"FLIPPING THE SCRIPT": FEMININE CULPABILITY MODELS IN FIFTEENTH-CENTURY IBERIAN TEXTS

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by
Erica F. O'Brien
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Examining Committee Members:

Dr. Montserrat Piera, Advisory Chair, Department of Spanish and Portuguese
Dr. Hiram Aldarondo, Department of Spanish and Portuguese
Dr. Víctor Pueyo Zoco, Department of Spanish and Portuguese
Dr. Adriano Duque, External Member, Villanova University

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the ways in which feminine culpability is verbally articulated by the male courtly lover to his beloved lady within the amorous relationship in three fifteenth-century Spanish sentimental novels: Diego de San Pedro’s *Cárcel de amor*, published in 1492, and two of Juan de Flores' sentimental novels, *Grimalte y Gradissa* and *Grisel and Mirabella*, both published in approximately 1495, and how these motifs of feminine culpability are subverted in the anonymous fifteenth-century Catalan chivalric novel *Curial e Güelfa.* This subversion of culpability motifs is facilitated in *Curial e Güelfa* since there is also a subversion of gender roles within the amorous relationship of the novel's protagonists: a female lover, Güelfa, who courts her male beloved, Curial.

To execute this study, I begin by discussing the origins of this rhetoric of feminine culpability in patristic, Biblical and philosophical texts, illustrating their sedimentation into the collective ideologies of medieval audiences. I also examine these feminine culpability models in Provençal lyric poetry written and recited by Occitan troubadours between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, as one of its particular genres, the *mala cansó*, aims to not only blame the beloved lady, but also to publicly defame her, a threat that is also ever-present in the words of the male lover in the sentimental novel. After analyzing the tactics used by the male courtly lover to blame the beloved lady for his suffering and the demise of the relationship, I demonstrate how these same tactics are employed by the female characters of *Curial e Güelfa* toward the beloved man. However, feminine blame still occurs in *Curial e Güelfa*, manifested as feminine self-blame and blame between women, while the male characters engage in self-absolution, absolution of other men, and utter shirking of the blame. The theoretical framework employed is that of medieval canon law, and the way in which culpability was determined under this law from

the twelfth century onward, which was by the intentions of the offender at the time of the crime or transgression rather than the consequences of the transgression. If we examine these fifteenth-century courtly love texts, it becomes clear that the beloved lady is innocent, while the male lover himself is the culpable party. Finally, following Rouben C. Cholakian's reading of the troubadour poetry through the work of twentieth-century psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, I conclude that although the poet-lover verbally enunciates erotic metaphors and adulating language toward his beloved lady in the guise of courtly love, the true desire that he cannot articulate is to dominate, to overpower, and possibly to eradicate the feminine. Thus, in a Lacanian sense the notion that courtly love literature praises the woman is a fallacy. Both the poet-lover of the Provençal lyric and the courtly lover of the sentimental novel subvert the concept of alleged feminine superiority and exaltation in these texts.

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PROLOGUE

Since the end of the twelfth century, the invective against women was a common practice in the Provençal poetic tradition. Two types of Provençal poems, the *mala cansó* and the *mala cobla*, were used by the troubadours as verbal vehicles to publicly criticize the cruel and ungrateful behavior of women to whom they devoted their love, indicating their final renunciation of the relationship, and, in some cases, joyfully boasting that they had found a new beloved lady. According to Robert Archer, the most famous of these *cansós* was Bernat de Ventadorn's "Can vei la lauzeta mover" (*Misoginia* 43). In this poem, Ventadorn's grievances about his beloved's betrayal lead him to a sweeping denouncement of all women, grouping them together as one unified, malicious entity: "De las domnas me dezesper; / ja mais en lor nọ·m fiari; / c'aissi com las solh chaptener, / enaissi las deschaptenrai./ Pois vei c'una pro no m'en te / vas leis que ·m destrui e·m cofon, / totas las dopt'e las mescre, / car be sai c'atretals se son" (vv. 25-32).

Matfre Ermengaud cites this *cansó* of Ventadorn about a century later in his 1288 treatise *Le Breviari d'amor*, a work which aims to teach about various forms of love including, paradoxically, both courtly love and love of God, within the framework of Catholic doctrine. Michelle Bolduc describes the text as "complex" and "problematic" given that its title connotes liturgical content, yet Ermengaud "creates in the *Breviari* an uneasy association of the the erotic love of *fin' amors* and the *caritas* of Christianity" (66). Ermengaud includes this *cansó* of Ventadorn in the work's final section entitled "Perilhos tractatz d'amor de donas, seguon qu'en han tractat li antic trobador en lurs cansos," or "The Perilous Treatise on the Love of Women According to What the Troubadours Have Said in Their Songs." In this section, Ermengaud and a host of courtly characters such as troubadours, lovers, and the *maldizen*, or the naysayers, debate whether or not women are

to blame for the amorous suffering of their male lovers, using a total of 265 troubadour lyrics to substantiate their claims. Bolduc asserts that Ermengaud's *Breviari* can be read as an *apologia* of courtly love in dispute of the ban of Andreas Capellanus' treatise on courtly love *De amore* by Bishop Etienne Tempier of France in 1277. Bolduc adds that the Catholic framework applied to the rest of the text is notably absent in this section about courtly love, and Ermengaud does not ascribe any sins to the courtly figures, including the troubadours and their songs. Although Ermengaud wholeheartedly defends human love in his *Breviari*, the debate about feminine culpability in the courtly love relationship pervaded various literary genres, extending not only from the Occitan tradition of these Provençal poets like Ventadorn to later poetry of the Peninsula like that found in the *Cancioneros*, but also to two of its prose genres which feature women as subjects of male devotion: the *novela sentimental* and the *novela de caballerias*, or chivalric romance, like those of the Arthurian tradition.

In addition to sharing the common thread of feminine blame, these prose genres and Occitan poetry also feature the distinctive presence of a "public." That is, when the lover threatens to tarnish his lady's honor, intentionally using verbs like *publicar*/*poblicar*, he indicates that he plans to reveal her forbidden behavior to an audience in a public place. Within the context of troubadour poetry and the sentimental novel, this audience would most likely be comprised of courtiers. In his *cansós* Ventadorn notes that the end of the amorous relationship also marks the end of his joyful song, since rejection leaves him with nothing to sing about. Isabel de Riquer maintains that other poets like Gui d'Ussell, Gaucelm Faidit, and Joan Berenguer de Masdovelles, however, were sure to note in their verses that they would "spread the word" about their beloved (115). Ussell takes the

opposite approach to Ventadorn, informing his lady that he refuses to keep her bad behavior from the public eye, because he is determined to tell everyone about her cruelty: “si faitz mal ja non sera celat, / anz en vol hom plus dire de vertat" (qtd. I. de Riquer 115). Berenguer de Masdovelles echoes this sentiment, confirming to his lady that he has been going around broadcasting her behavior: “si vau de vos ers poblicant / vostros Ilayts ffets" (vv.17-8).

Riquer affirms that unlike other antifeminist genres of the Middle Ages that bemoaned the shared defects of all womankind, in the *mala cansó* the poet focused on one woman in particular, not only blaming her for his heartache and resentment, but also defaming her personally—highlighting her cruelty, her sexual promiscuity (or her stinginess in granting him sexual favors, on the other hand) or her foolishness in leaving him for another man of lower status. Armed with the threat of a judgmental public, the lover of both the troubadour lyric and the sentimental novel gains access to a myriad of tactics to blame his beloved lady not only for the demise of the relationship, but for the course of events during the courtship as well. If the lover is dissatisfied with the lady's failure to respond to his letters, to send a *galardón* with his messenger, or to provide sexual gratification, he can use the threat of public defamation to manipulate her into complying with his requests.

The threat of damaging a woman's reputation was quite a legitimate one, since the parameters of acceptable feminine behavior in the Middle Ages were extremely restrictive, as I discuss in Chapter 1. The teachings of the church worked to regulate women's sexual behavior and encourage their silence, especially in the social sphere, and philosophical doctrine maintained women's rational, biological and intellectual inferiority to men. Thus,

being slandered as promiscuous (which could simply entail having committed the act of premarital "fornication" with one man), adulterous, or cruel had social consequences for women. The concept of feminine honor was a delicate one, especially because a woman's honor was irrevocably bound to that of her family, most importantly, men: her father, brothers, or husband. Therefore, a woman's behavior (even alleged behavior, as we will see in the texts studied in this dissertation) could jeopardize not only her reputation, but that of her entire family unit. This was especially true for women of the nobility.

My aim in this dissertation is to explore this rhetoric of culpability employed by the male lover to blame his beloved lady for the failure of the amorous relationship. But first, in order to clarify the term "culpability," I will provide here several definitions and documented uses of the word, along with definitions of terms related to culpability, as conceptualized by medievalists, anthropologists and historians of medieval canon law. The *Oxford English Dictionary Online* defines the adjective "culpable" in its first sense as "Guilty, criminal; deserving punishment or condemnation," noting that this definition is now obsolete or "blended" with the second adjectival sense, "Deserving blame or censure, blameworthy." Among the earliest uses of the first sense, the *OED* cites the Middle English devotional text *Handling Synne*, written in 1331 by Robert Mannyng of Brune: "Ȝyf þou..Fordost pore mannys sustynaunce Þat aftyrwarde he may nat lyve Þou art coupable." The earliest cited use of the second sense comes from Geoffrey Chaucer's *Melibeus* written in approximately 1386: "Þe lawe saith þat he is coupable þat entremettith him or mellith him with such þing as aperteyneþ not vnto him." Finally, the noun form of "culpable," defined as "A guilty person, a culprit," now deemed obsolete, is cited from *Golden Legende*, the widely-read 1483 collection of hagiographies of Blessed Jacobus de

Voragine: “He punysshed the culpables” ("culpable," adj, 1a, adj. 2a, n. Oxford English Dictionary Online, 2019). The Real Academia Española defines the Spanish word "*culpable*" in three adjectival senses: the first " Que tiene la culpa de algo," noting that this sense is applied to people, and can also be used as a noun. The second meaning is " Que implica culpa," and the third sense is assigned to a legal context, meaning, " Dicho de una persona: Responsable civil o penalmente de algo," from the Latin *culpabilis*. ("culpable," adj, 1-3. La Real Academia Española Online, 2019).

A more recent discussion of the terms related to culpability can be found in Ellen Wehner Eaton’s dissertation entitled *Shame Culture or Guilt Culture: The Evidence of the Medieval French Fabliaux*. In the introduction, Eaton describes the way scholars from diverse fields including psychology, anthropology, and history have defined the terms "shame" and "guilt" throughout the twentieth century, illustrating the gradual evolution of the way in which these terms are conceptualized. Eaton explains that the anthropological definitions proposed in the 1930s and 40s define shame as an externally imposed sanction, while guilt is an internally imposed sanction. She continues, "In a shame culture, the opinion of others, or 'what people will say,' is more important than what the individual personally feels. In a guilt culture, in contrast, people act according to an internal sense of what is right and wrong" (26).

Eaton claims that these “outdated” definitions to discern between the two types of cultures were still in use by medieval literary scholars writing after the 1960s. To illustrate, Eaton alludes to Eugene Vance’s description of the differences between shame and guilt cultures in his 1971 book *Reading the "Song of Roland"*: "a shame culture is one in which respect for public opinion and the desire to obtain honor are the most important

forces guiding behavior, while in a guilt culture the fear of God and a desire for a quiet conscience are the stronger factors" (Eaton 26). Joseph Szövérffy's definition in his "'Amiswelt' und 'Gralwelt': Shame Culture and Guilt Culture in 'Parzivai'" resembles Vance's, affirming that in a shame culture the collective focus is on increasing one's reputation and honor, while a guilt culture is based on religious and moralistic views, therefore, as Eaton states, "the fear of sin plays the predominant role" (26). In his book *Medieval French Literature and Law*, Howard R. Bloch affirms that a shame culture compels the individual to act more in alignment with the opinions of others than with his or her own personal feelings, while a guilt culture compels the individual to rely on his or her innate sense of right and wrong. D.S. Brewer, editor of *The Morte Darthur, Parts Seven and Eight, by Sir Thomas Malory*, describes honor as fixed on "what people will say," and guilt as the consequence of an "internalized set of values" (Eaton 26). In his book *Malory: Style and Vision in* Le Morte Darthur, Mark Lambert explains that in a shame culture, public recognition of an individual's actions is more important than one's own acknowledgement of their wrongdoing, while in a guilt culture internal values are more important than external values. Eaton refers as well to the work of Loretta Wasserman, who uses an honor/shame culture model, defining it in her essay "Honor and Shame in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*" as a culture in which "public opinion is the measure of all worth," while guilt is an internal feeling of shame (Eaton 26-7). Eaton claims that many psychological and anthropological writings have since challenged the internal/external model of the 1930s and 40s, now rejected within the social sciences, as the basis for distinguishing between guilt and shame, looking instead for more meaningful ways to distinguish between the two terms.

Eaton further adds that the terms elude static definitions for a multitude of reasons, explaining:

> Shame is not necessarily external nor guilt necessarily internal. It is possible for an individual to feel shame even if no one witnesses the shameful act. An Ojibway Indian who breaks his paddle while alone in his canoe, for instance, may experience such shame that he will commit suicide, even though no one sees the event. Likewise an individual may feel guilty only when told by others that he or she has done wrong. A small child, for example, will often not feel guilt over a misdeed unless reprimanded by his or her parents. In addition, shame seems actually to require some degree of internalization in order to function adequately as a social sanction. Without an internal sense of what constitutes shameful behavior, people would never try to avoid those acts considered shameful. So too guilt seems to require some degree of externalization, at least initially, for it is only by means of external sanctions such as spankings and scoldings that a child gradually comes to internalize the behavioral norms which, when violated later, give rise to guilt. (27-8)

Yet, Eaton still aims at a more stable definition of the terms in a contemporary context, stating that shame is now generally conceptualized as a feeling of "negative self-evaluation which occurs when a person realizes that he or she has failed to live up to his or her ideals. Psychoanalysts speak of this as a failure vis-à-vis the ego-ideal, the internalized positive image of the parent figure, while anthropologists speak of it as a failure to live up to the internalized standards of society" (28). Eaton maintains that the only difference

between these two explanations is semantic, and that both disciplines convey shame as the failure to achieve one's goals, or live up to one's own preconceived notion of oneself, or one's aspirational self, resulting in a feeling of inferiority and a "decline in his or her perceived status" (28).

Despite the internalized and isolated sensation of shame, however, Eaton contends that it also includes an external component, which lies in the sources from which we construct our goals: "parents, peers, or even society as a whole" (28). Consequentially, the ashamed individual assumes that their shameful act will affect their ties with these respected outside sources, assuming that people will think less of them as a result (28-9). As Eaton contends,

> In more abstract terms, the person fears that his or her status in the eyes of the valued "Other" will decline because he or she has failed to live up to the "Other's" goals…It may of course be the case that the ideals of the "Other" have been so internalized that the person does not even associate them with the "Other", and and instead considers them uniquely his or her own; in such instances the person may experience a decline in status solely in his or her own eyes. Still, insofar as status is in essence one's position in society in relation to others, the sense of a scornful "Other" remains implicit. (29)

Eaton insists that in any case, one's responsibility is irrelevant, since shame can be felt about something over which one has no control, therefore the feeling of shame does not always indicate responsibility. On the other hand, she goes on to describe the collective concept of guilt as "the recognition that one has done something wrong.

Psychoanalysts refer to this as the recognition of having violated the code of conduct prescribed by the superego, the internalized, threatening, castrating parental figure; anthropologists speak instead of the realization that one has contravened the behavioral norms prescribed by society" (29-30). Again, Eaton reiterates that both fields essentially concur on how to define the term, which in this case means transgressing socially accepted codes of conduct. Like shame, guilt has both an internal and external component. Internally, Eaton confirms, the guilty person recognizes that he or she has committed a "wrongful act," while it is the external code of conduct that this wrongful act has violated. The code of conduct is external since, as Eaton argues, its rules are "originally acquired during the process of socialization from others: parents, peers, or society in general. More importantly, guilt has an external component also in that when the guilty person commits the misdeed, he or she injures some 'Other' or in some way oversteps his or her rights vis-à-vis the 'Other'" (30). This "Other" Eaton refers to could be the direct victim of the wrongful act, or it could be any entity the guilty person feels that they have offended, like their family, community, or God. She uses the example of a house burglar who not only feels remorseful for the loss and damage he has caused to the homeowners, but also the negative impact he has had on his community as a whole.

She goes on to discuss the concept of reparations for a transgression, affirming, "Because of this injustice done to the 'Other', the guilty person's relationship with the 'Other' is disturbed; some steps therefore need to be taken to re-establish a normal relationship. Often this is accomplished by punishment of the guilty person, either by the 'Other' or through the agency of people acting on behalf of the 'Other'" (30). While the house burglar faces punishment on a societal level via imprisonment, Eaton states that a

guilty person can restore their relationship with the victimized or offended party by making amends: "The murderer in Teutonic society made payments to the family of the victim, the disobedient child buys his parents a gift, and the sinner does penance. Guilt thus revolves around the notion of balance in relationships. When a misdeed is committed, the guilty person is out of balance in his or her relations with the 'Other'. Thus, [u]nlike shame, guilt always implies responsibility" (30-1).

While the entirety of Eaton's discussion of guilt and shame will greatly support my reading of the motif of feminine culpability in the fifteenth-century Iberian texts studied in the following chapters, the notion of restoring balance to a compromised relationship is very similar to James A. Brundage's discussion of the precursors to medieval canon law. Medieval canon law was based on the *Decretum*, a twelfth-century collection of Latin legal sources compiled by a Camaldolese monk known as Master Gratian, of whom little other biographical information is known. Peter Landau speculates that because he is only credited with the name "Magister Gratianus" in the earliest records of the *Decretum*, it is possible that Gratian was a teacher. The collection includes texts dating from the early patristic period to the twelfth century, methodically organized and accompanied by Gratian's *dicta*, which as Landau explains, include his analyses and comments on the texts, interpreting any contradictions in the sources in order to rectify them (22). By 1140 the *Decretum* gained a vast readership across Europe, and was established as the authoritative textbook for the teaching of canon law, first in Bologna, then spreading to other regions. Landau calls the *Decretum* "both the summary of the development of the law of the Christian Church in the first eleven centuries of its existence and the foundation of canonical jurisprudence until the twentieth century" (22-3). While Gratian drew mainly

from ecclesiastical sources such as papal decretals, Carolingian capitularies, pseudo-apostolic texts, Roman law, patristic writings, and canons of councils, he did incorporate some non-canonical sources, including Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*. Although canon law is ecclesiastical in nature, it was considered the law of the land in the Middle Ages, and was applied in all manner of juridical cases.

James A. Brundage states that when medieval canon lawyers implemented the canonical theory of culpability to criminal law in the twelfth century, it was a "revolutionary approach, one that lies at the root of most modern theories of criminal justice" (171). As Brundage explains, the theory of culpability considered the intentions of the offender crucial information when it came to determining guilt or innocence. This concept was based on the penitential model of the Church, wherein the degree to which one was found guilty depended upon his or her mental and moral intent at the time of the crime. While earlier approaches sought to determine the degree of harm caused by the criminal and then procure the proper reparations to both victim and community such as the circumstances of Teutonian murderers Eaton describes, Brundage contends that the church's model, after which the theory of culpability was structured, considered any harm caused to be a "secondary" concern. Brundage offers the following example:

> Under this theory, what the sinner did might be morally neutral, but his reasons for doing it could readily convert a morally indifferent act into a grievous offence. Thus, for example, if I buy an axe, the purchase of the tool is in itself neither good nor bad. But if I buy an axe in order to silence my noisy neighbor once and for all, my murderous intention converts the purchase into a serious sin, even if I fail to follow through and actually

> never use the axe for anything except chopping firewood. Approached in this way, guilt resides primarily in the internal, subjective attitude that exists in the mind and will of the actor, rather than in some external, objective action or event in which the actor participates...Medieval canonistic theories of culpability underlie the modern criminal law's concern with determining whether an action was voluntary or involuntary, whether it was premeditated or impulsive, whether it was an isolated offence or part of a habitual pattern of behaviour, whether the outcome of the offender's deeds resulted from deliberate, purposeful action or was accidental and unforeseen. (172)

Brundage's discussion will be extremely useful in reading the literary texts from a contemporary perspective of determining culpability. As we reread the literary texts with the concept of feminine culpability in mind, I will illustrate that the blaming "process" that women undergo at the hands of the male protagonists effectively violates, that is, subverts medieval canon law. In short, I will demonstrate that by the standards of medieval canon law, the beloved lady is in fact *inculpable*, while in effect it is the men who reveal themselves as culpable. Ironically, many of the literary texts I discuss in this dissertation include juridical references, and, in the case of *Arcipreste de Talavera o El Corbacho*, an outright mention of canon law. Thus, reading these texts alongside medieval canon law affords us an accurate snapshot of the legal conceptualization of culpability of the period. Additionally, the legal references in literary texts confirm that the male protagonists and male authors were familiar with how culpability was determined, but that they chose not

to apply it to themselves; these juridical tropes were only employed by the male protagonists when judging women's actions and never their own.

Thus, the potency of this trope of feminine culpability is so pervasive in the legal, literary and devotional texts of the Middle Ages that it breaks the boundaries of mere textual discourse and manifests itself as a truism in medieval *mentalités*. Consequently, these mediated and highly biased portrayals of women are presented as what a woman "is," further alienating real women in a medieval patriarchal society, including, as Anne Clark Bartlett exemplifies, as readers (31-3). Following Judith Butler, it can be argued that these texts that exemplify the trope of feminine blame make women "perform" a role within the texts that is non-existent and which has been imposed on them by the male poets (*Gender Trouble* 190). It is my contention that the courtly lover projects his own desire on the lady, making her appear as though she is a willful participant in the courtship when in fact it is not always the case. My dissertation aims to reveal both the instances of imposition on women of unwanted roles on the part of the male authors or male characters, as well as instances of resistance to these impositions on the part of the female characters of the texts under scrutiny.

Now, what the majority of literary works under the genres of the sentimental novel and the chivalric romance have in common is their static portrayal of their female characters as damsels in distress, women who need to be rescued by their admirers. In order to imitate the codes of courtly love, the male lover must mimic the roles of feudal vassal to his overlord; the role of subjugated lover, willing to suffer physical and emotional anguish at the hands of his lady; and valiant knight, ready to rescue his lady in times of danger. These admirers-turned-rescuers in turn expect some reward for their

suffering and bravery, that is, their amorous "service." This reward, or *galardón*, typically takes the form of some sort of reciprocation from the lady, whether it be a letter, one of her garments, or sexual consummation of their relationship. Often in these works, however, the lady's lack of amorous reciprocation and refusal to provide such a reward results in the lover's dramatized reaction: a cycle of intense feelings toward the lady ranging from love and devotion, to lust and yearning, to abjection and despair, and finally to resentment or even complete disdain. Throughout this cycle of emotions the lover accuses the lady of being uncompassionate, since she refuses to take pity on him and honor her end of the bargain, especially considering that he fulfilled his chivalric duty and saved her from some sort of physical harm or imprisonment.

My purpose is to analyze examples of the way these cycles play out between the male lover and his beloved lady in several fifteenth-century Iberian texts: Juan de Flores' two sentimental novels *Grimalte y Gradissa* and *Grisel y Mirabella*, and Diego de San Pedro's *Cárcel de amor*. My aim is to examine how the trope of feminine culpability is verbally articulated by male characters in these medieval Iberian literary texts and to illustrate, in some cases, the correlation between blame and the characterization of women as "damsels in distress," since lack of reward for unsolicited service results in feminine blame. Then, I will illustrate how these intertwined motifs are overturned in one literary work in particular, the anonymous fifteenth-century chivalric romance *Curial e Güelfa*. I will also demonstrate the sharp contrast between the blame that is assigned to and, in some cases, self-imposed by women with the absolution granted to men by both themselves and one another in these texts.

Throughout this dissertation, in addition to Occitan lyric poetry, I will be discussing four fifteenth-century Iberian prose texts. Three are Spanish sentimental novels, namely, Diego de San Pedro's *Cárcel de amor*, published in approximately 1492, and two of Juan de Flores' works, both published approximately in 1495, *Grisel y Mirabella* and *Grimalte y Gradissa*. The last text is the anonymous Catalan chivalric romance *Curial e Güelfa*, written approximately between 1445 and 1448.

Cárcel de amor is the story of the lovesick Leriano, who has become so intensely enamored of Laureola, the princess of Macedonia, that the text begins with Leriano being dragged by the allegorical figure Deseo to the very Cárcel that will imprison him. On his way, a traveler who has gone astray sees the fearsome Deseo dragging the prisoner in chains, and follows them to their destination in a combination of awe, stupor, amd pity.

Once they arrive at the Prison, Leriano explains to the traveler that the edifice has taken on the characteristics of his amorous suffering: the rock upon which it sits represents his faith; the figure of an eagle on the building's steeple represents his thoughts; a chair of fire in which Leriano is doomed to sit represents his passion for Laureola. Inside, his suffering becomes personified in the form of allegorical figures as well: Deseo resumes his post as the prison's doorman; Ansia and Passión are two weeping women who place a crown of iron spikes atop Leriano's head; and Mal, Pena and Dolor are the three servants who deliver his metaphorical food and drink, or as Emily C. Francomano puts it, " a sad meal of his tortured thoughts, washed down by tears" (*Prison* 6). Leriano tells the traveler about his love for Laureola, and asks him to assume the role of mediator, a request which the traveler obliges. Assuming his new role, the traveler is tranformed into the *Auctor*, acting at once as a human intermediary but also the narrator of the story.

From this point on, the *Auctor* makes it his mission to alleviate Leriano's heartache, bringing Laureola his letters and asking that she write one in response. The *Auctor* is sure to make a case for his lord, each time telling her how much Leriano's love for her is affecting his mental and physical health. Laureola gives in, temporarily curing Leriano of his lovesickness, which enables him to come to the court to see her. The two are spotted exchanging glances by Laureola's other suitor, Persio, who in a fit of jealousy goes to Laureola's father, the King of Macedonia, and tells him that the two are secretly meeting. Without further deliberation, the King imprisons Laureola inside the castle. Persio posts a *cartel* challenging Leriano to a duel.

In an incredible turn of events, Leriano is transformed from pitiful lover to valiant knight, defeating Persio and confirming Laureola's innocence. When Persio's friends insist to the King that they witnessed the pair together, corroborating Persio's story, the King again puts his confidence in the words of other men, leaving Laureola incarcerated and condemning her to death. This time, Leriano storms the castle, defeating the King's army and liberating Laureola.

Leriano's acts of chivalry do not change his situation, however. Although Leriano now expects a reward more than ever from his lady, having saved her life, Laureola writes him a final letter, informing him that she is cutting all ties with him, as any more communication would further compromise her honor and give false credit to the rumors that Persio started. In dramatic fashion, Leriano decides to let himself die of starvation inside his Prison of Love, tearing Laureola's letters, which he mixes with water to make an elixir of his unrequited love. He dies with an audience, including his mother and his friend Tefeo who, in an effort to prevent Leriano's death, reminds him of all of women's defects.

Leriano challenges him wih a noble defense of women, including a list of reasons why men are indebted to them.

Flores' *Grimalte and Gradissa* also deals with unrequited love on two character planes. In the hopes of winning his lady's affection Grimalte gifts Gradissa with a copy of Giovanni Boccaccio's *Elegia di madonna Fiammetta*, although comically, without having read it himself. Once Gradissa reads it, she is not only overcome with pity for Fiammetta's unrequited love story, she also heeds the lesson Fiammetta addresses to other women. She asks Grimalte to find the protagonists of Boccaccio's text, and make an effort to reunite them, at once giving Fiammetta the love she yearned for and giving Gradissa a happy ending to a story she became personally invested in as a reader.

While Grimalte does indeed reunite the pair (known in Flores' text as Fiometa and Pánfilo), things end in disaster: when Fiometa accuses Pánfilo of having abandoned her for another woman, Pánfilo evades the blame by insisting that Fiometa is a married woman, and rekindling their relationship will only result in the loss of her honor, and that of her family. Devastated by Pánfilo's words, Fiometa dies of heartache.

Horrorized by the turn of events, Grimalte mourns Fiometa and challenges Pánfilo to a duel, but Pánfilo resolves to exile himself as a self-imposed penitence for what he has done to Fiometa. Isolated in the forest in "las partidas de Asia " (207), Pánfilo suffers horrific visions of Fiometa as part of his punishment. When Grimalte sends Gradissa a letter telling her what has transpired, she rejects him once and for all, on the grounds that his endeavor to give both her and Fiometa a happy ending was a failure. Grimalte returns to the place of Pánfilo's exile and also assumes the life of an anchorite, suffering the same frightening visions of Fiometa as Pánfilo.

Flores' *Grisel and Mirabella* is, unlike the last two texts, the story of a requited love. Nevertheless, tragedy still ensues. Mirabella is locked away in her father's castle under the pretext that all the men battling over her love is causing bloodshed and death. However, Flores' text implies that the King of Scotland has desirous feelings of his own for his daughter. Despite her isolation, the knight Grisel is able to reach her, allowing them to consummate their love. When a guard betrays their secret to the King, he imprisons the lovers, but decides to hold a trial to determine which lover is more culpable for the crime of fornication: the one who had initiated the crime would be put to death; the other, banished from the kingdom in perpetuity.

The King does not get the results he anticipates, however; all of Mirabella's maidens deny knowing anything about the affair, and both Grisel and Mirabella claim responsibility, neither wanting to condemn their lover. Therefore, he calls a trial in which a general debate of the sexes will determine the sentence by deciding which of the two sexes is more culpable of seduction in the amorous relationship. Braçayda is called to represent the women, and Torrellas, based on the poet Pere Torrellas, is called to represent the men. After a lengthy debate, it is decided that women are the guiltier sex, and the King prepares to have Mirabella burned at the stake. Grisel takes his own life out of guilt, prompting Mirabella to jump out of a window into the corral of the King's lions, where she is dismembered and eaten.

Believing that it was Torrellas' reasoning that helped him win the debate and lead to the sequence of events that caused Mirabella's death, the Queen becomes embittered against him, thinking of ways to kill him. By the whims of Fortune, however, Torrellas falls in love with Braçayda. Plotting with the Queen and her maidens, Braçayda agrees to

meet with him in a secret chamber. Torrellas speaks sweetly to her, but Braçayda reveals that he will pay for his cruelty to women. The Queen and all her ladies enter, stripping off his clothes, gagging him and tying him to a pillar so he cannot move. The women bite him, burn him with hot iron pincers, or scratch at him with their fingernails. They decide not to give him the mercy of a quick death, setting up a table to dine nearby so that Torrellas can watch from the pillar. They discuss all the wrongs he has said and done, and together speak harshly about him, each one mentioning a different way they would like to torture him. They continue to torture him all night, until "no dexaron ninguna carne en los huessos; fueron quemados. Y de su seniza guardando cada qual una buxeta por reliquias de su enemigo. Y algunas hovo que por cultre en el cuello la traían. Porque trayendo más a memoria su vengança mayor plazer hoviessen" (*Querelle* 172).

All of these texts have the typical components of the sentimental romance genre; primarily, of course, the vision of impossible love that ends in catastrophic tragedy. *Cárcel* and *Grimalte y Gradissa* especially reflect the mutable setting attributed to the genre, as Leriano moves between an allegorical prison of torture and the royal court of Macedonia, while Grimalte moves between Spain, where his beloved lady is, to the fictional world that of Boccaccio's characters, complete with Pánfilo's dwelling at the ends of the earth, and hellish visions of Fiometa screaming out her heartache like a banshee. The sentimental romance's atemporality is observed by Alan Deyermond in *Grisel y Mirabella*: "Es muy interesante también que Braçayda, personaje de la Historia troyana (es decir, personaje literario, ajeno a la Escocia ficticia donde vive Mirabella) se enfrente con Torrellas (el poeta, en la vida real contemporáneo de Juan de Flores, ajeno al mundo

ficticio) de manera muy distinta para decidir el destino de Mirabella y de su amante" (*Cárcel* XVIII).

The anonymous fifteenth-century chivalric romance *Curial e Güelfa* also includes a mutual love relationship; one that, unlike those of the sentimental novel, does not end in total catastrophe. After her husband the Duke of Milan dies,[1] Güelfa goes to Montferrat to live in her brother the marquis' court. Curial, a knight of lowly origins, has been reared and educated in the court, and upon her arrival, Güelfa sets her sights on him. She consults with her steward and adviser Melcior de Pando, and together they conclude that with some financial help, Curial could become an exemplary knight.

Güelfa decides to bestow her wealth on Curial so that he can not only reach his potential, acquiring renown through his chivalric deeds and victories in battle, but additionally, so that he will be worthy of marrying a woman of Güelfa's caliber. While Curial corresponds Güelfa's love, this love is still put to the test: when the Duchess of Ostalric is falsely accused of adultery, Curial travels to Germany to defend her. When he defeats the Duchess' accuser, her father the Duke of Bavaria offers Curial the hand of his other daughter Laquesis in marriage as a token of his gratitude. Curial does not accept, but nor does he decline, and Melcior, who traveled with him, warns him that his ambiguity will upset Güelfa. Surely enough, Güelfa finds out, and reproaches Curial, warning him the next time he travels not to upset her again, or she will withdraw her financial support.

Next Curial sets off for the tournament in Melun as a knight-errant. While in France, he comes into contact with Laquesis again, this time finding himself completely enraptured by her beauty. Noticing the attraction between the two, Laquesis' mother

[1] See Piera and Rogers, "The Widow as Heroine: The Fifteenth-Century Catalan Chivalresque Novel *Curial e Güelfa*."

encourages their union, asking Curial what he finds most alluring about Laquesis' appearance. She then orders a bed to be prepared for him in Laquesis' room, where he will sleep surrounded by her bedsheets, clothing, and jewelry, undoubtedly a plan to make him even more enamored of Laquesis.[2]

Meanwhile, two old knights in the marquis' court, Ansaldo and Ambrosio, who are extremely jealous of Curial, seek to ruin his reputation. At the same time they tell the King of France that he is only using Güelfa for her money, causing the King to facilitate Laquesis' marriage with the Duke of Orleans instead of Curial, and igniting in Güelfa such strong jealousy that she banishes him. Setting sail for Alexandria, Curial's boat becomes shipwrecked, and Curial and his shipmate Bertran are kidnapped and sold into slavery in Tunis. He spends six years in slavery, and Camar, the daughter of his master, falls desperately in love with Curial. When the King of Tunis requests her hand in marriage, Camar refuses, and the King orders the execution of her father Farax, believing that he has intentionally delayed the process. Assuming responsibility for her father's death and devastated that Curial does not return her love, she takes her own life. She is the only character in the novel that faces death as a consequence of unrequited love. Finally, Curial and Bertran escape slavery, Curial earns the pardon of all the courtiers at Le-Puy-en-Velay, and when they all beg Güelfa to give him her mercy, she consents, and the two are married in the court.

Like the sentimental novels, *Curial e Güelfa* also features an archetypal cruel King, although the sentimental novel emphasizes the cruel father figure as King. Like contemporary French chivalric romances, *Curial e Güelfa* includes chivalric adventures,

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[2] See Manuela Stocchi, "«*Curial e Güelfa* e il «*Decamerone*»." *Butlletí de la Reial Acadèmia de Bones Lletres de Barcelona* 1.45 (1995-96) :295-316.

humor, references to Greek and Latin classical culture,[3] influences from patristic texts, and varies between literary and popular language (Ferrando, *Curial* 1).[4] The setting is extremely variable as Curial's adventures take him from Italy to places like Germany, France, Tunisia, Greece, and Jerusalem. There are vivid descriptions of clothing amd jewels (especially if we consider Laquesis' gown patterned with eyes, and her lion brooch), as well as of the celebrations after a victory in battle. *Curial e Güelfa* illustrates much Italian influence, but demonstrates faithful Catalan nationalism and references to Catalan history.[5]

The damsel in distress motif present in all of these texts stems from one of the many oaths knights pledged when they were initiated into the knighthood. In his book *The Study of Chivalry: Resources and Approaches*, Maurice Keen describes the "votal" orders of the Knights of the Band of Castile, which are those related to more leisurely activities like sport and play, saying, "[t]he upholding of the honour of womankind was the chief avowed concern of the first of these two orders, whose companions bound themselves for five years to the service of women, especially of the defenceless and disinherited" (186). Keen affirms that both literary works and the code of courtly love served to influence the

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[3] For a discussion of the classical tradition in the novel, see Sònia Gros Lladós, *«Aquella dolçor amarga». La tradició amatòria en el* Curial e Güelfa. Valencia: U de València, 2015.

[4] See Lola Badia's study on popular language in the novel, "De la reverenda letradura en el *Curial e Güelfa*." *Calletra 2* (primavera 1987): 5-18. For a comprehensive linguistic study of the novel, see *Estudis lingüístics i culturals sobre* Curial e Güelfa, ed. Antoni Ferrando. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2012, including Sandra Montserrat, Joaquim Martí Mestre, Xavier Molina Martí and Manuel Pérez Saldanya, Montserrat Batllori and Avel·lina Suñer, Xavier Rofes Moliner, Max W. Wheeler, Beatrice Schmid, Joan-Rafael Ramos, Albert Turull and Esperança Ramirez, and Curt Wittlin.

[5] See Cesáreo Calvo Rigual, "Lingua toscana in bocca catalana: sull'italianità del *Curial e Güelfa*." *Curial e Güelfa, anonimo del secolo XV,* eds. Cesáreo Calvo i Anna Giordano. Berna: Peter Lang International, 2011, and Olimpio Musso, "Il romanzo cavalleresco *Curial e Güelfa* e il Montferrato: note storiche." *Miscellanea Umanistico-catalana. Quaderni della Sezione di Studi Storizi Alberto Boscolo, II*: 39-52.

foundation of these votal orders, noting the dedication of French knight orders like the *Dame Blanche à l'Escu Vert* and the *Fer de Prisonnier* to "give succour to any [gentlewoman] who asked it of them" (193). He likens the courtly love relationship, whose tradition pervaded Provençal poetry and later chivalric tales, to the relationship between a feudal lord and his vassal: "[The lady's] acceptance of her admirer's service (which meant her acceptance of his amorous service, not admission to her bed) was the *laisser passer* into the rich, secure world of the court of which she was mistress. The courtly literature of the troubadours encapsulated thus an ethic of faithful service to a lord: indeed it borrowed not a little of its vocabulary from the legal vocabulary of lordship, fealty, and service" (30).

It is precisely from this idea of "charitable" orders of knights like the *Dame Blanche* and the Band of Castile, focused on the preservation of feminine honor and coming to the aid of "defenseless" women in times of trouble that the damsel in distress motif emerges. Among the numerous duties of a knight, the rescue of a helpless woman was just as highly prioritized as participating in combat. Thus, the concept of male "service" done for the benefit of a woman both in knighthood and in the courtly love tradition ties these genres together: when service is done for the woman, a reward is expected by her "rescuer" or "vassal." When this reward goes unpaid, the lover's subjugation to his lady turns to harassment and vengeance. Furthermore, as I will argue, this imminent vengeance of the male lover is verbally concretized in the form of threats of tarnishing the lady's reputation by publicly defaming her. I will discuss how the threats, slanderous verses, and public defamation not only violate the code of courtly love and the oath of knighthood that Keen describes, but also violate and subvert twelfth-century canon

law, as I indicated earlier. According to medieval jurisprudence and usage, the male courtly lover is actually the culpable one, as he clearly and repeatedly expresses his intention to damage the lady's reputation, while engaging in both dialogic and written exchanges with her. Finally, following Rouben C. Cholakian's Lacanian reading of the dichotomous characterization of the beloved lady in troubadour poetry, I will illustrate how the male protagonists subvert the notion of feminine superiority in the courtly love tradition, revealing that the exaltation of the feminine assumed in the language of courtly love literature is merely a fallacy.

Rouben C. Cholakian describes the love triangle at the heart of Occitan lyric poetry as consisting of "an enunciating lover, more unloved than loved, and an unnamed woman, more unloving than lovable. The plot also includes a third male party who is by turns a slandering eavesdropper (*lausengier*), a jealous rival (*gilos*) or a neutral companion [(*companho*)]" (1). Cholakian maintains that scholarship previous to his study on the Occitan troubadour lyric poetry had always focused on its origins, on one hand, or

the historical identities of the characters in this love triangle, on the other. This is especially true, Cholakian maintains, when it comes to identifying the woman about whom the poem is composed. This is often a challenge since the woman is typically only referred to by a (masculine) *senhal*, or pseudonym, and as Cholakian observes, assumes more of a static quality than a human identity, such as "'Bels Vezers ('Lovely View'), ' 'Miels de Domna' ('Better than Woman') or 'Belhs Deportz' ('Lovely Pleasure'). Descriptions of each 'individual' blend together, losing particularity" (2).

Cholakian explains that nineteenth-century positivism produced French "biographist" critics such as Hippolyte Taine and Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve, both of

whom "sought to explain the text in terms of its author. The search for 'meaning' was equated with the search for intentionality. If the scholar could only know what made the author think and write, if he could only understand the artistic creator, he could then unfailingly comprehend the invention" (2). The problem with a strictly contextual reading of troubadour poetry, Cholakian asserts, is that long-posited notions about courtly love have come to be disproved. Cholakian refers to William D. Paden's 1975 study that postulated that two basic assumptions about courtly love could find minimal to no corroboration in the texts—these assumptions being that the lady was normally a married woman, and of a higher social standing than her lover. Cholakian further adds that Paden's research leads him to conclude, most importantly, that "one finds more and more reason to believe that this supposedly eulogistic picture of the woman is fraught with contradictions" (4). While Cholakian, writing in 1989, explains that scholars of Occitan lyric poetry have always been aware of the paradoxical attitudes of the poet-lover toward the woman, he asserts that the more novel aspect of troubadour research is "its awareness that antithetical postures permeate virutally all of this courtly literature" (4). This concept will become clearer as I discuss not only the troubadour lyric, but the sentimental and chivalric romance as well, exploring the feminine culpability models present in all of these genres.

Cholakian postulates that French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan's psycholinguistic analyses have "destroyed any simplistic understanding of the relations between what we imagine about 'objective' reality outside us (the signified) and the words with which we identify it (the signifiers). As he puts it, the link between signifier and signified 'is always fluid, always ready to come undone'" (qtd. Cholakian 5). With this in mind, Cholakian

postulates that readers need to consider both what is said and what is not said in a text, since "[t]he creative act not only cannot take place in a void; it must draw from both consciousness and unconsciousness" (6). While he confirms the importance of continuing to study courtly love texts from contextual and historical perspectives, Cholakian also reiterates the importance of the including the psychological "subtext," referring to the question posed by Joseph T. Snow and Nathaniel B. Smith in their book *The Expansion and Transformation of Courtly Literature*: "'is courtly love not solely literary, but a phenomenon so real as to express psychological truths that may escape the archives and chronicles?'" (qtd. Cholakian 7).

