocumented» (Cull, «Paremias in the Plays of Juan Pérez de Montalbán», forthcoming in *Rilce*). Solís himself evoked a refrain in the title of one of his plays: [*La gran Comedia de*] *Vn bobo haze ciento*. In the dramatic text, Martín states: «Miren si vn Bobo haze ciento / como el loco del refrán» (Solís, 1681: 307). The paremia is registered by Vallés: *Un loco / haze ciento* and Correas (1627): *Un loco hará ciento, o un loco hace ciento*, among others.

¹⁹ It is not inconceivable that the enormous personal library of Solís, consisting of some 1,500 books (Serralta, 1986: 133) contained some of these *refraneros*.

²⁰ The anonymous *Vida de Don Antonio de Solís* observes that Solís even declined the invitation to compose *autos sacramentales* for Madrid upon the death of Calderón: «No se inclinó por ruegos algunos, ni aún por preceptos muy soberanos, a componer los Autos Sacramentales, muerto D. Pedro Calderón de la Barca, el nuevo Apolo de nuestro siglo» (Solís, 1692: unpaginated).

puente de plata, mas no
que por ella bolverá. (Solís, 1681: 373)

The second example occurs immediately on the heels of the first. A melancholic don Carlos, who suffers from unrequited love, receives this advice from Muñoz:

dexa esse necio cuydado,
mira que es mas acertado
el vivir con su pepita,
que morir desesperado. (Solís, 1681: 373)

It is really just a single word here, *pepita* (a tumor on the tongue that prevents the hen from crowing or eating), that evokes a number of closely related refrains that are all applicable to the situation at hand. In the first instance, the paremia *Escarba la gallina y halla su pepita* (Correas)²¹ recommends not probing too deeply into a matter and risk getting burned (metaphorically). Thus Muñoz is warning Carlos that the pursuit of his love interest, Leonor, will lead to disaster. However, he is at the same time alluding to the paremia *Biua la gallina con su pepita* (Núñez de Toledo and Vallés), which implies that one should tolerate a minor inconvenience or ailment in order to avoid an even worse fate by trying to address and rectify it. Muñoz then counsels Carlos to resign himself to his love sickness and not risk losing his life by succumbing to it in a suicidal act. Finally, given Muñoz's recent act of locking the door to avoid the return of the loquacious Elvira, he might be evoking the refrain *No tiene pepita en la lengua*, which Correas explains thus: «Dícese de quien tiene prontitud en hablar, y más de las mujeres que con enojo dicen muchas injurias». This is an excellent example of how a truncated paremia can evoke, with great verbal economy, a whole wealth of associations. At the same time, it points to the unique synergistic dynamic at work in a dramatic performance where the text demands a degree of audience participation in order to make the connections insinuated and arrive at the full meaning.

Another play that offers a number of examples of paremias that have been unpacked and recast with the certainty that the audience will be complicit in understanding and acknowledging the dramatist's crafty use of figurative language is *El doctor Carlino*. With a total of eight paremias (by my count) this is the play by Solís that most abounds in proverbs and refrains. And in almost every instance the proverbial locution in question is evoked somewhat obliquely, with a clear ludic intent. For example, the pompous Doctor Carlino uses inflated diction to explain to Diego how the latter's sister Leonor must have escaped from her room that evening:

abrió como vna granada
la puerta de par en par.
Vio el jardín abierto, y como
ruego de buenos no ay,
salto diera de la mata,
que parece vn gauilán;
fuesse en casa de vna amiga. (Solís, 1681: 250)

²¹ This refrain is cited in the *Seniloquium* (*Escarua la galina et falla su pepita*) with very interesting commentary: «Alude este proverbio a los judíos, que murmuraron contra Cristo, enconados por la lepra de la perfidia y del error [...] Este proverbio puede decirse de un pecador que pide algo a Dios, manifestándose como pecador y conforme con su culpa; pues también es escuchado por Dios para distorsión del pecado, mientras le permite derrumbarse más profundamente en su mal» (García de Castro, 2006: 144).