Thus, in this dissertation I will be using Cholakian's Lacanian study to examine the antagonistic portrait of the beloved lady in courtly love literature, and the void between what the poet-lover (or male protagonist, in the case of the sentimental novel) desires of the purportedly "beloved" lady and what he actually verbalizes, or in the case of epistolary exchange, what he writes.

Therefore, to sum up my objective in this dissertation: I seek to further illuminate this paradox at the very heart of the courtly love tradition: namely, the belief that a courtly or chivalrous gentleman owes all his service and aid to all women at all times—that is, until these women stop cooperating. The same lover who is so steeped in the practice of doing acts of "charity" for any woman who so needs or desires it, is the same man who is willing to terminate this charity the moment he is not given the sexual reward he anticipates in exchange. This paradox is heightened even more by the widely accepted notion that the sentimental novel is a "pro-feminist" genre, insofar as it always includes some sort of defense of women, and that troubadour lyric poetry and courtly love literature

in general exalt the beloved lady. This is illustrated in *Cárcel de amor* when, before eating the shredded remains of Laureola's letters and ending his life, Leriano lists twenty reasons why men should not defame women to his misogynist friend Tefeo, whose current mission is to make Leriano see Laureola's flaws and thus prevent him from taking his own life. In theory, this would be a nice idea, since Leriano notes that women have been the cause of many great things (67), amongst other reasons, but again, the paradox looms in plain sight: this is the same Leriano who threatened his beloved with his suicide, and who chastised her for taking his mother's only son away from her. Again, he only upholds his service insomuch as it pleases him; when the lady no longer complies with his requests, the service turns to blame and threats of social ruin.

Moreover, I will look not only at the discourse of blame as it is employed by the male characters in these texts, but I will examine as well the use of such discourse as not only rhetorical but also literal blackmail, a connection which has not been widely studied in the critical literature of these texts. Sanda Munjic, for example, labels Leriano's courtship process as simple "blackmail" (216), which lays a foundation from which I can begin a more thorough discussion of this extortionist quality of the masculine language of blame.

Therefore, I believe this dissertation will be the beginning of a comprehensive study of the trope of feminine blame in the Provençal and courtly love literary traditions: how it functions, the way in which it evolves, weaving its way through various Medieval Iberian literary traditions, and, finally, how it will continue to hyperbolize misogynistic discourse in some instances (such as in *Grisel y Mirabella*) while producing contesting texts which reverse the discourse of blame in other instances such as *Curial e Güelfa*.

While most scholars cite passages in which Curial is reproached by other characters, both male and female, for his wrongdoing toward Güelfa, they neglect to point out that this is a reversal of the same discourse of blame used on the beloved lady by the male lover in the courtly love tradition. For instance, Albert G. Hauf notes that Melcior uses the word "prodigal" to describe both Curial's freeloading behavior and Güelfa's financial generosity (354), but he does not discuss the way in which the use of this language by the male mediator toward the male protagonist results in an unconventional male-on-male blaming session that starkly contrasts with other contemporary Iberian works. Moreover, a discussion of male self-absolution in these works in also absent.

In addition, my discussion of Leriano's manipulation of Laureola in *Cárcel de amor* will include my interpretation of her desire to reject both him and the courtly code from the onset of his courtship, which will serve to refute the theories of various critics, including Alan Deyermond, who have postulated that Laureola does, in fact, reciprocate Leriano's love, and rejects him solely on the basis of compromising her honor (Deyermond *Historia* 75).

Although the texts I will analyze in my dissertation are very different, they share a problematization of the paradox to which I referred: the idea that chivalrous or courtly "service" is relinquished at the very moment a reward is withheld, which drives the male lover to pin the blame on his beloved lady through a variety of tactics. These tactics include evoking images of his death and perpetual suffering to provoke feelings of guilt in the lady, and threatening to compromise her reputation and honor by publically defaming her as cruel, uncompassionate, and the cause of his suffering. *Cárcel de amor* and *Curial e Güelfa* especially dramatize this cycle of verbal blame that operates within the amorous

relationship, whether requited or not, highlighting the very existence of this paradox, and its need for resolution through debate. Both works shed light on the injustice of the feminine culpability model in the courtly love tradition: in *Cárcel de amor*, Laureola refuses to accept Leriano's manipulation any further, thus cutting his never-ending "script" of blame short. In *Curial e Güelfa*, this script is completely overturned, permitting Güelfa to employ the same tactics that the male lover usually enjoys in his game of admonishment and blackmail. My study will illustrate how women who are not in need of rescue by their male lovers therefore cease to be "damsels in distress," thus forcing the male heroes to relinquish their masculine power, ultimately "flipping the script" that the courtly love tradition had imposed on them.

CHAPTER 1: *MALDIZEN*: MISOGYNISTIC MODELS AND MALE "NAYSAYERS" IN BIBLICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL TEXTS

The ubiquity of the male "script" of feminine culpability, with its recurring motifs of women's coldness, cruelty, lasciviousness, and inconstancy (and, as a consequence, the male lover's death) did not emerge arbitrarily in medieval literature. Rather, medieval audiences gleaned these ideologies about the hierarchy of the sexes from religious and philosophic texts that were considered seminal, such as the Bible, especially the Books of Genesis, Ecclesiastes, and Samuel, and the writings of philosophers like Aristotle. In this chapter, I will discuss some of the most well-known tales of unruly women used as *exemplum* in oral stories, letters, songs, sermons, medical and philosophical writings, and performances in the Middle Ages to dissuade men from falling victim to women's seduction. The dissemination of these ideas from esteemed institutions like the church, and enlightened thinkers like Aristotle and Seneca, led to their sedimentation into the collective ideologies of Medieval Iberia. Furthermore, I will illustrate connections between these seminal texts and the way in which their postulations about women manifest themselves in not only the main prose texts of my investigation, Diego de San Pedro's sentimental novel *Cárcel de amor* (1492) and the anonymous Catalan chivalric novel *Curial e Güelfa* (approx. 1445-1448), but also in troubadour lyric poetry and several of Juan de Flores' so-called pro-feminine sentimental novels as well.

Susan Boynton and Diane J. Reilly call the Bible "one of the most, if not the most, accessible source for historical information in the Middle Ages" (321). For theologians and historians alike, affirm Boynton and Reilly, the Bible was regarded as a "trustworthy

narrative founded in creation, tracing all human societies back to their common ancestors, Adam and Eve" (84). Brian Murdoch adds that "[The Book of] Genesis stands at the beginnings of history for the Middle Ages" (8). The Bible is comprised of sacred Hebrew texts and other writings from the first century CE that tell the story of Jesus' life and early Christianity.[6] Murdoch as well as Boynton and Reilly acknowledge that King Alfonso X's thirteenth century *General estoria*, a text whose intent was to narrate a comprehensive history of the world up to his present day, began with the story of Genesis. Boynton and Reilly affirm that Alfonso uses the Bible as the "structural and literary backbone" for his *General estoria* (321). Alfonso, however, was not the only one: citing the Bible as a historical source was a common practice in the production of medieval chronicles. It makes sense, then, that a text so indispensable to the understanding of humankind's origins would become a focal point of education, debate, and even entertainment:

> In the Middle Ages, practices of biblical reading, performance, and interpretation yielded a large and varied manuscript tradition and provided material for all levels of education. Just as commentary on the Bible was a central activity of contemplative and scholarly life, so manuscripts of Scripture formed the core collections of monastic libraries and were also

[6] Boynton and Reilly specify that to a medieval cleric, the Bible would consist of the following books grouped in this way: The Pentateuch, or the Five Books of Moses, also known as the Torah: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, written from the ninth to the BCE; The Historical Books: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, the Four Books of the Kings (later known as 1-2 Samuel and 1-2 Kings) and 1-2 fifth Chronicles, written from the ninth to the fourth centuries BCE; The Great Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the twelve minor prophets; The Psalter, believed by medieval people to have been written by King David and his co-authors; Job, written between the fifth and second centuries BCE; The Wisdom Books: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Ecclesiasticus, the Wisdom of Solomon and the Song of Solomon, written between the fourth and the first centuries BCE; The Apocryphal and Later Historical Books: Ezra, Nehemiah, Tobit, Judith, Esther, and Maccabees, written from the fifth to the first centuries BCE; The Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, likely written between thirty and eighty years after Jesus' death; The Acts; The Epistles: letters from Saints Peter, Paul, John, James and Jude in the first two centuries after Jesus' death, and Revelation, which would have been known to medieval people as Apocalypse (3-5).

> central to university studies. Biblical texts were the foundation of the medieval Latin and vernacular sermons that were preached to both the clergy and the laity. The Christian Bible was also one of the earliest texts to be translated into postclassical languages, a process from which new interpretations emerged in response to contemporary political and religious needs. The results influenced the development of the vernacular languages. In addition, as the basis for the medieval tradition of history writing, the Bible framed the worldview of the literate. Even those who never saw a written Bible would have heard biblical texts read, sung, and synthesized in the liturgy and sermons. (Boynton and Reilly 1)

Here, Boynton and Reilly illustrate the extensive reach these ideologies had: even the lower social classes, including the illiterate and poor, would have been exposed to these teachings via oral transmission, art and performance.

The Book of Genesis provides us with the prototype of feminine culpability: Eve, wife of Adam, the first man created by God. Given that Eve is the first woman and the first sinner in human creation, one could assert that woman and blame came into existence simultaneously.[7] This concept will continue to be relevant throughout my discussion of each literary text in this study. In fact, Eve's sole function in the Bible is to sin; no sooner are her and Adam presented to one another by God than she is already being cajoled by the serpent to eat from the Tree of Knowledge. Once God senses Adam's shame about his nakedness, he asks Adam why he chose to eat from the tree. Adam is quick to blame his

[7] Prudence Allen also notes that as a sort of counterpart to Eve, the ancient Greek poet Hesiod (eighth century BC) created Pandora, who is characterized as the “shameless and deceitful” first woman “responsible for evil in the world” (14). Allen says that in Hesiod’s works, “[w]oman is described in her origin as a punishment for man” (14).

wife, responding, "The woman, whom thou gavest me to be my companion, gave me of the tree, and I did eat" (3:12). God swiftly delivers Eve's punishment, at once establishing the physical burden she would assume in childbirth and her inferiority in the hierarchy of the sexes: "I will multiply thy sorrows, and thy conceptions: in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children, and thou shalt be under thy husband's power, and he shall have dominion over thee" (3:16). Adam is not exempt from punishment, of course, but the consequences he faces are different. Furthermore, God is careful to explain to Adam that he is punished because "thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree" (3:17). Even before God establishes the order of the sexes, it is as if Adam should have known better than to listen to her, recognizing his wife's inferiority and lack of good sense. These exchanges show not only Adam's automatic inclination to blame Eve, but also God's automatic inclination to believe Adam and assign to Eve a fitting set of consequences. This same sequence of action is often taken by the father-king characters in the sentimental and chivalric novels I discuss in the following chapters.

The influence of the Creation story on the philosophy and literature of the Middle Ages is undeniable. Because medieval audiences viewed this story as the origin of human history, it would seem that Eve set the bar for gender relations as they would exist for centuries to come. Eve's propensity for sin and the consequences this sin brought with it worked to solidify the concept of woman not only as physically and intellectually inferior, but also inherently bad, untrustworthy, deceitful, lascivious, fickle, unruly and lacking in discipline in the teachings of Fathers of the Church,[8] philosophy and medicine, and literature of the Middle Ages and beyond.

[8] Anne Clark Bartlett affirms that extant books owned by English monastic women in the Middle Ages can be divided into three categories: liturgical, devotional, and theological. The theological treatises include

These same ideas prevailed in classical antiquity. In his *Politics*, the Greek philosopher Aristotle (fourth century BC) proposes a utopian society, emphasizing the male-dominant order of the sexes: "[A]lmost all things rule and are ruled according to nature. But the kind of rule differs—the freeman rules over the slave after another manner from that in which the male rules over the female, or the man over the child; although the parts of the soul are present in all of them, they are present in different degrees... the woman has [deliberative faculty], but it is without authority" (*Politics* 1260a, vv.9-13). Aristotle believed in the natural inferiority of the woman to the man, and was the first philosopher to establish a consistent model for sex polarity that incorporated all four aspects of the relation between man and woman: opposites, generation (that is, roles in the act of reproduction), wisdom and virtue (Allen, 83-4.) In the first place, Aristotle asserts that men and women are contraries of one another, the woman being the privation of the man. In Aristotelian theory, then, the very idea of woman is perceived as a lack; she is at a disadvantage from the outset. The idea of two complementary sexes is completely rejected by Aristotle. Since women were considered passive participants in the act of reproduction, being incapable of producing semen, Aristotle believed that they contributed only the child's appearance in the process of generation, while the father, possessing the "vital"

Rabanus Marus' exposition of Maccabees and Hugh of Saint Victor's *Allegoriae*, *Speculum ecclesiae*, and *De arrha animae,* among others. Laywomen also collected a significant amount of devotional texts, including the lives of saints, and in the case of Adeliza of Louvain, the second wife of Henry I, and other noblewomen, bestiaries, codices of Old Testament stories, psalters, breviaries, and sermons. Despite their exposure to the patristic ideas about women in these texts, Bartlett explains that a sort of "strategic ignorance" on the part of women served as a type of resistance. She cites Margery Kempe as an example, asserting that although she read many Biblical texts, Kempe's "semi-literacy routinely works in her favor as a site of feminine resistance to misogynistic texts and practices. Kempe is able to challenge the biblical and ecclesiastical constraints on her religious and social activities, *because* she is apparently unable to assimilate them fully. This incomplete literacy thwarts the transmission of a textual tradition that sought to silence and subdue women, garbles the message, and robs it of its authoritative status" (22-3). Bartlett recounts other examples of medieval women blaming their failure to comply with ecclesiastical mandates on the lack of an educated male scribe to better explain such mandates to them.

fluid, contributed the child's soul.[9] This resulted in his postulation of woman as an infertile and deformed man:

> a woman is as it were an infertile male; the female, in fact, is female on account of an inability of a sort, viz. it lacks the power to concoct semen out of the final state of nourishment (this is either blood, or its counterpart in bloodless animals) because of the coldness of its nature [...] Male is that which is able to concoct, to cause to take shape, and to discharge semen possessing the "principle" of the "form." Female is that which receives the semen but is unable to cause semen to take shape or to discharge it.[10] (*On the Generation of Animals* IV)

Apart from deeming women as mere receptacles for man's life-giving fluid in the act of generation, Aristotle's writings show apparent disdain even for their bodily secretions:

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[9] St. Thomas Aquinas applied this Aristotelian theory to the conception of Jesus Christ. Prudence Allen points out that Thomas "believed that the generation of Christ occurred through the union of passive material supplied by Mary and the active soul power supplied by God" (396). He thus concluded that Eve was not responsible for the transmission of original sin, as he believed that the "passive contribution" of the mother was unable to transmit an active impulse. Therefore it must come from the father. Allen points out that Thomas still undermines the concept of woman, since he believed, then, that "Eve's existence had no significance beyond her generative function" (398).

[10] Aristotle's equation of man and seminal fluid with the capacity to concoct and bring shape to form is not unlike Rouben C. Cholakian's description of the power of the poet-lover to create his ideal woman inside his poetic universe. There the poet becomes the creator and " inventor" of the lady, as Cholakian explains: "Inherent in the implied eithical system is the idea that even if females inspire males, all the advantage, glory, and redemptive power move ineluctably from her to him" (31). Diane Bornstein echoes this, asserting that "In the typical romance, little attention is given to the characterization of the lady, who exists mainly as a motivating force or source of inspiration for the knight [...] The medieval heroine may be a temptress or a virgin, disdainful or unaware, but she rarely plays an active role. Since her main function is to provide motivation for male characters, we usually see her through their eyes" (10). Comparing Aristotle's claims about generation and Cholakian's egocentric poet-lover, it seems as though both the woman "receptacle" and the muse could be anyone; they are interchangeable, faceless. Therefore, semen is to the poem as the receptacle is to the muse. I discuss this further in Chapter 2.

> when the semen from the male has entered, it causes the purest portion of the residue to "set"— I say "purest portion," because the most part of the menstrual discharge is useless, being fluid, just as the most fluid portion of the male semen is. [...] The action of the semen in the male in "setting" the female's secretion in the uterus is similar to that of rennet upon milk. Rennet is milk which contains vital heat, as semen does, and this integrates the homogenous substances and makes it "set". (*On the Generation of Animals* IV)

In this sense, then, any contributions made by the woman are rendered useless: "There are some who think that the female contributes semen during coition because women sometimes derive pleasure from it comparable to that of the male and also produce a fluid secretion. This fluid, however, is not seminal" (*On the Generation of Animals* IV). In Aristotle's *Problems,* which is formatted as a collection of questions and answers, a question is raised about the color contrast of male and female "seed": "This [seed] is white in man by reason of his great heat and quick digestion, because rarified in the testicles; but a woman's is red, because 'tis the superfluity of the second digestion" (qtd. Allen 464). This repugnance for women's bodily fluids did not originate with Aristotle. In the Book of Samuel, King David sends messengers to take Bathsheba so that he can sleep with her. Once the deed is done, Samuel writes that Bathsheba is "purified from her [monthly] uncleanness" (2 Samuel 11:4).[11] Sefer Avahat Nasim also maintains in the Book of

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[11] Boynton and Reilly discuss Andrew of St. Victor's commentary on the Book of Samuel, noting that he "is not particularly concerned with the theological or even the moral implications of this story," as he was compelled to elaborate on only two things: one, that the story of David and Bathsheba would have occurred during harvest time; and two, that the "uncleanliness" from which Bathsheba was purified either signaled that she was menstruating or that she had conceived (161-2). Andrew believes conception is more likely,

Women's Love *and Jewish Medieval Medical Literature on Women* that "from the twelfth century, a misogynisitc tradition arose in natural philosophy whose most representative work is the thirteenth century treatise entitled *Secreta mulierum*, attributed to Albertus Magnus and strongly influenced by Aristotelian concepts. In the works of this current of thought are collected types of knowledge devised by and for men—to whom they promise the secrets of women will be revealed. The texts deal with questions relating to conception, embryology, the determination of the sex of a foetus, and the nature of menstruation, which, obsessively, they define as harmful" (81). Overall, the woman is necessary for generation, however, she is a passive—nay, *superfluous*—participant in contrast to the male's active role; infertile to the male's fertility; cold and wet (which, naturally, causes many of her ineptitudes, right down to the shrillness of her voice) to his warmth and dryness.[12] So passive is the woman in the act of reproduction, in fact, that Aristotle argues that the reason the woman is incapable of reproducing on her own is to give man's existence purpose (Allen 103).[13] Again, a parallel can be drawn between this

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explaining that, according to the medical theory of his time, "pregnant women do not menstruate, because nature is keeping that blood inside, to feed the newly conceived fetus" (162). Angelomus of Luxeuil contended that Bathsheba's first husband, Uria, symbolized the devil, but that "Christ's power killed him, so that the church could become Christ's new bride" (162). Boynton and Reilly thus highlight here the often conflated, inverted, and downright absurd meanings medieval exegetes would extract from Biblical texts, thus perpetuating these misinformed ideologies.

[12] Prudence Allen explains, "Aristotle chose to isolate what he believed was woman's contribution to generation and then, upon that idea, to develop an account of the differences between the sexes in a wide range of other aspects of human life. This pattern of isolating a single factor in woman's biological nature is common to sex-polarity arguments. In Aristotle's first development of a rationale for sex polarity, we found this tendency to choose one factor, namely the lack of heat in the female, and from this factor derive a whole series of consequences to justify the superiority of the male over the female…Aristotle's theory of sex-polarity, therefore, set a precedent in which a single aspect of the materiality of the female was isolated and devalued in relation to the male" (126).

[13] Bartlett points out that in his *Summa theologiae*, St. Thomas Aquinas quotes St. Augustine, claiming. "it was necessary for woman to be created, as the Scripture says, for the help of man, not however, for some other work, as some have said, since for any other work it would be more fitting for man to be helped by

assertion of Aristotle and Cholakian's theory of the subjectivity of the poet-lover and the muse as object: the muse exists so that the poem can be written, for the end purpose of the man's glory. I will discuss Cholakian's ideas about the woman as object in troubadour poetry in-depth in Chapter 2.

Aristotle presented the analogy of man as carpenter and woman as wood: she provided the matter, and the man provided the form. Prudence Allen explains, "Just as form activated matter and gave it a certain shape, so the male becomes the source of movement and shape for the female. By a further process of association, man initiated a relationship with woman, and man attempted to develop the identity of the woman to conform to his own ideas. Just as matter itself was lifeless and unformed, so woman by herself needed man to be awakened" (91). Allen's description here of Aristotle's analogy sounds not only like Cholakian's conception of the poet-lover, but also uncannily like God's creation of Eve in Genesis: "[...] but for Adam there was not found a helper like himself. Then the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam: and when he was fast asleep, he took one of his ribs, and filled up flesh for it. And the Lord God built the rib which he took from Adam into a woman: and brought her to Adam. And Adam said: This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man" (2:20-4). This analogy is also present in the episode of Pygmalion and Galatea in Ovid's eighth-century AD narrative poem *Metamorphoses*. This episode recounts the myth of Pygmalion, a sculptor from Cyprus disgusted by the Propoetides, immoral sisters who through a vengeful curse by the goddess Venus, are forced to live as

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another man than by a woman; rather [woman was created] for her help in procreation" (qtd. Bartlett 38). Allen adds that in Augustine's view, then, "since woman was taken from man's side, she is not complete in her own identity, she cannot represent the image of God by herself; while man, the complete being, perfectly represents the image of God" (225).

prostitutes. Witnessing all the flaws they possess, Pygmalion renounces all women, swearing to a life of celibacy. However, he sets about sculpting a statue of a woman, endowing her with more beauty than any woman who had ever lived.[14] He becomes so intensely enamored of his own creation that he treats her like a real woman, kissing and caressing her, and bringing her gifts of flowers and pebbles, and even adorning her body with clothing and jewelry. He makes an offering to Venus, and prays that his statue become his wife, and when he returns home, sees that his statue has indeed come to life.[15] By the time Aristotle and Ovid were writing, about three and five centuries after the Book of Genesis, little had changed: woman was still a malleable mass waiting for her sculptor to give her form, and with it, meaning. She needed man's guidance; therefore, it was her obligation in both society and the family unit to obey him.

Woman's incumbency to obey man stems as well from her purported tendency toward irrationality. Just as Aristotle asserted that the woman only contributes the child's body or appearance in the act of reproduction, while the man provides the soul, he also postulated that the soul is comprised of two parts, the rational and the irrational. The rational, or the higher sphere, is driven by reason; the irrational, or lower sphere, by appetite (Allen 108). It is for this reason, as Susan L. Smith explains, that theologians assigned more blame to Eve for the fall of humankind: "Theological opinion differed as to

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[14] See Sarah-Grace Heller, "Fashioning a Woman: The Vernacular Pygmalion in 'Roman de la rose.'

[15] Aristotle explains this analogy this way: "Taking, then, the widest formulation of each of these two opposites [male and female], *viz*., regarding the male *qua* active and causing movement, and the female *qua* passive and being set in movement, we see that the one thing which if formed *from them* only in the sense in which a bedstead is formed from the carpenter and the wood, or a bull from the wax and the form" (*Generation of Animals* 729b, vv.15-20). Likewise, the fable of Pygmalion describes the sculptor's discovery that his statue had come alive: "The pressed ivory becomes soft, and losing its hardness, yields to the fingers, and gives way, just as Hymettian wax grows soft in the sun, and being worked with the fingers is turned into many shapes, and becomes pliable by the very handling" (*Metamorphoses*, X.VII, x.282-99).

which of the vices led Adam and Eve to the first, catastrophic act of disobedience. But the general consensus was that the woman, Eve, was at fault and that the damage was done when the sensuality that ruled the woman overcame reason, which ruled the man, Adam. Only Eve could have believed the serpent, according to the unknown author of *Quaestiones super Genesim*, attributed in the Middle Ages to the seventh-century English Benedictine monk Bede, 'quia non potest ratio nostra seduce ad peccandum, nisi praecedente delectation, in carnali infirmitatis affect, qui magis debet obtemperare rationi tanquam viro dominati' "(115). Cholakian refers to Eve as "an always-handy scapegoat invented by theologians and chroniclers to explain the human predicament and establish masculine innocence" (49).

Allen explains that for Aristotle, the virtue of any entity came from its function. For humans, function stemmed from a rational faculty. This feminine irrationality was due to the fact that the irrational, or lower, part of the soul which governed women's behavior was unable to be ordered by this deliberative faculty, which is why Aristotle claimed that although the deliberative faculty was present in women, it was "without authority" (*Politics* 1260a v.13). Aristotle believed that as a result, women were incapable of such functions as deliberation, deductive reasoning, and definition, all necessary prerequisites for philosophy. Allen maintains that Aristotle's division of the soul into these two spheres and their related faculties "reflected the basic hostility of the sexes that has already been seen in the antagonism of opposites and in the drive for conquest in generation;[16] the

[16] Allen contends that for Aristotle, generation was "best described as a hostile interaction of the opposites male and female in which one of the pairs of contraries attempted to conquer or resist the other" (103). Ann W. Astell notes several interpretations made by medieval exegetes about the relationship between the Bride and Bridegroom in the Song of Songs, claiming that their union represented "the soul's oneness with God," and that exegetes emphasized different feminine aspects of the Bride, depending on the aim of their writing, one being "the Virgin who resists conquest" (13).

rational principle had to establish order in the soul and force the irrational elements to obey its dictates [...] The male, in his identification with rationality, was inherently superior to the female, in her identification with irrationality" (109).

In fact, Allen affirms that although Aristotle did not explicitly say it, he seems to have deemed "true opinion" as the highest level of reason woman can possess. Allen explains that Aristotle deemed woman's rational faculty as "without authority," and as such, described the feminine rational faculty as

> not able to direct its activities in an ordered way. It might be possible for her, however, to have an intuitive insight into truth. In this way, she would be like many men who fell short of the goals of practical and theoretical wisdom [...] Aristotle took pains to distinguish opinion from scientific knowledge. Science has to locate the universal and necessary definitions of things. Opinion, on the other hand, because it did not know why something was true, often fell into error [...] The person possessing only true opinion lacked a certain inner authority of reason, and was also an unreliable source of truth. (109-110)

Following his reasoning, when a female child is conceived, her formation is truncated as her material resisted the man's "seed" to a certain degree, resulting in a series of natural defects: "her intelligence was therefore not fully formed, she was limited in her practise of wisdom, and confined by nature to inferior virtues" (Allen 126). Furthermore, since for Aristotle, virtue followed function, he felt that a woman's virtue lie in obedience to man. Just as the "glory" he attributes to a woman's silence in *Politics* solidifies her

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The troubadour Guillaume d'Aquitaine also describes a similar antagonism at work between himself and the 'con' in his lyric poetry, which I discuss in the following chapter.

obligation to be submissive and refrain from conversation in society, the "virtue" he attributes to a woman's submission to man solidifies her obligation to be submissive within the family unit. Allen explains, "In the household, then, the good husband ruled by giving to the wife a certain sphere of activity over which she, in turn, could rule. The good wife submitted to her husband's dictates because of his inherently superior worth" (115).

Of course, Aristotle's criticism of women was certainly not limited to their intellectual and reproductive capacities; he also affirms the inferiority of their physical structure to that of man. In his *Problems*, Aristotle attributes the difference in the width of the chest between men and women to, again, the way in which heat and cold respectively are retained by their bodies, explaining, "in women cold predominates, which naturally tends downwards, and therefore women often fall on their backside, because their hinderparts are gross and heavy, by reason of cold ascending thither; but a man commonly falls on his breast by reason of its greatness and thickness" (qtd. Allen 464). Even this comparison, however objectively scientific Aristotle may have intended it to be, portrays the woman as the ungainly dunce who cannot even maneuver her own body properly while the man gracefully falls on his chest, which is rightfully muscular and strong. Even their bodily bulk is unequal: woman's is burdensome, clumsy, and uncontrollable; man's is mighty and agile. Thus, both woman's internal and external physiology is inferior to that of man.

As expected, a woman's personality is also riddled with flaws in Aristotelian philosophy, among them greed: “The nature of woman is imperfect, and therefore they think it impossible to fully satisfy themselves; they gather together, and keep that by which they may help their need; and by industry and art they covet to obtain that which

nature did not give them" (qtd. Allen 465). Due to their association with the lower part of the soul, they are prone to emotional instability, as Nicholas D. Smith explains: "it is not just that women's deliberations are set aside by society or by men but that they are set aside or cancelled by the emotional or alogical part of their souls. In short, women are too susceptible to being overcome by their emotions and thus require the steadier rule of men" (475-6). It is easy to see how this claim of impulsivity evolves into the fickleness in the amorous relationship attributed to the women characters by their lovers in the literature of courtly love. In his twelfth-century *De amore*, a treatise intended to serve as a codified manual on courtly love, Andreas Capellanus uses Eve to rationalize women's gluttony, claiming that "although she was created by the hand of God without man's agency she was not afraid to eat the forbidden fruit and for her gluttony was deservedly driven from her home in Paradise"; and adding that her lack of discipline was still inherent in contemporary women: "[Eve] destroyed herself by the sin of disobedience and lost the glory of immortality and by her offence brought all her descendents to destruction and death [...]Therefore, if you want a woman to do anything, you can get her to do it by ordering her to do the opposite" (qtd. Allen 335).

In fact, many of the negative feminine characteristics postulated in Aristotle's writings emerge in the literature of the later Middle Ages. When he outlines appropriate feminine behavior in the utopian *polis*, he emphasizes that, above all, silence is key: "All classes must be deemed to have their special attributes; as [Gorgias] the poet says of women, 'Silence is a woman's glory,' but this is not equally the glory of a man" (*Politics* 1260a, vv. 27-31). He adds that not only should women be silent and complacent, they should also be absent of thought, especially when pregnant: "Their minds, however, unlike

their bodies, they ought to keep quiet, for the offspring derive their natures from their mothers as plants do from the earth" (*Politics* 1335b, vv.16-18).

This insistence on feminine silence is present in many fifteenth-century Iberian literary texts, such as *Arcipreste de Talavera o Corbacho*. In the *Corbacho*, Alfonso Martínez de Toledo lists “ser mucho parlera” as one of the many “tachas” or vices of the female sex, asserting that “non es muger que non quisiese siempre fablar e ser escuchada” (194). Not only are women overly talkative, he claims, but their endless conversation is almost always comprised of gossip, negativity, and lies. Aristotle also notes the detached, apathetic nature of the female sex (*Generation of Animals* 728a, vv.17-21), an accusation that comes into play often in the masculine courtly love discourse. In Diego de San Pedro’s *Cárcel de amor*, Leriano and the *Auctor* vary between describing Laureola as both "cruel" and "compassionate" based on whether she indulges or denies their requests, thus subscribing to the belief that women are generally prone to cruelty and emotional evasiveness.

Of course, Aristotle was not the only sage man whose ideas about women influenced fifteenth-century Iberian literature. As Boynton and Reilly point out, the Bible was perceived by medieval people as a historically accurate text, with the Creation Story as the source of human nature, especially that of women. Thus, Eve’s alleged initiation of original sin in Genesis is referenced by many fifteenth-century Iberian authors and characters eager to associate her sinfulness with the entire female race. Martínez de Toledo notes that, among many other reasons, women are not trustworthy, since “por ellas en el mundo vino destruición, y oy dura” (95). Sempronio echoes these same sentiments in his diatribe against women in Fernando de Rojas' *La Celestina*, as he tries to talk Calisto

out of pursuing his desires with Melibea. He exclaims: "¡Qué imperfición, qué albañares debaxo de templos pintados! Por ellas es dicho: «arma de diablo, cabeça de pecado, destruyción de paraýso». ¿No has rezado en la festividad de Sant Juan, do dize: «ésta es la mujer, antigua malicia que a Adam echó de los deleytes de parayso. Ésta el linaje humano metió en el infierno…»?" (Rojas 132). Both Sempronio and Martínez de Toledo reference not only the Creation story, but also other Biblical stories of men who were deceived by women, such as King David and Bathsheba, Samson and Delilah, as well as the writings of Solomon. Both also cite Aristotle as a source of knowledge in their invectives about women, along with other poets and philosophers like Virgil and Seneca. Incredulous at Calisto's foolish infatuation with Melibea, Sempronio musters a long list of examples of women's vices, determined to prove his point:

> Lee los ystoriales, estudia los filósofos, mira los poetas. Llenos están los libros de sus viles y malos exemplos de las caydas que levaron los que en algo como tú las reputaron. Oye a Salomón, do dize que las mugeres y el vino hazen a los hombres renegar. Conséjate con Séneca y verás en qué las tiene. Escucha al Aristóteles, mira a Bernardo. Gentiles, judíos, christianos y moros, todos en esta concordia están. Pero lo dicho y lo que ellas dixiere, no te contezca error de tomarlo en común, que muchas hovo y ay sanctas y virtuosas y notables cuya resplandesciente corona quita el general vituperio. Pero destas otras, ¿quién te contaría sus mentiras, sus trafagos, sus cambios, su liviandad, sus lagrimillas, sus alteraciones, sus osadías, que todo lo que piensan osan sin deliberar, sus disimulaciones, su lengua, su engaño, su olvido, su desamor, su ingratitud, su inconstancia, su

> testimoniar, su negar, su rebolver, su presunción, su vanagloria, su abatamiento, su locura, su desdén, su sobervia, su subjeción, su parlería, su golosina, su luxuria y suziedad, su miedo, su atrevimiento, sus hechizerías, sus embaymientos, sus escarnios, su deslenguamiento, su desvergüença, su al cahuetería? (130-1)

Of all the defects Sempronio highlights, many of the descriptors he chooses relate back to Aristotle's assertion of women's impulsivity and instability: *cambios*, *alteraciones*, *inconstancia*, *rebolver*, *locura*. All of these words convey both women's purportedly natural instability and their fickleness as lovers. They are fraught with indecision: at one moment, they are bored with their lover's adulation; at the next, they are insulted by his aloofness.

When Juan Ruíz advises his male readers on how to be a skilled lover in his fourteenth-century *Libro de Buen Amor*, he cautions against drinking too much wine. To properly convey the dangers of drunkenness to the reader, he cites the Biblical story of Lot, whose daughters inebriated him with wine to prompt him to impregnate each of them: "guárdate sobre todo mucho vino bever, / que el vino fizo a Lot con sus fijas bolver, / en vergüença del mundo, en saña de Dios caer" (vv. 529-31). Aside from Eve, Alfonso Martínez de Toledo also references the deception of Aristotle, Virgil, King David, and Samson by women, and warns his reader about women's many vices, including greed, vanity, jealousy, gossiping, dishonesty, and fickleness. Susan L. Smith begins her book *The Power of Women: A* Topos *in Medieval Art and Literature* with an excerpt from a fourteenth-century English sermon, first cited by Gerald Owst, that references these same Biblical stories: "Who was strenger than Sampson, wyser than Salamon, holyer than

David? And ȝit thei were al overcomen by the queyntise and whiles of women" (qtd. Smith 1). Smith goes on to relate this sermon to the prologue of Geoffrey Chaucer's "Wife of Bath's Tale" in his fourteenth-century work *The Canterbury Tales*, in which the Wife's fifth husband Jankyn refuses to follow in the footsteps of the husbands before him, determined to establish his dominance over her. He decides to recount to her all the famous tales of malicious wives, and naturally, Jankyn too, begins with Eve: "Eva first, that for hir wikkednesse / Was al mankynde broght to wrecchednesse, / For which that Jhesu Crist hymself was slayn, [...] / Lo, heere expres of womman may ye fynde / That womman was the los of al mankynde" (qtd. Smith 1). He goes on to mention Samson and Delilah, Socrates and Xanthippe, and Hercules and Deianeira, among others. Smith explains the function of these examples as the Woman of Power *topos*, one that, she adds, acquired "near-proverbial status" throughout the Middle Ages. According to Smith, Jankyn draws on this *topos* by utilizing examples of well-known women from history, biblical accounts, or romance who, as Smith puts it, "caused the suffering of the men who loved them too well" (2), in order to

> exemplify a cluster of interrelated themes that include the wiles of women, the power of love, and the trials of marriage. This *topos* is just one of many manifestations of the medieval preoccupation with women who seize the upper hand in their relations with men.[17] Wives like the rebellious Alison

[17] A good example of this "medieval preoccupation with women who seize the upper hand in their relations with men" is Don Juan Manuel's moralistic text *El Libro de Patronio* o *El Conde Lucanor* (1335). The text includes fifty-one *exempla* rooted in sources such as Aesop's Fables, Spanish historical tales and tales of Eastern civilization. In the book's *Exemplo* XXXV, "De lo que contesçió a un mancebo que casó con una muger muy fuerte y muy brava," the count asks his adviser Patronio's advice for one of his servants, who seeks marriage with a rich noblewoman. The count notes that she is a very strong-willed woman. Patronio responds with a similar tale about a gentle man who also sought to marry a rich but brazen woman, and

of Bath and the conniving women of the fabliaux use lies, sex, violence, or whatever means available to keep their husbands under their relentless thumbs, while courtly ladies of love lyric and romance keep their lovers and would-be lovers in a state of amorous servitude—all in violation of every officially sanctioned norm of female behavior that demanded the submission of the female to the male sex. What distinguishes the Power of Women *topos* and gives it its particular impact is that it singles out the most celebrated men of the past to prove the power of women...these disorderly women and their victims were paraded forth, one after another, to prove beyond any doubt that women exercise a power that no man, however superior his mental, physical, and moral endowments, can resist...in every instance, the *topos*'s purpose is the same: to bring to bear the authority of history on the issue of women and power. (2, 4)

Smith notes that this *topos* originated in the patristic period, which lasted from approximately the late first century to the late eighth century, and served to condemn the seductive nature of women in favor of the sexual morality the fathers of the church hoped to instill.[18] More specifically, Smith explains that early Christian moralists used the Power

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everyone told him he would surely be dominated (if not killed) by her within the first night of marriage. To take preventative measures, the man pretended to be hot-tempered and cruel as soon as the newlyweds sat down for their first meal, gruesomely killing the household cat, dog, and horse in front of his new wife. Seeing this behavior, the woman immediately obeyed his orders, for fear that he would kill her too. The "exemplo" ends with the author's own voice, who sums up the tale as "buen consejo," and recounts its moral in a *copla*: "Si al comienço non muestras qui eres, / Nunca podrás después quando quisieres" (Burton 108-11).

[18] While St. Francis of Assisi did caution men against having sexual relations with many women, the sexual morality which the Fathers of the Church preached was mostly directed at women, while men enjoyed more leniency under the guise of spreading their seed more widely. St. Augustine writes in *On Christian Doctrine*, "The just men of antiquity imagined and foretold the Heavenly Kingdom in terms of an earthly kingdom.

of Women *topos* as a "weapon to persuade men and women alike to adopt an ascetic morality based on fear of and hostility toward the body and toward the female sex with which the body was closely identified" (22). Furthermore, Smith affirms that before the resurgence of Western Europe's population, economy, and religious and political institutions in the late twelfth century, the church held supreme power over the dissemination of ideas. This meant that written language was controlled mainly by the clergy, and perhaps a small fraction of laymen, and consequently women were naturally excluded from its production. Thus, although these moral lessons were intended for both men and women, their message was also exclusionary. Smith illustrates the rejection of the sexual body and therefore of the feminine in the pseudo-Clement letter "Ad Virgines," and the alienation of women congregants that invariably resulted from speeches like these. Like the author of this letter, Smith explains that it was customary for an *orator* to beseech his audience to tap into their prior knowledge about the *exempla virtutis* he was about to cite with questions like "Hast thou not heard?" or "Hast thou not read?" (23). Smith asserts that while "Ad Virgines" was purportedly intended to instruct both men and women, "the examples of Samson, David, Solomon, and Amnon represent lust only as it is embodied in women and brings disaster to men, and the only reader whom he addresses directly is male. Saint Jerome makes the same leap in his letter to Eustochium, from a statement that the devil assaults both men and women to an array of all-male examples" (24). Where

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The necessity for a sufficient number of children was responsible for a blameless custom by which one man had several wives at the same time. And thus it was not virtuous for one wife to have several husbands, for one woman is not more fruitful by this means, and it is rather a whorish evil to seek either wealth or children by common intercourse. With reference to customs of this kind, whatever the holy men of those days did without libidinousness, even though they did things that may not now be done in that way, is not blamed by the Scripture" (91). In my view, Augustine's use of the phrase "whorish evil" in itself illustrates the double standard in the patristic teachings.

women *were* included in these teachings, Smith argues, was in their association with carnality simply by being female:[19]

> To a male reader, the message of "Ad Virgines" is clear and unambiguous: shun the company of women, or what happened to Samson, David, and the rest will happen to you. What, however is the message to the female reader? The simple answer is that for the men who constituted the leadership of the early church, even when they are ostensibly addressing both sexes, it is the fate of men's souls, not women's, that is foremost in their minds. Women, whom they use the Power of Women *topos* to condemn, are excluded from its address: men speak it to other men, even when women are in the audience...For the fathers of the church, the seductive power of the flesh could only be exemplified by the power of women over men because it was the female sex that was identified with the sexualized body while the male was identified with spirit and reason...[T[he author of "Ad Virgines" implies that the destructive power of women lies in what they have in common. That, for theologians, was their identification with the flesh. The author implies as much when he blames Delilah's "wretched body" and "vile passion" for destroying Samson and when he cites the case of David, who was led to commit adultery and murder

[19] In her article "La *mala cansó* provenzal, fuente del *maldit* catalán," Isabel de Riquer explains Ausias March's poem "la tortra," which juxtaposes the image of the turtledove, a symbol of loyalty and constancy, with his unfaithful lady (Riquer 122). He tells his lady that once the male turtledove dies, the female no longer drinks water or perches in lush green trees, as evidence of her mourning of her lover. Then he asserts, "Mas contr' açò és vostra qualitat, / per gran desig no cast que·n vós se raygua" (vv.7-8). Not only is it hypocritical for March to cite his lady's "unchaste desire," given that the scorned poet-lover is often bemoaning the denial of sexual consummation; the fact that he claims that this unchaste desire " que·n vós se raygua" can be read as the same innate carnality that the author of the "Ad Virgines" associates with all women.

> "because of a woman" solely because the sight of her body aroused his desire, of which she was merely the object...Tamar was "guilty" only of being desired by her brother and being the resisting victim of rape[.] It is not what individual women do that causes trouble, but what "woman" is as a sex. (24-5)

What Smith points out here, especially in the cases of Bathsheba and Tamar, is that women are considered culpable merely for the way in which they are perceived by men, be they clergymen or lovers: that is, sexually arousing. As I point out in Chapter 3, in *Cárcel de amor*, Leriano blames Laureola for his amorous suffering on these same premises: her beauty aroused his interest, which led to his pain and longing for her, which led to his bold pursuit of her. Laureola does not do anything to "cause trouble," as Smith puts it; like Bathsheba and Tamar, she is simply guilty of being arousing, of being the object of a man's desire. She further adds that the danger of looking at women became a common motif in the patristic period, and Biblical stories like these helped to illustrate the consequences of doing so, all the while blaming women for these consequences without any action on their part. The mere sight of Bathsheba bathing "led [David] into adultery and murder," leading Tertullian, an early Roman author credited as the father of Latin Christianity, to claim in his *De virginibus velandis*, "so a veil must be drawn over a beauty so dangerous as to have brought scandal into heaven itself" (Smith 223).[20]

In fact, in his fifteenth-century *Corbacho*, Alfonso Martínez de Toledo recounts the story of David and Bathsheba, assigning Bathsheba an active role in David's

[20] Bornstein adds that Tertullian condemned the use of any artificial means of enhancing feminine beauty, such as makeup or wearing jewelry: "In *De cultu feminarum*, Tertullian states that women serve as the 'gate of the devil' when they enhance their beauty to attract men" (qtd. Bornstein 15)

temptation: "en un huerto la veía de cada día peinarse e arrearse a su ojo, e ella, como sentía quel rey la venía cada día a mirar de allí, aunque lo ella disimulaba—como que ella non conosçía ni sentía quel rey la miraba nin la venía a mirar—pero, por ser del rey cobdiçiada e deseada, venía allí cada día a se arrear e peinar mostrando sus cabellos e pechos, dando a entender que no lo entendía, como otras muchas de cada día acostumbran a fazer […] e con ella acometió carnal deseo e adulterio en derecho canónico llamado; lo qual non cometiera si ella quisiera, quando vido e sintió la voluntad e comienço de amor del rey, que ella se dexara de seguir la venida a peinar e arrearse allí donde venía" (101). Martínez de Toledo's retelling of the story is especially interesting, because while it also assigns culpability to Bathsheba, it corroborates my earlier contention about the subversion of medieval canon law. Martínez de Toledo explicitly says that David is the one who violated canon law by committing adultery with Bathsheba, yet he still ascribes the blame to her. Even in an outright admission of masculine violation of the legal code, Martínez de Toledo still absolves David on the grounds that Bathsheba provoked him by continuing to bathe in his line of sight. The concept of provocation is also relevant to our discussion of feminine culpability in the chapters that follow.

James A. Schultz illustrates the same motif in High German vernacular as well. Minnesängers sang of looking at women in their love lyrics, pointing out Walther von der Vogelweide's claim that "when men see an attractive woman, they stare at her" (37) and Heinrich von Morungen's belief that God's purpose in creating women was for them to be looked at: "wan durch schouwen / sô geschuof si got dem man, / Daz si waer ein spiegel, / al der werlde ein wunne gar" (Schultz 38). Schultz also notes that concupiscence, the root

of sexual urges, was a consequence of the fall of humankind for theologians such as St. Augustine (68).

Therefore, the root of women's culpability is that which they cannot control, tying to the *a priori* blaming that Rouben C. Cholakian conceptualizes and which I discuss in the following chapter. In fact, Smith's discussion of the exclusion medieval women faced both in the production and dissemination of written texts and in the didactic sermons complements Rouben C. Cholakian's claim that women are excluded in troubadour lyric poetry. Smith explains that even though women are in the preacher's audience, they are not the addressee of his homily; likewise, Cholakian postulates that women, although muses used as inspiration for poetry, are not the addressee of the final literary product. In both cases, men are the only intended recipient.

Smith and Cholakian converge on several other ideas as well. Smith contends that for the Fathers of the Church, women could not avoid the dangers they were cautioned against, because they effectively embodied this danger: "To a male reader, then, the examples cited in 'Ad Virgines' warn of a danger that comes from without; to a female reader, of one that comes from within herself. By definition, she cannot resist this danger *as* herself, as a woman, because as a creature of the flesh she *is* the danger, but only by renouncing her nature as a woman, remaining a virgin, and identifying herself with male spirit" (25). Sarah Kay likewise postulates that the muse in troubadour poetry assumes a third gender, as she is endowed with a feminine semblance but masculine characteristics, likely including a masculine *senhal*; and, after all, the poem, like the sermon, is written about her, but not *for* her, as Cholakian illustrates. Kay explains that the creation of a third or "mixed" gender lady maintains a balance between the poet-lover's need to express his

sexual desire for the feminine while still upholding the gender hierarchy of male superiority. She explains:

> The problem with this hierarchy is that it presents "women" as so reprehensible that men's desire for them, and love poetry expressing that desire, become implausible. The solution of constructing a third gender, of women-to-whom-love-poems-can-be-written, solves this problem but raises new ones [....] The third gender is sexually female, but its sexuality is consciously presented as passive [...] the *domna*'s sexuality expresses itself in acceptance and welcome...Other aspects of [her psychology] such as *cortesia*, *franquesa*, *patage*, *pretz*, *valor* are held in common with the troubadour, or represent the qualities to which he aspires. The *domna* is therefore morally and psychologically androgynous. In terms of social status, however, she is masculine. Imagery derived from feudalism makes the *domna* the lover's lord from Guilhem de Peiteu onwards, and credits her with masculine powers such as making war, appearing in court, and granting territories [...] a third, "mixed" gender [...] assimilates the *domna* to "masculine" norms, while continuing to represent her desirability as female. (91-2) [21]

In fact, the way in which Cholakian describes the troubadour's muse is as a replaceable entity: one that inspires, but due to the lack of identity and importance

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[21] Virginie Greene discusses Georges Duby's interpretation of the masculine *senhals* in troubadour poetry: "one may well ask whether the figure of the *domina* or mistress was not identified with the figure of the *dominus*, or the lord, her husband, the head of the household" (qtd. Greene 55-6). Greene explains that "The courtly literature flourishing at the end of this period [from the tenth to the twelfth century] enhances the success of the knights as a group in power, and reveals their frustrations and fears before the feminine. Knights, with the help of clerks, have invented courtly love in order to create imaginary women, fantasize about adultery, and express homosexual desires in an acceptable guise" (57). Duby concluded that "La femme était-elle autre chose qu'une illusion, une sorte de voile, de paravent [...] ou plutôt qu'un truchement, un intermédiaire, la médiatrice" (qtd. Greene 57)

assigned to her by the poet, she is faceless; the lyric poem could be about any woman. Similarly, Smith insists that when the author of "Ad Virgines" does not address Delilah or Bathsheba by name, it is to highlight their commonality, "thus refusing to recognize them as individuals" (25). She also cites the anonymous Middle Latin poem "Cancio de mulieribus," whose narrative voice urges the men of the *exempla* to tell of their deception at the hands of women. While the poetic voice calls on Adam, Lot, Samson, and David by name, he only acknowledges their female predators in the collective sense, in his chorus "ne muliere credite!" (Smith 30-1). French Benedictine monk Bernard of Morval's twelfth-century poem "De contemptu mundi" uses the same tactic, expressly naming the same men, while continuously grouping their notorious counterparts under the umbrella term "femina": feminia res fragilis, numquam nisi crimine constans, / numquam sponte sua desinit esse nocens. / femina flamma vorax, furor ultimus, unica clades, / et docet et discit quicquid obesse solet. / femina vile forum, res publica, fallere nata" (Smith 32). Thus, like the troubadour's muse, women are one in the same, faceless, and interchangeable. This commonality or interchangeability of women is a common thread postulated by scholars whose work I discuss throughout this dissertation. Susan L. Smith signals the commonality of Biblical women in the "Ad Virgines"; Rouben C. Cholakian postulates the non-existent quality of the woman in Guillaume d'Aquitaine's lyric poetry; Catherine Henry Walsh refers to *Cárcel*'s Laureola as a "stick-figure" (Walsh 120); and Virginie Greene translates Georges Duby's claim that twelfth-century women are so absent from the written text that they are "shadowy figures, without shape, without depth, without individuality" from his *Dames du XIIe siècle* (qtd. Greene 58).

Aside from their exposure to these ideologies in sermons, Anne Clark Bartlett also discusses the exclusionary impact Middle English devotional texts had on women, explaining that they presented female readers with "such 'techniques of the self' as the rejection of the feminized body, devotion to Christ's passion, and meditation on Christ as divine bridegroom. These dual operations […] seek both to eradicate and to enhance the reader's desire—initiat[ing] an uneasy tension" (32-3). Bartlett refers to Michel Foucault's labeling of identity-formation in the discursive context with "structuring entities" such as devotional texts, monastic rules, legal codes, and widespread social practices such as courtesy as subjectification, explaining, "Identities are constituted when subjects internalize prescriptive discourses about sex, the body, and the institutions that govern human activity" (Bartlett 31). Bartlett's point here illustrates that the paradoxical characterization of the woman in troubadour poetry postulated by Cholakian had likewise operated in the devotional writings aimed at women. Like the troubadour lyric, these patristic texts send mixed messages to the female audience; women are, at once, sexualized and de-sexualized, desirable and repugnant.

As one example of the church's rejection of the feminized body, Bartlett cites the fifth letter of Héloïse to Abélard, in which she criticizes the way that Benedictine Rule not only disregards women's physical needs, but also overlooks the logistics of their monastic life. She insists in her letter that the Rule of Saint Benedict "was clearly written for men alone, it can only be obeyed by men, whether subordinates or superiors…how can women be concerned with what is written there about cowls, drawers, and scapulars? Or indeed, with tunics and woolen garments when the monthly purging of their superfluous humors must avoid such things?" (qtd. Bartlett). Héloïse also notes, as Bartlett points out, the way

in which monastic rule forbids mixed-sex contact, yet Benedictine Rule demands that nuns are responsible for providing hospitality for visiting church officials. Bartlett states that Abélard's responses are largely dismissive of Héloïse's concerns with gender difference, and instead opts to discuss the importance of monastic silence and solitude for women, especially since women succumb more easily to temptation. In this way, Bartlett asserts, "Abélard's 'rule' makes its accommodations based on the medieval gender stereotypes (particularly the association of women with the sexual, verbal, and appetitive urges) which inform the Rule that Héloïse critiques" (36). He fails to comment on Héloïse's remark that monastic clothing is impractical for women's menstrual needs, responding only that clothing should "inhibit the lusts of the body" (Bartlett 37).

Bartlett remarks that Abélard's responses are not surprising, given that the Christian church attempted to "regender" its female converts from the very beginning of its institutionalization; that is, "to instill in them a masculine religious identification and ideal of religious practice. Women were urged to divest themselves of the characteristics that male authorities deemed 'feminine' (e.g., sensuality, weakness, irrationality), and to develop 'manly' attributes (e.g., rationality, orderliness, and moral purity)" (37). Physical "regendering" also occurred in self-inflicted "sacrificial mutilation" by nuns in order to avoid rape. According to a ninth-century chronicle, Ebba the Younger, abbess of the convent at Coldingham cut off her nose and upper lip with a razor (Bartlett 39). Breasts were also self-amputated, and these displays of internal and external strength resulted in medieval women being "rewarded with the highest patristic praise: they had become 'male' or 'virile'" (39). Bartlett contends that the Fathers of the Church believed that if women renounced their "inherently evil identities," they would thus "nullify their

seductive difference and contribute their energies productively with men toward the expansion of the early church" (40). Bernard of Clairvaux highlights this "seductive difference" when he claims in his eleventh-century *Sermones in cantica* "it is easier to raise the dead than to be alone with a woman and not have sex" (qtd. Bartlett 89).

In terms of the feminine devotion to Christ's passion and meditation on him as the divine bridegroom, Bartlett discusses the way *The Book of Margery Kempe* illustrates the conflicting roles Kempe assumed as a reader of devotional literature. In the book, Kempe's scribe notes her "astonishingly comprehensive internalization of a discursive system of spiritual identifications and values," one which compelled Kempe to meditate on her own sins and deservedness of punishment when seeing anyone publicly reproached; to experience joy at the sight of men of high or exalted status, as she associated them with Christ; and finally, to play the role of lover and female servant. Bartlett explains that the "voices" of all the religious discourses to which she was exposed "promote several separate feminine roles for Kempe, including lover, daughter, and handmaid […]For example, Christ addresses her using the diverse assortment of textualized identities commonly found in familiar medieval genres. Christ invites Kempe to be intimate ['homly'] with him (the term she uses to describe their conjugal relations), to play lady-in-waiting to the Virgin Mary, and to view him as a father" (Bartlett 29). Again, these devotional texts corroborate Bartlett's Foucaultian reading about the construction of feminine identities as well as Cholakian's Lacanian reading about the antagonistic attitude of the troubadour: women are simultaneously excluded and called to assume various feminine roles to fulfill multiple masculine expectations.

Chaucer's Wife of Bath, for her part, belongs to the same group of "script-flipping" women as those in *Curial e Güelfa* that I discuss in Chapter 4, as she not only defends her right to remarry and to seek sexual pleasure from marriage; she also reframes these same Biblical tales to illustrate the benefits of wives and multiple marriages. Most importantly, she emphasizes that the men in these tales so often used as examples were themselves not free of sin. However, even though Jankyn suffered the same fate as those who came before him, his role in the Prologue serves to illustrate the reach of these ideas about women, especially in the minds of men, as Smith points out: "The contents of Jankyn's book reveal how long the *topos* had been in use and by what revered authorities it had been propagated" (2).

Thus, propagation of these ideas about women from "revered authorities" in biblical or philosophic sources served to facilitate the justification of misogyny by Medieval Iberian male authors and their characters, particularly in the fifteenth century. Smith even points out that Aristotle's use of the tale of Dionysius in his *Rhetoric* is to demonstrate that an "example operates as a form of proof" (5). Smith also discusses Cicero's use of *exempla virtutis* in his *De oratore* to convince his listeners to uphold the morals and virtues of their ancestors: "The examples favored by Roman orators carried the evidentiary weight necessary to prove the speaker's case and the emotional resonances to win the audience to his cause because they referred to past events of a specific kind: the memorable deeds performed by celebrated individuals from the Roman past who represented the collective memory of the Roman people" (6-7). During the increase of popular preaching late in the twelfth century, Smith explains, the sermon *exemplum* took a slightly different approach than the *exemplum virtutis*:

> [T]he sermon *exemplum* is always narrative in form, even if relatively brief. For the broads-based audiences to whom *exempla* were directed, the story had to speak for itself [...]Rarely does it report the great deed of a famous individual. Its characters are more apt to be identified according to type, such as "a certain clerk," "a young apprentice"—even animals can be the protagonists—and the time is not distant history but recent past which is continuous with the experience of the speaker and his audience. Many are closer to similitude than example. Moreover, according to thirteenth-century theorists of the *exemplum*, its function as proof in a technical sense was secondary to its capacity to delight and move the audience and to stir its emotions, for it was emotion, not reason, by which popular audiences were swayed. Thus *exempla* had to divert, amuse, and excite as well as instruct. The claim that the events reported really took place continues to characterize the *exemplum*, however, and in many *exempla*, the preacher declares that he himself saw or heard what took place. (9) [22]

As I have stated, the deeming of Eve as a prototype of all women, or an *exemplum*, worked to solidify the idea that all women are inherently malicious or evil, just as the Occitan troubadour Bernat de Ventadorn legitimizes his renunciation of all women based on the reproachable actions of his cruel beloved in his *mala cansó*, as I mentioned in the introduction. Eve, however, was not the only example authors and literary characters

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[22] Smith also notes, however, that *exempla* were easily manipulated to fit multiple discourses. She refers to Saint Ambrose, who reproaches the practice of using *exempla* from Scripture to justify sin, especially that of adultery. John of Salisbury condemned those who used the story of King David to justify having more than one wife. Conversely, Christians often used pagan *exempla virtutis* stripped of their original context to illustrate that "if even pagans were capable of fortitude in the face of adversity, how much greater should be the fortitude of Christian martyrs" (11-12).

could use to justify their misogyny against their ladies, or all of womankind in these literary works.[23] As I have discussed, both the author of "Ad Virgines" and Alfonso Martínez de Toledo recount the misfortune that befell King David, who saw the beautiful Bathsheba bathing from the roof of his castle one night, resulting in an adulterous affair with her. To have her to himself, King David arranged the death of Bathsheba's husband in battle. Since God was angered by David's selfishness and adultery, he killed the son Bathsheba conceived with him.

There are, on the other hand, other biblical male protagonists aside from those already cited by Sempronio, Martínez de Toledo, and popular sermons who suffered grave consequences for their involvement with women. Because of his love for Delilah, Samson gave in to her persistent questioning about the secret of his amazing strength. Bribed with silver, she conspired in his attack by the Philistines, in which they gouged out Samson's eyes, and bound him to the pillars of their temple. King Herod, pleased so much by his stepdaughter Salome's performance in his court, promised to give her whatever she asked in return, including as much as half his kingdom. Avenging her mother's grudge, Salome asked for the head of John the Baptist on a platter. Although the King did not want to kill John, he arranged for his beheading right away, since he had made his promise in front of his court and did not want to go back on his word and compromise his reputation. As we witnessed in Sempronio's tirade, Aristotle himself was included in this *topos* of men who,

[23] It is also important to remember that the medieval practice of exegesis would have also heavily influenced medieval ideologies, rather than solely the Bible itself. Murdoch notes that "It is worth reminding ourselves that the literal sense in medieval biblical exegesis is a mode of interpretation. It can supply something that is missing or not immediately apparent in a biblical text...either to make the text more interesting...or to make it comprehensible. It can also be used to...give greater interpretative possibilities; in fact, to develop and expand" (5). He cites Peter Meredith's claim that exegesis also can also entail "altering a biblical event" (qtd. Murdoch 5). Boynton and Reilly state that allegorical interpretation of texts that were authoritative but challenging to understand was a normal practice stemming from early Christianity (160), thus the allegorical interpretations of the Song of Songs and David and Bathsheba as representing Christ and the Church.

despite all of their wisdom, ability, and virtue, still fell prey to the seduction of women. According to Susan L. Smith, the tale of "Aristotle and Phyllis" was the best-known example of the Power of Women *topos* in the later Middle Ages. When Aristotle served as a tutor to the young emperor Alexander, he reproached him for his lovesick fixation on his mistress Phyllis. To get revenge, Phyllis resolves to seduce Aristotle, and passes outside the window of his study with her skirts raised. Smith explains,

> As she intended, the sight of her charms so captivated the old philosopher that he begged her for her sexual favors. She consented, but only on the condition that first, he would allow her to ride him like a horse. Aristotle willingly agreed. The lady, however, had no intention of keeping her part of the bargain, and when the time came for Aristotle to do as she demanded, she arranged for Alexander to be present to witness her triumphant ride and Aristotle's humiliation. (67)

Smith asserts that in Jacques de Vitry's use of the mounted Aristotle as *exemplum* in his thirteenth-century sermons, he "confirms the view of Christian moralists that women present a twofold danger to men: through the sight of their bodies and through their speech, which they use, like Eve, to seduce and to deceive" (78).

Another way to justify the aggressive misogyny by these characters and authors is to soften their viperous words with some brief praise to the few examples of women who have somehow evaded the same fate as the rest of their kind, instead being "virtuous" and "saintly" as Sempronio does. Leriano employs this same trope on his deathbed, when his friend Tefeo hopes to cure his love-induced affliction by reminding him of all of women's vices. Leriano responds with a pseudo-heroic, pompous defense of women in which he

cites women from antiquity whose deeds have benefitted mankind and thus make men indebted to women. He tells Tefeo that in spite of the fact that his pain was caused by a woman, his dying words will be in praise of women. His aim in this speech is to "mostrar quinze causas por que yerran los que en esta nación ponen lengua; y veinte razones por que les somos los onbres obligados; y diversos exenplos de su bondad" (65). In an effort to contradict Tefeo's slanderous words, Leriano takes it upon himself to reproach all the men who disparage the female sex, explaining why they are wrong to do so. Leriano begins by pointing out that every man begins "en entrañas de muger y es de su misma sustancia," and then goes on to invoke the tenets of Christianity (65).

For one thing, he declares, God has commanded all of humankind to honor both their father and their mother; for another, women are creations of God, therefore "no solamente a ellas ofende quien las afea, mas blasfema de las obras del mismo Dios" (65-6). The reasons he lists for men's indebtedness to women serve primarily as a list of ways in which women improve upon men's original qualities: in loving them, men learn to become more judicious, more patient, more contemplative, more contrite, more reserved, and, as a result of withstanding so much anticipation and heartache, stronger. He commends their sound advice, their ability to calm men's ire and make peace, and the way in which they motivate men to achieve their aspirations: "nos hazen onrrados; con ellas se alcançan grandes casamientos con muchas haziendas y rentas, y porque alguno podría responderme que la onrra está en la virtud y no en la riqueza, digo que tan bien causan lo uno como lo otro; pónennos presunciones tan virtuosas que sacamos dellas las grandes onrras y alabanças que deseamos" (70). He declares that it is because of women that beautiful songs and romances are composed; he even credits them with improving men's

appearance and style of dress: "nos hazen ser galanes; por ellas nos desvelamos en el vestir, por ellas estudiamos en el traer...por las mugeres se inventan los galanes entretalles [y] las discretas bordaduras" (71). While Leriano's intentions are chivalrous, or rather, his intention is to *appear* chivalrous, all of the reasons he cites for women's goodness only serve to further glorify men, just as Cholakian affirms with woman as the object of troubadour poetry. Although the woman is the source of inspiration, it is the poet-lover who is celebrated as the true agent—the creator of the poem, the singer of the song, or, in the case of Leriano's example, the proprietor of the estate and the assets. Just like Aristotle's contentions about reproduction, it seems that women are incapable of generating goodness on their own or from within themselves: the good they do is through men, or in addition to what men have already contributed. Of course, this inflated speech on Leriano's deathbed, as I discuss in Chapter 3, also serves as a maneuver through which Leriano absolves himself of the ways in which he himself has degraded Laureola, threatening her on the premise of the same ideologies he strives to debunk here. This discourse also grants him a heroic death in front of his friend and distraught mother. As I continue throughout the following chapters to discuss the influence that these misogynistic models have left on the prose texts at the center of my study, we will see how these ideologies and *topoi* assist the courtly lover in his quest to overcome his lady’s will, and, when he cannot, how he can manipulate these ideologies in his discourse of blame toward the lady.

CHAPTER 2: COURTEOUS JERKS AND CHIVALROUS SNOBS, AT YOUR "SERVICE": OCCITAN POETRY, THE COURTLY LOVE TRADITION, AND THE FORMATION OF THE DAMSEL IN DISTRESS MOTIF

In order to understand why the motif of feminine culpability is so ubiquitous (and so readily verbalized by male characters) in the Iberian sentimental and chivalric novels of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, a re-reading of the troubadour lyric poetry of the Middle Ages, especially the *mala cansó*, is necessary. The troubadour verse sets the misogynistic tone for the subsequent prose genres; therefore, Leriano serves as merely one example in a vast tradition of male characters (and narrative voices, and authors) who employ these feminine culpability motifs as ammunition against their allegedly "beloved" ladies in the battle of courtly love.

Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay remark that although the heyday of the troubadour culture, which lasted from the eleventh to the thirteenth century, was "relatively short-lived, its spark was sufficient to light the broader flame of subsequent European poetry. The rise of courtliness, in the senses both of ‘courtly love’ and ‘courtly living,’ in which the troubadours played a determining role, helped to shape mainstream Western culture; while their commentaries as moralists, and as political and cultural critics, provide vital testimony to the attitudes which underlie and helped to form our own" (1). This is especially true with respect to the phallocentric and, as Rouben C. Cholakian calls it, "gynophobic" perspective adopted in the literature that followed (42). In this chapter I will discuss the work of Isabel de Riquer, Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay, and Rouben C. Cholakian, scholars whose studies on the role of woman in troubadour poetry will help to

support my observations about the motif of feminine culpability in the sentimental and chivalric romances, especially Diego de San Pedro's *Cárcel de amor*, and the anonymous Catalan chivalric novel *Curial e Güelfa*.

The motifs for blaming women used by the troubadours are the same ones deftly adopted by Leriano and his messenger the *Auctor* in *Cárcel de amor*; by characters from two of Juan de Flores' fifteenth-century sentimental novels, Pánfilo in *Grimalte y Gradissa* and Torrellas in *Grisel y Mirabella*; and, moreover, amongst themselves and between one another by the women characters in *Curial e Güelfa*. In addition, the troubadour lyric also provides the models of male absolution that I emphasize in these prose works, including masculine loyalty, rationality, men's centrality to the sexual experience, and thus, phallic power and domination, and sympathy for the errant (but well-intentioned) hero.

There has been much debate about the origins of troubadour poetry. Some scholars have pointed to Arabic influence of the eighth century, a notion which was dismissed by Henry John Chaytor in his 1912 book *The Troubadours*, claiming that Arabic and Provençal poetry share too few similarities to give this hypothesis much credibility (8). However, María Rosa Menocal has supported the hypothesis of Arabic influence as recently as 1990. Either way, scholars have settled on the term "Occitan" to describe the literary language of the troubadours, which I will explain in more detail shortly. When the Romans settled in Gaul in the second century, they brought with them their *joculatores*, a group which Chaytor classifies as "mountebanks...who amused the common people by day and the nobles after their banquets at night and travelled from town to town in pursuit of their livelihood, were accustomed to accompany their performances by some sort of rude

song and music" (7). He describes the evolution of both their performance and social status, explaining:

> In the uncivilized North [of France] they remained buffoons; but in the South, where the greater refinement of life demanded more artistic performance, the musical part of their entertainment became predominant and the *joculator* became the *joglar* (Northern French, *jongleur)*, a wandering musician and eventually a troubadour, a composer of his own poems. These latter were no longer the gross and coarse songs of the mountebank age...but the grave and artificially wrought stanzas of the troubadour *chanso*. (7)

The troubadour *chanso*, or *cansó* as will be used here, is distinguished from the folkloric poetry found in many countries of relatively uniform themes such as the *alba*, the *pastorela* or the *ballata*. Troubadour poetry, Chaytor explains, boasts one of the highest levels of technical perfection in metric diversity in the world, estimating approximately nine hundred different forms of stanza construction (8). The *cansó* consists of five, six or seven stanzas, called *coblas*, with one or two *tornadas*, which are shorter stanzas that bring the poem to a close. Stanzas vary in length from two lines to forty-two lines in extreme cases. Based on the verb *trobar*, meaning "to find," Martí de Riquer explains that the term came to signify literary invention: "el verbo provenzal *trobar* (como en catalán, como el francés *trouver* y el italiano *trovare*) significa también «encontrar, hallar», y en latín *invenire* tiene, entre otros, los valores de «encontrar, hallar», pero también los de «imaginar, inventar», y llegó a adquirir el de «crear literariamente», como demuestra el titulo del tratado ciceroniano *De inventione*" (20). Martí de Riquer adds "[e]l estrofismo y

las melodías del arte litúrgico medieval, por un lado, y la *inventio* de la retórica latina, por el otro, no tan sólo explican las palabras *trobar* y *trobador*, sino que señalan las dos corrientes culturales más dominantes y más seguras que confluyen en el fenómeno de la poesía trovadoresca" (21). Thus the troubadour was considered the inventor of his song, both its words and its tune, and thus deserved acknowledgement, either by his own *joglar* (a class grouped with acrobats, clowns, jugglers and animal tamers) sent to a faraway court to sing it for him, or by another who preserved its melody but with revamped lyrics.[24] Approximately 2500 *cansós* are extant today.

Despite their admirable poetic style, however, Chaytor notes that most of the troubadours were oftentimes looked down upon and excluded from the aristocratic society they aspired to, and intended their songs for. This of course, excludes those who were part of the nobility such as Guillaume d'Aquitaine, Theobald I of Navarre, and King Richard Coeur de Lion. Many came from the lower classes (Chaytor notes that Bernat de Ventadorn's father was the fire stoker at the castle of Ventadorn, while Rouben C. Cholakian attributes Marcabru's misogyny in part to an absent mother who abandoned him on the steps of a church), and depended on patrons for their livelihood. These patrons were nobles, usually kings or princes who valued the arts, but very few patrons permanently sustained troubadours, which motivated their vagabond lifestyle. Troubadours traveled not only within France, Italy, and the Iberian Peninsula, but also to places like Hungary, Cyprus, Malta, and the Balkan Peninsula.

[24] According to Martí de Riquer, the troubadour Guiraut Riquer cites Alfonso X as having declared "son inventores / dig tug li trobador" (qtd. M. de Riquer 20). Joseph T. Snow affirms that this was a response to Guiraut's *supplicatio* in 1274 for a clarification of the status of the different types of performers, as the categories became nebulous and artists such as Giraut felt that their work was not being duly credited (Snow 274).

A lauded or entertaining song was many times rewarded by the patron in the form of monetary gifts or courtly provisions. Chaytor notes that troubadours were not above manipulating their patrons to get what they wanted; they "would stoop to threats or adulation in order to obtain the horse or the garments or the money of [their] desire" (12). Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay add that singing a *bona cansó* for their patron's wife was not only to please her, as it increased her renown in the court; it was also a covert way of ensuring courtly provisions for themselves. Thus, the theme of a troubadour's song could praise their patron or his wife, mourn their passing, satirize a poetic rival, challenge a political or religious opponent, preach the Crusades, or discuss a pressing political or social issue of the period.

However, Chaytor points out that the troubadours were the first lyric poets in medieval Europe to confer such an extensive and "exhaustive" treatment to the theme of love (14). This love relationship was based on the relationship between vassal and lord in feudal southern France and influenced by the cult of the Virgin especially popular in the eleventh century. Chaytor explains that "the reverence bestowed upon the Virgin was extended to the female sex in general, and as a vassal owed obedience to his feudal overlord, so did he owe service and devotion to his lady...Thus there was a service of love as there was a service of vassalage, and the lover stood to his lady in a position analogous to that of the vassal to his overlord" (15). Chaytor notes that a man gradually had to earn his position as the lover of a particular woman, by passing through the stages detailed by Andreas Capellanus in his twelfth-century treatise on courtly love, *De amore*: "there are four stages in love: the first is that of aspirant (*fegnedor*), the second that of suppliant (*precador*), the third that of recognized suitor (*entendedor*) and the fourth that of accepted

lover (*drut*)" (Chaytor 15). Especially important to the theme of this study is Chaytor's emphasis of both the mutual consent of both the lover and the lady, signaled by an exchange and the true implications of the lady's "agreement" to courtship:

> The lover was formally installed as such by the lady, took an oath of fidelity to her and received a kiss to seal it, a ring or some other personal possession. For practical purposes the contract merely implied that the lady was prepared to receive the troubadour's homage in poetry and to be the subject of his song. As secrecy was a duty incumbent upon the troubadour, he usually referred to the lady by a pseudonym (*senhal*); naturally, the lady's reputation was increased if her attraction for a famous troubadour was known, and the *senhal* was no doubt an open secret at times. (15-16)

These reminders by Chaytor of the passage to becoming an accepted lover, and of the analogy of the love relationship with that of the feudal vassal and overlord are especially important to keep in mind as I discuss the troubadour scholarship included in this chapter. It will continue to be relevant in the following chapters as I explore the opposing themes of feminine culpability and masculine absolution in the fifteenth-century prose texts.

Much of the male-authored literature of the late Middle Ages undertook as part of its didactic mission to highlight and criticize the defects of the female race as a whole. Sometimes this criticism serves as the entirety of a medieval text, such as in vituperations of women, while other times it emerges effortlessly in a conversation between two male literary characters, like Sempronio's diatribe in Fernando de Rojas' fifteenth-century dialogic novel *La Celestina*. This applies to the troubadour lyric as well; some poets were

intent on spreading far and wide the ways in which women had corrupted mankind and continued to do so; others sang the praises of their lady while slyly incorporating subtle condescension or disapproval.

Isabel de Riquer remarks that in the late Middle Ages, male authors of all genres, languages, tones and styles participated in these attacks, exempting no class or group of women: "Ninguna mujer se salvaba de sus denuestos: casadas, solteras, viudas o monjas; jóvenes, maduras o ancianas; famosas o anónimas. En todas veían ellos, los hombres, un cúmulo de vicios y engaños que divulgaban desmenuzándolos uno a uno" (109). According to the recurring motifs in their writing, Riquer attests that for these men "[n]ingún animal era más terrible o más repugnante que cualquier mujer, pues todas eran leonas, serpientes, osas, zorras, caballos, ratones, asnos o, simplemente, bestias" (109). Regardless of how vile they portrayed women to be, however, men continued to fall prey to their seduction: scholars, philosophers, biblical and literary characters alike. So ubiquitous was the figure of the man victimized by women's powers of sensuality, temptation and cunning that it became the literary *topos* known as the Power of Women, which I have discussed at length in the previous chapter. Authors, narrators and characters repeatedly invoked a list of the many wise (but beguiled) men who had fallen, including, but not limited to Adam, Samson, Lot, Aristotle, Hippocrates, and Virgil.

By the end of the twelfth century, this misogynistic literature had evolved into the genre of debate, resulting in the creation of a pro-feminist and an anti-feminist camp that infiltrated every literary genre in medieval Romania. However, Isabel de Riquer points out that two particular lyrical genres innovated the literary invective against women, namely the Provençal *mala cansó* and the Catalan *maldit*. Rather than condemning the entire

female race, troubadours utilized these two lyrical genres to decry the “misconduct” or defects of one woman in particular.

Isabel de Riquer clarifies that the *bona cansó* is the love song in which the troubadour extolled his beloved lady and all the ways in which he had improved because of her, both as a man and a poet. She cites Gaucelm Faidit's "Mon cor e mi" to illustrate the positive praise afforded the lady in the *bona cansó*: "Mon cor e mi e mis bonas chanssos / e tot qan sai d'avinen dir e far, / conosc q'ieu teing, bona dompna, de vos" (vv. 1-3). Conversely, the *mala cansó* is the vehicle through which the troubadour “proclama a los cuatro vientos su desamor, su rechazo a una dama particular, con lenguaje duro y graves y concretas acusaciones; y, al abandonarla, le avisa, algunas veces, que ha encontrado otra dama mejor” (Riquer 111). Instead of making sweeping generalizations about the whole of womankind, Isabel de Riquer explains that the troubadour’s accusations against his lady in the *mala cansó* were specific: she had made him wait too long for his reward of sexual consummation; she had deceived him; or she had simply accepted his courtship without holding up her end of the feudal bargain: she had not given him the "payment" he felt his "service" to her had warranted. Riquer illustrates this analogy of payment and debt at work in Folquet de Marselha’s “Sitot me sui," where sexual consummation is the currency owed by the female debtor: “c’ab bel semblan m’a tengut en fadia/ mais de detz ans, a lei de mal deutor/ c’ades promet mas re no pagaria” (vv. 6-8). Eliza Miruna Ghil explains that, due to the feudal society in which the troubadour lyric was created, terms like *avara* and *orgolhoza* were frequently applied to the lady's withholding of affection and sexual favors. Ghil points out these terms in Bernat de Ventadorn's verses, noting that "Can vei la lauzeta mover" includes Ventadorn's vow to

give up service to his lady, using the verb *se recreire*, which means to renege or back out of an agreement (Ghil 443). Ghil illustrates that legal, commercial and religious language was also employed by the troubadours in the same manner. The use of this type of language by the troubadours confirms their familiarity, as I have postulated, with contemporary legal, feudal, chivalric and courtly codes, and thus reveals a *conscious* retraction of service on part of the poet-lover, violating these codes.[25] The ease with which the lover can retract amorous service and violate the chivalric codes that Maurice Keen describes uncovers the fallacy of the troubadour's adoration of his beloved, and betrays his "service" as nothing more than a performance, as James A. Schultz maintains in his study of the Minnesänger, whose lyrical tradition flourished in the Middle High German period from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries. Schultz claims that the "single singer" as he calls the Minnesänger has a performative role, claiming that his songs are part of a constructed identity he has assumed for his audience, transforming him into

> the singer whose primary relationship is with his audience and whose songs take on a life of their own: the lover becomes a performer. Thus at the same time the singer sings himself into existence as a courtly lover, he is always on the verge of demonstrating that this sort of courtly lover is merely a series of roles that have been assumed. For the single singer, courtly love is a performative that is always on the verge of being unmasked as mere performance...The judge of his success is not his lady, whoever she is, but the court. (116-7)

[25] Cholakian notes Niccolo Pasero's interpretation of the figures of the "gardadors" in Guillaume d'Aquitaine's poem "[Co]mpaigno, no puosc mudar qu'eo no m'effrei" as "part of a 'istanza giuridica'" (qtd. Cholakian 17). Likewise, in his analysis of an anonymous troubadour song entitled "S'anc vos amei, era.us vau desaman," Gerald A. Bond explains, "The speaker argues that since the lady has not kept her half of the contractual agreement, he is not obligated to keep his" (*Unpublished*, 841-2).

Schultz discusses this same expectation of sexual favors on the part of the male Minnesängers. Like Riquer, Schultz also confirms that suffering on the part of the poet "can also be a form of leverage," since the poet believes that "his suffering entitles him to something in return" (108). Schultz postulates that there are three types of suffering: instrumental suffering is used to accomplish or gain something for the poet-lover; ethical suffering is undertaken by the poet-lover because it will improve him; and resistant suffering, suffering of which the poet-lover has grown tired, and which impels him to renounce the lady causing such suffering (106). Conversely, however, Schultz insists that when female Minnesängers invoke their suffering as proof of their love for a man, "it is retrospective rather than prospective: it is testimony to what they have lost, not, as it is for the men, a tool they deploy in the hope of gain" (108).

While Erich Kohler's work on the troubadours had classified the *comiat* and the *chanson de change* as *mala cansós*, Isabel de Riquer asserts that the *mala cansó* differs from the other two genres. The *comiat* simply functions as the troubadour's announcement of the end of the amorous relationship with his lady, while in the *chanson de change*, the disgruntled troubadour ends the relationship with the uncooperative woman and boasts the beginning of a relationship with another, more welcoming one. The defining characteristics of the *mala cansó*, on the other hand, are the defamation of a particular woman based on specific complaints rendered by the lover—that is, complaints of the lady's unsavory behavior in the amorous relationship. Most essential of all is that her defamation is public, as Riquer asserts: "si en la *cansó* se insistía en que el amor debía de llevarse en secreto, [aquí] la ruptura se proclama a voz en grito" (113). During this public renunciation of his beloved, the lover announces the end of both the relationship and of his

amorous service. If the lover already had his sights set on a new woman, such a juicy detail would be eagerly divulged as well.

The first known *mala cansó* was composed by the Occitan troubadour Gui d'Ussell at the end of the twelfth century, entitled "Si be·m partetz, mala domna, de vos." The most ubiquitous epithet hurled at women in this lyrical genre was that of "*mala dompna*," a term used in many of the misogynistic Latin texts, as well as in juridical feudal vocabulary. While Isabel de Riquer points out that the *razó* or reasoning for Ussell's song is not explicitly stated, it is believed that the lover is scorned either because his lady has left him for a wealthier man, or because she has let him pursue her for a long time without rewarding him with sexual intimacy.

Isabel de Riquer contends that Ussell "expresa claramente su intención de dar a conocer públicamente la infidelidad de su señora" in his *mala cansó*, warning her, "si faitz mal ja non sera celat, / anz en vol hom plus dire de vertat" (qtd. I. de Riquer 115). She points out that his indignant, tattletale attitude is the complete antithesis of Bernat de Ventadorn's principle that because the lady had made him unhappy, the troubadour was obligated to keep quiet, a fairly widely-adopted poetic principle when it came to treating the unfaithful lady. Riquer calls this ventadornian principle "canto porque amo" (114). Therefore, once Ventadorn is rejected by his lady, he renounces his craft, as well as love itself: "De chantar me gic e·m recre, / e de joi e d'amor m'escon" ("Can vei la lauzeta mover," vv. 55-6).

Ussell, on the other hand, insists that his lady's betrayal "non es razos q'ieu me parta de chan / ni de solatz" (vv. 2-3). In fact, Ussell's public divulging of his own unpleasant experience only motivates him to reproach her even more. Because his post in

society obligates him to disseminate this tale of failed love to courtly audiences, she is also responsible for making him appear angry and embittered to his interlocutors, therefore making his song less celebrated. Now, Ussell is able to blame his lady for even more of his troubles: not only is she the cause of his misery and anger, she is also responsible for his failure as a troubadour. Contrary to the way in which Gaucelm Faidit thanks his lady for enriching his songs with her love, the lady's cruelty toward Ussell has depreciated his songs, therefore robbing him of the acclaim he deserves. She has not only affected his emotional state, but now her behavior has a negative impact even on his livelihood, thus threatening his poetic reputation and his economic stability. The way these things fluctuate depending on the lady's behavior illustrates how much power is conferred to her so that the poet (like *Cárcel de amor*'s Leriano and his mediator the *Auctor*) is able to justify his vilification of her when their relationship has gone awry.

One of Ussell's tactics even surpasses the sort of threats commonly made by troubadours about the lady's immoral, licentious behavior and the consequential sullying of her reputation. Isabel de Riquer asserts that not only does Ussell "increpa públicamente a la dama," but on top of that, "con crueldad le augura lo que le sucederá a partir de ahora: todas sus buenas cualidades, su agradable manera de ser, su gentil conversación y su belleza, desaparecerán" (116). In what Riquer labels a "threat" to the lady, Ussell warns her,

> Mala dompna, ja non cujei que fos
> que, si·us perdes, no m'o tengues a dan;
> que l'acuillirs, don vos sabiatz tan,
> e·l gens parlars e l'avinens respos
> vos fazian sobre totas plazen;
> mas era·us tol foldatz l'aculimen
> e·l gen parlar vei tornar en barat,
> et en breu temps vos perdretz la beltat. (vv.17-24)

Rimbaut de Vaqueiras echoes these same judgments of his lady in his "D'una dona·m tueill e·m lais," though not with the same quality of predicting the ominous decline of her beauty and charm. Instead, Vaqueiras indicates that her beauty has already begun to diminish, and no amount of lotions, ointments or makeup can salvage it: "Ben es tornad' en debais / la beutat qu'ill avía; / e no l'en te pro borrais / ni tefinhos que sia" (vv. 31-4). In my view, Ussell's sinister predictions imply a karmic punishment for the way his lady has treated him, bestowing him with a sort of supernatural power, in addition to the control he already has over his own public poetic discourse, and therefore, her reputation.