The very common paremia to which the doctor alludes here is: *Más vale salto de mata que ruego de buenos; o de hombres buenos* (Correas).²² The meanings imputed to this proverb vary, but the most frequent, perhaps, is that after committing a crime or indiscretion, the safest thing to do is flee and not risk being apprehended by the authorities.²³ Given the context, the Doctor seems to be suggesting that since there was nobody present to offer sage counsel, Leonor took the bold and perhaps imprudent step of escaping the house.

As he continues with his affected account of the events that transpired, Doctor Carlino explains how Leonor came to his house to ask if Diego was there, conflating Peter's denial of Christ three times before the crowing of the rooster (Luke 22:54-62) with another common proverb, both linked by the word *gallo*:

Preguntó por ti, neguéte;
porfió, neguéte más,
y a la tercera negada
el gallo empezó a cantar,
el gallo de tu pasión,
que viendo a Leonor acá
garganteó, imaginando
que estaua en su muladar. (Solís, 1681: 250-251)

The proverb in question is: *cada gallo canta en su muladar* (Blasco de Garay, Carta 1),²⁴ and has the general meaning that one is king of one's own domain. But here Carlino is merely revealing Diego's shock at finding his sister in the doctor's house when she was presumed to be safely confined to her room at home. But by linking the proverb with the biblical context, Carlino is clearly and cleverly implying a betrayal on the part of Leonor for challenging the masculine authority of her brother. Just a few verses later Doctor Carlino makes his most recondite proverbial allusion, when he summarizes the perturbation that all three experienced upon seeing Leonor in his house:

Como la causa ignoraste,
yo de aquella al verte entrar
me cogiesse antes que al coxo,
que es afrenta, y es refrán;
y así todos tres turbados [...] (Solís, 1681: 251)

Precisely because the reference is so abstruse, Carlino feels compelled to clarify that his words are meant to evoke a refrain. I believe that the paremia in question is: *Antes toman al mentiroso: que al coxo* (Vallés),²⁵ which makes perfect sense if he is trying to assure his disbelieving guest of the veracity of his version of the events.

Another interesting phenomenon in the plays of Solís are those metadramatic instances when characters recognize and reject the popular nature of proverbial discourse, a linguistic register

²² Included in other *refraneros* as: *más vale salto de mata, que ruego de hombres buenos* (Blasco de Garay, Cartas 1 & 4); *Más vale / salto de mata: que ruego / de buenos hombres* (Vallés); *Más vale salto de mata, que ruego de hombres buenos* (Núñez de Toledo); *Más vale salto de mata, que ruego d'omes buenos* (Santillana); *Más vale salto de mata, que ruego de homes buenos* (*Seniloquium*).

²³ Lope de Vega authored a play with this paremia as its title. For the explanation of the proverb's meaning, see Sierra Martínez, 2000: 749.

²⁴ Other versions include: *Cada gallo en su muladar* (Núñez de Toledo); *Cada gallo / canta en su muladar* (Vallés); *Cada gallo en su muladar* (Santillana); *Cada gallo, en su muralda* [*sic*] (*Seniloquium*).

²⁵ A version of the paremia is found in the *Celestina* as well: *Toman antes al mentiroso que al que coxquea* (Acto XVII).

deemed, perhaps, as inferior. In *El amor al uso*, the *gracioso* Ortuño chides his master Gaspar for using a comically altered refrain:

Gaspar: Ortuño, a menos mugeres,
más ganancia.
Ortuño: Essos refranes
son de viejos, que no pueden,
y echan la culpa al que saben. (Solís, 1681: 111)

The refrain in question upon which Gaspar bases his pun is: *A más Moros, más ganancia* (Correas); *Mientras más Moros, más ganancia* (Núñez de Toledo); *A más moros / más ganancia* (Vallés). Shortly thereafter Juana questions the authority and veracity traditionally imputed to refrains and proverbs:

La razón no quiere fuerça,
dize vn refrán, y es vn necio,
que con fuerça vna puñada
tiene cosas de argumento;
y assí es mayor la razón
de quien arguye más recio. (Solís, 1681: 114)

Juana here is of course repudiating the validity of the refrain *La razón no quiere fuerza, ni la fuerza quiere razón* (Correas), and positing instead that violence can indeed be effective in attaining one's ends.