Gaucelm Faidit added insult to injury by insisting that if the lady had so boldly tarnished her own honor through sexual promiscuity, then his *mala cansó* was not doing her any further damage. In fact, he asserts that it is her own fault that she is the subject of his song, since she did nothing to protect her own reputation, especially the one "sotz sa centura," or "under her belt." In his "Si anc niulls hom per aver fin coratge," he proclaims to his audience,

> Q'ieu.n sai una q'es de tant franc usatge
> c'anc non gardet honor sotz sa centura
> -sieus es lo tortz s'ieu en dic vilanatge!-
> qe, senes geing e senes cobertura,
> fai a totz vezer
> cum poing en se deschazer —
> E dompna q'ab tans s'essaia
> non cuich ja qe m'alezer,
> que ja de lieis ben retraia,
> ni.m vuoill qe.m deia eschazer. (vv. 51-60)

The Catalan troubadour Joan Berenguer de Masdovelles assumes this same indignation about his lady's sexual indulgence in his "No veyrets mai, d'eras enan," though with more implicit language than Faidit:

Co-us esta be anar per orts,
e ffer venir a flotes grans,
palasament, alguns vilans,
per ffer-vos-ho, donch, no us fau torts
si vau de vos ers publicant
vostros Ilayts ffets... (vv.13-18)

In telling about his lady's frequenting of "orts," Berenguer alludes to the literary *topos* of the *locus amoenus*, as the orchard is the ideal backdrop for sexual consummation to take place. Although it was extremely common for the lover to complain about his long wait for sexual gratification, a sexually uninhibited woman was immoral and thus easily vilified in these lyric poems. Furthermore, the poet is able to absolve himself of blame for writing the defaming verses about the woman, since her behavior demonstrates her disregard for public opinion. For that reason, the poet does not feel remorse for his lack of "*mesura*": she has done the damage all by herself.

Not only does Joan Berenguer de Masdovelles employ the feminine culpability motif by blaming his lady for her promiscuity, he also uses her alleged promiscuity as a way to nullify his own culpability in publicly declaring it. Moreover, Isabel de Riquer's contention that Ussell "expresa claramente su intención" to announce his lady's disloyalty makes a case for the masculine subversion of culpability according to medieval canon law as well. Because all of these fast-talking troubadours intend to damage their lady's reputation, they would be guilty under medieval canon law, as James A. Brundage explains. While we do not know the circumstrances of the women to whom these *mala cansós* were addressed, we can confirm that any woman who did not intend to hurt the poet-lover would be inculpable under canon law.

Isabel de Riquer points out that the troubadours' threats were not purely social; at times, they went to the point of physical violence, which she illustrates with the verses of

Guillaume d'Aquitaine, who is considered the first known troubadour. In "Farai un vers, pos mi sonehl," he claims that a woman who chooses to love a clergyman over a “cavaller leal [...] / Per dreg la deuri'hom cremar / ab un tezo” (vv. 8, 11-12). The *mala cansó* is fraught with comparisons like this one between the lover and his amorous rival—the man with whom his lady has cuckolded him, or whom she has simply chosen over him. The poet-lover criticizes her decision either way: if she chooses a man with more wealth than him, her motives are driven by money, revealing her shallow character; if she chooses a man of inferior social status or uneducated in the art of courtly love, she is debasing herself and investing her love in *bas luoc*.

Even more pertinent to my study of the prose texts, however, this verse by Guillaume d'Aquitaine calls to mind, as we shall see, the constant portrayal of Curial as loyal in *Curial e Güelfa*: in the descriptions and observations made by the narrative voice, and verbalized repeatedly by every character in the novel. Each time Güelfa is driven to anger by his behavior, male and female characters alike remind her of his loyalty and overall goodness in an effort to justify or absolve him of his behavior, and, like Guillaume, suggest that Güelfa should love him based solely on his loyalty. Ironically, as I discuss in Chapter 4, Curial is actually not a completely loyal lover, despite the fact that everyone around him awards him that title. The troubadour lover condemns his lady for wanting any alternative to him, which suggests that his loyalty alone should please her, and that within him lies all she should need and want. Likewise, Güelfa's confidants the abbess and Melcior imply the same thing: despite his "errors" in love, Curial is loyal, and thus should meet every want and need Güelfa has. Women should not want anything more, and who are women to ask anything more than loyalty, and, in the case of a courtly

lover like Leriano, subjugation? In Leriano's case, Laureola is cruel for not being sated by Leriano's complete and utter devotion, pining, and suffering in her name. Therefore, when the beloved lady is not satisfied and, what is more, enthusiastic about the "loyalty" or "service" the lover is giving to her, she is cruel, cold and condescending. What is not taken into account are things like mutual attraction and reciprocation of love, such as in the case of Laureola; and ways in which the lover's flirtations with other women cancel out his so-called loyalty, in the case of Güelfa. The escalation from mere verbal slander to more tangible physical threats is also evident in Raimbaut d'Aurenga's "Assatz sai d'amor ben parlar," where the poetic voice advises the lover to punch the lady in the nose if she does not respond satisfactorily to his advances. Sarah Kay points out Raimbaut's ambiguities in addressing his audience, as he confesses to be unfit to administer love advice, since his own efforts have been unsuccessful, but proceeds to impart his "formula for seduction" anyway:

> Si voletz dompnas guazanhar,
> Quan querretz que·us fassan honors,
> Si·us fan avol respos avar
> Vos las prenetz a menassar;
> E si vos fan respos peiors
> Datz lor del ponh per mieg sas nars;
> E si son bravas siatz braus
> Ab gran mal n'auretz gran repaus. (qtd. Kay 92).

Kay also references a *tenso* that is attributed to one of the *trobairitz* vaguely credited as Domna H, but, as Kay presumes, most likely written by a man. The *tenso* consists of a dialogue between domna H and Rosin, a name that merely serves as a *senhal*. Kay summarizes the discussion like this:

> A woman with two lovers wants them to swear that they will do no more than kiss and hold her before she go to bed with them. One dares not take

> the oath; the other hastily swears, but with no intention of keeping his word. Which lover acts better? Rosin defends the 'courtly' one who respected the sanctity of the oath and shrank from disobeying his *domna* or committing violence against her; whereas domna H applauds the initiative of the oath-breaker who
>
> saup gen sa valor enansar,
> quan pres tot so que.lh fon plus car
> mentre.lh fon l'amors aiziva. (vv. 46-8)
>
> According to this fiction, the knight who resolves on what is effectively rape is acting in conformity with his lady's wishes, and gratifying *her* desires. However active his role in appearance, he is not responsible: she 'asked for it' [.] (Kay 99)

Even though Kay is careful to note that domna H "endorses her desire" in this particular instance (99), the importance in this example lies not only in that this appropriation of access to her body or the ever-so-cheeky transgression of boundaries without express permission is indeed violence against women; it also ties into the overarching theme of this study. This sly transgression of sexual boundaries is another instance of the lover's projection onto the lady. According to the lover, there is a disparity between what the lady says and what she actually desires. That is to say, the lover projects his own desires onto his lady, resulting in the overall belief of the courtly lover that the lady wants what he wants, but is too protective of her reputation to say it. This projection makes for a perfectly self-serving justification of the lover's incessant pleading, harassment, threatening and infringement upon her sexual boundaries.

This projection, then, imposes the role of damsel in distress onto the lady in all of these genres alike: lyric poetry, sentimental novel, and chivalric novel. If the women indeed desire the same things as the lovers that endlessly hound them, then they are, in fact, willful participants in these relationships, which I argue is not the case. Leriano does not pass through the aforementioned steps of courtly love that Henry Chaytor notes; there is never a point in which Laureola "recognizes" him as a suitor, nor does she "accept" his service. More importantly, there is no physical contact or exchange of tangible goods to "seal" the deal, as Chaytor describes, with a ring or a kiss. As I point out in Chapter 3, Leriano does nothing for Laureola that could be likened to the "service" that Maurice Keen describes as part of the knightly oath in *The Study of Chivalry*.

Kay also points out the self-absolution of the knight in the *tenso*: because the lady, in his view, secretly wanted to overstep her own sexual parameters, he is not to blame. She brought it on herself, just as the ladies of whom Faidit and Berenguer complain: because they willfully acted upon their own sexual desires without regard for their honor, they have invited public scorn onto themselves and thus cannot blame the poets for their slanderous words. In Laureola's case, Leriano and the *Auctor* postulate that she has caused Leriano's passionate suffering just by being beautiful, and thus attracting his attention. Therefore, her beauty operates as a product of sorts of her own volition, and thus she is culpable for all the physical and emotional turmoil Leriano is experiencing.

This corroborates Susan L. Smith's claim, discussed in the previous chapter, that women were considered culpable simply for the way in which they were perceived by men as sexually arousing. While Curial is the exemplary case in this group of fictional men, not blaming any of the women in the novel, he does produce a bevy of excuses for

his careless actions in his relationship with Güelfa: he needs to graciously accept Laquesis' honor; Güelfa is too demanding of his behavior, or, she is misinterpreting his mere courtesy toward Laquesis as flirtation. Pánfilo is also careful to note that his love affair with Fiometa is especially shameful because Fiometa is married, and as an adulterer she is debasing not only her own honor, but that of her entire family, which essentially eradicates him from the equation. Minor male characters in *Curial e Güelfa*, such as the hair-pulling knight and the King of Tunis, also engage in the act of self-absolution, which I discuss at length in Chapter 4.

I will now briefly discuss how Occitan poetry came to influence the Iberian Peninsula's verse and prose genres. Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay note that the use of the term "Provençal" to describe the language of the troubadours is misleading, since the first known troubadours came from Poitou and Gascony, not Provence. The more accurate term "Occitan" has replaced it from *Occitania,* a word used in the thirteenth century to describe the entire area of southern France, based on the word for "yes" in the subdivision of the medieval romance languages: *langue d'oïl* in Northern France; *langue de si* in Italy; and *langue d'oc* in the Midi. But the south of France soon became an area of discord.

With the marriage of the Provençal countess Douce I to Count Ramon Berenguer III of Barcelona in 1112 came a struggle for power over Provence. The Catalan house claimed the county, and it was ruled by Aragonese-Catalan princes until the middle of the thirteenth century. This rule was met with political and military conflict, especially from Toulouse; and the English monarchs played a part in the division of the Midi as well. Eleanor of Aquitaine divorced Louis VII of France in March of 1152, marrying Henry II, Count of Anjou just two months later, taking with her the lands of Poitou and Aquitaine,

which she had inherited. Henry controlled the area from Hadrian's Wall to the foothills of the Pyrenees, which included Limousin and Périgord, and became the King of England two years later. Henry became allies with Alfonso II, King of Aragon and Count of Barcelona, who in 1167 inherited Provence. Their alliance helped to stop the Count of Toulouse from seizing Provence, which he repeatedly claimed as his rightful property.

These ongoing power struggles and division of lands, along with the Albigensian Crusade in 1209, sent many troubadours out of the south of France in search of livelihood elsewhere. Thus while the Crusade extinguished the flourishing of the troubadour lyric in its home, its influence was still felt in the vernaculars of Italy, Germany, Catalonia and Galicia, inspiring the Catalan and Galician-Portuguese poetic traditions. Gerald A. Bond warns against reading "parallelisms" across troubadours' songs, however, asserting that it is difficult to answer questions of relative chronology of any two songs, if one troubadour truly had access to another's work, and, in that case, if a troubadour borrowed from another, or merely from that troubadour's sources, and so on. He also points out the way in which sources ebb and flow: as new sources are discovered, old ones are left behind in the name of innovation. He maintains that "Marcabru uses sacred texts untouched by Guillem de Peiteus, Peire Vidal borrows from new French narrative, Raimbaut de Vaqueiras introduces Ovid's *Heroides*, later troubadours adopt formal developments of dance songs. As the twelfth century progresses, the repertory created by other troubadours becomes itself an increasingly important source" ("Origins," 241). Thus, Bond concludes, similarities in the troubadour corpus can cause the reader to interpret analogues and derivatives as true sources.

Joseph T. Snow reminds us that the Iberian Peninsula has its own indigenous lyric tradition in the Hebrew and Arabic *jarchas*, Spanish *villancico*s and Galician-Portuguese *cantigas d'amigo*. Snow explains that this indigenous lyric tradition came "under the spell" of the troubadours in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but some genres more than others. The troubadours had more influence on the formalized *cantiga d'amor*, as it was similar to the *cansó*, rather than the popular *cantiga d'amigo*. Moreover, Snow postulates that the troubadour *sirventes* and *partimens* likely would have informed the *cantigas d'escarnio e maldezir*, given their satirical nature. By the thirteenth century, Snow adds, Occitan troubadours would have likely had new influence in the courts of Aragon, Castile, Navarre, and Leon, and the courts of Portugal, explaining that Catalonia and the Levant already had a long-standing linguistic, cultural and dynastic history with southern France:

> The lyric poets in this part of the Peninsula were active participants in the poetic styles associated with Occitania and the Midi and composed in the same literary language as their trans-Pyrenean *confrères*. The use of Occitan in the region extended long past 1300, and its impact was still strong in such fifteenth-century poets as Ausias March. Thus, we would count poets from this area among those 'Occitan' troubadours whose style and manner came into contact with the principal lyric language utilized by poets in the rest of the Peninsula: Galician-Portuguese. (271)

Therefore, the misogynistic tone of the Occitan *mala cansó* was incorporated into the *maldit* by Catalan poets. While the feudal analogy is absent in the *maldit*, the poet-lover still airs the same amorous grievances as in the *mala cansó*: the lady's cruelty, her long delay in rewarding him with sexual gratification, and her foolish election of men of

lower social status. The *maldit* typically features the more crude and uninhibited language we have observed in Guillaume d'Aquitaine's verses, but Isabel de Riquer affirms that in both the *maldit* and the *mala cansó* "para denunciar la conducta reprochable de la mujer el poeta no se muerde la lengua y deja de lado toda mesura" (117). Riquer's word choice here is especially significant, since, as Chaytor notes, the quality of *mesura* was a necessary characteristic in an aspiring courtly lover: "the lover must have valor, that is, he must be worthy of his lady; this worth implies the possession of *cortesía*, pleasure in the pleasure of another and the desire to please; this quality is acquired by the observance of *mesura*, wisdom and self-restraint in word and deed" (17). Linda Paterson defines *mezura* as "self-discipline, the ability to moderate one's passions with rational control, to avoid extremes or anything that contravenes courtly behavior," calling it a "key element of the troubadours' courtly ethos as a whole" (35). Given Isabel de Riquer's examples alone, the idea of *mesura* in the *mala cansó* is downright outlandish, but Paterson amends this by explaining that it was a subject of contention in the troubadour world since Ventadorn, among others, claimed that maintaining *mezura* in love was impossible (35).

In Joan Berenguer de Masdovelles' *maldit* "Mos cars cossis: pus t'amia t'a ras," the poetic voice offers to slander his friend's lady for him, if he does not have the heart to verbally destroy her himself: "es master que la pachs / del que t'a fayt, e no-t tropia pechs;/ e ssi ffort dan no-1 pots ffer a tos pichs, / empre-y a mi, qui-n maldir no suy pochs" (vv. 5-8).

This concept of slandering the lady in another man's place is interesting because it foreshadows the fraternity between the male characters of the prose genres, but succeeds the fraternal traditions of both the patristic period that Smith discusses in "Ad Virgines" as

well as that of the Occitan lyric that Cholakian discusses. This fraternity can be especially observed between the messenger and the lover in the sentimental novel, which we see in *Cárcel de amor*. While the *Auctor*'s objective is not to expressly slander Laureola, he takes care to uphold Leriano's threatening and condemning tone during his meetings with her. The Valencian Ausias March also seeks this kind of fratermity from his audience, asserting that once the public hears his *maldit* and understands the extent of his suffering at his lady's hands, they will have sympathy for him:

> Per tal dolor no faré vida ermita;
> palesament será ma vida activa,
> e de parlar no tendré lengua squiva,
> e ver parlar, de ssi gran dolor gita.
> Cells qui sabrán mon ver complanyiment,
> tots planyeran mi per ma causa justa [.] (vv. 35-40) [26]

Like Ussell and Berenguer's vow to give the public an unbridled account of their lady's misconduct, abandoning both the ventadornian principle and the "*mesura*" Isabel de Riquer refers to, March also boasts that he will triumph in the amorous fallout by winning his audience's sympathy. Simultaneously, the public will vilify his lady and coddle him. This coincides perfectly with the seemingly infinite sympathy Curial receives from everyone around him when he falls out of favor with Güelfa. The sympathy from his fellow men is unsurprising; however, Curial also wins the sympathy of the abbess, the mythical Neptune, all the courtiers at the court of love in Le Puy-en-Velay, and even the

[26] March's verses remind us of Ussell's ideas of winning both acclaim and sympathy from his audience, which can be likened to James A. Schultz's discussion about the medieval perception that disciplined love and amorous service bring distinction and honor to men (166). As I discussed in the previous chapter, it was believed that loving a woman improved men in a plethora of ways, or as Schultz says, "There is a long scholarly tradition that maintains courtly love is ennobling, that it improves or perfects the lover and teaches moral behavior" (166). Schultz refers to the Body in Hartmann von Aue's twelfth-century poem *Klage*, who maintains that even in the absence of a "reward" from his lady, he will still be rewarded by the public: "enphahe ichs nimmer lon von ir, / dannoch frümet es mir / daz mirz diu werlt se guote verstat / und mich deste gerner hat" (qtd. Schultz 166).

narrative voice (who should be considered, of course, inherently male). Leriano not only begs for sympathy at every turn; he shames Laureola into it. Furthermore, nothing could provoke more sympathy from an audience, both intradiegetic and extradiegetic, than the Christ-like depiction Diego de San Pedro affords to his death scene, in which Leriano, like Christ himself, dies as a martyr for love with his weeping mother at his bedside.

Related to the theme of fraternity among poets also is Linda Paterson's explanation of the term *joven* in troubadour lyric poetry. Paterson says the term is a *topos* of the *cansó* related, in some contexts, to the lover's moral qualities and his union with other men like himself: "*Joven*, literally 'youth', refers on the one hand to a courtly quality, and on the other to an association or brotherhood of those endowed with it. As a moral or social quality it involves generosity, especially in making gifts, and more broadly represents the font of virtue[...] Outside the *cansó joven* can also mean the liveliness and carefree energy of men keen to fight for a just cause , in Marcabru's crusading songs for example [...] or in the case of Bertran de Born, to risk life and limb in adventurous exploits rather than stagnate in the accumulation of worldly goods" (34). Virginie Greene also says that the courtly love literature at the end of the feudal age "enhances the success of the knights as a group in power, and reveals [men's] frustrations and fears before the feminine" (57). Both Sarah Kay's and Rouben C. Cholakian's reading of the troubadours espouses the ideas put forth by Paterson and Green, as Kay notes that troubadours celebrate "male consensus" about women rather than celebrating or exalting women themselves. Cholakian, for his part, explains that the figure of the 'compaignho' functions as a third party in the love lyric to whom the poetic voice can figuratively "exchange" his muse like currency. I will review Cholakian's psychoanalytic reading of the troubadour poems shortly.

Each troubadour, like Ussell, Berenguer and March, who pledges not to let his lady's scathing rejection make a hermit of him, or stop him from singing altogether, assumes revenge as his masculine right. Because his lady wounded his ego, he deserves to get revenge on her in the form of a song.[27] Yet, a man in the courtly love stage of aspirant, begs his lady's mercy in every encounter they have: the lady is expected to act at all times with the same *mesura* these poets abandon as soon as they are not conceded what they have asked of her. This is exemplified in the revenge Güelfa plans against Curial with Boca de Far, another of her suitors who also happens to be a highly celebrated knight. Even though Curial has clearly violated her trust by engaging with another woman, the abbess still chastises her for considering retaliation, advising her not to act "tan cruament" with Curial (97). For men, revenge (in the form of public defamation) is a right that comes with being scorned; for women, regardless of the circumstances, revenge is outside the range of acceptable feminine conduct.

Rouben C. Cholakian postulates that in the troubadour lyric, a subset of gender rules exist within the private universe created by the poet as inventor. He exemplifies this subset of rules at work in Guillaume d'Aquitaine's "Farai un vers pos sonehl," explaining that the poetic persona "insists on his role as maker ('farai') of his own universe ('vers'). This surrogate *imago dei* assigns to himself attributes of omnipotence and power not as easily demonstrated in the world outside his imagination. War, love and political superiority are recreated in the private cosmos of the poetic invention where the Promethean inventor presides unchallenged" (16). In this song, Guillaume d'Aquitaine

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[27] Like Ussel's vengeful predictions that his lady will lose her beauty, twelfth-century Minnesänger Walther von der Vogelweide fantasizes that in the distant future, when the lady who scorned him inevitably seeks out a younger lover, he will send his son to avenge his heartache: "sô rechet mich und gânt ir alten hût mit sumerlatten an!" (qtd. Schultz 110).

describes an ethereal woman who, although he has never seen her, is still under his control. As his creation, she is his property; as the poet, he is the inventor, and thus the center of both the poetic universe and the poem as a text. In this way, the poet's existence assumes "a magical quality, not just the 'magic' of poetic imagination, but an empowering ('fadatz') which defines his activities in a supernatural sphere.[28] The magic, moreover, punctuates the libidinal quest which has to find fulfillment in the Lacanian elsewhere of the 'Imaginary' Order. The poet is empowered (sexually) upon a 'pueg' ('high hill'), which here displaces the 'con'" (21). Cholakian explains that the only existence granted to Guillaume d'Aquitaine's ethereal woman is within the parameters of the poet's will, and never outside of that: "she must reside in the site which he has created to fulfill his fantasy [...] The Promethean persona appears as law-giver of his own *orbis amoris*, where male invariably judges female, and never the reverse" (23). Through the poem's abstraction, Guillaume d'Aquitaine "denies the woman's existence. The ultimate irony is that poetic closure is also feminine enclosure by way of a male discourse which aims to exclude female threat. In this fashion, the persona achieves both sexual distance and domination, a paradox which is echoed in *fin' amors* ethics for several generations to come" (23). All the while, Guillaume d'Aquitaine's endless synecdochic references to the "con" and "sa leis," reduce the lady to "her genital identity," while the poet is the "sole possessor of the empowering logos, who makes the laws which govern gender relations" (Cholakian 19).

Thus, the troubadour is given agency in the real world because he is a man, giving him the right to slander his lady to his heart's content while she is expected to act with tact

[28] Cholakian's theory about the magical quality and the supernatural universe that Guillaume d'Aquitaine creates in "Farai un vers pos sonehl" can easily be applied to Isabel de Riquer's description of the "curse" Ussell places on his beloved for rejecting him in "Si be·m partetz, mala domna, de vos." As the creator of his own universe, he is endowed with the power to predict the way in which his lady's beauty will diminish as a result of causing him pain.

for the duration of the courtship (the harassment, the begging, and the threatening) as well as for the duration of his "tour" from court to court bemoaning her behavior. Additionally, in Cholakian's view, this power dynamic is heightened since the troubadour is the god-like creator of his own poetic universe, and, as such, controls every woman he decides to place within it. He is therefore given two planes of freedom: the real world, which is the patriarchal medieval society that will listen to his song, judge the immorality of the woman, and sympathize with him; and even more so in the poetic world in which he is free to further judge the woman's behavior and forgive his own, all the while making her ethereal because she is not earthly, but rather, she is his, and can be conjured up or banished at his will. However, it would be erroneous for us as readers to accept these "Promethean" troubadour poems as a completely accurate representation of real-world gender relations in the Middle Ages.[29] After all, Cholakian does point out that it is within the poetic universe of his mind that the poet-lover is afforded the creative control, power, and sexual dominance he so craves.

Isabel de Riquer points out that the threat of public defamation was, in fact, a very realistic threat to these women's reputations. In the first place, troubadour lyric was of great interest to the medieval public, as courtly audiences anticipated these performances with enthusiasm, attempting to piece together which lady the song alluded to, or listening eagerly for a familiar melody, this time refurbished with new lyrics or new, exciting twists

[29] Diane Bornstein reflects on the disparity between the "damsel" portrayed in medieval literature and real women in the Middle Ages in her book *The Lady in the Tower*, asserting, "The popular image of a medieval woman is a lady in a tower wearing a pointed headdress, a flowing cloak, and a sumptuous gown of silk, velvet, or cloth of gold; she is gazing out the window at knights riding to a tournament, or at peasants laboring in the field. This picture captures the popular imagination because it represents the romantic, chivalric ideas about women that developed during the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, it owes more to medieval romances than to the social life of the time, or even to the more realistic didactic literature written for and about women" (9).

to its plot. Part of the fun, then, was trying to decipher the identity of the troubadour's lady. Other times the audience would have easily guessed her identity based on the "clues" in his song. Chaytor also notes that many times the *senhal* used to protect her anonymity was actually an "open secret" (16). Isabel de Riquer also describes the nightly literary soirées among men who fancied themselves poets in fifteenth-century Barcelona and Valencia:

> eran frecuentes las veladas literarias en casas particulares y en conventos, en donde en las epístolas y en los debates no podían faltar las alusiones concretas, familiares para ellos, oscuras algunas para nosotros. Este ambiente cerrado, masculino, favorecía el tono desenvuelto y el lenguaje grosero al hablar, a veces, de determinadas actitudes femeninas. Y es fácil imaginarnos el momento de la lectura de alguno de estos poemas catalanes en una de estas reuniones literarias entre poetas, que con sus papeles en la mano, entre bromas y comentarios intentarían adivinar quién era la dama de Barcelona o de Valencia que se escondía detrás de la protagonista del *maldit* encubierta por un misterioso *senhal*; rivalizando a ver quien decía la grosería más refinada o en escoger las rimas más difíciles en un juego jactancioso de habilidad versificatoria y de agudo misoginismo. (123-4)

According to Riquer, the "masculine" environment of these soirées would have allowed men to speak about the women in the songs without censorship; given them access to the sexual escapades of their fellow poets with women they might easily guess; and finally, given them an opportunity to improve on the slanderous quality of the songs, competing to see who could produce the most shocking verses.

Riquer points out that the loss of acclaim about which Ussell complains was not actually the case; “Si be·m partetz” was included in at least twenty manuscripts, including Matfre Ermengaud’s *Breviari d’amor*, and the *cansó*’s melody and style were preserved and borrowed for others’ songs, as Chaytor describes as common troubadour practice. Sarah Kay also mentions that the *trobairitz* were fearful of judgment based on the men for whom they proclaimed love in their songs, and felt the need to justify their choices by signaling their lover's approval from other men. Kay also observes that, although a woman is the object of praise in Bertran de Born's "Rassa, tant creis e mont'e poia," the cause of his pride is something else entirely: "Bertran is here chiefly celebrating male consensus in contrast with female division. Men's admiration is seen as 'objective,' grounded in a proper estimation of the lady's worth...Like proper reflection, proper feeling is a masculine domain" (90).

This celebration of male consensus is consistent: in the "Ad Virgines"; in the concept of *joven* that Paterson offers; in the poetic voice of Berenguer de Masdovelles' *maldit* who offers to reproach his scorned friend's lady for him; and in the uniformity maintained in the speech that both Leriano and the *Auctor* direct toward Laureola. Cholakian explains that the troubadour lyric poem is, in effect, intended for a male audience, rather than for the lady as its addressee. He explains,

> The major *actant,* the poet/lover, valiantly meets the female challenger. Though she would appear to be the subject, if not the *destinataire* of his love message, the implied audience is invariably the ‘compainho’ who, even when not in evidence, hear him out and ultimately assess his sexual performance. Co-proprietors of the double-signifying logos, fellow

> members of the Symbolic order, they are the true recipients of the love discourse, while the female is its objectified subject. This is incontestably a man's world. The male is *actant* in both the figurative and literal senses of the word. (28)

Much like Cholakian's description of the poet's internal universe, the woman is an object within the poem, but she is not a participant: "Language, through inclusion and exclusion, is a vehicle of power. Guillaume [d'Aquitaine] communicated *about* the desired woman *to* men, who can participate vicariously in his amorous enterprise. The male is included and the female is incorporated but excluded [...] the two work together to rob the woman of access to male language" (18). Thus, as Cholakian attests, the appeal of the soirées that Isabel de Riquer discusses is this living vicariously through one another's amorous experiences (all the more if the woman behind the *senhal* can be discovered), and of course, the mutual understanding between men of women's many vices and defects.

He illustrates an example of Guillaume d'Aquitaine's denial of access to male language to women in a passage from "Farai un vers, pos mi sonehl," a passage that strikingly recalls the episode of *las serranas* in Juan Ruiz's *Libro de buen amor*. The poetic persona sets off on a pilgrimage and meets two women who offer to take him in for the night, to which he responds "Ar auziretz qu'ai respondut; / anc no li diz ni 'bat' ni 'but', / ni fer ni fust no ai mentagut, / mas sol aitan: /'Babariol, babariol, babarian.' (qtd. Cholakian 24). Cholakian interprets the pilgrim's response this way:

> These are, incontestably, the words of the play-acting 'fool'. But why does the 'pilgrim' play the fool? Why does he not respond intelligibly? [...] here, the babbling tells us something about the relationship of the male with

> these two women, who will soon test his sexual prowess, for that, of course, is the real destination of this symbolic peregrination. The persona's refusal to respond is not merely a comic device. It has a double psychological genesis. On the one hand, it shows disdain for the sexual object, the woman who does not deserve and cannot be expected to comprehend masculine discourse. But at the same time it expresses masculine fear of the erotic exploit. (24-5)

Cholakian elaborates on this masculine fear, explaining how after hearing the pilgrim's babbling one sister turns to the other and says that this is the man they have been waiting for, one who cannot speak and therefore, cannot reveal their secret. Cholakian continues,

> Critics interpret the concealment *topos* in the troubadour love lyric as a gallant protection of the women in the 'adulterous' relationship. But these remarks must be decoded as a masculine characterisation of the woman. She is shown to be the temptress Eve, ready to pounce upon her victim. Like the lover, she understands that speech is power and that to deprive the male of it is to render him powerless. The non-communication thus expresses the fear the male feels when faced with two sexually voracious females. At the same time the encounter fulfills the erotic fantasy. Having turned the woman (women) into the aggressors [...] But the women are not satisfied with the poet's persistent silence. They will induce the traveller to speak by setting upon him their 'gat ros' [.] The metaphor of the cat represents feminine sexuality and unleashes the anxieties which lie buried

> in the poet's silence [...] the comic exaggeration of the sexual 'gab' ('boast') uncovers hostility toward the women [...] On the other hand, these caricatures of masculine prowess, while they appear to be erotic fantasies, conceal fear of impotence and castration. (26-7) [30]

This fluctuation between eroticism and fear on the part of the poetic persona is part of the contradiction that d'Aquitaine experiences as part of the amorous relationship: "Guillaume describes female complicity as part of the debased nature of the woman he both desires and deprecates...a woman whose attraction for a man is also her power over him, whose desirability is also a threat" (18-19). Cholakian illustrates this same metaphor of the "feline enemy" in Marcabru's verse "Lai ou non pot morder, lecha / Plus aspramens no fai chatz" (qtd. Cholakian 46). The woman's sexual aggression is a source of intrigue and fear for the poetic persona, creating a paradox of simultaneous desire and fear of castration. Cholakian asserts that this "Castrophobia belies the idealisation of women in courtly discourse and puts the focus where it really belongs, on the pervasive masculine anxiety" (46).

Contradictions like the intrigue and anxiety toward feminine sexuality that Cholakian describes arise in Jacques Lacan's treatment of desire. A twentieth-century French psychoanalyst and psychiatrist, Lacan conceptualizes the breach between what one desires and what one is capable of verbally articulating relating to that need. In his book *Lacan: A Beginner's Guide*, Lionel Bailly explains that Lacanian desire essentially consists of this paradox: "Indeed anxiety occupies as central a role as desire, but for

[30] The sexual boast made by Guillaume to which Cholakian refers here is "Tant las fotei com auziretz: / cent et quatre-vinz et uiet vetz" (qtd. Cholakian 26). However, Cholakian insists that "It is too emphatic, however, to mask the real insecurities which it attempts to hide" (26).

Lacan, this exists in a kind of tension with desire: where there is anxiety there is desire" (66). According to Lacan, desire manifests itself when the subject encounters a lack in oneself, and attempts to fill that lack through a complement in the Other.

As Bailly explains, however, articulating one's desire is not so simple:

> when a Subject is moved to make a demand, it signals a neediness—a lack of something—and expects to receive it from the Other the complement—the precise thing—that will fill this lack and complete it; however, what is demanded is never what is actually needed, and it is in this space between need and demand that desire appears. Furthermore, Lacan continues, in making the demand, the Subject assumes that the Other has whatever it needs, while in fact the Other is as lacking as the Subject. (67)

Bailly explains how verbalizing what one truly desires is impossible by offering the example of a baby:

> Demand is spoken and yet what you ask for is never what you truly want, as what you want is something that remains hidden from your consciousness; so it is with the acquisition of language that desire arises. At first, the baby cries out of discomfort, but doesn't know what it needs; as it acquires language, it tries to 'solve' its discomfiture by using words in its lexicon. To begin with, the baby only knows a few words that seem understood by others, and in an attempt to have its needs met, it may say 'bottle' or 'mama' or 'bear', while what it really needs may be something quite different or even something that doesn't exist. But these signifiers

have predetermined signified imposed by language, and so the baby has to accept these as the solution to its need, however unsatisfactory. (67-8)

This seems to be the exact contradiction Cholakian describes at work within troubadour lyric poetry. The first chapter of his book *The Troubadour Lyric* entitled "I hate what I love: Guillaume d'Aquitaine," contemplates the poet's paradoxical feelings toward the so-called beloved lady. Cholakian states that Pio Rajna had already coined the phrase "trovador bifronte" to describe what he calls Guillaume d'Aquitaine's "antithetical attitudes towards love" (14).[31] However, Cholakian maintains that a psychological approach to this conspicuous contradiction had been missing: "no one thought to view the text, in Lacanian terms, as the 'vehicle of a word, to the extent that it constitutes a new emergence of truth'. No one...has seriously attempted to explain the fundamental antithesis between the submissive lover and the agressive male using the implicit psychological context of the persona's self-representations" (14).

Thus, for Cholakian, there is a gap between the demand of the poet-lover, that is, what he articulates about the lady, and what he truly desires. Cholakian uses the symbol of the two horses—one unruly and one docile—in Guillaume d'Aquitaine's "Companho" songs (I-III) as an example. These songs comprise a series in which Cholakian claims that the poet assumes the persona of the "knight-lover" (14). Cholakian affirms that the horse is a significant symbol to represent conflicting attitudes, because "the horse not only

[31] Bornstein maintains that in the troubadour lyric, woman "is even less of a real human being [than in the chivalric romance]. Courtly literature is concerned with the effect of love on a man, his development of self-awareness and the ensuing conflicts. The woman whom the poet loves is a mirror in which he sees his ideal self. How he sees her depends on how he feels about himself or how he thinks she's treating him. Whether she is a saint or a devil, a virgin or a whore, depends more on the man's feelings than on the woman's character" (10).

suggests power in the knight's world of masculine authority, but has frequently served as a mythological archetype for animal instinct and the unconscious" (15).

He goes on to illustrate that the horse acquires different meanings as the song continues, first, a war-horse, then a woman, and finally, property. Cholakian further adds: "The need for domination finds metaphoric expression in the poet-knight's major spheres of activity: in war (horse), in love (woman), and in feudal politics (property)" (16). This observation is quite similar to Sanda Munjic's description of Leriano as the embodiment of various masculine ideals of the Middle Ages, which I will discuss in Chapter 3. Following Cholakian's reading of the troubadour poetry through Lacan, then, while the poet-lover seems to verbally enunciate erotic metaphors (like the horse as woman) and adulating language in the guise of courtly love, the true desire that he cannot articulate is to dominate, to overpower, and possibly to eradicate the feminine. In this way, as I have aimed to show, in a Lacanian sense the notion that courtly love literature praises the woman is a fallacy. The poets subvert the concept of alleged feminine superiority in these texts.

Based on Cholakian's synthesis of masculine anxiety and fear of the feminine, then, one can conclude that part of the gravity of the threat of public denunciation for medieval women lies in the judgment by its intended male audience; that is, other suitors, lovers, fathers, and rulers and law-makers. In Laureola's case, she need not only fear what the general public thinks of her once Leriano "publishes" her cruel behavior toward him, but also the judgment of her father, who happens to be the King, a title which grants him double authority over her punishment. Cholakian maintains that in the troubadour lyric, the woman is not so much an exalted object of inspiration as she is an "object of exchange

between men" (16). This observation illustrates that the amorous relationships in both troubadour poetry and the sentimental novel are not linear, between lover and lady; but rather, they are triangular in nature, always including a second male figure, in the form of the male public, the male mediator, or the father figure.

However, while Cholakian's Lacanian reading of the text dissolves the illusion of courtly love in a theoretical sense, other scholars' descriptions of the everyday behavioral codes of the Middle Ages serve us in a more practical sense. Among these are Maurice Keen's description of chivalric obligation to the service of women for a period of five years; H.J. Chaytor and Linda Paterson's discussions of *mezura* and the process of becoming an accepted suitor; and James A. Brundage's explanation of medieval canon law. All of these discussions serve to illustrate masculine violation of these codes. Both Paterson and Chaytor have maintained that *mezura* was a necessary quality in an aspiring courtly lover, as it was the core of courtly love ethics. As we have just observed, especially within the *mala cansó* and the *maldit*, *mezura* was rarely upheld by a scorned troubadour. As I illustrate in the next chapter in the case of *Cárcel de amor*'s Leriano, the steps to becoming an accepted lover outlined by Andreas Capellanus and reiterated here by Chaytor exist more as theory than as practice, since Leriano has no verbal agreement with Laureola, nor any exchange of tangible goods or physical affection from her to confirm her acceptance of his service.

Moreover, the poet-lover unable to hold his tongue once he is not rewarded with his lady's sexual favors, like Leriano who resorts to threatening his lady into doing what he wants, not only violates the code of courtly love for his lack of *mezura*, as Chaytor and Paterson illustrate; he also violates the canon law of culpability. Given the tenets

Brundage explains, Leriano and his troubadour counterparts clearly express their intention to slander their ladies. In fact, under this law, Laureola would be completely absolved of the blame Leriano and *Auctor* ascribe to her, as she lacks the intention to do harm that Brundage emphasizes. Additionally, the lovers adhere more closely to the precursors to canon law, seeking "reparations" for their heartache through slanderous song. This also relates to Eaton's conceptualization of restoring balance after a transgression occurs in a relationship; for the lovers, the public defamation functions as a sort of recalibration of balance for the pain they have endured at the hands of the lady. I will continue to discuss the framework of the canonical theory of culpability as it relates to Laureola and Leriano in the next chapter.

I hope to have shown in this chapter how the troubadour lyric will come to inform the prose genres of the fifteenth century that I will discuss in the following chapters. The troubadour lyric pervades these genres through the use of the same motifs of feminine culpability and masculine absolution, and the imposition of the damsel in distress role onto women without their permission or willful participation in every case. Perhaps Cholakian best illustrates the way in which medieval courtly love literature operates in regard to the lady when he asserts, "While the male actants have not yet played out their roles, the woman is *a priori* labelled guilty" (24). This astute observation will serve us when dissecting the gender relations in the amorous relationship in all of the literary texts studied in the coming chapters, along with the consideration of how the courtly lover disregards both the principles of courtly love and the contemporaneous legal codes when they do not serve his personal amorous interests.

CHAPTER 3: THE BEARER OF THE BLAME: FEMININE CULPABILITY MODELS IN THE *NOVELA SENTIMENTAL*

In this chapter I will analyze the masculine rhetoric of blame in three texts which are considered *novelas sentimentales*: *Cárcel de amor* by Diego de San Pedro,[32] and *Grisel y Mirabella* and *Grimalte y Gradissa*, both by Juan de Flores.[33] The *novela sentimental*, or sentimental romance,[34] is a genre frequently characterized by the convergence of love and tragedy. These brief tales of frustrated love affairs usually unravel through a series of dialogues, monologues, and letters exchanged between a pair of lovers with the help of a mediator. While Alan Deyermond labels the sentimental novel

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[32] *Cárcel de amor* was published in 1492 in Seville. Alan Deyermond speculates that the surprising success of San Pedro's *Arnalte y Lucenda* in 1491 prompted him to write *Cárcel* (Parrilla XXII). *Cárcel de amor* also enjoyed instant success, being translated into Catalan by Bernardí Vallmanya only a year and a half after its original publication. Vallmanya's translation was the first translation of a sentimental novel written in Castilian Spanish. The continuation by Nicolás Nuñez also illustrates the vast popularity of the text, as it was published in 1496, only four years later. The sixteenth century produced translations in Italian, French, and English; the seventeenth century produced bilingual French-Spanish editions as well as a German translation. Additionally, Emily C. Francomano notes the visual popularity of *Cárcel de amor* in 1520s France on a series of tapestries known as *L'Histoire de Lérian et Lauréolle*, which were first made in a workshop in northern France or Flanders. Requested by King Francis I as a gift to his sister-in-law Princess Renée of France, Francomano confirms that the tapestries seemed as widely coveted as the print editions of the book, as other sets were found to have belonged to the Counts of Croatia and the Dukes of Lorraine (Francomano, "Reversing the Tapestry," 1059-61). There is one extant manuscript of the 1492 Seville publication, now preserved in the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, and nine extant manuscripts of the French translation *Prison d'amour* (Francomano, "Epistolarity" 45).

[33] Published approximately in 1495, *Grisel y Mirabella* was also widely successful, acquiring 56 editions in several different language including Italian, French,Polish, and English by the sixteenth century. An extant manuscript is preserved at the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, as well as in Milan, at the Biblioteca Trivulziana (Miscellanea Spagnuola (Cod. N. 940).*Grimalte y Gradissa* has two extant manuscripts, one in Seville at the Biblioteca Colombina, and the other at the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid.

[34] Dorothy Sherman Severin discusses the debate about the inclusion of the word sentimental in the nomenclature of this genre in her collection of essays *Religious Parody and the Spanish Sentimental Romance*. Emily C. Francomano also addresses the question of wording in *The Prison of Love* (9).

a "subgenre" [35] that emerged from the more extensive works of fiction in the Middle Ages such as the *novela de caballerías*, he insists that the two genres differ in more than simply length. Deyermond asserts that what truly distinguishes the sentimental novel from works such as *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *Amadís de Gaula* is "su acción principalmente interior. Hay retos, duelos, batallas, asedios, sí, pero ocupan una proporción mucho menor que en los libros de caballerías. Las cartas, las poesías, los monólogos y diálogos, en cambio, se destacan mucho más" (Parrilla, *Cárcel de amor* XI). Joseph J. Gwara and E. Michael Gerli note that part of the interior action Deyermond describes comes from the sentimental novel's emphasis on "psychological interiority," that is, its "insistent portrayal of madness, uncertainty, and the sufferings of love" (xiii).

Another salient feature of the sentimental novel is its hyperbolically varied setting. For example, in one instant, *Grimalte and Gradissa*'s pair of lovers Fiometa and Pánfilo meet in an Italian court; in the next, author Juan de Flores invokes the *topos* of the *finis terrae*, locating Pánfilo in a self-imposed exile in "las partidas de Asia, fines de las tierras todas y mares" (207). Similarly, in *Cárcel de amor*, Sanda Munjic incredulously highlights Leriano's sudden ability to leave the torturous confines of his prison to visit his beloved Laureola's court.

Much of the biographical information recorded about Diego de San Pedro is merely speculative in nature. Among these biographical speculations are hypotheses that he was a *converso*, a native of Peñafiel, and during his secondary education he specialized in the study of law. However, what is known with certainty is that San Pedro worked for

[35] Joseph J. Gwara and E. Michael Gerli refer to Keith Whinnom's contention that the genre is represented by only twenty works by a total of sixteen authors, beginning around 1440 with Juan Rodríguez del Padrón's *Siervo libre de amor* and ending with Juan de Segura's *Processo de cartas de amores* in 1548 (Gwara and Gerli vii).

Juan Tellez-Girón, the Count of Ureña, between 1469 and 1498. Despite seemingly humble beginnings, however, San Pedro earned recognition for his prose works, acquiring what Deyermond describes as “fama literaria […] pronta y duradera” (*Cárcel* XLI), especially for *Cárcel de amor* (1492 approx.) and *Tractado de amores de Arnalte y Lucenda* (1491). Although San Pedro is believed to have belonged to the lower nobility, his works denote more sophisticated courtly aspirations: *Arnalte y Lucenda* is dedicated to Queen Isabel’s ladies-in-waiting, and includes a panegyric to the Queen herself within the body of the text (Parrilla *Cárcel* XXXVII); *Cárcel de amor* is dedicated to Diego Hernandes, the husband of Juana Pacheco, a cousin of the Tellez-Girón family.[36]

Cárcel de amor tells the story of Leriano, the son of Duke Guersio of Macedonia, who sets his sights on Laureola, the King’s daughter. While being dragged to the very prison of love in which he will contend with his feelings of longing and frustration by the allegorical *Deseo*, he meets a traveler who has deviated from his path. This traveler, known for the rest of the narration as the *Auctor*, feels such compassion in seeing Leriano’s physical suffering and hearing the story of his ill-fated love for Laureola that he agrees to help him in his amorous pursuit. This entails not only acting as mediator between the lovers, delivering messages and letters, but also, as I will discuss, advocating wholeheartedly for Leriano by any means necessary. When Laureola's other admirer Persio sees them together, he immediately alerts the King of his suspicion that the two are

[36] Of the year of *Cárcel de amor*'s publication, Robert Folger remarks, "In Spanish cultural memory, the date 1492 is heavily overdetermined: it marks not only Columbus's first voyage to the 'Indies,' but also the conquest of Granada, the last Moorish stronghold in the Iberian peninsula; the expulsion of the Jews from the Spanish Kingdoms; and, as a cultural highlight, the publication of Antonio de Nebrija's first grammar of the Spanish language" (22). José-Luis Gastañaga insists that King Gaulo reflects San Pedro's criticism of the absolutist power helf by Isabel and Fernando, and illustrates the way in which Leriano summons the help of other social strata to help him "defeat" the King (815-6).

secretly meeting each night after the King has gone to sleep, a lie that he believes without hesitation. Laureola's father immediately imprisons her, subjecting her to numerous physical and emotional tortures. In this moment, Laureola embodies the typical “damsel in distress” paradigm that I have described in Chapter 1: held captive by her own father until Leriano fights a juridical duel for her freedom, at once defeating his amorous rival and freeing Laureola from the confinement of her cell in a scene that, for Alan Deyermond, is reminiscent of the story of Lancelot and Guinevere (*Historia* 75). However, this "service" of rescue completed by Leriano goes unrewarded, since after her liberation Laureola decides to cut ties with him in a letter, explaining that it is best they do not see each other again. It is at this point that Leriano's language acquires more of a threatening quality, evoking the motif seen repeatedly in courtly love literature: the male lover and his mediator use the image of his physical and mental suffering and even his death—induced either by lovesick, frustrated longing on one hand, or by his own suicide on the other—to urge the lady to reconsider her decision and comply with his requests.

Since *Cárcel de amor* will serve in this dissertation as the fundamental model of the discourse of blame employed by the male lover against the beloved lady in the *novela sentimental*, I will begin this chapter by illustrating the textual instances in which the male protagonist Leriano verbally casts blame on Laureola, his beloved lady. I will then carefully analyze this language, aiming to demonstrate the ways in which the male lover of the fifteenth-century Iberian sentimental novel utilizes the rhetoric of blame to manipulate the lady into doing what he asks of her.[37] Additionally, I will discuss how, like

[37] Comparing the trajectory of Calisto and Melibea’s relationship in Fernando de Rojas’ *La Celestina* with that of Leriano and Laureola, Catherine Henry Walsh points out that the outcome of each of these courtships "will differ for each swain, [….] in keeping with his character, with external forces, and especially with the

the poet-lover of the troubadour lyric, the male protagonist of the sentimental novel also uses dichotomous discourse toward the lady, resulting in the subversion of courtly love literature as a pro-feminist genre, that is, one that holds women in high esteem. Again, it will become evident that the male protagonists of the fifteenth-century Iberian sentimental novel behave in ways that violate the codes of courtly love, knighthood, and medieval canon law.

The most basic of tactics used by the lover to provoke a sense of guilt in the beloved lady is to meticulously recount the physical and mental anguish suffered by the lover as a result of his desire for her. This leads to other avenues by which the lover can manipulate the lady, including the threat of his untimely death, since her failure to reciprocate his love will drive him either to die of longing or to take his own life. Thus, the allegedly precarious nature of his will to live permits the lover to execute the most daunting threat of all: public defamation. Once he has stirred up guilt in his lady with talk of his death, the lover explains to his lady that as the source of his amorous suffering, she is responsible for the decline of his mental and physical health. From the outset of the courtship, it is the lady's responsibility to alleviate the pain that the male lover feels.[38]

This premature condemnation of the lady for the lover's hypothetical death facilitates the threat of public defamation. By accusing the lady of murder by indifference, the lover implies that she would stand idly by and watch as her ever-faithful suitor dies,

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behavior of his lady" (119), thus indicating that both the lover's tactics and the lady's reaction are pivotal to their amorous fate.

[38] Since medieval medical literature conceived of love as an actual illness, as evidenced in Andreas Capellanus' *De amore*, the method of entreating the lady for a "cure" was not such an outlandish request. Moreover, the validation of lovesickness within the medical field as a legitimate illness could have afforded the male lover yet another pretext: his "illness" was affecting him so extremely that he was unable to behave with restraint around her.

knowing full well that any small chance of reciprocation on her part would give him the strength to continue living. The lover affords himself several possible modes of persuasion from this point. For one, he appeals to her morality by claiming that any *galardón* from her (a token as minimal as a letter or a piece of clothing, or as intimate as the sexual consummation of their relationship) would save his life. Thus she will enjoy the satisfaction of being publicly praised as a savior, and a good Samaritan.

This public renown is quite a stark contrast from the threat of being publicly shunned as a murderer, thus suffering the loss of her honor, which, as I have discussed in relation to the women defamed in the *mala cansó*, was especially delicate for medieval women. The juxtaposition here of exaltation versus indictment, that is, two different outcomes contingent on the lady's conduct calls to mind the "antithetical attitudes" toward women that Cholakian credits to the Occitan troubadour Guillaume d'Aquitaine. In addition, in this masculine discourse there is a constant oscillation between two dichotomous adjectives to describe the lady: *piadosa* and *cruel*. The male protagonists not only employ these descriptors to cause the lady to further consider her reputation, but also as an attempt to group women together on either end of the spectrum: inherently kind and merciful on one hand, or inherently cold and distant, on the other, as Aristotelian texts portrayed them. Like Eve, Bathsheba, or the Virgin in the patristic writings and sermons, these polar adjectives *piadosa* and *cruel* allow the male characters to judge all womankind, positively or negatively, on the basis of one individual prototype. Thus, by generalizing that all women are by nature compassionate and virtuous, it incites a sense of inadequacy and possibly even guilt in the beloved lady.

Sanda Munjic discusses the way in which the threat of defamation and indictment is deftly incorporated into Leriano's courtly discourse to Laureola. She explains, "This exhibition of lover's pain is accompanied by a not-so-subtle show of force contained not only in psychological terms in the charge of cruelty against the lady, in making her responsible for his impending death, but also in the final threat: 'el fin, si ver no me quieres, será forçado que veas.' The threat formulated literally as ' it will be forced upon you to see' thus discloses Laureola's utter lack of control, and Leriano's power concealed under the guise of suffering and submission in this masochistic game" (214). Just like the troubadour poet-lover, Leriano demonstrates conflicting attitudes toward Laureola.

It is precisely this evolution from abject pity-seeking to using the woman's honor as leverage to get what the lover wants that, as I will argue, exposes the adulating language of courtly love as a fallacy. Just as Cholakian posits that Guillaume d'Aquitaine seeks to dominate his beloved lady, Munjic reiterates that submission is only a mask for Leriano's control and power over Laureola. Thus, the feminine culpability models so often seen in the *novela sentimental* and the language of courtly love take on an extortionist quality. Frankly speaking, the male lover blackmails the lady, arming himself with the threat of charging her with his murder, publicly humiliating her, or both, in order to elicit from her the response that he wants. Munjic also adopts the term "emotional blackmail" to describe Leriano's courting tactics (212).

It is relevant to note that any sort of mixed-sex contact, whether it be the exchange of letters, conversation, or even glances was enough to jeopardize a woman's honor in the Middle Ages, since an unmarried woman could not be seen engaging in any activity that led to sexual relations. Janet L. Nelson and Alice Rio confirm this, emphasizing that the

sexual conduct of an unmarried woman, regardless of her age or her relationship circumstances, was highly regulated: "A woman's sexual behavior, of course, mattered at any stage of life: since she always belonged to someone else (her husband if she was married; her family if she was not; her master if she was unfree), any sexual relationship she undertook outside marriage infringed on at least one other person's rights, and diminished someone else's honor" (109). Munjic seconds this, explaining that "to give in to Leriano's persuasion to requite with a *galardón* his suffering...would constitute for Laureola engagement in socially inappropriate behavior" (213). This is because, as Munjic notes, marriage is never among the favors the courtly lover requests of his lady (213). Joaquín Márquez adds that even in passivity, Laureola can be susceptible to condemnation, simply for being "publicly" loved by Leriano: "el conocimiento público del enamoramiento de Leriano implicaría que Laureola se ha mostrado dispuesta a recibir ese amor...Más que el amor, es su mera presunción lo que resulta prueba suficiente para declarar a Laureola culpable" (506). Much like the danger of looking at women trope, Márquez's point illustrates that women did not have to be active participants to be considered guilty.

I will now turn to the language employed by the two male protagonists of *Cárcel de amor*, analyzing their passage through each of these phases of blame and executing the above tactics to manipulate Laureola into continuing to engage witth both of them; Leriano in writing, and the *Auctor* in person. I will also compare their language with that of the male characters in other fifteenth-century sentimental novels contemporary with *Cárcel de amor*.

The motif of feminine culpability is quite salient in *Cárcel*, as the *novela*'s plot revolves around the exchange of letters between Leriano, son of the Duke, and Laureola, princess and heiress to the throne of Macedonia. In his letters, Leriano tries relentlessly to convince his beloved of the many reasons why she should reward him with some manifestation of her affection. This culpability motif is doubly reinforced by the fact that Leriano is not the only man casting blame on Laureola—his faithful messenger and mediator by default, the *Auctor*, dutifully mimics the same accusatory language in his conversations with Laureola as Leriano uses in his letters to her. After meeting Leriano and witnessing the torture he suffers at the hands of the allegorical *Deseo*, who drags him to the very Cárcel de Amor in which he will reside, the *Auctor* is overcome with pity, and compelled to help the desperate lover find the *remedio* for his heartache. This decision on the part of the *Auctor* transforms him from an outside narrator of events to a flesh-and-bones character incorporated into the *novela*'s plot.

Undertaking his mission as Leriano's go-between in his affairs with Laureola, the *Auctor* sets off to her kingdom to confront her (a verb I use with intention here) and make her aware of Leriano's love for her. No sooner does he meet Laureola in person than he begins blaming her for his lord's current mental and physical state, taking great care to describe his suffering down to the very last detail: "dolor le atormenta; pasión le persigue; desesperança le destruye; muerte le amenaza; pena le secuta; pensamiento lo desvela; deseo le atribula; tristeza le condena; fe no le salva. Supe dél que de todo esto tú eres causa" (14). With this accusation, he at once expresses Laureola's responsibility for

Leriano's demise and aims to provoke a sense of guilt in her for what she has purportedly caused.[39]

Next, the *Auctor* uses the high stakes of her social image to his advantage, imploring her to comply with Leriano's requests as it pertains to her reputation. He reasons that being venerated as Leriano's savior from suicide would be much better than being convicted as his killer: "Si la pena que le causas con el merecer, le remedias con la piedad, serás entre las mugeres nacidas la más alabada de quántas nacieron; contenpla y mira quánto es mejor que te alaben porque redimiste, que no que te culpen porque mataste" (15). This part of the *Auctor*'s defense of his lord is multi-faceted; it insinuates many things. First, he seeks to bribe her with the allure of public praise and *fama*, convincing her that she will be "*alabada*" by the masses. He not only appeals to her sense of virtue, highlighting the feeling of satisfaction that comes from doing a good deed, but also to her pride, emphasizing the thrill of being considered a heroine, and, more subtly, her sense of morality.[40]

He elevates her from mere mortality to sainthood, explaining, "si remedias [la passión de Leriano] te da causa que puedas hazer lo mismo que Dios; porque no es de

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[39] This tactic is also noted by Braçayda in Juan de Flores' *novela sentimental Grisel y Mirabella*. Debating over which sex is generally guilty of seducing the other in the courtship, she exclaims knowingly to her opponent Torrellas, "¡O quientos venís ante nos tan mortales y tristes: que sin amor era razón de os haver piedad! Y por daros la vida: buscáisnos agora la muerte. Pues si os dexamos morir dezís que por más encareçer se faze" (126).

[40] It should be noted that Leriano and the *Auctor* often use the same persuasive rhetoric on one another as they do on Laureola. While trying to convince the *Auctor* to be his go-between, Leriano reminds him, "mayor virtud es redemir los atribulados que sostener los prósperos" (11), appealing to his ethical sense. The *Auctor* later turns the tables when Leriano begins to consider suicide again, telling him, "de tu pena te veo gloriar; segund tu dolor, gran corona es para ti que se diga que toviste esfuerço para sofrirlo; los fuertes en las grandes fortunas muestran mayor coraçon; ninguna diferencia entre buenos y malos avría si la bondad no fuese tentada" (23), consoling him with being rewarded in the afterlife. These interactions between the men themselves show the reader from the beginning just how experienced they are in the art of persuasion.

menos estima el redemir que el criar, assí que harás tú tanto en quitalle la muerte como Dios en darle la vida" (15). On the one hand, being compared to God is an attempt to boost her ego, fitting in well with the luster of public renown the *Auctor* has already offered, but it also connects to the idea of being a good Samaritan, [41] made in the image of God and thus morally urged to do his will. Since Aristotle and St. Augustine insisted that woman was incomplete and therefore not made in the image of God, this comparison by the *Auctor* could offer Laureola some validation. Later, when he arrives to the court with Leriano's first letter for Laureola, the *Auctor* expands on this metaphor, urging her to consider not only her Christian duty, but also the reward of eternal salvation: "Assí te dé Dios tanta parte del cielo como mereces de la tierra, que la recibas y le respondas" (20). If she does the right thing by agreeing to read and respond to the letter, she can hope to be compensated for her mercy in the afterlife. Now it is not only her peers who will recognize her virtue if she complies with Leriano's requests, but God as well. Catherine Henry Walsh also observes this tactic, explaining, "Since pity alone can cure Leriano of his lovesickness, Laureola is cast in the role of redeemer, and the religious imagery adopted by the cult of love is used almost to deify her" (122). Márquez confirms that it is the granting of the *galardón* which "equipara [la amada] a Dios" (508).

As if godliness were not enough, the *Auctor* reminds Laureola that her pity quite literally has healing potential for her admirer: "esforçarás su flaqueza; con ella afloxarás su tormento; con ella favorecerás su firmeza; pornásle en estado que ni quiera más bien ni

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[41] The Good Samaritan is a Biblical figure from a story in the Book of Luke 10:25-37, in which a man is robbed, beaten and left to die on his way to Jericho. Two men pass the beaten man's body but avoid him and keep going on their way. When the Samaritan passes him, he cleans and dresses his wounds, and carries him on his own donkey to an inn where he can be cared for. Thus, the figure of the Good Samaritan represents extending charity to those in need.

tema más mal" (20). In this way, she becomes not just the emotional savior of Leriano, but his physical healer as well; she is converted into the panacea for all his ailments, corporal and psychological.[42] At once the *Auctor* bestows on her immense power and immense liability. Márquez explains this paradoxical nature of her position, asserting, "mientras que Leriano y el *Auctor* la juzgan en condiciones de decidir la vida del enamorado, esto es, la dotan del poder que caracteriza al soberano, su situación concreta en la corte resulta muy diferente" (508), a fact that becomes evident in her dealings with her father. Also, as Munjic has pointed out, any relegation of power to Laureola by the men is ultimately a ruse. Knowing that she can alleviate his pain with a simple response, Laureola must either oblige him, jeopardizing her reputation, or wrestle with her conscience.

In the same breath, though, he reminds her of the crime she has practically already committed in killing Leriano and threatens her with the thought of public shame. What will people say when they find out that she let Leriano die? This is where the blackmail aspect of the rhetoric of blame used by both men begins.[43] His urge to "contenpla y mira quánto es mejor que te alaben porque redimiste, que no que te culpen porque mataste" (15) is passive-aggressive, since we know that Laureola's subjection to public shame and the ruin of her social reputation are not merely probable, they are inevitable, if the lover decides to "publicar" the turn of events between them, as he is so inclined to do. This is

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[42] Walsh contends that *La Celestina*'s Melibea, like Laureola, "assumes the conventional courtly role of cause-and-cure of her lover's illness" (124). While I agree that this is true for Melibea, as it serves her end purpose of being with Calisto, I object to the assertion that Laureola "assumes" this role; rather, it is one of many imposed upon her by her male counterparts.

[43] Elizabeth Teresa Howe also signals the underlying tones of threat and blame in the discourse directed at Laureola, saying, "[Leriano's] first letter artfully combines his request for her favor with the hint of a threat...the second more explicitly threatens her [.] The thread connecting both missives is the blame ascribed to Laureola for causing Leriano's condition and her obligation to assuage it" (15).

especially true for Laureola, not only as a woman, but also as the princess and heiress to the throne; her future position as queen should make her especially concerned with preserving her social image. Leriano mentions this ever-present threat of "publication" when he explains to her that everyone will know she caused his death whether or not it is announced, based on her beauty alone: "si consientes que muera porque se publique que podiste matar, mal te aconsejaste, que sin experencia mía lo certificava la hermosura tuya" (26).[44] In these cases, this "publication" is not typically written, but rather refers to the oral passage of "secret" reputation-damaging information about the lady, or even public announcements of such information in a public place, such as a *plaza*. Munjic postulates that, although written as a parodic guide to appropriate amorous conduct, Leriano's character makes many of the amorous mistakes against which San Pedro warns in his 1480's text "Sermón" (211). Munjic points out that the "Sermón" preaches that the lover "rather lose his life than risk the reputation of his lady when trying to obtain a reward: 'Todo amador deve antes perder la vida que escurescer la fama de la que sirviere, haviendo por mejor recibir la muerte callando su pena, que merecerla trayendo su cuidado a publicación' " (qtd. Munjic 212). This is quite a transgression of San Pedro's warnings since Leriano repeatedly threatens Laureola with "publication."

Leriano's first letter to Laureola begins with slightly subtler insinuations of blame than the *Auctor*'s first testimony, in which he resorts to mercantilist terminology to communicate Laureola's accountability for his pain: "Yo me culpo porque te pido galardón sin haverte hecho servicio, aunque si recibes en cuenta del servir el penar, por

[44] Leriano's use of the passive voice in "*se publique*" here seems to conform with the male characters' lack of accountability for the trajectory of Leriano and Laureola's relationship, as I will discuss shortly. It also serves to veil somewhat the threat posed here by Leriano.

mucho que me pagues siempre pensaré que me quedas en deuda" (18).[45] This echoes the *Auctor*'s call for her to "mira en qué cargo eres a Leriano, que aun su pasión te haze servicio" (15). Both men approach her with a sense of entitlement; it is a given that she owes Leriano some sort of recompense for his "service" of adoring her, as well as for the suffering this adoration has occasioned in him, like payment for the rendering of goods and services. The *Auctor* also later refers to Leriano's dealings with Laureola as a "negocio" (23). In another instance, he implores her to "tells her, "mira quánto le eres obligada, que se precia de quien le destruye" (20). Laureola is "obligated" to do what Leriano asks simply because he loves her, because he has chosen to set his sights on her.

Interestingly enough, by this point in the *novela*, this is the only "service" Leriano has provided her–that is, he has not rescued or helped her in any way similar to the knightly oaths Maurice Keen describes, yet he still insists on a reward.[46] Here the *Auctor* also makes subtle use of the cruel versus merciful trope by adding that she is "destroying" Leriano, again subtly insulting her by devaluing her supposedly inherent feminine sense of kindness.

His reasoning here greatly reflects the patriarchal societal structure founded on the role of woman as dutiful mother, wife, and daughter, and as the gentler and kinder of the two sexes, while man is the authority to which she owes her obedience, as Prudence Allen illustrates in Aristotle's teachings. Women are meant to be quiet, timid and obedient. Asking her to read the letter, the *Auctor* says, "si esto no quisieres hazer por quien deves,

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[45] Márquez highlights the text's awareness of "la progresiva aparición de una economía monetaria y capitalista," especially given Persio's "transacción económica," the only one in the text: "compra la palabra de los testigos para confirmar su mentira" (517).

[46] Munjic points out that, according to the "*Sermón*," the only recompense a lover can truly ask for his suffering is the lady's empathy (212).

que es él, ni quien lo suplica, que so yo, en tu virtud tengo esperança que, segund la usas, no sabrás hazer otra cosa" (21). With this, he exposes his belief in these Aristotelian ideologies, assuming that as a woman she is predisposed to being compliant and helpful. He also believes that she should be compelled by Leriano's distress—after all, a woman should be inherently empathetic and accommodating in general, and all the more so to her lover's suffering. Even without the reward of *fama* he offers her for her compliance, he assumes that Laureola should already be a morally upstanding person, because she is a woman.

Meanwhile, Leriano shifts to more blatant uses of rhetoric of blame in his letter, first identifying her as the sole cause of the downward spiral he is going through: "No te marauilles, que tu hermosura causó el afición, y el afición el deseo, y el deseo la pena, y la pena el atrevimiento" (18). Again he makes use of the guilt tactic, and at the same time, absolves himself of all accountability. As we will continue to see in both male characters' frequent use of the words *causa* and *causar*, there is never an acknowledgement of the lover's active role in seeking out his beloved, or in persisting in his pursuit of her; rather, there is a consistent focus on the way in which she, simply by being sexually arousing to him, has caused his physical and emotional perdition. Yet again, Leriano utilizes the danger of looking at women trope used in "Ad Virgines" and in the troubadour love lyric.

Elizabeth Teresa Howe makes an interesting point when she asserts that the men's requirements of Laureola continue to increase with each interaction:

> Although Leriano's initial request to the *Auctor* was simply to convey to Laureola the existence of his love and suffering, it is evident through the course of the novel that his claim on her will grow even as the result will

> lead to tragedy. At the same time, the *Auctor* will not feel his duty done merely by conveying the news to Laureola that he has witnessed the sufferings of Leriano. Both men will demand more from her than either is willing or able to admit in the opening pages of the narrative. (16)

Howe's contention that both men demand more from Laureola than either is willing or able to admit is an astute one, to which I would like to add yet another point: both men also demand more of her than either is willing or able to take responsibility for. Howe explains that the code of courtly love perpetuates this masculine absolution because "[s]ince the lover is overcome by passion, he is not to be blamed for the love he feels" (15). Again, the idea of *amor hereos* functions as a justification for unrestrained behavior: in this case, unrelenting pursuit.

The masculine message conveyed to the lady, which is "you brought it on yourself," becomes more and more apparent in these exchanges, even though the "acceptance" of knightly service that Keen describes is completely absent in Leriano and Laureola's relationship. This is precisely what Leriano wishes to communicate when he tells Laureola that her beauty had provoked his interest, and therefore, his brazen pursuit of her. Walsh describes Laureola as being characterized by ambivalence when it comes to Leriano's requests (124).[47] While I agree that she demonstrates a more passive attitude after her first meeting with the *Auctor*, Laureola never gives any type of consent, written or verbal, to participate in these charades with her two aggressors. Rather, she is

[47] However, she also insinuates many times that Laureola is a muted, flat character, calling her "merely a fictional device" (119), and "something of a stick-figure, a virtually disembodied ideal" (120), leading us to conclude that San Pedro writes in her passivity so as to be easily overshadowed by her male peers. Munjic seconds this, pointing out that she is not individualized in any way by "a description of her appearance, of her particular motivations or circumstances. All we know...is that she is a king's daughter- a princess, and therefore...an object of Leriano's love" (209). In fact, Munjic says that due to their strictly stylized portrayals, "it would be problematic to attribute to [any of] those characters psychological depth" (209).

ambushed in her own court by the *Auctor*, who misinterprets her body language and mild (provoked) concern for Leriano's safety as interest and reports it as such to his lord. In fact, the reader only encounters the word *consentimiento* in reference to Laureola in a monologue by the *Auctor*, who notes that, in that particular meeting, Laureola "me dixo quantas razones bastavan para descargarse del consentimiento que dava en la pena de Leriano" (27). Her desire to disassociate herself from Leriano's suffering here is apparent.

Therefore, despite Laureola's passivity in the face of the men's harassment, I disagree with Catherine Henry Walsh that her responses to Leriano's advances are ambivalent, which I shall discuss more in detail shortly. Elizabeth Teresa Howe's depiction of the courtly love relationship supports this lack of feminine consent: "What emerges is the portrait of a woman ensnared by the ill-considered demands of the courtly lover within a social framework that severely limits her field of action. The victim is the woman who neither sought nor encouraged the series of events that will lead to her downfall" (13). Howe reiterates the key point that, with no action nor invitation on her part, Laureola is forced to go through the motions with these two men, and when her own quality of life is imtruded upon, she is made to believe that she did something to cause it.

In fact, Leriano even absolves himself of what one might consider his gravest offense against Laureola—getting her imprisoned by her own father. In a letter he sends during her capitvity, he writes, "Suplícote no me tengas enemiga por lo que padeces, pues como tengo dicho no tiene la culpa dello lo que hize, mas lo que mi dicha quiere" (41).[48]

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[48] Leriano asks that Laureola not judge him by what he has caused, since his actions aim only to attain his happiness, which of course is to be with Laureola. For Laureola, on the other hand, the situation of her imprisonment reflects the very real set of consequences determined by her gender; the collective "bad luck" of all courted women. She illustrates this in her letter to her father, saying, "me tiene mi fortuna en el estrecho que me podiera tener la culpa que no tengo" (51). The King acknowledges this predetermined set of consequences for women in a letter to the cardinal, writing, "Bien sabéis que establecen nuestras leyes que la

Leriano's shirking of the blame here is evident. While Laureola is not able to alleviate herself of any of the blame imposed on her by these two men, Leriano accepts none for his own actions, imploring her to judge him by his intentions and not by the compromising situation he has gotten her into. As I noted above, he even employs this shirking tactic when talking about the social consequences of her cruelty, opting to say "se publique que podiste matar" instead of "yo/mi mensajero/mis compañeros publique(n)," which contrasts greatly with his consistently intimidating tone. Leriano's use of the passive voice here serves to reframe the threat in a more courteous manner, thus distancing himself from it and insinuating how little responsibility he is willing to take for his own premeditated vengeance on her.[49]

Leriano continues trying to provoke guilt in Laureola with the imagery of his death, a tactic which swiftly evolves into a threat of her defamation as a murderer: "si porque hize [el atrevimiento] te pareciere que merezco muerte, mandámela dar, que muy mejor es morir por tu causa que bevir sin tu esperanca; y hablandote verdad, la muerte, sin que tu me la dieses yo mismo me la daría, por hallar en ella la libertad que en la vida busco, si tu no hovieses de quedar infamada por matadora" (18-9). This statement perfectly illustrates the anithetic attitudes at work in Leriano's discourse: he would bring death upon himself, if only Laureola would not be condemned. It appears submissive, but

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muger que fuere acusada de tal pecado muera por ello" (47). Carmen Parrilla affirms this, noting that "el castigo del adulterio recae en la mujer" (47), a fact affirmed by Janet L. Nelson and Alice Rio: "any sexual relationship [a woman] undertook outside marriage infringed on at least one other person's rights, and diminished someone else's honor. This is evident from the use of the word *adulterium* in laws to refer not just to adultery, but to any unsanctioned sexual activity by women, including virgins, widows, and slaves" (109).

[49] When Laureola, although appreciative of Leriano's efforts to free her from her father's prison, announces her plans to cut ties with Leriano, the *Auctor* says, "díxele que escriviese a Laureola acordóndole de lo que hizo por ella" (60). While Leriano does not take this advice, it again illustrates how quick the men are to take credit and how slow they are to take accountability.

he is reminding her yet again that he has control over her reputation. He continues to dredge up imagery of his suicide, saying, "te suplico que hagas tu carta galardón de mis males, que avnque no me mate por lo que a ti toca, no podré beuir por lo que yo sufro, y todavía quedarás condenada. Si algund bien quisieres hacerme, no lo tardes; si no, podrá ser que tengas tienpo de arrepentirte y no lugar de remediarme" (19). In short, he reminds her that if she does not act quickly, she may change her mind after he has already taken his own life, and then will forever live with the regret and shame of causing his death.

I would like to point out here the radical conflict between the way in which the *Auctor* presents Leriano—tortured, pathetic, sniveling—and the way in which Leriano articulates himself in his letters to Laureola. This menacing letter is the first of many that Leriano sends to her, and he comes off as quite the shrewd operator. We know by a few statements made by the *Auctor* in passing that as the son of a duke, Leriano is part of the nobility, such as when the *Auctor* notes that he seemed in closer condition to writing a "memorial de su hazienda que carta de su passión" (18), and that, on his arrival to the King's court, "todos los grandes señores y mancebos cortesanos salieron a recibirle" (30), and, perhaps most notably in his duel against Persio and his gathering of knights and vassals to help him free Laureola from the prison. But these details of his status seem to occupy a very minimal part of Leriano's characterization; instead, it is his intense emotions with which he is associated over and over again, both by himself and the *Auctor*. From the time he meets Leriano, the *Auctor* perpetually bears witness to his fragile emotional state: his "grave sentimiento" (19), his "lastimado gemido" of "mortal angustia" (4), and "las lágrimas con que [me dava la carta]" (19). By minimizing his status within the nobility, he is able to more easily embody the figure of the obedient vassal to his lady.

There is a disconnect between the physical and verbal representation of Leriano that the *Auctor* chooses to reveal to the reader, and Leriano's own textual self-representation on paper.[50] He transforms from the self-loathing, pitiful, bumbling fool we envision captive in the Cárcel to a skillful persuader, availing himself of all rhetorical resources possible in his case with Laureola. One could argue that the letter is the medium through which Leriano reveals his true colors. His letters finally show his true identity, the educated aristocrat (although he never once brings up his status in his letters), and one well-versed in the courtly manipulation of women.

There is also the great contradiction in the variation of tones he uses with Laureola in the same letter, a contradiction consistently found in the male lover's dialogue in the courtly love tradition: the constant oscillation between threats and appeasement. In the same sentence of one letter, Leriano writes, "Por cierto tú eres tu enemiga; si no me querías remediar porque me salvara yo, deviéraslo hazer porque no te condenaras tú; porque en mi perdición oviese algund bien, deseo que te pese della; mas si el pesar te avrié de dar pena, no lo quiero, que pues nunca biviendo te hize servicio,[51] no sería justo que moriendo te causase enojo" (25). Although it could be asserted that this fluctuation between love and hate is paramount in almost every frustrated love story, this claim

[50] Parrilla notes that the *Auctor* "encarece [...] los rasgos de carácter moral que ostenta Leriano," referring frequently to his "virtud" y "bondad" (11-12), following Aristotelian ethics. However, Hanna Fenichel Pitkin's discussion of the Machiavellian *virtù* also deserves consideration. Pitkin contends that Machiavelli's ambivalent ideas concerning women in his texts are the product of his "anxiety about being sufficiently masculine and concern over what it means to be a man" (5).Pitkin asserts that the Renaissance mentality centered on patriarchal power, thus Niccolò Machiavelli's *virtù* is "certainly not equivalent to virtue in the Christian sense" (25). Rather, she says, it "tends mostly to connote energy, effectiveness, virtuosity...The word derives from the Latin *virtus*, and thus from *vir*, which means 'man'. *Virtù* is thus manliness, those qualities found in a 'real man' "(25).These ideas shed some light on why the *Auctor* is compelled to help him from the beginning, as well as why he is able to make such a strong case for Leriano throughout the *novela* using these flattering representations.

[51] It is important to note Leriano's admission here of never having completed any "service" other than adoration for his beloved up to this point.

borders on the absurd. He claims he does not want to anger her in death, yet has no problem binding her in a relationship in which she participates against her will only for fear of compromising her social reputation. What is more, for as much as he and the *Auctor* remind her of the blame she will face if she does not cooperate, he sheepishly tells her in this same letter that "nunca pensé pedirte merced que te causase culpa" (26).[52] Thus, Leriano's tone and self-representation in his letters are in constant fluctuation. Although he tells Laureola that "muy mejor es morir por tu causa" he does not fail to remind her in the same breath that, if he were to act on his claims of self-sacrifice, she would be "infamada por matadora" (19). It appears that Leriano uses whatever self-representation will serve him in the moment, even if this means constantly wavering between self-deprecating on one hand and demanding on the other. Munjic explains these shifts in Leriano's behavior by addressing the socially accepted models of masculinity found in many texts of the period. She contends that Leriano's role in the courtship is decidedly masochistic, a role that aligns well with the values of these texts:

> The central theme of [*Cárcel*]...follows the blueprint of courtly love aesthetics that San Pedro lays out in "*Sermón*." This aesthetics encourages Leriano...to derive pleasure from subjugating himself to a cultural norm of passive masculine subjectivity, the norm that had been promoted largely through an influential medium of medieval lyrical poetry [...] Leriano's behavior projects the cultural values of suffering, of submission to the lady of his choice, and of persistence in his amorous commitment - the values that are articulated through lyrical poetry that shapes his sensibility...the

[52] The *Auctor* also adopts this attitude at times, telling Laureola, "siempre tove por costumbre de servir antes que importunar" (20). This is just as hypocritical as Leriano's feigned politeness, given that the *Auctor* was the one who marched right over to Laureola's court and initiated the harassment process.

> masochistic Leriano, a fictional double of a medieval nobleman, enacts amorous behavior that in his cultural environment carries a connotation of refined, aristocratic masculine subjectivity. (204)

She points out, however, that courtly love poetry and prose were not the only works responsible for the diffusion of this model, asserting that these are "only a segment of a much wider cultural trend that fetishizes amorous suffering. The disruptive nature of passionate love was in addition of central interest to non-fictional - philosophical, medical, and theological - texts that dealt with the issues of human affectivity and sexuality in Western culture," such as medical literature on the symptoms of *amor hereos* and the writings of Plato (206). Munjic reiterates that the wide dissemination of the heroicized suffering lover model solidified its incorporation into highly regarded forms of masculine behavior:

> The endlessly repeated literary motif of an anguished lover was imitated, reproduced, and questioned - if not steadfastly on the courtly stage on which medieval elite interacted, then through textual stagings of a lyrical "I" - as a model of courtliness in the performance of socially valued forms of masculinity and nobility in the Middle Ages and early modern period. That is to say, the particular ways of being in love as explored by the predominantly male authors in courtly literature created literary models that played into medieval notions of what it meant to be an exemplary nobleman. (207)

While the influence of this anguished lover motif on Leriano's character is clear, Munjic affirms that he also takes a cue from another contrasting literary model of the

period, that of the "knight-warrior, whose dedication to the exercise of arms epitomizes masculine activity, associated with decision-making and with rationality" (217). Munjic asserts that this binary characterization, along with the non-linear, atemporal setting of *Cárcel* "naturalizes Leriano's off-beat behavior: his self-described torment to *El Auctor* while in the prison; his ability to abruptly deliver himself from the prison's torture chamber to visit the court; his sudden awakening from apparent passivity into battle-readiness; and his subsequent and automatic relapse into suicide" (211). Therefore, Munjic explains, Leriano successfully embodies both the submissive lover and the knight-warrior. While Leriano's oscillations in behavior seem to be self-serving modes of exercising control over Laureola, which Munjic demonstrates (203), she also reminds us that no matter how childish, Leriano's behavior was regarded not only as acceptable, but also as a highly esteemed form of masculine self-representation.[53] Márquez adds that within the courtly love ideologies of fifteenth-century Castile, "el sentimiento de amor es exclusivamente masculino y aristocrático...Tal como enuncia Leriano en el tratado final de la obra, amar a mujeres hace honrados a los hombres y los conduce a una serie de virtudes... [mientras que] [p]ara Laureola...la piedad con el enamorado entra en conflicto con su honra" (512).

Now I will address the way in which Leriano and the *Auctor* employ the sweeping generalization of women as naturally compassionate in order to motivate Laureola to surrender to Leriano's advances. Carmen Parrilla notes that in Aristotelian doctrine, "la piedad es movimiento natural de los seres sensibles de la naturaleza femenina" (14), a belief sustained and acted upon by the male characters in almost every courtly love text in

[53] Munjic adds that this acceptance also occurs within the literary text itself: "The protagonist's behavior is rarely questioned; instead, it is accepted and condoned by all who witness his suffering - often including those readers who romanticize his conduct as a case of overwhelming love" (211).

the Middle Ages. Each time, the frustrated lover measures his lady against the entire female race, as I have explained with the *piadosa*/*cruel* opposition, undoubtedly signaling the conflict between how she is behaving in their interactions and how she is supposed to behave, thus inciting a sort of inadequacy within her. According to this conflict, then, the lady can only fall into one of two dichotomous categories: compassionate, as she is supposed to be, given her gender; or cruel, which seems to imply negative connotations beyond simply not reciprocating the man's love. For if a woman is not compassionate, like she is supposed to be (as she should strive to imitate the Virgin Mary), then what is wrong with her? Is she adequately performing her role in society? And, of course, what consequences would being judged as "different" or "separate" from the rest of her sex have on her social image? Again, what would people say? Like Anne Clark Bartlett contends, women constituted identities around these conflicting ideologies.

This is exactly the type of position in which Leriano and the *Auctor* entrap Laureola. In their petitions to do the right thing, they always encourage her to act in accordance with her femininity, making sure to shift between the two antithetical adjectives *piadosa* and *cruel* in their observations of her behavior. As soon as he meets Laureola for the first time, the *Auctor* begins his diatribe by declaring how deserving she is of honor, as she is one of "las generosas mugeres que tienen el coraçon real de su nacimiento y la piedad natural de su condición" (14). In the same visit, he admits to her that, judging by Leriano's emotional state, "te juzgué cruel y en tu acatamiento te veo piadosa, lo qual va por razon, que de tu hermosura se cree lo uno y de tu condición se espera lo otro" (14-15). Leriano himself writes, "Sienpre creí que forçara tu condición piadosa a tu voluntad porfiada" (25), a declaration in which stubbornness is not as bad as

being cruel, but still carries a negative connotation. It is a quality that, according to Leriano, should be dominated by her "natural" compassion. Furthermore, in my view, Leriano communicates ever so subtly his intention of wearing Laureola down by gradually overcoming her obstinacy.

In many ways Laureola could be called the poster child for the feminine culpability motif. Not only is she accosted daily by her admirer and his representative, she is also blamed by almost every other man in her life—Persio, another admirer, his friends, and her father. She has no refuge from the constant masculine accusations being flung at her.[54] Persio's motives in going to her father and accusing her of secret trysts with Leriano are clear: he simply wants to impede his rival's relationship with Laureola in order to advance his own. His friends, who corroborate his story to King Gaulo, serve as his alibi.[55]

It is Laureola's father, however, whose accusations seem most offensive, not just for the lack of compassion he demonstrates in imprisoning his own daughter, but even more for his hastiness to believe the rumor started by Persio and his entourage. After first hearing Persio's claims, the King "estovo dubdoso," but after pondering it, he "tovólo por verdad, creyendo segund la virtud y auctoridad de Persio que no le diría otra cosa" (31). The biggest injustice lies, perhaps, in that the King trusts more in the "virtue" of another man of the court than that of his own daughter. But this is not surprising, since as I have discussed, philosophical and biblical texts did much to influence the general consensus on

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[54] "A lo largo del relato, la doncella se encuentra en poder de otro (su padre y, brevemente, su tío), subordinada a la autoridad masculina" (Márquez 513).

[55] Márquez explains that just as *Cárcel* highlights the excessive power held by los Reyes Católicos in King Gaulo, it also indicates the King's favoritism of the new nobility in his interactions with Persio. Like many within this sector, Márquez says, Persio's objective is "ganarse la confianza del monarca y acrecentar su poder político en la corte" (517-8).

women. It should still be noted, however, that Laureola has no allies among the men in her life; the same models of blame being utilized against her by her suitors are mirrored in the family structure, just as we see in Mirabella's father in Juan de Flores' *novela sentimental* published around 1495, *Grisel y Mirabella*. Laureola's father is especially impressionable: in one instant he believes Leriano's insistence that the two are innocent; moments later when Persio's three "witnesses" corroborate his story of having caught the two exchanging longing glances, he is convinced of their guilt once again. Janet L. Nelson and Alice Rio note that under medieval canon law, fathers had a right to "react" to their daughters' sexual activity: "Indeed, laws seem to expect the reactions of fathers and [cuckolded] husbands to be similar, some of them giving fathers the right to kill a daughter's lover caught in the act in their own house. Transgressing in the context of a household was a great affront to the honor of whatever man stood at its head, since his authority partly depended on his ability ro control the sexual behavior of his women" (109). Nelson and Rio add that under Visigothic law, a father had the right to kill his daughter for having sex in their home.