The total rejection of proverbial discourse (albeit in a humorous vein) is most explicit in the extant fragment of *Amor es arte de amar*:

Riselo	Lo que digo es, que quisiera que fueran los refranes prohibidos; porque han echado a perder muchos hombres.	Riselo	¿Por qué? porque aquel refrán, que dixo: El que pregunta, no yerra, fue el inventor del martirio de ciertos preguntadores como vos, que muy prolixos, sin informar la atención, desustancian el oído. (Solís, 1692: 203)
Federico	No percibo por qué lo dizes.		

The refrain to which Riselo refers is: *Quien pregunta: no yerra: si la pregunta / no es necia* (Vallés).²⁶ It is precisely the qualifier at the end of the *paremia*, omitted by Riselo that makes impertinent questions so burdensome.

CONCLUSIONS

My approach to the *paremias* of Antonio de Solís has not been that of a linguist and it is for this reason that I have refrained from presenting a rigorous classification of their manifestations in his poems and plays. I instead view the proverbs, refrains and set expressions in the works of our dramatist as a communicative strategy that is both rhetorical and stylistic in nature, with the purpose of facilitating a privileged communication between actors and spectators that not only engages the audience, but also endows an otherwise stale convention with new life and dynamism.

²⁶ The same refrain appears in *La más dichosa venganza*, when Camacho states: «Que quien pregunte no yerre / ya está del refrán» (Solís, 2010: f. 27v).

Antonio de Solís is not the first Spanish Golden Age dramatist to alter standard paremiias for comic purposes, but he is unique in the frequency of this practice and in the self-conscious awareness his characters show in questioning the validity and reliability of the knowledge conveyed in proverbs and refrains. Indeed, Solís seems to manifest a love/hate relationship with the convention of incorporating paremiias in the dramatic and poetic discourse. While the strategy of using proverbs and refrains might have been valuable to draw the audience into the performance by relying on them to make the not always obvious connections that are implied but not made explicit, their repeated exploitation in so many dramatic works of the Golden Age resulted in a sort of trivialization, where paremiias were perceived as trite clichés. While Solís was distrustful of this stale convention,²⁷ he managed to find a clever and subversive way to pay tribute to it at the same time that he ridiculed it with the sharp wit for which he was so renowned.²⁸

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²⁷ The quote that forms part of my title is evidence of this skepticism towards the alleged wisdom of proverbs and refrains. It is one final example of Solís's penchant for deviant paremiias. In the text, Martín and his master Fernando secretly listen as Isabel appears to declare her love for don Alonso. Martín comments: «Su bien a oído el que a escuchar venía / mal aya el hombre que en refranes fía» (Solís, 2001: f. 15r). This is of course an ironic inversion of the paremia in its standard form: *Quien escucha su mal oye*. The version registered by Vallés is: *Quien escucha / al agujero: oyó de su duelo*.

²⁸ The previously mentioned *Vida de don Antonio de Solís y Ribadeneyra* [...] claims that his wit rivals that of Góngora: «Fue Góngora primero en el tiempo: pero no sé, si lo fue en el Ingenio. En muchas cosas fueron iguales. En muchas le excedió Don Antonio. Dudo, si fue excedido en alguna. Lo numeroso, no fue en él menos: pero lo agudo, quizá fue más» (Solís, 1681: Unpaginated).

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