The value placed on preserving one's public image is seen as poignantly in the King's justification of his actions toward his daughter as it is in Laureola's reluctance to succumb to Leriano's pleas. His biggest fear resides in how he will look if he does not punish his daughter, provided that the rumors are true: "Publicado que tal cosa perdoné, sería de los comarcanos despreciado y de los naturales desobedecido, y de todos mal estimado; y podria ser acusado que supe mal conservar la generosidad de mis antecesores; y a tanto se estendería esta culpa si castigada no fuese" (46). The King seems to fear public defamation just as much as his daughter; this fear of "publication" arises again,

illustrating its potency as a threat in medieval society. The cardinal replies that he could be just as harshly judged by his subjects for being so heartless: "antes serías […] infamado por padre cruel que por rey justiciero" (45). Since Leriano and Persio's duel was meant to settle the matter in the first place, the cardinal asks him, "Pues ¿por qué das más fe a la información dellos que al juizio de Dios, el qual en las armas de Persio y Leriano se mostró claramente?" (45). This inquiry on the part of the cardinal illustrates the medieval belief that the outcome of a juridical duel was in effect the manifestation of God's will.[56] This means that Leriano's victory served as a divine confirmation of Laureola's innocence. While the outcome of the duel sufficed to confirm Laureola's innocence to the cardinal, she is still considered culpable both in the eyes of her father, for the alleged trysts with Leriano, and in the eyes of Leriano, for all his amorous suffering.

In fact, it is only the women who ask him why he doubts Laureola. During the Queen's tearful visit to Laureola's prison, she laments, "¿[P]or qué, si la onestad es prueva de la virtud, no dio el rey mas crédito a tu presencia que al testimonio?" (49). Laureola herself asks her father this in the letter she writes him as her final plea for liberation: "Bien sabes la virtud que las corónicas pasadas publican de los reyes y reinas donde yo procedo; pues ¿por qué, nacida yo de tal sangre, creíste mas la información falsa que la bondad natural?" (51). Still, she discounts the trust her father ought to have in her just by virtue of being his daughter, asking why he does not believe that, as a princess, she would have the

[56] The *Auctor* explains that once the King hears Leriano's testimony regarding his daughter's innocence, "con alegre coraçón, [tenía] ya a Laureola por desculpada, cosa que él tanto deseava" (37). It is interesting here the great passivity the King assumes: while he "so wanted" Laureola to be innocent, he does not allow her to alleviate his suspicion by defending herself with the truth. Not only does this fact reiterate that a woman's word holds no value regardless of status or relation, this can also be seen as another extension of the lack of male accountability for one's actions. Like Leriano's use of the passive voice when threatening to "publish" the news of Laureola's cruelty, these tidbits of kindness on the part of the kings in these novels serve to balance out, justify, and/or distance them from their previously merciless and/or violent behavior.

same values as their predecessors, as praised in the literature of royal history. The Queen, for her part, engages in self-blame, a theme I will discuss more in *Curial e Güelfa*, interpreting Laureola's death sentence to some sort of karmic punishment for her own life mistakes: "No hallo por cierto otra causa sino que puede más la muchedumbre de mis pecados que el merecimiento de tu justedad" (49-50).[57]

Many of these exact scenarios are mirrored in Juan de Flores' sentimental novel *Grisel y Mirabella*, a work believed to have been published, along with Flores' other best-known sentimental novel *Grimalte y Gradissa*, around 1495. Flores is believed to have been part of the Aragonese nobility, working as royal chronicler to the Catholic monarchs King Fernando and Queen Isabel beginning in 1476. In addition to his courtly activities, he belonged to an order of humanistic knights, and is speculated to have participated in the civil war of the 1470s between Isabel I of Castile and her niece Juana for the Castilian throne. Like San Pedro, Flores' works acquired a vast readership throughout Europe. *Grisel y Mirabella* was especially popular, being translated into several languages and made into more than 56 editions before the sixteenth century.

At the start of *Grisel y Mirabella*, Mirabella's father, the King of Scotland, imprisons her due to all the deaths caused by men fighting for her love, aptly described by *Grisel y Mirabella*'s own *El auctor* as "quantos por su causa eran muertos" (94). However, there is an interesting disparity between the King's behavior and the way he is represented by various characters in the text, including the narrative voice of *El auctor* and even by

[57] It should be noted that during her visit to Laureola's prison cell, the Queen also describes herself as "tu piadosa madre" (50), confirming Leriano and the *Auctor*'s presumption of the inherence of this quality in all women. All of the texts sentimental texts discussed in this dissertation call into question the dichotomous characters of King and Queen as father and mother. In Alan Deyermond's foreword in Carmen Parrilla's edition of *Cárcel de amor*, he cites a "padre cruel" as one of the characteristics of the sentimental romance genre (XXIX).

Mirabella herself. Despite *El auctor's* claims that the King of Scotland is "un excellente Rey de todas virtudes amigo[,] [y] principalmente en ser justiciero. Y era tanto justo: como la misma justicia" (88) and "el más justificado príncipe que a la sazón se hallasse en el mundo" (96), and Mirabella's assertion that "no dudo el Rey mi padre haverse conmigo piadosamente" (100) once her affair with the knight Grisel becomes public knowledge, he acts drastically out of line with these testimonies. Since neither Grisel nor Mirabella will accuse the other of initiating the relationship, the King "mandólos muy cruelmente atormentar. Tanto que las llagas que soffrían eran de mayor dolor que la misma muerte que speravan" (102). Then, once the judges in the debate between Braçayda and Torrellas determine that women are the principal seductresses in the love relationship and therefore that Mirabella should die, the King indifferently proceeds with the arrangements for her death, while the Queen begs for her salvation, just as Laureola's mother had done. In fact, the Queen is the only character in the text who notes that the King is "tan sin clemencia en lo que tocava a justicia" (108). When she pleads with the King to spare her life, he is more concerned with the image he projects to his subjects than with Laureola's fate. He tells her:

> Bien pareçe el consejo que tú me das ser más affeccionado que justo. Y si tú grande amor tuviesses conmigo como lo has con Mirabella más dolor habrías de mi honra: que de su muerte...Pues en el fin de la vida está el loor. Y si yo fasta aquí he administrado justicia: quando en mi hija non la fiziesse: non me podrían loar de justo...Pero como quien de sí mismo faze justicia: assí me es fuerça fazerla d'ella. Porque mis súbditos no hayan lugar de se quexar: diziendo ser más affeccionado a mí que a ellos. Y viendo mis

gentes que de una sola hija sin sperança de haver otra fago padecer: ¿qué sperança terná ninguno en la piedad mía: que yerro cometa? (142)[58]

Just like Laureola's father, Mirabella's father is worried about the message his lenience with his own daughter would send to future offenders, and, ultimately, the way his legacy will be remembered after he is gone.[59] The Queen points this out, echoing Laureola's letter to her father, saying, "Y como non basta para satisfazer al mundo lo que ya contra tu fija has obrado sino que quieres ser estremo. Y por una arrebata fama de ti por el mundo se pregone: la qual non dirán justicia mas muy enemiga crueldad" (146). Even after Grisel takes his own life, causing the judges to revoke Mirabella's sentence, the King turns to his council rather than listen to the petitions of his wife, or consider his love for his daughter. Emily C. Francomano even indicates in her translation that the King "turned to the *men* of his council" (*Querelle* 153, my emphasis), thus even more poignantly demonstrating that, once again, women's word holds no value, especially when it comes to freeing themselves from culpability.

Returning to *Cárcel de amor*, the subject of Laureola's guilt or innocence even comes up in the debates between Leriano and Persio. When Persio sends Leriano a *cartel* challenging Leriano to a duel, Leriano responds that Laureola "quedará libre de culpa, y tu onra no de vergüença" (33). He maintains Laureola's innocence (freedom from blame) to Persio even though he has blamed her himself the entire time. He fights Persio on the very

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[58] It is interesting to note how the King's reproach of his wife is a reversal of Leriano and the *Auctor*'s petitions to Laureola. The King asks that more respect be given to his honor than to being compassionate, while Leriano and the Auctor ask Laureola to focus less on her honor and more on extending compassion to Leriano.

[59] Márquez explains that just as the amorous ideologies of the fifteenth-century Castilian court considered the lover/beloved relationship to be analogous to that of God and His devout believers, the relationship between the King and his subjects was also a projection of this divine order (507). He maintains that both Laureola and her father are in the same predicament: choosing between pity and personal honor (508).

thing he has used as a vehicle to continuously threaten her. Furthermore, Persio's *cartel* in itself is a very telling part of the text, as it gives the reader an idea of what type of "publication" or public defamation Laureola could expect from her suitor if she did not cooperate. This is because despite the fact that Persio takes his accusations privately to the King, the King immediately orders him to confront Leriano with this charge, and, once turned over to Leriano, the *cartel*'s contents become public knowledge.[60]

For bearing the brunt of so much blame, the only opportunities Laureola gets to declare her own innocence are in her responses to Leriano and the *Auctor*. Each time she tries to defend herself, she emphasizes the expectations put on women (the very ones used as leverage in their threats against her) to conduct themselves according to a code of strict societal etiquette fashioned exclusively for them. From the *Auctor*'s first visit to her kingdom, she points out the never-ending responsibility to preserve her honor (that is, her purity, innocence, virginity, dignity, and socioeconomic status). She tells him, "no solamente por el atrevimiento devías morir, mas por la ofensa que a mi bondad heziste, en la qual posiste en dubda" (16). She highlights, as I have mentioned, that this responsibility is twofold for her, being both a woman and the successor to the throne. She explains, "[N]o podría él ser libre de pena sin que yo fuese condenada de culpa. Si pudiese remediar su mal sin amanzillar mi onrra, no con menos afición que tú lo pides yo lo haría; mas ya tú

[60] Regula Rohland de Langbehn confirms that Persio's *cartel* is indeed a "reto público" (182), a stance which Rogelio Miñana also takes (141). Márquez believes, based on Laureola's assertion in her last letter that "se dirá muriendo tú que galardono los servicios quitando las vidas" (*Cárcel*, 62-3), that Leriano's love for her is public knowledge, and that the entire kingdom believes Persio's story (509). He also insinuates their right to know, pointing out that the inaccessibility of the beloved lady is protocol in the courtly love tradition in which "la mujer pertenece a la corte; como contrapartida, el ingreso del amante a ese espacio resulta problemático" (513).

conosces quánto las mugeres deven ser más obligadas a su fama que a su vida,[61] la qual deven estimar en lo menos por razón de lo mas, que es la bondad" (21). Here she admits how much control societal pressures exert over her, to the extent that she has to be more concerned with what the masses will report of her behavior than with her relationships, and, what is more, the expression of her true feelings (for certainly if not, she would have told both men to leave her alone by now). She attempts to make a case for protecting herself above all else to the *Auctor*, explaining the consequences she could potentially face if she entertains Leriano's wishes: "Pues si el bevir de Leriano ha de ser con la muerte desta, tú juzga a quien con mas razon devo ser piadosa, a mí o a su mal; y que esto todas las mugeres deven assí tener, en muy mas manera las de real nacimiento, en las quales assí ponen los ojos todas las gentes, que antes se vee en ellas la pequeña manzilla que en las baxas la gran fealdad" (21). She has to always be concerned with what people will say (a fact which Leriano and the *Auctor* continue to deftly and liberally use to their advantage), since as a princess she is even more closely scrutinized than a woman of the lower or middle classes.

Another notable characteristic of Laureola's defenses against her pursuer is her feeling of perpetual accusation, regardless of any decision she makes. Since she continues to respond to Leriano's letters, a move he falsely interprets as a sign of romantic interest, he is temporarily freed from his allegorical prison while she sits in a real one, charged for a crime for which she is not culpable, a spectacle consumed by the entire kingdom. She complains about her ever-compromised position to Leriano, writing, "en las otras gentes se alaba la piedad por virtud y en mí se castiga por vicio...No fue por cierto tu fortuna ni

[61] This short declaration by Laureola demonstrates that women are not permitted to act instinctually or in pursuit of pleasure or enjoyment, unless it is in line with social guidelines.

tus obras causa de mi prisión, ni me querello de ti ni de otra persona en esta vida, sino de mí sola, que por librarte de muerte me cargué de culpa...[te] remedié como inocente y pago como culpada" (42-3). She is damned either way, as she says herself; she is charged with the crime whether she has truly committed it or not; slander by word of mouth is just as damaging as the actual commission itself. This mirrors the exact compromise in which she finds herself with Leriano. If she shows any sign of reciprocation, whether real or imagined by the lover, she is condemned by her peers; if she does not, she is threatened with the guilt and public shame of driving her adorer to his early death. She has no way out; she is constantly under fire regardless of how she behaves. She is at once obligated and completely unable to please everyone, whether it be her father, her suitors, or her subjects. In fact, Elizabeth Teresa Howe insists, the entire code of courtly love itself "inevitably jeopardizes the honor of the lady" since, as Bruce W. Wardropper maintains, in ceding to her suitor she must renounce her chaste reputation, or, in resisting, must accept being dubbed as heartless (Howe 20).

Interestingly enough, though she complains about her contradictory position to Leriano, she does not blame him for becoming her father's hostage even though the reader knows that it is indeed his fault. By continuing to pursue her, he has awakened Persio's jealousy, leading to the circulation of the clandestine affair rumor and her ultimate imprisonment and death sentence. While she, much to our dismay, absolves him of any offense in her letter, she continues to note the conflict between saving Leriano's life or saving her own: "las prisiones que ponen a los que han hecho muertes me tienen puestas porque la tuya escusé" (43). She is punished instead of praised for her compassion, and the lengths she goes to in order to appease Leriano are far more trouble for her than they are

worth. Therefore, the "service" that Leriano claims he has done her in his adoration is certainly much more of a disservice than anything else. In fact, the only service he does provide is freeing her from her father's imprisonment, which was his fault in the first place.[62]

Now, I mentioned in the introduction to this dissertation that one of my intentions was to refute the claim of some critics that Laureola is indeed in love with Leriano, a claim made by Pamela Waley, Alan Deyermond and Carmen Parrilla, among other scholars.[63] In a letter to Leriano, Laureola writes:

> [P]or Dios te pido que enbuelvas mi carta en tu fe, porque si es tan cierta como confiesas, no se te pierda ni de nadie puede ser vista; que quien viese lo que te escrivo pensaría que te amo, y creería que mis razones antes eran dichas por disimulación de la verdad que por la verdad. Lo qual es al revés, que por cierto mas las digo, como ya he dicho, con intención piadosa que con voluntad enamorada. Por hazerte creer esto querría estenderme, y por no ponerte otra sospecha acabo[.] (28)

[62] Howe notes how gracious Laureola is to "[acknowledge] her debt to her suitor for rescuing her from a death sentence (without pointing out the part he played in causing it)" (23).

[63] See Deyermond's *Historia*: "Integra San Pedro en su *Cárcel* al narrador mismo dentro de la acción, agudizando la tragedia al hacer que Laureola corresponda al amor de Leriano" (298). Waley notes that Laureola "bears all the conventional signs of love" ("Love and Honour,"260). While Walsh only attests to "the tension [Laureola] feels between honor and compassion" (122), she never says outright that she does not reciprocate Leriano's love. On the other hand, Robert Folger does in fact conclude that Laureola "is simply not in love with Leriano" (624), as do Whinnom, Snow and Howe. Munjic contends that Laureola reciprocates no love or desire for him, since she offers him marriage, a relationship devoid of sexual desire, according to the principles of courtly love (215-6).Tórrego insists that stronger proof is needed (334), while Márquez believes preservation of her honor is what impedes Laureola from acting on her love for Leriano (505).

Parrilla notes that it is this very discrepancy between continuing or ending the letter which demonstrates Laureola's love for Leriano (28). She also claims that it is Laureola's preoccupation with her honor that "le impediría responder a otros movimientos de su ánimo" (21),[64] dismissing her steadfast rejection of Leriano as a mere "formality" of the courtly love tradition (15), and claiming that many of Laureola's written statements to Leriano are simply veiled declarations of love in accordance with the rules of the courtly tradition (28).

Parrilla makes a good point here. Almost every courtship in courtly love texts of fifteenth-century Iberia begins with the utter indignation of the beloved lady at the audacity of the male lover to approach her and seek her participation. Consider, for example, Melibea, the female protagonist of Fernando de Rojas' *La* Celestina. While *La Celestina* is not a *novela sentimental*, it is a contemporary text to *Cárcel*, published in 1499, and a text whose characters follow the protocol of courtly love, even if to parody it.

When the enamored noble Calisto first approaches her with flirtations, she outright rejects him. Later, when the matchmaker Celestina, visiting with the pretext of selling spools of thread, finally reveals that her true motive is to bring the two together, the maiden chastises her for her brazenness:

> ¿Ésse es el doliente por quien has fecho tantas premissas en tu demanda, por quien has venido a buscar la muerte para ti, por quien has dado tan dañosos passos, desvergonçada barvuda? ¿Qué siente esse perdido, que con tanta passión vienes? ¡De locura será su mal! ¿Qué te parece? [...]

[64] The *Auctor* echoes this sentiment, rationalizing that Laureola's hesitation may be due to fear of her father's disapproval (23).

> ¡Quemada seas, alcahueta falsa, hechizera, enemiga de onestad, causadora de secretos yerros! (225)

However, despite this outburst, Melibea slowly but surely shows signs first of desire and then complete infatuation for Calisto. Her interest is evident from this first encounter with Celestina.[65] Marta Haro Cortés and Juan Carlos Conde note that while her feigned outrage is customary in these texts, she skillfully maintains the conversation rather than ending it:

> Melibea reacciona de acuerdo con las reglas del amor cortés que tan bien conoce; sin embargo [...] no despide a Celestina, sino que la incita con sus preguntas a continuar. La joven desde el principio ha entendido la ambivalencia del término «enfermedad» y al nombrar la vieja a Calisto, la protagonista sabe perfectamente el sentido del mal del joven. Así pues, a partir de aquí, Celestina hace uso de su maestría con la palabra defendiéndose y justificando su atrevimiento, pero Melibea también maneja a Celestina y, bajo la apariencia de dama airada y ofendida, conseguirá la información que desea. (226)

While one could just as easily refute this point as the editors' subjective opinion, as I do with Parrilla's statements about Laureola, Melibea's own words reveal these very intentions. As the editors note, for as offended as she seems, she continues to provoke Celestina with questions rather than closing the door on her: "¿Tienes disculpa alguna para satisfazer mi enojo y escusar tu yerro y osadía? [...] ¿Qué palabra podías tú querer para

[65] According to Walsh, these radical differences in demonstration of romantic interest of Laureola and Melibea are due to the fact that "[i]n the creation of Melibea, Rojas burlesques the values personified by Laureola. Instead of the conflict between honor and compassion felt by Laureola, these virtues are now replaced by their corruptions: sexual appetite and social convention. While Leriano, Laureola, and the *Auctor* clearly act in concert within an aristocratic community of shared Medieval values, Calisto, Melibea and Celestina dwell in a changing, chaotic world of markedly different moral values—lust, greed and hypocrisy" (123).

esse tal hombre que a mí bien me estuviesse? Responde, pues dizes que no has concluydo; quiça purgarás lo passado" (227-8). Melibea not only sustains the conversation with questions, she also allows Celestina the chance to finish and make a better impression on her.

Celestina then requests that Melibea write down a prayer to St. Apollonia to soothe Calisto's aching teeth (a known symbol of amorous suffering in the courtly love tradition), and that she donate the sash around her waist, since, as Celestina says, "es fama que ha tocado todas las reliquias que ay en Roma y Jerusalem" (228). In this way, Celestina astutely reduces the whole transaction to a corporal work of mercy. Melibea feeds into this tactic, using it just as much to her advantage as Celestina does to hers, disguising her eagerness as charity: "en alguna manera es aliviado mi coraçon, viendo que es obra pía y santa sanar los passionados y enfermos" (231).[66]

The Good Samaritan trope is not the only approach Celestina uses to manipulate Melibea. In fact, Celestina uses all the same tactics as Leriano and the *Auctor* in *Cárcel de amor*; that is, with the exception of the veiled threats. Celestina claims that Melibea's beauty gave her the courage to advocate for Calisto, and surely must be the facade of an even more angelic spirit: "El temor perdí mirando, señora, tu beldad. Que no puedo creer que en balde pintasse Dios unos gestos más perfetos que otros, más dotados de gracias, más hermosas facciones, sino para fazerlos almazén de virtudes, de misericordia, de compassión, ministros de sus mercedes y dádivas, como a ti" (223). She sounds eerily like the *Auctor* when she tells Melibea, "estuve en grandes dubdas si te descobriría mi petición. Visto el gran poder de tu padre, temía...vista tu discreción, me recelava; mirando tu virtud

[66] As Walsh argues, "Rojas uses compassion satirically in this text, and Melibea's reference to traditional Christian teaching on *piedad* is a sham" (124).

y humanidad, me esforçava. En lo uno fallava el miedo y en lo otro la seguridad" (349). Furthermore, like the men of *Cárcel*, Celestina also politely excuses the inconvenience she may have caused, saying, "Nunca fue mi voluntad enojar a unos por agradar a otros" (229).[67] Thus, Melibea obliges, handing over her sash, but tells Celestina, "porque para escrivir la oración no havrá tiempo sin que venga mi madre, si [el cordón] no bastare, ven mañana por ella muy secretamente" (234). This guarantees another visit from Celestina to talk about Calisto.

Finally, Melibea's desire for Calisto grows to the point where she cannot hide it. By Act X, she speaks openly about her torturous longing for Calisto. She refers to him as "aquel señor, cuya vista me cativó" (336), praying aloud to God for a remedy: "¡O, si ya veniesses con aquella medianera de mi salud! ¡O soberano Dios! A ti, que todos los atribulados llaman, los apassionados piden remedio, los llagados medicina...húmilmente suplico des a mi herido coraçon sofrimiento y paciencia con que mi terrible passión pueda dissimular" (337). She elaborates on her symptoms of *amor hereos* herself:

> Madre mía, que me comen este coraçon serpientes dentro de mi cuerpo [...] Mi mal es de coraçon, la ysquierda teta es su aposentamiento, tiende sus rayos a todas partes. Lo segundo, es nuevamente nacido en mi cuerpo, que no pensé jamás que podía el dolor privar el seso como éste haze: túrbame la cara, quítame el comer, no puedo dormir, ningún género de risa querría ver. (339-41)

It is not only in her desperate soliloquies that Melibea admits her love for Calisto. She demonstrates the irritability of unfullfulled desire, telling Celestina, "¡O, por Dios,

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[67]In fact, Walsh contends that the role of Celestina as mediator is written by Rojas as a parody of San Pedro's *Auctor* (124).

que me matas! ¿Y no te tengo dicho que no alabes esse hombre, ni me lo nombres en bueno ni en malo?" (345). Her longing has reached the point that she can no longer tolerate the mere mention of his name. In addition, while Melibea does play the role of the scandalized maiden when Calisto comes to consummate their relationship, the farce does not last long. She openly admits her affection to him, declaring,

> Cessen, señor mío, tus verdaderas querellas; que ni mi coraçon basta para lo sofrir, ni mis ojos para lo dissimular. Tú lloras de tristeza, juzgándome cruel; yo lloro de plazer, viéndote tan fiel. ¡O mi señor y mi bien todo! ¡Quánto más alegre me fuera poder ver tu haz que oýr tu voz! [...]Todo lo que [Celestina] te dixo, confirmo; todo lo he por bueno. Limpia, señor, tus ojos; ordena de mí a tu voluntad [...] ningun momento de mi coraçón te partiesses. Y aunque muchos días he pugnado por lo dissimular, no he podido [.] (371-3)

This exchange of sweet nothings results, of course, in the sexual consummation of their relationship, the most obvious marker of Melibea's feelings for Calisto, despite her alleged anxieties over her social image. She expresses all the same risks of giving in to her passion with which Leriano and the *Auctor* blackmail Laureola. When Celestina first makes the purpose of her visit known, Melibea exclaims, "¿Querrías condenar mi onestidad por dar vida a un loco? ¿Dexar a mí triste por alegrar a él y llevar tú el provecho de mi perdición, el galardón de mi yerro? ¿Perder y destruyr la casa y la honrra de mi padre, por ganar la de una vieja maldita como tú?" (226). Even during her prayer begging God to alleviate her suffering, she speaks hypothetically to Lucrecia, noting the shame she feels in confessing her love: "¡O mi fiel criada Lucrecia! ¿Qué dirás de mí, qué pensarás

de mi seso, quando me veas publicar lo que a ti jamás he quesido descobrir? ¡Cómo te espantarás del rompimiento de mi honestidad y vergüença que siempre como encerrada donzella acostumbré tener!" (336).

As we see, the stakes are the same over and over again for the women in these texts. Melibea is concerned about tarnishing her own image and the subsequent ruin of her family name. In her case, the loss of her “honestidad y vergüença" is much more tangible than it is for Laureola since all this back and forth will culminate in the loss of her virginity.[68] In yet another *novela sentimental* by Flores published in approximately 1495, *Grimalte y Gradisa*, the subject of women's responsibility to preserve the family name comes up again. When Fiometa travels to find her estranged lover Pánfilo to convince him to rekindle their clandestine relationship, he uses the preservation of her social image to justify his departure: "El temor del perdimiento tuyo, más que el peligro mío, me causó absentarme" (127). He also points out that she should not be so hasty to continue an adulterous affair, due to the consequences it will have not only on her reputation, but on her family's as well:

> Pues, ¿cómo de tu desseo más que tu cordura te dexaste vencer, y dexar tu noble marido y tal señoría y casa cual ninguna igual de ti conosco? Pues, ¿cómo será posible que persona de tal estado pueda con estraño hombre en agenas tierras bivir en olvido, sin que tus parientes o amigos no ayan de proveer sobre ti? Que si tú con amor demasiado te plaze perder honor, los

[68] Walsh points out that although Melibea pretends to be concerned about her honor, she is a woman who only "dons the inherited trappings of Laureola's nobility," illustrating that for her class, "[t]raditional codes are feigned but not felt" (121). Walsh also points out that unlike Laureola and Mirabella, Melibea is "an only daughter, not of a king whose honor is determined by standards of chivalry and Christianity, but of a *nouveau-riche* whose name means 'commoner' and whose honor is vested in wealth and appearances" (121). She concludes that Melibea's suicide is due not to the loss of her honor, but rather the loss of the source of her sexual pleasure (127).

> otros no lo querrán. Porque bien es que seas liberal en aquello que a ti solamente toca, mas que tú hagas mercedes de la honor de muchos es grand agravio, por cierto; piensa que a cada uno de aquellos de la pérdida tuya le alcança parte. (125-6)

Although these admonishments serve Pánfilo's motive of not wanting to reunite with Fiometa, they also legitimize the fears of Melibea, Laureola, and Gradissa, illustrating just how real the social stakes were for women in the Middle Ages. This also indicates the drastic disparity between women and men regarding the social consequences of their acts. Even though Pánfilo was just as much a participant in an adulterous relationship with a married woman, he does not need to be concerned with his reputation or tarnishing his family name. As the man, he hardly has to claim any responsibility whatsoever. These issues come up for Mirabella as well. During the debate, both Grisel and Torrellas observe the risks of women participating in amorous relationships. In hopes of sparing her beloved's life, Mirabella insists that she was the initiator of the relationship, to which Grisel responds, "¡O quán grande infamia sería a vos: si tal fuesse como lo dezís: en haver a mí requestado! Y por sólo esso más quiero yo consentir en mi muerte: que dar lugar a vuestra vergüença" (100). Echoing Pánfilo, Torrellas asserts that women gamble their own honor, as well as that of their friends and family, for a night of fleeting passion: "Mas vosotras pospuesto todo temor y vergüença: de los encendidos desseos vencidas os vencéis. Ni miráis honor de marido fijos parientes ni amigos ni de vos mismas a quien más obligadas sóis. Ni a reverencia de fama. Ni muy menos al temor de la muerte" (116). He insists that women persist, despite the "tanto peligro y vergüença" they risk (124). Yet, we see that, all things being equal, Melibea, Mirabella and Fiometa still obey their desires, not

letting these things stop them from consummating the relationship with their lovers. Consequently, Laureola's recalcitrance can only further corroborate her complete lack of interest in Leriano's advances.

We do not witness the same evolution in Laureola that we do in Melibea; what we do witness instead is an unfaltering manifestation of disinterest, clearly and firmly expressed over and over again, each time misinterpreted by the *Auctor*.[69] Celestina has no need to twist Melibea's words, as she expresses interest quite obviously on her own. What is more, Lucrecia also acts as an impartial witness to Melibea's enthusiastic participation in Celestina's trickery. She stands by several times, watching and lamenting the ensnarement of her mistress: "¡Ya, ya, perdida es mi ama! ¿Secretamente quiere que venga Celestina? ¡Fraude ay! ¡Más le querrá dar que lo dicho! [...] El seso tiene perdido mi señora...Cativado la ha esta fechizera" (234, 344). Laureola, for her part, has no outside witnesses; just a jealous Persio, who, thinking of his own desire for her, bases his suspicion on an exchange of glances, an exchange also "witnessed" by an *Auctor* we cannot trust.

I argue that while the *Auctor*, along with Parrilla, finds every reason to justify Laureola's desire to be with Leriano despite her declarations to the contrary, the reader as an outsider is able to see both Laureola's consistency in her refusal and the dubiousness of

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[69] Keith Whinnom also refutes the complete omniscience and infallibility that Parrilla assigns to the *Auctor*, asserting that her agitation can be owed to emotions other than desire. Folger observes that he "mistakes the signs of Laureola's pity for symptoms of *hereos* [, and h]is misreading of her body triggers a cataclysm of events that compromises Laureola's honour, damages the reputation and authority of the king, and causes civil war and ultimately, Leriano's death" (623). He calls the *Auctor* "incapable of deciphering" Laureola's signals, as he relies solely on "evasive body language" (627), resulting in his "failed intervention as a go-between" (624). What is more, the Spanish *Auctor* notes the "diferencia de la lengua" between him and the other Macedonian protagonists, a discrepancy that Parrilla says is never justified (12). If the reader keeps this language barrier in mind, it could further make a case against the *Auctor*'s ability to successfully interpret and understand Laureola's verbal articulations. For a discussion on the discrepancy between the *Auctor* as omniscient narrator and simple observer with limited knowledge, see Miñana.

the *Auctor*. The *Auctor* relays details of their interactions to help his own case, but, in my view, these details only act to further corroborate Laureola's impartiality to Leriano. In their first meeting, he begs her, "[S]uplícote sea tu respuesta conforme a la virtud que tienes, y no la saña que muestras" (15). From the beginning, Laureola's expression indicates not only her lack of interest, but also her clear aggravation at the *Auctor*'s ambush at her kingdom.

On his second visit, however, the *Auctor* senses a shift in her attitude, finding her kinder and more hospitable to his messages from Leriano, and thus begins to doubt the genuineness of the ire she first exhibited. As they meet more and more, he notes:

> hallava en sus aparencias mas causa para osar que para temer [...] hovo en ella menos saña; y como aunque en sus palabras havía menos esquividad para que deviese callar, en sus muestras hallava licencia para que osase dezir [...] hallava áspero lo que respondía y sin aspereza lo que mostrava [...] mirava en ella algunas cosas en que se conosce el coraçon enamorado[.] (17)

From his perceived variation in Laureola's attitudes, he concludes, "[N]o sabía a quál de mis pensamientos diese fe" (17). The *Auctor* attributes her shifts in attitude to the fact that "aquel estudio [amoroso] avié usado poco," or, as Parrilla explains it, that "Laureola es novicia en el trato amoroso" (27). *La Celestina*'s Melibea is also portrayed as a novice in the game of love, as she fluctuates between feigned irritation and peaked curiosity at Calisto's advances. Laureola, on the other hand, does not demonstrate this same interest toward her admirer; but the "lack of experience" trope serves the *Auctor* with a pretext to take liberty with interpreting her words and reactions. This reduction of

her message on his part also undermines her intelligence and her ability to effectively articulate herself. And even though Parrilla attributes it to the fact that he is the narrator and therefore must anticipate the *novela*'s turn of events, the *Auctor* himself acknowledges that the changes he notices in both her appearance and her affect were a result "más de piedad que de amor" (17).[70]

This is a fact that Laureola confirms many times as well. While the *Auctor* interprets the changes in her as signs of *aegritudo amoris*, noting that he

> mirava en ella algunas cosas en que se conosce el coraçon enamorado: quando estaba sola veía-la pensativa; quando estaba acompañada, no muy alegre; érale la compañía aborrecible y la soledad agradable. Más vezes se quexava que estaba mal por huir los plazeres; quando era vista, fengía algund dolor; quando le dexavan, davas grandes sospiros; si Leriano se nonbrava en su presencia, desatinava de lo que dezía, bolvíase súpito colorada y después amarilla, tornávase ronca su boz, secávasele la boca (17), [71]

her words repeatedly speak of her moral obligation to Leriano rather than of her love: "[M]as te scrivo por redemir tu vida que por satisfacer tu deseo [...] porque si deste pecado fuese acusada no tengo otro testigo sino mi intención, y por ser parte tan principal no se tomaría en cuenta su dicho" (27-8). Howe notes that the men's continued "lack of attentiveness" to her words have dire consequences in the grand scheme of things: "it is precisely the *Auctor*'s confidence in his ability to 'read' Laureola that also contributes to the impending tragedy...Both the *Auctor* and Leriano refuse to acknowledge that Laureola

[71] It is by this passage that Waley concludes that Laureola "bears all the conventional signs of love" ("Love and Honour," 260).

is not in love with Leriano despite his suffering. Indeed, the *Auctor* believes she is merely dissembling...[N]either is she in love with Leriano, a point she makes clear in virtually every instance in which she voices her own opinions" (18-25). Her actions are driven not only by her mercy for Leriano, but also, by fear for her reputation; in the guilt of his death and the fear of how she will be judged by her peers. She feels a sense of obligation to stop him from taking his own life and to keep her social image tarnish-free.

Both the sense of obligation and the fear of defamation come up during Braçayda and Torrellas' debate in *Grisel y Mirabella* as well. Grisel first assumes the responsibility for their affair, using this same scenario of the lover who tricks the lady into feeling sorry for him:

> Que tan atribulado triste y lloroso ante vos me ponía continuo: y de vos misma quexándome tanto: que sin haverme amor: me oviérades piedad. Y según las cosas que yo hize y dixe: creo non ser yerro lo que vos hizísteis. Pues era deuda conocida...Y vos no seríades fija del rey tan justo si non diérades mi merecido premio…pues la condición de los grandes es fazer mayores las pagas que los trabajos mereçen. (100-2)

Grisel not only references the familiar situation of the beloved who acts out of pity rather than love, but he also points out that as a royal woman, Mirabella is expected to act with more kindness and decorum than others. Braçayda, for her part, cites the perpetual anxiety experienced by courted women about the ways in which the lover will destroy her name if she does not give in to his advances:

> todos nuestros yerros y enganyos sallen de la mar de vuestros enganyos. Que ni defender ni amenazar no aprovecha, Que de fuerça o de grado a

> quien queréis sojuzgáis. Y muchas vezes por temor de vuestras lenguas e difamias: complimos vuestros desseos. Y más queremos errar secreto y contentaros: que ser publicadas por malas aunque no lo sean. Y unas por amor: y otras por temor: como fortalezas conbatidas: que por fuerça de los petrechos a manos de los enemigos se venden: somos vencidas aziendo del vicio virtud. Demostrando que más no pueden fazer por amor: lo que fuerça en la verdad las tenía ya apremiadas. (126)

Laureola also points out the tendency of men to misinterpret things and distort a woman's words, saying to the *Auctor*, "podrás pensar que huelgo de hablar en [esta plática] y creerás que de Leriano me acuerdo; de lo qual no me maravillo, que como las palabras sean imagen del coraçón, irás contento por lo que juzgaste y levarás buen esperança de lo que deseas" (22). She is aware that the he will interpret things as he wants to, especially given that his objective is to deliver good news to Leriano as encouragement not to take his own life. Given his very purpose to improve the physical and mental anguish in which Leriano finds himself, taking care to prevent his suicide, can we trust the *Auctor* as a reliable narrator of what Laureola says, does, and expresses through her body language? Carmen Parrilla not only indicates the *Auctor*'s instinct to follow the code of Aristotelian ethics upon meeting Leriano, she also points out that the *Auctor*'s apology for any harshness in Leriano's first letter just serves as a measure of "el grado de relación amistosa entre Leriano y su mensajero" (20). The *Auctor* asks that Laureola overlook "el mal que le queda en las palabras que enbía, las quales, aunque la boca las dezía, el dolor las ordenava" (20), yet another lack of masculine accountability for one's own words, this time assumed by the *Auctor* for Leriano. Consistently, as I have said, the men are able to

“excuse” themselves for their words and actions without being held accountable by Laureola while the reverse does not apply. The men are able to speak and act with impunity, continuously shirking the blame, while they constantly remind Laureola that her words and actions breed consequences. Moreover, the *Auctor* feels entitled to justify Leriano's curt and manipulative tone by insisting that it is merely a product of his pain, and politely begging her pardon. This exchange is not unlike the Kings' fluctuation between tyranny and clemency; it is as if these fleeting moments of courtesy, tenderness, or compassion on the part of the male characters work to nullify their previously pugnacious behavior. The *Auctor* not only feels morally obligated to help Leriano, but also as time goes on, he sees him as a friend to whom he owes his loyalty, even if that means compromising the dignity of the woman being courted.[72]

Besides, given with what finesse both he and Leriano have demonstrated in their ability to coax Laureola to continue writing and to feel obligated to do so, do we not already view both of them as skillful manipulators? When the *Auctor* asserts that Laureola did not want to allow Leriano's suicide to come to fruition, "pareciéndole inumanidad perder por tan poco precio un onbre tal" (27), Laureola's appraisal seems falsified simply to appease his lord. This compliment is out of place with the rest of Laureola's dialogue throughout the novel. She never once acknowledges any redeeming qualities in her admirer. Furthermore, his tampering with one of Leriano's letters also damages his credibility, especially when it comes to Laureola's interests: "puesto en el camino [a Laureola], puse un sobrescrito a su carta, porque Laureola en seguridad de aquél la

[72] After hearing Leriano's petition of his help, the *Auctor* is immediately drawn to his charisma: "no he avido menos plazer de oírte que dolor de verte, porque en tu persona se muestra tu pena y en tus razones se conosce tu bondad...tanta afición te tengo y tanto me ha obligado amarte tu nobleza, que avría tu remedio por galardón de mis trabajos" (12). Deyermond also concurs with Parrilla that the *Auctor* "se compromete emocionalmente" to the success of Leriano's courtship (*Historia*, 298).

quisiese recebir; y llegado donde estava, acordé de ge la dar, la qual creyendo que era de otra calidad, recebió, y comencó, y acabó de leer" (26).[73] Emily C. Francomano insists that the *Auctor* does this because he is aware of Laureola's feelings of not only disinterest, but also fear: "Knowing that Laurerola would not willingly accept Leriano's second letter, having experienced the trauma and the danger of the first, the *Auctor* puts pen to paper, for the first and only time in *Cárcel*, and forges the name of another sender" (98).[74] There is a need to trick Laureola into reading Leriano's letter, and, because the *Auctor* is aware of the tangible threat he and Leriano pose to her, as Francomano points out, he happily intervenes by redacting this letter without being asked. Throughout the novel, he goes from agreeing to help Leriano alleviate his heartache to becoming a downright accomplice in Leriano's game of extortion against Laureola.

Laureola herself even notes the collaborative quality of their harrassment, writing to Leriano, "Todas las veces que dudé en responderte fue porque sin mi condenación no podias tú ser asuelto, como agora parece, que puesto que tú solo y el levador de mi carta

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[73] Howe also brings up his altering of the letter, as well as his choice not to deliver Laureola's letter from prison to Leriano, stripping him of his impartiality: "Rather than being dissuaded by such contradictory signs...the *Auctor* opts for a course of action that involves him even more deeply. Unconsciously he seeks to manipulate these events in order to bring about the happy ending he envisions from the start...and to gain fame as a successful mediator on behalf of Amor" (18). Howe also points out that the *Auctor* confesses to be a "former captive of love" (17), therefore letting his own sentiments pervade his actions and rhetoric with respect to Laureola, while Munjic believes he represents the medieval poet who celebrates unrequited love, such as when he urges Leriano to persist in courting Laureola even though he knows there is no hope (213-6). This statement mirrors the ideas put forth by James A.Schultz about the ennobling qualities of love, even if it is unrequited, which I have discussed in Chapter 2. Miñana contends that the *Auctor* narrates the story with a subjective point of view (139).

[74] In her book *The Prison of Love*, Francomano also talks about the1574 *Floresta española de apotegmas o sentencias*, a book of sketches and expressions for its reader to copy by hand. Francomano's chapter "De sobreescriptos" includes an anecdote about a man who wanted to "imitate Leriano's eloquence" by hand-copying one of his letters to Laureola to a woman. According to Francomano, the woman, recognizing the letter, responded: "'Esta carta no viene a mí, sino a Laureola' " (105).

sepáis lo que escreví, ¿qué sé yo los juizios que daréis sobre mí?" (28).[75] This is really the first time she points out the unjust quality of their behavior, rather than simply showing irritation at Leriano's advances. She acknowledges that both of them are playing equal roles in this crime, that she cannot trust either of them, and that it is only through her condemnation as a heartless murderer that Leriano looks like the adoring underdog. It is through this juxtaposition of character portrayals that Leriano is "absolved," as she says herself, of the crimes he is committing against her. Conversely, though, on her part, she still has to concern herself with what people will say about her once Leriano and his co-conspirator make their *juizios* public. She once again demonstrates her understanding of the scale of their blackmail, imploring them to think of her *fama*:

> sola mi sospecha me amanzilla. Ruégote mucho, quando con mi respuesta en medio de tus plazeres estés más ufano, que te acuerdes de la fama de quien los causó; y avísote desto porque semejantes favores desean publicarse, teniendo más acatamiento a la vitoria dellos que a la fama de quien los da. Quánto mejor me estoviera ser afeada por cruel que amanzillada por piadosa, tú lo conosces; y por remediarte usé lo contrario; ya tú tienes lo que deseavas y yo lo que temía [.] (28) [76]

[75] Braçayda also accuses men of lying about their amorous conquests: "si alguna con sobra de virtud de vosotros sabe guardarse de vuestras maliciosas lenguas: no se podrá defender porque en la companya de vuestras amistades por loaros traéis en practica: que havéis ovido más de lo que pedir quesistes: pues contra esto ¿qué faremos? ...Que sin pecar nos culpáis" (120). Interestingly enough, Braçayda's theory is confirmed once Torrellas begins to court her. As soon as she responds to his letter, he immediately tells his friends, "[l]oando a sí y menguando a aquella" (166).

[76] Parrilla claims that with this petition Laureola "encarece el secreto" of their relationship, one of the key steps of the courtship protocol (28).

As if Laureola had not been blamed enough, it is fitting to bring up Nicolás Nuñez's continuation to *Cárcel de amor*. Nuñez was a poet believed to be from Valencia, whose work was found in the *Cancionero.* Nuñez is a disgruntled reader of *Cárcel*, insisting that San Pedro's original ending is too ambiguous. He pens his own, still paying tribute to San Pedro, saying that he writes not to overshadow San Pedro's work, "mas por saber si a la firmeza de Leriano en la muerte dava algún galárdon, pues en la vida se lo había negado" (83). The first priority for the *Auctor*, according to Nuñez, should have been to go straightaway to Laureola's court and tell her what she had done to Leriano: "que deviera venirse por la corte, a dezir a Laureola de cierto como ya era muerto Leriano. Y ahunque le pareciera que al muerto no le aprovechava, a lo menos satisfiziérase a sí, si viera en ella alguna muestra del pesar por lo que havía hecho; pues sabía que si Leriano pudiera alcançar a saber el arrepentimento de Laureola, diera su muerte por bien empleada" (83). Nuñez is not only adamant that Laureola find out about Leriano's death so that she can experience the guilt for what she has done; he also opines—vis-à-vis the Auctor—that any expression of regret from her would serve as a sort of recompense for Leriano. His death, in that case, would not have been in vain. While Nuñez stays loyal to the original characterizations by repeating some of their well-known utterances from San Pedro's text, he gets to talk anew through the *Aucto*r, Laureola and Leriano, rectifying the situation as he sees fit. But like San Pedro's original *Auctor,* and Leriano with him, Nuñez's new *Auctor* is not about to let Laureola off that easily. He reproaches her numerous times for causing Leriano's death, reminding her that she alone had the power to prevent it as he

reflects on "cómo en tu mano estaba su vida" (85). He also blames Laureola not simply for Leriano's death, but for the pain inflicted on everyone who loved him: "A él hiciste morir, y a su madre porque no muere, y a mí que viviendo muere" (85).

It seems, however, that Nuñez not only rewrites San Pedro's conclusion in order to rectify with a happy ending a love story he was invested in; part of the satisfaction he gets from re-writing is for Laureola to willingly, verbally take the blame. If we consider Brundage's explanation of pre-canon law reparations, Nuñez seeks reparations for the "harm" she has caused in the form of her regret, not simply for the two to be together. It is as if Nuñez avenges Leriano's death by making Laureola say what she refused to say in San Pedro's text. The troubadour seeks reparations in publicly humiliating the woman. The instances we see are mostly shame-based, if we consider Eaton's argument. That is to say, the instances of public defamation, such as the women of the *mala cansó* could be considered shame-based, since revelation of socially unacceptable behavior and therefore humiliation is at stake.

However, we might assume that Laureola ends up with feelings of both guilt and shame. She is shamed from the very beginning of the story by both Leriano and the *Auctor* with threats of exposing her cruelty, and when Leriano is especially heartsick, both he and the *Auctor* attempt to make her feel guilty for his suffering. Furthermore, Francomano points out that Leriano's death takes place in front of many people including servants, friends, and his mother, so the "secret" has definitely been compromised. Then, with the continuation of Nuñez, Laureola

is blamed all over again for causing Leriano's death. What is more, Nuñez sought another reparation aside from Laureola's simple admission of guilt—her admission of love. It almost seems like a form of revenge; Laureola was not in love with him, so to avenge Leriano's death, so to speak, Nuñez forced her to confess her love. She tells the *Auctor* in the continuation:

> no creas que de su muerte recibo plazer; ni creo que a ti tanto puede pesar como a mí me duele; pero el temor de mi honra y el miedo del rey mi padre pudieron más que la voluntad que le tenía. Ni creas que el conoscimiento que yo de sus servicios tengo desconozco ni menos desagradezco; y si con otro galardón pudiera pagallos que la honra no costara, tú me tuvieras por tan gradecida quanto agora me culpas por desamorada; y pues en la vida sin que costarme la muerte no se lo pude pagar, quiero agora que conozcas que la muerte de él haze que mi vida biva muerta. Agora verás quánto me duele; agora conoscerás si dello me plugo; agora juzgarás si amor le tenía (87).

Nicolás Nuñez's addition is a reversal of Gradissa's role as reader in *Grimalte y Gradissa*. After reading Giovanni Boccaccio's 1335 *Elegia di madonna Fiammetta*, she understands Fiammetta's plea at the opening of the book "alle innamorate donne" and decides she wants not only to ease her fellow woman's heartache; she takes the lesson Fiammeta teaches to heart, keeping Grimalte at a distance. After all, according to Fiammeta's plea, love breeds deceit, abandonment, heartache, and even tragedy. Likewise, Nuñez is a male reader interested in his fellow man's fate, and like Gradissa, sought a way to give Leriano that which he so

wanted but never got from Laureola. Nicolás Nuñez and Gradissa show us the importance of readers' responses to a literary text and the differing interpretations, and, often, misinterpretations, that a text can elicit.

Braçayda mentions these instances of misinterpretation as well in *Grisel y Mirabella*, observing men's ability to convolute and falsify consent when it is not given: "Y contra nuestras moradas sin ver aquella a quien mostráis querer: a las paredes o finestras enamoráis con stranyas senyales enganyos y remiramientos. Por donde aunque allí no esté persona alguna: fingís que la veis. Y como que responde a vuestros auctos y malicias…Pues ¿quál puede ser tan grande defensora de sí misma: que contra tantas cosas refrenarse pueda?" (112).

In fact, many of Torrellas' declarations about the silent "signals" of consent and desire women offer illustrate the many misconceptions the men have about what is being communicated. He tells Braçayda, "Quanto a las letras y embaxadas que dezís enviamos: siempre las vi ser bien recebidas. Y si ad alguno desdichado el contrario acaece: vosotras con honesta discreción sin ver la carta conocéis lo que puede pedir. Y vale tanto como leerla. Y aunque allí con furia la fazéis pedaços enjuriando al portador: en aquell mismo enojo se sconde un deleitoso plazer" (116). With this, he confirms that the reaction really does not matter—either way, it is interpreted as desire. He adds that being rejected actually encourages the lover more: "Mas como sabéis que nuestro es el seguimiento: en cordura cabe que nos lo vendáis caro. Mayormente porque conocéis tanto de la condición vuestra: que la que más lo encarece tenemos en mayor stima…Que quanto más os defendéis: mas me dais lugar de sospechar. Pues que sé lo deseáis quanto más lo encarecéis" (122). Torrellas confirms that the male lover is programmed to interpret

rejection or anger as an invitation, and in doing so further elucidates the *Auctor*'s continued misinterpretations of Laureola's messages. He claims it is not even necessary for women to verbally articulate their feelings, since their signals will suffice for the lover to understand:

> ningún hombre de discreción no demandaría a ninguna aquello que no sperasse de haver…Porque quien viene en tal demanda: aparejos halla en la muger de senyales. Assí en el mirar como en el reír y otras condiciones que quieren tanto dezir: "si queréis queremos." Ansí que non faze menester que lo digáis, Pues havemos por más cierto lo que la voluntad consiente: que lo que la lengua dize. (136).

Torrellas' assertion here is especially interesting, because it begs the question: what *can* a courted woman do to effectively say no?

We see the internalization of these masculine misconceptions in Mirabella, who, when claiming the blame for her affair with Grisel, asserts that she silently invited his advances: "¡O quán ligero es de conocer en las mujeres quando aman que sin condeçender en lo que es demandado: dan senyales de consentir en ello! [...] pues ¿quál hombre fuera tan ozado a me dezir cosa tan grave: si en mí no viera senyales de grande aparejo?" (98-102). Her claims that her own body language provoked Grisel to act are much like Torrellas' accusations in the debate, and while in her case may be true, they simply perpetuate the behavior and justifications of the courtly lover, as well as the idea that if a man is pursuing a woman, it is only because she somehow encouraged him to do so.[77]

[77] Waley insists that this confirmation of Torrellas' claims on the part of Mirabella is no coincidence; that it is typical of Flores' approach to the debate about the sexes that the protagonists' behavior all aligns with the claims made by Torrellas or Braçayda in the debate ("*Cárcel de amor* and *Grisel y Mirabella*," 350), using as another example Torrellas' immediate gossiping to his friends about winning Braçayda's heart (351).

Because the danger of looking at women is a fundamental part of the feminine blame and masculine absolution narrative, stemming from the patristic writings and evolving into the belief that women "asked for it," or "brought it on themselves," it is interesting to see how these tropes of unspoken consent, invitation and provocation still operate in the twenty-first century. In her 2013 book *Sex, Culpability and the Defense of Provocation*, Danielle Tyson discusses the defense of provocation in intimate-partner murder cases. She offers the following example of a courtroom exchange she witnessed in the 1999 case of a defendant who had killed his fiancée:

> Counsel for the defence had asked the judge to make a ruling that the partial defence of provocation be left for the jury on the ground that words allegedly spoken by the deceased caused the defendant, her fiancé, to feel insulted and lose all self-control. While under the influence of that loss of self-control, he inflicted at least 24 stab wounds to her head, back, groin and shoulder, thereby causing her death. The words allegedly spoken by the deceased were that she had been "fucking" another man, which she followed with a taunt, in Spanish, about the defendant's lack of sexual prowess ("he did it better than you did"). (1)

Tyson explains that while the presiding judge in this case believed that there were no authoritative legal cases that "established mere words as a sufficient ground to raise the partial defence of provocation and therefore he did not intend to leave it as a matter for the jury" (1). In turn, the defense counsel provided a counterexample of a similar 1975 case in which a man killed his ex-wife, claiming to have been "wounded by the words spoken by his former spouse 'at a time when he was under a lot of stress,' and those words caused

him to lose all self-control and kill her" (2). The defense counsel asserted that in this 1975 case, the presiding judge did leave for the jury's consideration whether or not the defendant had in fact been provoked on the ground of mere words. This led the defense attorney to insist, "the proposition that mere words cannot amount to provocation as a 'be all and end all' proposition is no longer correct…it's a question of looking at the words in the context in which they are uttered" (2).

Tyson expresses her incredulity about the subsequent reaction of the judge and the entire courtroom: "It was at this point that the judge replied: 'Affectively speaking, I think that words can be much more harmful than actions. There's a sting in words, which no action can replicate' [.] On hearing this a number of those seated in the courtroom—the prosecuting counsel, counsel for the defendant, their respective solicitors, the judge's associate and even the tipstaff—leaned back in their chairs and nodded their heads as if in agreement" (2). Tyson justifies her use of these examples by contending that these types of cases tend to highlight "the problem of law's masculinist bias related to the constitution of subjectivity, sexual difference and assessments of culpability in provocation cases" (2). Tyson illustrates the way in which the judge's use of the metaphor of "stinging words" works to invoke the audience's universal knowledge: "Literary tropes, such as metaphor, are employed in the process of judging because of their all-inclusive universal properties to explain social values and behaviours to various audience groups […] On this view, the meaning of an event such as the killing of a woman by her intimate partner or ex-partner is assumed to be self-evident or to speak for itself, thus requiring no further justification" (3). This is not unlike Susan L. Smith's discussion of the way the fathers of the church used *exempla* to call on the audience's universal knowledge of biblical parables and what

happened in the Bible to each man who trusted a woman. However, in these legal cases, Tyson adds, "Metaphor inscribes the event of murder with new meanings. Every deployment of the 'stinging speech' analogy repositions the victim as an illegitimate (active) subject rather than a legitimate victim and recasts the accused as the unwitting object of the speech act's insulting trajectory, compelled to restore his subjectivity by killing the verbal antagonist" (3). While the fifteenth-century literary texts I discuss do not involve alleged provocation of murder, the narrative is still the same: passive women are transformed into active participants without their consent, then they are blamed for the misfortune caused by men. Tyson argues:

> the metaphor that words have a sting carries with it a whole host of associated meanings, a sedimented narrative history, that "begin in myth, legend and religion and continue in representations of film, art, pornography, poetry and popular and domestic fiction and through to traditional common-law legal categories" such as the defence of self-defence and the defence of provocation (Threadgold 1997a: 229). Interrogation of these scripts provides some insights as to the fears and fantasies that dominate the cultural and legal imagination. Foremost of these is the long held assumption about the capacity of the female body to incite male violence, which is illustrated by the qualifier: *she asked for it*. (Tyson 4)

We observe this qualifier at work frequently in the medieval literary texts studied here as, for example, in Leriano's assertion that Laureola's beauty (*hermosura*) motivated him to pursue her, as well as in the fact that Domna H might have said no, but she really meant yes, In each case, it serves to remove the blame from the active male agent and place it on the passive female, as Tyson explains:

Some of the most scathing criticisms of the provocation defence have been in regard to how such cases operate to construct the female victim as partially to blame for, and hence deserving of, her own death. This was outlined by the National Association of Women and the Law (Côté et al):

> By placing the focus on the victim's behaviour, the law capitalizes on historic judeo-christian (sic) ideologies that blame women for the evils of mankind, and that immunize men from responsibility for their behaviour. The plausibility of the provocation hypothesis in spousal femicide cases rests on sexist assumptions about female maliciousness and male vulnerability. It excludes the real context of male domination and patriarchal violence. (qtd. Tyson 6)

This argument of Côté et al cited by Tyson illustrates not only how the "she asked for it" trope is still operating in the twenty-first century, but also the trope of Eve as a prototype for all women. Côté et al show that the patristic ideologies continue to linger in our moral and legal systems.

In her book *Coyness and in Crime Restoration Comedy*, Peggy Thompson opens the book by citing a verse from the seventeenth-century English poet Andrew Marvell: "Had we but world enough, and time / This coyness, lady, were no crime" (qtd. Thompson 1) and synthesizes the verses this way:

> Marvell's famous lines seem to imply a clear situation: a would-be lover pressures his mistress for consummation. But it is not clear whether the speaker believes the "lady" is sincere in her resistance. The word "coyness" could suggest disingenuous demurral as well as genuine refusal. In his reference to "world enough, and time,"the speaker playfully, but manipulatively, suggests that she is attempting to

> defer rather than to deny their love […] he implicitly interprets her resistance as a sort of gamesmanship, thus dismissing her power to say no and rationalizing his continued importunity. (1)

This is directly related to the themes of feminine culpability and masculine absolution. As I have said, by projecting his own desire onto the beloved lady, the lover not only turns her into a willful participant, but he also completely forgoes her consent.The poet-turned-protagonist Torrellas asserts in *Grisel y Mirabella* that even when women protest, the man interprets it as an invitation, so they are left with no way to effectively say no. Even the women in the *mala cansó* are deemed responsible for the way in which their lack of sexual inhibition caused the scorned lover to tell everyone about it: she brought it on herself. In short, from David's kidnapping of Bathsheba to Leriano's persistent courtship to Domna H's tale of the "brave" lover who took advantage of his lady after swearing not to, to the victims of spousal murder that Tyson cites, women are consistently blamed for "asking for it," which has, as Thompson argues, "disturbing implications for women's verbal and sexual agency" (1).

The interesting part is that actually, the male lover is much more guilty of provocation. It is the male lover whose words are unrestrained (such as, for example, the troubadour without *mezura*) and who repeatedly accosts the women to the point of wearing them down. Tyson asserts that the judge in the cited case who argued that words have a "sting" to them was invoking the audience's universal common-sense knowledge with the use of metaphor. One part of that knowledge, Tyson explains, is the notion that "everybody has a breaking point" (3). In that case, it would seem more likely that the beloved lady, ambushed, nagged, and shamed continuously without her consent, would

reach a breaking point and hurt the male lover with words or with force. Of course, she does not, but based on these concepts tailored to the courtroom, the male lover would be considered the culpable party.

Returning to *Cárcel de amor*, another quite telling declaration of Laureola's true feelings is her insistence that she cannot give Leriano a *galardón* of her honor; rather, she offers him part of the kingdom in return for resisting suicide: "yo te daría [paga] como devo si la quisieses de mi hazienda y no de mi onrra...ternás en el reino toda la parte que quisieres; creceré tu honrra, doblaré tu renta, sobiré tu estado, ninguna cosa ordenarás que revocada te sea" (63). This bribe is not the proposal of an enamored, lustful woman, like Melibea, who willfully surrenders first her sash, and then her body to Calisto, or, like Güelfa and Laquesis, who both give Curial cloth from their garments to wear in battle.[78] Folger deems Laureola "[i]mmune to the power of courtly persuasion and male prowess" (623), maintaining that in her rejection of Leriano's love she "actively determines her fate" (633). He says that her steadfastness in this rejection is tied to "her determination, expressed in her last letter, to take over the distribution of mercedes after her father's death, suggest[ing] that she herself aspires to royal power" (633). Regardless, the contrast of attitudes and actions between Laureola and the other female characters is apparent.

It could be asserted that, just like her suitor, the letter is also the medium through which Laureola shows her true colors. In her case, that is, she is able to articulate her true feelings, which, as I have asserted here, come out in the form of a resounding no. While the *Auctor* is always able to distort her verbal declinations and physical gestures into good

[78] Torrellas observes this tradition in the debate against Braçayda: "mas ¿quién me me negará: que allí en las tales fiestas justas o torneos no vayan las empresas que distes en los corrientes cavallos y favorecidos cavalleros?" (114).

news for Leriano, in her letters she is free to give the truest, most authentic representation of herself and her feelings for Leriano.[79]

Perhaps the ultimate avoidance of his accountability in the course of events is the way in which Leriano ends his life at the *novela*'s end. It is not so much the act of suicide itself, since he had threatened that all along; rather, it is the way in which San Pedro writes his death that seems to absolve him of all responsibility and allows him to exit the story, once again, as the tragic hero. This is because, as Deyermond observes, Leriano's suicide is reminiscent of the death of Christ (298), complete with his weeping mother's dramatic fall to the floor, lament of his unfulfilled life, and finally her vigilance, along with the *Auctor*, at his beside until his final moment. Parrilla sums it up perfectly: "Leriano se entrega a la muerte adoptando la imagen de un mártir por amor" (64). As Wardropper has noted (8), this ending mirrors the opening scene when, once inside the Cárcel with Leriano, the *Auctor* observes that "dos dueñas lastimeras con rostros llorosos y tristes le servían y adornavan, poniéndole con crueza en la cabeça una corona de unas puntas de hierro sin ninguna piedad que le traspasavan todo el cerebro...y vi que le recebía los golpes [de una visarma] en un escudo que súpitamente le salía de la cabeça y le cobría hasta los pies" (8). The *Auctor* describes what seems like an amorous restaging of the Passion of Christ.

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[79] While Miñana does agree that the *Auctor* "malinterpreta" Laureola's feelings on many occasions, he insists he is not a completely malevolent character. Since the presence of an *Auctor* character who is both omniscient and a mere observer at the same time was common in texts from the twelfth century on, Miñana contends that the *Auctor* benefits the framework in many ways: "da coherencia al relato de la historia, posibilita la historia misma, es personaje y sabe todo al mismo tiempo, es marco e historia enmarcada a la vez" (142). He also points out the *Auctor*'s efforts in trying to save Laureola from execution at the hands of her father (142), which is why Márquez asserts that he is the only character who indeed shows compassion without entering into any conflict (511). This is because he has no ties to the King, assigning to him a political and diplomatic function outside of simple intermediary (520).

Nevertheless, the heroic quality of his death is twofold, not only encompassing the Christian ideal, but the courtly ideal as well: Leriano must die "in order to preserve his persona of the ideal(istic) lover. Moreover, his love is exalted because he loves in spite of not being loved" (Folger 624). The ceremony surrounding Leriano's death seems the perfect encore for the suffering character he and the *Auctor* have created for the purpose of blackmailing Laureola, while at the same time, according to Munjic, satisfying his own masochistic desire: "Leriano takes center stage amid his pleasurable torments - in *El Auctor*'s own words...literally, in a prison 'sweet to his will'" (210). Munjic reiterates that even in death, Leriano opts for the exit that most benefits his image: "Leriano chooses the lesser of two evils: he prefers his own death to the perishing of desire. Thus Leriano's death should not be interpreted as a tragic outcome of an unrequited love. Rather, his death represents a sardonic commentary on that amorous convention according to which a medieval nobleman is defined through his ability to desire and to suffer" (217). He dies with the pity and reverence of his peers and loved ones, having exacted the ultimate revenge on Laureola, while she, whether ever "outed" as the object of his affection or not, will undoubtedly be shamed and plagued with guilt, having been perceived since the outset as the sole bearer of the blame.[80]

[80] Howe explains that since he leaves Tefeo with an extensive defense of women before taking his life, "he is now free to embrace the martyrdom for love he has desired from the outset. In doing so, he achieves his most cherished desire," while Laureola, "will be considered responsible and, therefore, cruel in the bargain" (24). De Armas echoes this idea, adding that although Leriano dies absolved, he "condena a Laureola a vivir en un mundo social, donde el código del honor reina, a vivir difamada, pues todos reconocieron en la muerte de Leriano una muerte pasional" (409). Márquez writes that Laureola "entiende que será juzgada socialmente por la decisión de vivir o morir de su amante" (509). These refute Walsh's claim that Laureola and her family will retain their honor (127). Interestingly enough, however, some critics have said that Leriano has only revealed the identity of his beloved to el *Auctor*, while Márquez points out that Leriano uses her name in the beginning of his last letter (Márquez 509).

CHAPTER 4: FLIPPING THE SCRIPT: THE NOT-SO-DISTRESSED DAMSEL AND THE SHIRKING OF THE BLAME IN *CURIAL E GÜELFA*

Curial and Güelfa is a chivalric romance written in Catalan in the mid-fifteenth century. It has been classified for many years as anonymous, but a continuous scholarly debate ensues about its true authorship.[81] The romance is named after its two protagonist lovers, the knight Curial and Güelfa, duchess of Milan and sister of the marquis of Montferrat. Curial spends his childhood at the marquis' court in northern Italy as a child of humble beginnings, where he is beloved by the courtiers and able to get an education. As Curial and Güelfa reach adulthood, Güelfa, the marquis' sister, finds herself widowed. Rather than pursuing a monastic life, she comes to Montferrat as her brother suggests, living at his court and ultimately pursuing her interest in Curial. Consulting with her adviser, Melcior de Pando, she decides to bestow the humble knight with some of her wealth, with the intention of increasing his skill in combat as well as his honor. This plan is not simply out of charity; Güelfa wants to make Curial worthy of her so that she might be able to marry him in the future.

Although Curial reciprocates Güelfa's feelings, his travels as a knight-errant cause him to cross paths with Laquesis, the beautiful daughter of the Dukes of Bavaria. Seduced

[81] While in Max W. Wheeler's 2011 translation of *Curial*, Antoni Ferrando discusses Jaume Riera i Sans' assertion that the text had been forged by Manuel Milà y Fontanals, Abel Soler has proposed Enyego D'Avalos as a plausible author as recently as 2017 in his *La cort napolitana d'Alfons el Magnànim: el context de Curial e Güelfa Vol. 1, Enyego d'Àvalos I el Napols alfonsí.* Susann Fischer investigates the way syntax can help to determine time and place of authorship, see "Original o falsificación? La sintaxis como argumento probatorio." *Estudis lingüístics I culturals sobre Curial e Güelfa*. See also Gemma Avenoza, Germà Colón Domènech, Isabel Grifoll, and Arsenio Sánchez Hernámperez for studies on binding, dating and locarion of the manuscript, *Estudis lingüístics i culturals sobre* Curial e Güelfa, ed. Antoni Ferrando, Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2012.

by her beauty, Curial finds himself conflicted between both women, allowing for the reversal of both the damsel in distress motif and the feminine culpability motif. Due to the compromise of their relationship caused by Curial's actions, Güelfa and her confidants are able to use the same tropes of culpability on Curial that Leriano and the troubadour poets utilize on their beloved ladies.

Though at times many of the female characters in *Curial e Güelfa* fit the damsel in distress paradigm, seeming like mere pawns as they are fought over, kidnapped, and handed over for marriage, this paradigm is largely reversed in the work's overall plot. This reversal occurs not only on the protagonist level, but on the secondary and tertiary character levels as well.

By its very nature as a chivalric novel, of course, the majority of the action is played out by the male characters, detailing the jousts, tournaments, festivities, and exiles of Curial and his companions. However, the men's interactions are superficial, acting as a mere backdrop for the women to enact the novel's true plot, which is the tumultuous unraveling of Curial and Güelfa's romance. It is the women who set all of the novel's action in motion; they are the ones who devise plans, mediate battles, and resolve problems. It is by Güelfa's bidding that Curial is bestowed with financial resources and molded into a more prestigious and skillful knight. It could be said that Curial is a mere puppet being controlled according to Güelfa's wishes. The renown he earns is simply a benefit of her amorous desire for him.

In this chapter I aim to illustrate the reversal of the damsel in distress motif so often attributed to the women of chivalry novels in *Curial e Güelfa*, demonstrating the ways in which the work's female characters come to the aid of their male counterparts,

rather than being the predictably dependent, emotionally fragile maidens in need of a heroic rescue so often portrayed in chivalric novels. *Brewer's Dictionary of Modern Phrase and Fable* defines a damsel in distress as "A mostly humorous term for a young woman in difficulties, especially when of a trivial or mildly embarrassing nature, The image is of the imprisoned maiden or captive princess of medieval stories and fairy tales who was rescued by a Knight in shining armour"("Damsel"). The most prominent of these reversal cases is Güelfa, as she builds Curial up from poverty and helps him to become a wealthy, universally venerated knight and finally, by marriage, a prince. Thus she serves as administrator of Curial's adventures, and, more importantly, as his financial benefactor.

I intend not only to further corroborate this inversion of the damsel in distress paradigm in Güelfa, but also to illustrate this inversion operating in the work's other female characters, demonstrating the ways in which they too have key roles in the affairs of their male counterparts: the nuns, prioress and abbess as mediators of both battles between knights and between the two protagonist lovers; Arta, as not only the overseer of Curial's behavior during his endeavors away from Güelfa, but also as adviser to Curial in matters of battle, chivalry, and strategy during their travels; and even the allegorical and mythological female characters Fortune, Jove and Venus, whose very whims determine Curial's social, economic, and romantic fate. I will also demonstrate the versatility and multi-faceted characterization of the female characters in comparison with the relatively unidimensional characterization of the men. While the women exhibit a wide range of emotions, talents, and modes of discourse, the men are limited only to the speech, gestures, and emotions of chivalry and combat. Finally, as I have done with Diego de San Pedro's sentimental novel *Cárcel de amor* in Chapter 3, I will explore how the language of

blame is employed in the novel, and how this language is also inverted, being aimed largely at Curial by the women. This inversion of culpability is extremely innovative, since typically the beloved lady is the target of shaming for her cruelty, obliviousness, and lack of compassion toward the male lover in the courtly love tradition, as I observed in the case of Leriano and Laureola in the sentimental novel, and in the troubadour love lyric.

Undoubtedly the epitome of the hero-damsel role reversal is Güelfa, since from the very start of the novel she is the sole source of Curial's economic, social, and personal growth. Montserrat Piera notes this reversal, stating:

> el personaje femenino en la mayor parte de las obras caballerescas se interpreta desde la perspectiva de la otredad: la mujer es "lo otro" en comparación al caballero y, por lo tanto, inferior. En cambio, en *Curial e Güelfa* encontramos una inversión de los roles genéricos: la dama es el personaje activo porque no sólo desencadena la acción sino que la controla a lo largo de toda la obra mientras que el caballero actúa pasivamente las órdenes de la dama. Esto provocará una desintegración de las fronteras genéricas del *roman* de caballerías, que dejará así de ser un *roman* "del caballero." (167) [82]

Güelfa initiates the narrative's action when she expresses to Melcior the potential she sees in Curial, despite his socioeconomic status: " vénc-los a memòria Curial, lo qual Melcior lloà molt, e maleí la pobretat del jove e la poca coneixença del marquès, car vijares li era que si aquell fadrí hagués alguns pocs de béns, sens tot dubte devendria molt valerós; de què la Güelfa, mostrant haver compassió, pres càrrec d'ajudar-lo e, a despit de

[82] Piera also notes that the very fact that Güelfa is a main character is, in itself, an inversion of the paradigm, as women are normally expected to be secondary characters in works rooted in the Arthurian tradition (145).

la pobretat, fer-lo home" (122). From the start, Güelfa's intentions surpass mere subsidy; she intends to make a man out of Curial—economically, socially, physically and mentally. The news of Curial's newfound financial freedom first comes to him from Melcior, but once Güelfa reveals herself as his patroness, her language toward Curial becomes distinctly authoritative, clearly staking her ownership over him: "Curial, jo he deliberat comunicar a tu tots los meus tesors e sens dir-te'n res he donat principi a la tua honor...així com t'he atorgats los béns, te donaré altres coses quan a mi serà vist que haver ho deges, per què et preg que vulles treballar en cercar via per la qual la tua honor créixer pusques" (127).

Güelfa's choice of words not only assert her possession of Curial, but also, complete control of what he will receive, all the while acknowledging the favor she is bestowing upon him.[83] She also informs Curial of the contingencies that come along with this newfound wealth: "Emperò vull que aquesta llei me serves, que tu jamés de la mia amor no em demanaràs més avant de ço que jo em comediré donar-te. E d'altra part t'avís, e membre't bé, que, si tu en algun temps per servidor meu te publicaràs, me perdràs per a totstemps e et privaré del bé que tu esperes haver de mi" (127). On one hand, her use of the term *llei* makes it clear, again, that she is the rule-maker; on the other, she threatens him with a sort of contingency, not only on her wealth, but also her affection. If he does anything to betray her, or to reveal their financial arrangement, she will retract her love and her money just as readily as she administered them.

[83] Piera notes that Güelfa does not do this "favor" simply out of the kindness of her heart; rather, to satisfy her sexual appetite, which the narrator makes clear when her character is introduced. Piera asserts, then, that Güelfa's aim is to create a person that will meet her needs and desires, therefore making Curial's journey toward perfection not a voluntary one, but one imposed by Güelfa, part of her plan to make Curial worthy of marrying her (132-3).

Perhaps the most poignant example of Güelfa's assertion of her ownership over Curial is when he departs to defend the Duchess of Austria in Jacob de Cleves' place: "Solament te vull reduir a memòria que et membre que est meu" (135). When Güelfa hears that Curial has caught Laquesis' eye while in Germany, she seethes with jealousy but is not surprised, acknowledging that her efforts have made Curial even more appealing than he was before: "¿Qual és la donzella que sentiment haja que de Curial no s'altas, veent-lo en lo punt que jo l'he mès?" (186). Later, Curial decides to become a knight-errant, hoping to gain more renown for himself. Having already learned of the covert exchanges of affection between him and Laquesis, such as his wearing doublets made from the cloth of her gown in battle, Güelfa subtly admonishes him before he departs, warning him not to betray her again: "membre't bé lo punt en què eres, com jo et comencí a avançar" (220). Her leverage is two-fold: she controls both Curial's money and his honor, providing financial support for the adventures he sets off on, adventures as a result of which his honor and reputability have increased. Even Laquesis herself acknowledges that the man she so desperately loves, handsome and brave as he may be, cannot take credit for his own stature : "E si Curial és benvolgut de la Güelfa, a mi plau e jo li'n sent grat, car la Güelfa l'ha criat, l'ha fet home e l'ha mès e el sosté en lo punt e estat en què es" (336). Laquesis describes Curial as if he were a child reared into manhood and "sustained" like a prodigal son by Güelfa, his unconditionally loving mother. She even expresses appreciation of her amorous rival for having "created" such an honorable and attractive suitor. Her descriptions confirm that Curial is not a self-made man, but rather, a product of Güelfa's efforts. In a sense, then, Curial and Güelfa take on the creator/invention dynamic that

Rouben C. Cholakian signals between the poet-lover and his muse, echoing, as I have postulated, both the Creation story and Aristotle's theory of the carpenter and his wood.

It seems all of the work's characters understand this fact. Melcior himself even calls Curial a prodigal son when he admonishes him for his cavalier attitude:[84]

> ¿recordes-te del primer jorn que ací venguist? […] pobre, molt humiliat e sens consell, minyó de poca edat e tal que, per ventura, de pensar bèsties e trotar detràs algun gentilhome fóres estat content...direm ab veritat que aquesta senyora fonc gràcia pervenint, en la qual, alegrant lo seu cor, profità a tu e et mès en orde de bé haver, e a pròpries despeses t'ha aportat a l'estat en què est e ha comprada per a tu honor e favor a molt gran preu. De l'honor que has guanyada, ¿quiny profit li'n ve? Certes, no degú...ella, com a pròdiga, ...t'ho ha donat e tu, com a pròdig, sens mesura e compte, ho has no sàviament despès e gastat. (396-7)

The abbess likewise acknowledges the power dynamic between the pair when Güelfa's anger forces Curial to leave Montferrat. Bitterly, Güelfa remarks, "“Plagués a Déu fos viva e Curial hagués bé ab [Camar]!"] The abbess simply replies, "Curial no pot haver bé sens vós" (483).

Though Güelfa is the work's central anti-damsel, she is certainly not the only one. Arta, the maiden whom Güelfa sends to supervise Curial's behavior during his adventures, at times exhibits traits of the typical damsel in distress, but more often than not she acts as a guide to Curial and his entourage. Several times Curial has to defend Arta from other

[84] Albert G. Hauf notes that Melcior plays with the word *pròdig* here to create a "clara antìtesi entre la generosa dama dadora de gràcia i el qui l'ha malbaratada" (354).

knights-errant who try to steal her for their companion, objectifying and degrading her all the while.

On two separate occasions in the novel, other knights demand Arta from Curial. On the second instance, she begs Curial to keep going and avoid confrontation. It is during this altercation in particular that she enacts the archetypal mannerisms of the damsel in distress. She pleads that they move on before the other knight comes to abduct her, or that Curial find a safe hiding place for her while he continues the journey alone.When Curial refuses to flee the scene, confidently awaiting the arrival of his opponent, Arta "cuidava esclatar e, ab los ulls plens de llàgremes, se lleixà caure del palafrè e ficà los genolls davant Curial e pregà'l molt e el requirí, de part d'aquella senyora que a ell l'havia recomanada, que no la retengués pus en aquell lloc ne esperàs lo cavaller" (246). When the other knight arrives, and the battle between the two intensifies, the knight's herald finds her "de genolls, les mans e ulls devers lo cel, escampant llàgremes de set en set" (248).

There are other moments in the novel when Arta's character is subdued to that of a more typical chivalric maiden. After she and Curial meet the herald Bon Penser, he says that the four Aragonese knights with whom he is traveling would love to meet them as well. Curial "repòs que ell los pregava que a present se volguessen abstenir de veure'l, emperò que la donzella li plaïa bé que vessen. E tantost dix a Festa que es metés a punt e anàs a ells...e, com Festa fonc arreada, féu-la muntar en lo palafrèn e, acompanyada dels escuders e de l'heraut, tramès-la als cavallers" (268). Arta is subtly objectified here, as she is transformed into an object to be observed by the knights; she must complete the task of speaking to them that Curial does not wish to do. She is the novel's only representation of

the damsel motif among the protagonists; however, the damsel is embodied in several minor characters like Laquesis' sister Cloto, who needs Curial's defense when she is accused of adultery; the Lord of Montbrun's stolen maiden, who is passed around like a rag doll and killed mercilessly by her own companion, and Ioland, who I will discuss shortly. Obviously, this is circumstantial; because Arta accompanies Curial on his travels, she is exposed to the constant danger of abduction, ambush, and death. Therefore, it is not surprising that Arta is defended and rescued from danger by the men, while Güelfa and the other principal female characters are never put in such physically compromising situations.

However, Güelfa's private life is micro-managed by the men around her. When Ambrosio and Ansaldo, the two jealous old men of the marquis' court, talk to him about Güelfa's involvement with Curial, they remind him that Güelfa's conduct puts his own reputation in jeopardy. They explain, "Nosaltres, per nostra desaventura, que ja plagués a Déu fos per fer, som estats en servei de la Güelfa ta sor, la qual, per algun temps, mentre consell li ha plagut, ha viscut assats honestament e a honor tua, en tant que nosaltres érem molt alegres pensant donar a tu bon compte de la sua honor" (129). They feign lament in their confession to the marquis, insisting that they wished to God that their news was not true. This calls to mind the purported sorrow of Laureola's father, who "so wanted" his daughter not to be guilty of fornication so that he could free her from the prison he put her in himself. Likewise, when Camar's mother describes the King of Tunis, she portrays him on one hand as kind and genteel, and on the other as quick-tempered and impulsive. The old men claim that seeing her kiss Curial gave them "intolerable dolor, pensant que en nostra vellesa siam venguts ací per ésser alcavots" (129). It is as if these"courteous"

expressions of sadness while telling on a woman absolve these men of their deceitful or violent actions, or cancel them out, just like the Kings of the sentimental novel.

Ambrosio and Ansaldo are sure to warn the marquis about his own honor, an effective tactic to ensure that their words have an impact on him. They contend that, while under their counsel, Güelfa had lived honestly, and thus were able to happily give the marquis a "good account" of her honor. They imply that Güelfa cannot conduct herself honorably on her own; she needs the men's counsel to be able to manage her behavior. Furthermore, her counselors are responsible for reporting back to her brother. This comment about being "matchmakers," furthermore, seeks not only to control Güelfa's private life, but also to trivialize it. Ambrosio and Ansaldo reflect the gender ideologies of the Fathers of the Church and Aristotle that I have discussed in Chapter 1: they appeal to the marquis by illustrating that Güelfa's "carnality" is damaging his honorable and rational reputation. Moreover, the nature of this entire exchange (and likewise, that of Persio and King Gaulo) mirrors the belief, also set forth by Aristotle, that a woman's behavior needed to be managed by men, as she had no authority of her own.

The marquis acts accordingly and banishes Curial from his court, pointing out that by kissing his sister, he cares more about his own pleasure than the marquis' honor: "pensar deus que la Güelfa és ma sor, e jo he a haver sentiment de tot ço que contra ma honor, en la persona aquella, és fet" (131). Therefore, although Güelfa is not put into physically compromising situations like Arta, Cloto, or the Lord of Montbrun's maiden, there are still men in her life treating her as though she needs to be "rescued" from her own misconduct.

Ioland is another tertiary character whose love life is handled completely by her brother Guillalmes. Deciding to make peace after a fierce battle, Aznar tells Guillalmes that he will be his prisoner and pay any ransom he wishes. Guillalmes takes him to his house and sits him next to his sister Ioland. After eating a meal together, Guillalmes tells him the ransom he requests of him is to give his sister a kiss. Aznar does so, but Guillalmes raises the stakes even higher: "Aznar, vòs havets pagar lo rescat, emperò jo no he pagat lo deute que us deig, car vos me teniets en terra e em poguérets haver mort si volguéssets, emperò vós, pus piadós de mi que jo mateix, me donàs la vida, la qual jo ab tot mon esforç me volia toldre. E així, fets de mi e de totes mes coses a vostre plaer. E tu, Ioland, fes sens contradicció tot ço que voldrà Aznar, havent-te donat un tal germà com jo son, lo qual hagueres perdut si ell hagués haüt tan poc seny com jo" (357).

The entire encounter is orchestrated without any input from Ioland; Guillalmes takes it upon himself to use his sister as a sort of currency with which he can repay his debt to Aznar for not killing him when he had the chance, recalling Cholakian's concept of women as the object of exchange between men in troubadour poetry (as I have discussed in Chapter 2). Without consulting with her first, he gives her over to Aznar and tells her that it is her duty to comply blindly with this man's wishes, since he mercifully spared her brother's life. Then, Guillalmes shuts the couple in a room together, and Aznar decides he wants to take Ioland as his wife. He announces to Guillalmes through the closed chamber door: "si a ella plau, que la'm dons per muller" (358). Guillalmes again decides that he can surpass that request and give Aznar an even better reward, replying, "Aznar, no per muller, car no ho meresc jo, mes per captiva la't done; e mena-la-te'n e fes d'ella ço que vulles" (358). Like the marquis' words to Curial about how his flirtations with Güelfa

reflect badly on his honor, Guillalmes postulates that he does not deserve for his sister to be treated so respectably as a wife; rather, to show his gratitude, he offers her as a slave.

Now I would like to return to Arta to discuss the ways in which she much more frequently contradicts damsel in distress behavior. Her fearful reaction to being abducted by the approaching knight that I have just discussed sharply contrasts with the coolness she displays during the first altercation Curial has with another knight. As soon as the other knight sees the pair on the road from the monastery, he tells Arta matter-of-factly that he is going to steal her for himself according to the custom of the knights-errant of his kingdom, asserting, "per ma fe, vós vindrets o per gat o per força. E allargant la mà, pres-la per les regnes e començà a tirar-la" (234). This time, Arta reprieves the knight's behavior, and rather than crying or begging for his mercy, she quips back with cunning sarcasm: "Anats [...] eb nom de Dèu, que vós no havets mester a mi. Hauríets somniat alguna cosa esta nit passada [...] Lleixats-me, car vós no coneixets lo cavaller qui em conduu. ¿E per ventura no us senyàs hui com vos lleyàs?" (233-4).

Arta also provides the men with insight and sage advice. When Curial insists on keeping his identity a secret, Arta urges him to reveal himself to the four Aragonese knights, reasoning:

> segons jo veig, aquests cavallers són nobles e bons, e no sabets què us haurets mester. E, segons ço que havets obrat per lo camí, pensar devets que haurets molts enemics e envejosos e que us faran la pitjor companyia del món, car vós havets deshonrats molts llinatges e abatuda llur fama e renom, en tant que molts hauran contra vós gros lo ventrell e us aminvaran

si poran. E puis que saben qui sots e volen vostra amistat, vullats la sua, car vostres fets ne poran mès valer. (272-3)

Interestingly enough, Arta seems to have more foresight than Curial, as she is able to strategize for the future, while he is prone to react in the moment. Due to her sound reasoning, Curial takes her advice and eats with the knights. Later, she advises all the knights in Curial's entourage to prepare for the tournament in France: "Senyors cavallers, lo torneig aquest, segons que oig, durarà ben vuit jorns e, així, si ho acordàssets, ací deuríets aparellar totes les coses que havets necessàries per a quan hi serets, en manera que res no us fàllega" (278).

Albeit a simple, common-sense piece of advice, it shows that Arta is well-informed about everything going on around her, even the men's affairs, and also that she is confident giving advice—and even commands—to the men. In this way, Arta contradicts the Aristotelian principles of irrationality and incapability of governing assigned to women in the Middle Ages. Her presence on the journey is useful to them in many ways. She is intelligent, assertive, and able to transition smoothly between the realms of the feminine (like the monastery) and the masculine (the battlefield). Also, she is able to transtion between these gender-coded spaces without having to "regender" herself, a term that Anne Clark Bartlett uses to talk about the self-mutilation performed by nuns in medieval England to desexualize themselves to their male peers. That is to say, Arta has no need to make herself more "masculine" in her travels with Curial; she still revels in compliments about her beauty, bursts into beautiful song in the French court, and engages in girlish banter with the other women in the monastery.The virility so prized by the medieval Church and philosophy is not assumed by Arta. It is valid to assert that in

this situation, Arta, like the nuns who stopped the battle, could be merely enacting traditionally “feminine” or “maternal” duties by being caretakers and planners. However, because of their failure to submit to the men around them both physically and verbally while doing them, I would like to postulate that the women are demonstrating their superiority to their male counterparts.

The clergywomen in the novel are also a poignant reversal of the damsel in distress motif, as they are instrumental in helping Curial and his companions, especially in the chapter aptly titled "Les monges posen fi a la batalla.” In the same confrontation with the aforementioned knight who wants to steal Arta from Curial, the narrator notes the grueling battle conditions: the suffocating heat of the sun, and the pain and fatigue both knights suffer from their continuously bleeding wounds. However, while Curial regains his energy to keep fighting, the other knight remains bewildered and barely conscious, which prompts his herald to turn to the oncoming slew of people he sees in the distance. When he catches up to them, he realizes it is the prioress and the nuns from the monastery where both knights had stopped to rest. The women stop the fight, saving the vanquished knight’s life by appealing to Curial’s compassion: "En tant les senyores foren ateses e, metent-se a peu, corregueren a Curial e clamaren-li mercè que no combates pus fins que haguessen parlat ab ell. Per què ell tantost se féu arrere. E bé que ho havia mester, car era tan cansat que, si l'altre hagués pogut combatre, no haguera durat llongament" (249-50). The nuns not only save his life by intervening, they also know exactly how to nurse him back to health: "la priora, ab aquelles senyores, llançaren-li aigua-ros per la cara e torcaren-li la suor, així que ell cobrà lo sentiment e elles, fet fer un llit de llurs mantells, meteren-lo dins e sí el començaren a interrogar com se sentia" (250). Again, the ability to

act as peacemakers and healers is decidedly "feminine," just as Arta's ability to make sure that Curial takes the most sensible course of action can be seen as a maternal instinct. In this way, *Curial e Güelfa* seems to illustrate the virtues of femininity, such as wisdom, reason, preparedness, kindness, caretaking, peacemaking, and fair mediation. The novel's emphasis of these qualities is a sharp contrast from the vituperations of women in the genres previously discussed. In fact, the troubadour lyric and the sentimental novel emphasize the lack of these virtues in women, highlighting instead the defects of womankind, such as cruelty, fickleness, deceitfulness, ignorance, and lechery.

After the nuns save the man's life and establish peace by forcing the two knights to call a truce, however, their coddling ends there. They laugh at the knight's inflated sense of confidence. When he demands that Curial hand Arta over to him, the prioress bluntly tells him, "[C]om serets en millor punt, per ventura ne porets haver alguna [donzella]...Lleixats aquesta, que no us vol" (250). When he vows to continue the fight if he and Curial ever cross paths again, she warns him, "vós no guanyarets res ab ell e siats cert que no trobarets en tot lloc priores que us estorcen de mort" (253). On one hand, the prioress frankly points out his poor combat skills rather than resorting to flattery to spare his ego; and on the other, she forces him to acknowledge that it is because of the women that he was not killed. This is just one of many examples in which the women characters in *Curial e Güelfa* acknowledge their own value. In addition, as I will continue to illustrate in Arta and the clergywomen, among others, these women characters possess a vivaciousness and a lively sense of humor.

The abbess alone serves a central role in the novel as mediator between Curial and Güelfa, as she is Güelfa's sole confidant from the beginning. Interestingly enough, though

Melcior has always done Güelfa's bidding in dealing with Curial, she never discloses emotional information to him—that is reserved strictly for the abbess, in whom she confides her love, hopes, and disappointments. When Güelfa's rage forces Curial into exile, it is the abbess whose counsel Curial seeks. Ironically, Melcior is unable to advise Curial in any way; he can only relay the news of her anger. When Curial asks Melcior to simply sit with Güelfa in hopes that she will confide her feelings in him, she does not: "se mès a estar davant ella; emperò, per molt que estigués, nulls temps ella obrí la boca para parlar de Curial; de què Melcior se meravellà molt" (375). Even Melcior acnowledges that turning to the abbess would be Curial's best bet. When Curial asks for any piece of advice Melcior can give him, he replies, "jo no en sé sinó un e és aquest, que us n'antes a l'abadessa, […] per ella porets saber açò què és" (376). Although Melcior has long been Güelfa's adviser, he seems unable to read her or connect with her on an emotional level.[85] The only key to truly accessing Güelfa is through the abbess, who surely enough finds out the source of Güelfa's anger.

This is not the only time that women take control of certain tasks to make up for the men's incompetence. Just as the abbess is able to understand Güelfa in a way that Melcior cannot, Güelfa sends Arta with Curial on his travels to assess the situation with Laquesis, implying again that Melcior is not sufficient, especially because he is not completely trustworthy. The reader is a witness as he lies to Güelfa, telling her what she wants to hear about Curial and Laquesis rather than the complete truth. When she asks Melcior if Curial "era ja molt lluny de Laquesis," he responds, "lo cos era lluny d'ella mès

[85] This inability to read a woman's body language could also, in fact, reflect the *Auctor*'s predicament with Laureola in *Cárcel*. It is also interesting that early in the novel the narrative voice describes Melcior as the man to whom Güelfa "fiava d'ell no solament les riqueses, ans encara tots los seus secrets" (122). In time, we find that this is clearly untrue.

de uitanta llegües, mas lo cor nulls temps s'hi acostà ab tornes de mil llegües" (188). This type of appeasing white lie is a common tactic practiced by mediators in the sentimental novel, such as *Cárcel*'s *Auctor*, who attempts to spare Leriano from the pain of rejection by reframing his interactions with Laureola more positively. Güelfa is able to honestly tell Arta her motives for sending her to Germany: "La causa per què jo t'hi tramet és aquesta, segons jo he sabut. Laquesis, doncella, filla del duc de Baviera, hi será, la qual dien que és la pus bella bella doncella del món; per què et preg que t'avises bé de la sua bellesa e sápies si és tanta com dien. E, d'altra part, te preg que veges quina festa se faran ella e Curial" (221). Likewise, when Laquesis' herald provides her little news about Curial, she sends her maiden Tura to find out more information. While they provide help to the men, the women also entrust important tasks to one another, especially in affairs of the heart. The maidens understand their ladies' emotional inner workings, sharing a particular synchronicity that the men do not.

Even the allegorical and mythological female characters in the work, like Güelfa, exercise a certain amount of control over Curial's destiny.[86] The novel takes an allegorical turn at the end of the second book, in which Fortune becomes an important character. The narrator credits the turn of events to the very whims of Fortune, who, "fins aquell jorn havia feta a Curial alegre e molt riallosa cara" (369), suddenly has a change of heart: "E jatsia ella fins aquest punt li hagués atorgats tots los béns e totes les prosperitats que ell havia sabudes desitjar...ara li vol noure, e de fet nourà, per tot son poder e saber, tant com a ella serà possible" (369). Fortune's shift from bestowal to damnation of Curial seems capricious at first, until she defends her reasons to the Misfortunes: "jo, ab tot mon poder,

[86] See Xavier Gómez, "*Curial e Güelfa*: oetges mitològiques." *Caplletra 3* (tardor 1998): 41-63.

me son esforçada avançar e metre en bon estat...Curial...[ell] ha tenguts ben a prop, que d'ells nulls temps s'és partida, pregant encara a mi que li volgués llevar tota o almenys alguna gran part de la favor que li he donada" (369). Fortune acts as a reflection of Güelfa: both have worked equally to help him reach his current social stature, and both feel betrayed by his lack of gratitude. Piera illustrates this parallel between the two characters:

> La correspondencia no puede ser más clara. Fortuna decide perjudicar a Curial y, al mismo tiempo, Güelfa le retira su apoyo. Ambas mujeres tienen, de hecho, los mismos motivos para hacerlo. Fortuna habla de la ingratitud del héroe y de su deseo de probar la virtud del caballero [....] Güelfa, evidentemente, tiene las mismas quejas. La dama ha protegido y dado riquezas al caballero y éste, no sólo ha flirteado descaradamente con Laquesis sino que ha hecho público el nombre de su benefactora, cubriéndola así deshonor. Por lo tanto, la dama también considera que Curial debe sufrir un castigo y que ha de demostrar su virtud si quiere ser digno de ella. (153) [87]

Fortune mirrors Güelfa's contingent approach about Curial's good luck, and, simultaneously, the courtly lover who retracts his service when he is denied sexual gratification. She invokes the goddess Jove, who is also eager to punish not only his ingratitude, but more importantly, his injustices against Güelfa:

> Oh per quantes maneres...he jo provada la ingratitud d'aquest cavaller! E la bella Cipriana e Cupido, fill seu, són testimonis que li feren tant de bé que li donaren en sort la pus bella e pus rica dona del món per enamorada, la

[87] According to Piera, Fortune not only coincides completely with Güelfa in her decisions about Curial's fate; she also serves as "un envoltorio mitológico para complementar al personaje que realmente controla a Curial, es decir, Güelfa" (155).

> qual, menyspreada e avorrida una e moltes vegades per ell, és encorregut en pena d'ingrat, cercant abs los bens d'aquest amor en altra dona; e per ço és raó que, no havent l'una e perdent l'altra, vaja per lo món pobre, exiliat e sens honor. E jo, si a vosaltres plau, així ho pronuncie. (370-1)

Just like that, Curial's luck is changed, bringing a myriad of misfortune his way—Güelfa believes the lies the two old men tell her about Curial and Laquesis; Laquesis marries the Duke of Orleans; and Curial and Bertran are kidnapped and sold into slavery in Tunis—all because Fortune and Jove want to punish his wrongdoings. They act on Güelfa's behalf, avenging the heartache and indignity inflicted on their fellow earthly woman. Thus, just as Güelfa had set Curial on the path to fame and honor, Fortune and Jove set him on the course to failure and disgrace. The allegorical women become an extension of Güelfa's emotions.

After Curial's stint as a slave in Tunis, Camar's suicide,[88] and his fight with the lions to prove himself to the King, Fortune finally decides to bestow her favor on him once again: "s'enutjà de perseguir Curial e, no penedint-se del mal que fet li havia, deliberà tornar-lo altra volta en favor" (489-90). She convinces Venus to persuade Cupid to make Güelfa fall back in love with Curial, so that Güelfa "desitj aquest cavaller e cerc via contra tot son grat com lo pusca haver" (491), and Venus complies. Just as she did earlier with Jove, Fortune again appeals to another woman to get the job done just as the mortal women do; not only to restore Curial's good fortune, but more importantly, to fulfill Güelfa's utmost desire.

[88] For a discussion on Camar's invocation of Dido, see Donna M. Rogers, "The Marks of the Hidden Flame: Three Faces of Dido in *Curial e Güelfa*."

It is also Venus who gets through to Güelfa, appearing to both her and the abbess in a shared mythological-allegorical dream. Venus persuades her to open her heart to Curial once again by praising his virtues: "Vet allí Camar, la bella, que es matà per ell, per ésser ell lleal a tu e passant per tu infinits treballs. Ara jo et man que d'aci avant l'ames tant temps com en aquest món hauràs durada" (516). In this way, Venus seals the lovers' destiny, controlling now not only Curial's actions, but also Güelfa's emotions.[89]

Now I will discuss the versatility and multi-faceted personalities of the women characters, especially in comparison with their male counterparts. While the men are restricted to the language and gestures of combat, having relatively repetitive dialogical exchanges, the women offer a wider range of personality traits, talents, and emotions. It is obvious that Güelfa is primarily portrayed throughout the novel as a typical lovesick woman, adoring and generous to the man she loves, and pining for his return when they are estranged. However, Güelfa also exhibits darker, more negative emotions that are oftentimes subdued or absent in protagonists like Laureola and Mirabella, such as rage and jealousy. When she hears about the way Laquesis dotes on Curial, she becomes jealous and territorial, noting at once the hard work she has put in to advance Curial and Laquesis' lack of sisterly empathy: "Certes, Laquesis no m'havia merescut que jo fes aquest cavaller per a què ella el se'n portàs...Ah, Laquesis, germana mia! ¿E per què t'altist de ço del meu e de tan lluny m'has robada la mia vida?" (185). She is also vengeful: following her discovery of their flirtations, she not only retracts her funds, but she also plans to get back at Curial "threefold" with Boca de Far, another of her suitors. This vindictive quality in Güelfa is not unlike the troubadours who vow to get revenge; however, it must reiterated

[89] A parallel can be drawn between the intervention of the mythological women in Güelfa's affairs and the way in which the Virgin Mary intercedes on behalf of her believers in times of distress in Alfonso El Sabio's *Las Cantigas de Santa María.*

yet again that the threat of "publication" does not figure into revenge taken on the part of a woman.

Perhaps the most surprising and lively displays of female behavior in the novel are the exchanges between Arta (known by the pseudonym Festa while traveling with Curial) and the nuns in the monastery where she and Curial stop to eat and rest during their travels. Although they are cloistered women, they do not fit the typical conception of such women as timid, reserved and reverent, especially as described by Anne Clark Bartlett in her book *Male Authors, Female Readers*, which I discuss in Chapter 1. Instead, these women engage in boisterous, colorful conversation: "Una altra començà a riure e, parlant baix, cuidant que Festa no ho oís, dix: —Certes, vós direts ço que us plaurà, mas jo no creuré hui ne demà que no faça més juntes ab vós que ab los cavallers errants. —No me'n meravell—dix una altra—, que menys perill ha la" (238). Arta is a good sport and gets in on the fun, taking the women's jokes in stride and teasing them in return. Thus in this monastery scene, an amicable bond is formed between them: "Així que totes, unes de ça, altres de lla, començaren a mordre a Festa, la qual [...] dix: —Jo em pens que vosaltres lo voldríets haver per sacristà. De què elles feren les majors rialles del món. E així trufant, totes ensems passaren aquell día" (238).

Their banter is quite surprising given its sexual innuendos, exceeding the reader's expectation of the behavior of not only medieval women in general, but also medieval cloistered women. While Piera points out the narrator's clear emphasis on Güelfa's sexual desire, it could be said that these women, too, are expressing their own sexual desire,

albeit in a humorous way.[90] They also create an intimate, playful environment that is exclusive to them, in which this playfulness forges a sense of unity.

The women in the monastery even joke in front of Curial. One of the nuns, Joanina de Borbó,[91] teases Arta, quipping, "jo em pens que no traurets lo cavaller del monestir aquesta volta e, si Déus vos fa gràcia que jamés lo cobrets, guardats-vos bé de tornar-lo en monestir de dones" (240). Joanina goes on to tease the prioress, saying, "jo no em sé ell si es té per segur o per presoner ací on vós lo tenits en vostre poder, mas son certa que bé així o millor li sabríets traure lo cotó del jupó com cavaller errant qui vaja al torneig" (240). The women do not have reservations about being “ladylike” or quiet around him, rather, they joke about stealing him away, going with him in Arta’s place, or the sexual rendezvous the two surely must have together. The scene in which Gileta de Berry invites Arta to sleep in her room turns into a full-blown slumber party—seven other girls insist on joining them, and the group spends the night giggling together and asking Arta about Curial’s adventures. The bond between Arta and the women at the monastery is in direct oppostion with the rivalry between Güelfa and Laquesis. Even though all the women acknowledge Curial’s appeal, Arta is not met with any real animosity, jealousy or competition.

In fact, it should be pointed out that sisterhood is a common theme in *Curial e Güelfa*. This is not only because of the mutual support, disclosure of amorous secrets and

[90] Arthur Terry alludes to this when he notes that the "erotic atmosphere" both surrounding Laquesis and in the convent is "one of the triumphs of the book" (45). Navarro Durán describes the kiss that Camar plants on Curial as "[un] beso...de antología...¡Hay que ver cómo besa Camar, casi con ventosa!, y ¡qué brazos de pulpo tiene!"(7-8). Albeit humorously, this suggests that despite her fragile state, she is able to be agressive with Curial in order to fulfill her own sexual desires, thus yet another display of feminine sexual desire in the novel.

[91] For a discussion of the historical figures behind the names of characters such as the nuns in the monastery, see Pamela Waley's "Historical Names and Titles in *Curial e Güelfa*" in *Medieval Hispanic Studies* (1976).

emotional vulnerability that exists between Curial's lovers and their maidens, but also in small exchanges between less significant female characters in the novel. For one, we see women who should be impartial take sides to support another woman, like when the Queen of France welcomes Arta: "Festejava-la la reina en extrem, lloava la sua bellesa, no solament perquè era gran e molta, mas encara per fer despit a Laquesis" (292). Acknowledgement of another woman's beauty, even in situations of jealousy or resentment, is also quite common.[92] After Curial and Arta leave the monastery, a herald comes to warn them of his lord's arrival to challenge Curial and steal Arta away from him since, when they passed the monastery themselves that same morning the women there "no li saberen contar noves sinó de vós e d'aquesta donzella, afermant totes aquesta ésser la pus bella del món" (244). When Arta and Tura meet during the tournament, despite the fact that their mission in common is to keep watch over Curial and track his loyalty to their respective ladies, they exchange flatteries: "Curial menà Tura a la cambra e Festa li féu molt gran acolliment. E Tura li demanà d'on era, Festa repòs que d'Aragó, e que com havia nom, dix que Festa. —Per ma fe—dix Tura—, vós havets bon nom e sens vós poc valen los fets del món" (279). However, later Tura remarks to Curial, "Per ma fe...ella és molt bella, mas davant Laquesis no serà res" (279**).** Regardless of this jab, there is a willingness to acknowledge one another's beauty that is not suppressed even by jealousy or conflict.

Arta, for her part, is a multi-faceted character, both in her personality and her talents. In the scenes I mentioned earlier, the reader sees that even when in danger of being

[92] Meritxell Simó discusses the concepts of inner and outer beauty in *Curial e Güelfa*; see "Les yeux et le le coeur: beauté extérieure et beauté intérieure in *Curial e Güelfa*." *Le Beau et le laid au Moyen Âge*, 477-91. Aix-en-Provence: Cuer Ma.

kidnapped by another knight, she still speaks to him with cunning quips; and does not hesitate to advise Curial and his companions about how to prepare for the tournament. She is confident and quick-witted. The reader can often witness her sense of humor, which is remarkable because she is most often in the company of groups of men. She and Curial speak with Bon Penser, the herald accompanying the four Aragonese knights. Bon Penser remarks to Curial, " Senyor, bella donzella tenits," and Arta replies wittily, "No em sé si li son bella, mas jo crec que li sia assats enutjosa, e seré més, si la companyia gaire dura" (267), at which the herald laughs. Later, when they arrive in France and all the knights sit down to eat the night before the tournament, the King of Aragon says, "E qui dirà que pus bella donzella que la nostra és venguda al torneig, no sabrà què es dirà [...] així, donzella, hajats bon cor" (288). Arta responds, "puis que vostra senyoria ho vol, mal que els pes hauré jo a ésser la pus bella, aquesta vegada" (288). The group of men laugh together at her joke.[93]

Laquesis' maiden Tura also shows her sense of humor when she is serving Curial his utensils at the banquet to celebrate his victory against the duchess' accusers. She notices that Curial, engrossed in contemplating Laquesis' beauty, has not touched his food, and seizes the opportunity to make a joke: "Curial, ¿mirant a mi vos oblida lo menjar o per ventura no us alta mon servei?" (163) Although Curial is disheartened that his focus on Laquesis has been interrupted, he makes the effort to laugh, noticing that Tura and the duchess are laughing. Like Arta and the nuns in the monastery, Tura is also unafraid to joke in front of an unfamiliar male guest.

[93] Rosa Navarro Durán points out that Arta's alias Festa, aside from being an obvious imitation of Plaerdemavida's name in *Tirant lo Blanc*, functions as yet another of her qualities that makes the other characters laugh (6).

Perhaps what is most impressive in these situations is the sense of humor the women display, their lack of inhibitions in displaying it even in the company of important men, and the way it is acknowledged and validated by their male counterparts; the narrator is sure to note the instances in which "ells rieren molt" (288). The fact that the men's laughter is always acknowledged in the narration at displays of feminine wit seems to communicate that the women are encouraged to participate in society, and to express themselves freely. This not only breaks with the code of feminine conduct in the courtly love tradition, but also, the feminine silence mandated by the Fathers of the Church and Aristotle. In texts like *El Corbacho*, women are derided for being talkative and, furthermore, gossipy. In fact, we know almost nothing of our female sentimental novel protagonists, who adhere to these codes, except that they are beautiful. The reader never has the opportunity to see Laureola express any emotions other than the stoicism she employs to handle both Leriano and her father, let alone display any sort of talent or wit. This is confirmed by Catherine Henry Walsh's description of Laureola as a "stick-figure" that lacks depth (120).

Yet another talent of Arta's is disclosed when, after the first day of the tournament the King's court is celebrating and praising her beauty, Arta "cantava així bé e mills que donzella que fos en lo món" (307). Just as with her jokes, she has no reservations about performing for a large group of honorable people. Each of these episodes involving Arta, be it with her assailants, the women in the monastery or in the King's court, share in common a complete absence of the feminine silence I have just discussed; "un atributo," as Piera points out, imposed on women in medieval patriarchal society (144). It is also

quite remarkable how often Arta's talents and personality traits are highlighted in the novel even though she is neither a love interest of any of the men, nor the work's "heroine."

We find that the women of *Curial e Güelfa* differ greatly from those of the sentimental novel: Laureola, though clearly disinterested in Leriano's advances, adopts an air of passivity as the novel's action happens around her; and while Mirabella and Fiometa are much more vocal about their desires, they too lack dimension. That is, although Fiometa experiences a whirlwind of emotions about the end of her relationship with Pànfilo, including despair and rage, and Mirabella attempts to sacrifice herself in front of her family and the court so that Grisel will not die, both women are mainly identified by their amorous relationships, whereas in *Curial e Güelfa* we are given a full panorama of the women's traits, talents, ideas, and emotions. In Arta's case, this panorama comes without any nexus to a male character.

Additionally, none of the male characters is surprised or offended by the women's gregariousness or humor; in social situations, the women seem to have an equal invitation to speak their mind, crack jokes, and be the life of the party. Even when Arta and the girls in the monastery joke about his sex appeal, Curial does not object. Once again, this contrasts greatly with the rejection of women's opinions we see in the sentimental novel; both Laureola and Mirabella's fathers completely disregard the pleas of their daughters and wives, even when death is involved. From these social situations with Arta to the clear dominance of Güelfa over the men, there is a clear acceptance and validation of women's authority. For example, Melcior's dialogue is marked by constant phrases of subordination to "la senyora."

However, this is not to say that the rampant misogynistic ideologies of the Middle Ages are completely absent in *Curial e Güelfa*. Noting the flawless beauty of both Arta and Laquesis as they arrive at the tournament, the narrator remarks, "Ai, e com les conegué aquell gran filòssof apellat Plató, quant dix que lo seny de les dones tot està en la bellesa e, per contrari, la bellesa dels hòmens en lo seny!" (293). Additionally, when Arta becomes irate thinking that Curial gave Laquesis his shield during the tournament, the narrator explains that this is because "les més dones no saben regir los moviments que els vènen ab regnes, abans lo seu cor llança tantost defora l'odi que haurà, per ventura, injustament concebut" (300). This echoes Aristotle's purported antagonism of masculine rationality with feminine passion. Melcior also makes many derisive generalizations about women throughout the novel, enlightening Curial about their tendency to cry (232) and their skillful use of the silent treatment in domestic squabbles, especially since they do not know any other way of effectively punishing their partners (303). In fact, each time Curial begins to show signs of vulnerability, Melcior reminds him that being visibly emotional, especially crying, is not respectable in a man: "Curial, no plorets, car no és obra de cavaller...en plorar sots fembra e aqueix vici vos tol gran part de la vostra virtut e honor" (319). Likewise, being moved with passion or joy is also rejected as feminine. While in Germany, Melcior and Jacob de Cleves witness Curial on his knees weeping and kissing Güelfa's letter with such ardor that he loses consciousness. After the two men put him into bed, they try to rouse him by pulling his hair and splashing his face with water. When he finally awakens, he gives an impassioned speech about his gratitude for Güelfa:

> ¿E què és de la deessa del món? ¿E sí li recorda de mi? Ah, Cupido, les armes del qual port ficades en lo meu cor! Jo mir sovent en los cels e en lo

terç contemple la tua mare, la qual ab los raigs lluminosos de la sua gran resplendor sol il·luminar aquest sobrestebrós cor prometent-me bona esperança, digues-me...si veuré jamés aquella de qui son esclau...e si em té per seu...Ai de mi, trist! ¿E quan li mereixeré los béns que m'ha donats e les honors que m'ha fetes e em fa tots dies? ¿E quals auirs m'havien guanyat ne quals fades me fadaren que aquesta reina de noblesa a ses pròpries despeses me llevàs de la pols? (158)

Melcior equally admonishes this sentimental display, responding disdainfully,"Curial, ¿per què fets continença e diets paraules de fembra? Eixugats les llàgremes, que massa les havets promptes e no es obra de cavaller" (158). What is ironic about Melcior's gender-coded assertions is that while he scolds Curial for crying on various occasions in the novel, Güelfa never shows her emotions publicly. When Curial leaves for Germany, the narrative voice points out that even though she could not take the pain of his departure, she "sabia cobrir molt bé les sues passions...[e] tant seny hagué que fèu eixir totes aquelles qui eren en la sua cambra e tota sola llongament la sua dolor plangué" (137). Perhaps this ability to hide her emotions is meant to signal that Güelfa is an exceptional woman, or perhaps Melcior's character serves as a parody of these medieval gender ideologies. There is a discrepancy between Melcior's preconceived notions about women and reality, just as there is a discrepancy between the work he does for Güelfa and his personal relationship with her.[94] The two envious old men also abide by

[94] He asserts to Curial that women are often the ones to make peace after an argument, since that they cannot tolerate these self-induced periods of ignoring their partners for much time, and that they generally "passen major pena per los enamorats a qui fan lo gros que no ells" (379). Again, there is a disparity between Melcior's alleged "understanding" of women and the actions of the women around him, for Güelfa immediately plans to get back at Curial with Boca de Far, and refuses to speak to him until being persuaded by the abbess.

these antifeminist ideologies, remarking to the King of France that in choosing to associate with Curial, Laquesis "mostra bé ésser fembra, que totstemps tria lo pitjor" (364).

Now I will return to the theme of sisterhood between the women in the novel. Undoubtedly, the most tight-knit female relationship in the book is that of Güelfa and the abbess. The joint dream experience they share suggests that the two are connected on a much deeper level than simply being confidants: "cansades per llonga vigília, caigueren al llit. E tantost com foren colgades, foren preses de tan estranya son [...] així dormint, la següent visió les aparec" (511). The fact that the women collapse into bed in unison and instantly have the same dream insinuates that their emotional closeness has created a sort of spiritual synchronicity between them that transcends the conscious world. The abbess is so attuned to Güelfa's emotions in wakefulness that she is now able to accompany her for moral support even in her dreams.

Meanwhile, the men are portrayed in a relatively one-dimensional way, discussing only issues like honor, battle, and surrender. Even though Curial does express emotions for Güelfa, he remains otherwise static, without exposing any other talents or personality traits than those he is known for. The women are praised for their beauty, both by the men and one another, all the while possessing confidence, know-how, humor, and a wide range of emotions; Curial's characterization is limited to his handsomeness, strength, and unwavering courage in battle.[95] He bemoans his romantic conflict to Melcior and the

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[95] There are, however, several glimpses of Curial's level of erudition in the novel. For instance, he is able to explain passages of Virgil's *Aeneid* to Camar, and, upon her death, give a heartfelt speech in Arabic (Navarro Durán, 7-8). Antoni Ferrando also calls these "poetic digressions, " asserting that they serve to "present Curial not only as an exemplary knight but also as an expert in the humanities, to the degree that Apollo, in one of the mythological visions related in the novel, crowns him with a laurel wreath as "the best

abbess, but his emotional depth ends there: unlike Güelfa, he does not appear to have a confidant, nor does he display tangible jealousy or anger. His soliloquy after Melcior and Bon Penser wake him up is really the only thorough, heartfelt, vulnerable expression of his feelings for Güelfa, whereas Güelfa mentions Curial in almost all of her conversations throughout the novel. Curial is as inaccessible as Laureola and Mirabella.There is also no real accentuation of the personalities of the secondary or tertiary male characters as there is in the case of the women.

Now, I would like to point out that, just as the damsel in distress paradigm is reversed in *Curial e Güelfa*, so too is the subject of culpability. In the courtly love tradition, the beloved lady is often blamed for scorning the male lover, who in turn uses shaming language to reproach her coldness and lack of pity for his amorous suffering. The lover tries to convince her that her coldness and rejection will cause his death, either literally, by driving him to suicide; or figuratively, by the perpetual anguish and heartache he will endure. The mediator, too, often participates in this shaming of the lady on the lover's behalf, in an effort to abate the sense of guilt she feels, as well as to coerce some sort of reciprocation from her. What is more, as I have noted in the troubadour love lyric in Chapter 2 and the sentimental novel in Chapter 3, this lover constantly brandishes the threat of publicizing his lady's reproachable conduct in their affair, be it cruelty or a sexual taboo. Therefore, the threat of "publication" translates to the corrosion of the lady's reputation.While Güelfa does not threaten Curial with publication, she does use her control over him as leverage to ruin his reputation. Güelfa, Melcior, and Arta alike all remind Curial that as the supplier of Curial's fortune and travels, Güelfa can restore his

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and most valiant among knights and the greatest of all the poets and orators of the present time'"(*Curial and Güelfa* 5).

former status, which, Melcior describes as "pobre, molt humiliat e sens consell, minyó de poca edat e tal que, per ventura, de pensar bèsties e trotar detràs algun gentilhome fóres estat content" (396). In *Curial e Güelfa*, however, this model is also for the most part inverted, and the accusatory language is directed instead at Curial, not only by Güelfa, but by other characters as well. It is not, of course, a lack of reciprocation on his part that causes this, as he indeed returns Güelfa's affection; but rather, for the carelessness with which he treats her feelings, and his wavering commitment to their relationship.

Ironically, the first time blame is directed at Curial, it is not by Güelfa, but by Melcior. When the Duke of Bavaria offers Laquesis' hand to Curial in return for defending the honor of his other daughter Cloto, Melcior is alarmed by Curial's hesitation to decline. He reminds him: "Curial, si lo duc de Baviera vos torna a parlar, membre-us de qui us ha fet home, ço és, la Güelfa, a la qual, si a açò donats lloc, convendrà morir prestament o haurà vida dolorosa" (161).

Melcior uses the image of Güelfa's death several other times to make Curial reconsider his actions, warning him that if he wears the cloth of Laquesis' gown in battle or sleeps in her room, "la Güelfa hi trobaria tant enuig que seria mort" (188). Later, Arta also resorts to this same tactic, warning Curial that if Güelfa hears of any further interaction between the two,"aquell mateix jorn la poran soterrar" (280). Like the *Auctor* to Laureola, Melcior and Arta intentionally use hyperbolic language and the imagery of Güelfa's death to provoke his repentance. Now Curial bears the moral responsibility to his female lover as her beloved, rather than the other way around. At one point, Melcior warns Curial, "no façats que, a culpa vostra, aquella senyora s'enfellonesca contra vós" (319), echoing Leriano's vague threat to Laureola that "si ver no me quieres, será forçado

que veas" (*Cárcel* 61). In both of these threats, the danger lies in the unpredictability of the lover's anger, and in what way they will seek to punish their beloved.

Güelfa conjures up the same sort of death and suffering imagery in her own lamentful soliloquies throughout the novel. When a herald tells her that the Duke has offered Laquesis to Curial, she curses her rival's betrayal: "Jo, desaventurada, tramís socors a la tua sor, la qual esperava ésser cremada, e tu per guardó has morta a mi" (185). Her use of the word *guardó* calls to mind the language of courtly love, and directs the rhetoric of blame toward Laquesis here as the male lover usually does toward his beloved. Like Laureola in the letter she writes to Leriano from her prison cell, Güelfa notes her own compromised position: even though she sent Curial to save Cloto's life, she is being punished for her good deed by Laquesis' attempts to steal him away. Both women bemoan the ways in which society has limited their behavior and their ability to react freely to the situations in which they find themselves.

Güelfa finally gets to personally unload this blame on Curial in the second book when he begins his journey as a knight-errant. As he departs, she warns him, "jo et preg que no em cercs los enuigs que m'has fets en Alemanya, si vols la vida mia... Car jo et certific que, pensant jo en allò e recordant la tua ingratitud, m'has aportada en un extrem tan fort que jo em pensí que no em trobasses viva" (220). In fact, the women of *Curial e Güelfa* are as adept as the men of the sentimental novel at using these morbid images to provoke remorse in Curial. Camar also invokes the image of her death to blame Curial for her attempted suicide, and the death of her father: "mon pare, qui per tu ha perduda la vida...Jo son morta per tu, e pensa que no llevaré viva d'aquest llit […].Ah, homeier de la persona que més t'ama en aquest món...Preg-te que si algun espirit de pietat viu e regna ab

tu, que aprés que sia morta sies remembrant de mi" (464). Camar's choice of words is perhaps the most similar to the discourse of the male lover in the courtly love tradition, in both troubadour poetry and the sentimental novel. She appeals to Curial's *pietat*, citing not her own lovesickness as the cause of the tragic course of events, but rather, Curial's physical allure. In the blame game, the women of *Curial e Güelfa* take their cues from male models of courtly love I have discussed in earlier chapters; Camar seems to be taking a page straight from Leriano's book, especially in deeming Curial's handsomeness the cause of her perdition. In another great gender inversion, now blame is placed on the man for being attractive, for simply existing. This turns the "danger of looking at women" motif discussed by Susan L. Smith on its head: now Curial is responsible simply for the way he is perceived by the women around him through no concrete action of his own; that is, sexually arousing.

Male obliviousness is another gender inversion in *Curial e Güelfa*, as one of the male lover's chief complaints is his lady's apathy or unawareness of his affection for her. While the women are very attuned to their own feelings, Curial is the one accused of utter cluelessness by his lovers. When Curial seems completely incognizant of Güelfa's signs of love, she unleashes her exasperation on him:

> E com és mal esmerçada la mia amor en tu! Jo, mesquina, tant temps ha t'he amat e t'he donat ço que de Melcior has reebut e dins la mia pensa t'he fet senyor de mi e e de mos béns e tu, pus cruel que Herodes, així com ingrat, menysprees los dons que amor, pus piadosa de tu que tu mateix, t'ha ofert. Ah, carn de mesell! ¿E nunca sentiràs los mots punyents que jo tantes

> vegades davant tu he trets de la mia boca? Ah, vergonya, vine, vine a mi e fuig d'aquest insensat que par que nunca haja comunicades persones! (125)

Camar has a similar reaction when Curial fails to recognize her amorous suffering:

> Oh, enemic de la mia salut! Oh, acurtador de la mia vida! ¿E encara has per conèixer jo ésser-me altada de tu e per aquesta raó haver avorrits pare, mare, parents e amics e encara tota la mia honor? ¿E ignores la causa de la nafra dels meus pits?...Major és la nafra que lo teu cor sens pietat me fa, la qual creix tots dies, que aquesta que jo m'he poguda fer. E la que em ve de tu, tu tot sol la pots guarir...E si jo, per estotjar-me per a tu, entens que deja morir, almenys haja en tu algun espirit de pietat e tròpia jo en tu tant mercè que em mates ab les tues mans en un colp. (456-7)

As I said earlier, Camar's language is especially akin to that of the male courtly lover, but this inversion is interesting for the fact that in many fifteenth-century Iberian texts, the lover deems his beloved not only oblivious to his suffering, but also indifferent to it.[96] This cold-heartedness in the face of devotion is something ascribed to women time and again in the troubadour lyric and the sentimental novel, along with inconstancy in romantic affairs.[97] While Curial is a steadfast knight and warrior, these notoriously "feminine" characteristics are displaced onto him. He is initially unaware of the women's affections; at times he seems indecisive and fickle, being lured in by both Güelfa and

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[96] See Abel Soler, "El lexic cortés i cavalleresc en *Curial e Güelfa*: mots patrimonials i interferències culturals. *Anuario de estudios medievales* 45.1 (2015): 109-42.

[97] Alain Chartier's 1429 *Le belle dame sans merci*, a very successful work of the fifteenth century, addresses this feminine inconstancy in love, and may have influenced *Curial e Güelfa*.

Laquesis. This indecision and sense of revelry in having attracted the attention of two beautiful women leads him to be careless with both women's affection.

However, just as with misogynistic ideologies, this inversion does not mean that feminine blame is completely absent in the novel. In *Curial e Güelfa*, while there are refreshingly few instances of men blaming women as compared to the dynamics observed in the other literary genres, we do witness a fair amount of feminine self-blame (albeit fleeting) as well as women blaming other women for, in all fairness, the actions of men.

After hearing about what happened between Curial and Laquesis in Germany, Güelfa decides to make him jealous with Boca de Far, a charming, noble knight who also happens to be in love with her. Curial knows this and that alone provokes his jealousy, but Güelfa is intent on testing his limits. First, she orders Curial to send her Laquesis' bed draperies and any other jewels or garments he had been gifted in Germany. Then, she makes Boca de Far a battle tent, using Laquesis' draperies for the curtains. And even though the abbess advises her not to behave "tan cruament" to Curial, Güelfa insists that she will go even further: not only will she go out to receive Boca de Far with honor and praise the day he arrives to the court, she will do the exact opposite for Curial, taking care not to acknowledge his arrival whatsoever (97, 199). However, although successful in achieving her goal, Güelfa's revenge backfires: Curial becomes so depressed by Güelfa's convincing performance of indifference toward him that the entire court assumes he is terrified of the battle, and therefore, will lose miserably to Boca de Far and be killed. As the day of the battle draws near, she second-guesses all of her self-indulgent behavior to the abbess: "Ai llassa, que com ell e Boca de Far havien les paraules, jo plaer n'havia, e ara voldria me costàs la vida e fossen per dir! Ai, mesquina, que jo ho he fet! Car, certes, Curial no ho

haguera emprès contra Boca de Far sinó per la gelosia que ha haüda raonablement de mi e d'ell e, si Curial mor, jo morta son! Ai, que totes aquestes morts que en esta plaça se faran, se carreguen a mi!" (205).

She goes on to justify Curial's interactions with Laquesis, suddenly convincing herself that he did not betray her in any way; that he had, in fact, remained loyal to her from the beginning:

> Ai, desaventurada fembra! E ¿per què em volia jo venjar de Curial si Laquesis li havia feta honor? Car, faent honor a ell, la feia a mi e les hòmens tenguts són reebre les honors que les dones los fan e així és costuma d'ells. E si Curial les prenia feia bé, emperò totstemps era meu e menyspreava dins son cor totes les altres. Ai, llassa!, que molt ha fet per mi, car aquell matrimoni menyspreà membrant-li lo meu nom, car veent la mia lletra tornà mut en la taula on presentaven Laquesis, verge alemanya, nada de clara sang e rutilant per inestimable bellesa e, veent-la's davant, un poc de paper meu no li lleixà allargar la mà per prendre-la. (205-6)

Interestingly, Güelfa crafts multiple justifications for Curial's behavior as she laments her own hasty, vengeful reaction; in the first place, her anger has made him so depressed that he has lost the will to battle her other suitor, therefore, when he is killed, she will undoubtedly be the one to blame. Not only will she be responsible for Curial's death, however; all deaths on the battlefield will inevitably be the consequence of her stubborn behavior. Then, she legitimizes the interactions between Curial and Laquesis, asserting that men are obliged to accept the praise and honor of women—it is customary. Moreover, she should be flattered by Laquesis' desire for Curial; after all, by honoring

him, she is honoring Güelfa as well. Finally, she deems herself ungrateful, since, as she declares, he has done so much for her, even demonstrating self-control in the face of a beautiful, noble virgin like Laquesis, all for her sake. Plagued with guilt, she distorts the sequence of events to align with the narrative of the courtly lover that we have seen in the sentimental novel. At once, Curial is an adoring, loyal, and obedient lover, who was simply complying with societal norms for knightly (male) behavior, and she is an ungrateful, insatiable woman, incapable of controlling her jealous rage, and thus will become a murderer up for public condemnation.

As I have commented in Chapter 2, this channels Gui d'Ussell's condemnation of the lady who forsakes a loyal gentleman (or knight) for any other man, and simultaneously feeds into the Aristotelian teaching that women give in too readily to their emotions, whether it be rage, jealousy, or lust. For a moment, Güelfa appears to come to her senses, declaring, "Mas, ¿per què m'acuse, mesquina de mi? ¿Què m'aprofiten les paraules, car veritat és que ell enuigs m'havia fets[?]" (206), but she quickly falls back into the cycle of self-blame as she adds, "mas molt són majors aquests que jo mateixa m'he procurats?" (206). While she can admit that Curial did indeed do her wrong, her morality (along with the precepts of permissible feminine conduct) tells her that her behavior was worse. Güelfa blames herself again for Curial's misfortune toward the end of the novel when it is believed that he and his shipmates have died in a shipwreck. This news is delivered in dramatic fashion by Melcior, using blatantly accusatory rhetoric to hamper her with guilt:

> A la fe, senyora, ja havets acabat e lo vostre avorriment no ha lloc; e si Curial vos féu algun enuig, los moros de Barbaria vos han venjada d'ell molt bé. Ell e tots quants eren en la sua galera són estats morts mìserament

> e trista e sens defensió alguna. E de tant han haüda pitjor sort que los seus ossos no han obtenguda sepultura, ans les llurs carns, menjades de cans e bèsties feres, han lleixats los ossos nuus e descoberts. No han haüt temps de confessar. Certes, senyora, bé l'han seguit vostres maldiccions. Ara reposaran aquells vells falsos, ara l'Enveja no el seguirà pus, e almenys l'ànima serà quita d'aquelles persecucions. Ah, vells falsos e malvats! Reposats d'humés! Mort és Curial, qui sens fer-vos enuig vos enutjava! Ja no us cal tembre que torn! Ara veurem quant vos millorarets de la sua mort, e quants anys vos seran tolts de la vellesa e quanta suma creixeran vostres béns per aquesta mort! E vós, senyora, cercats altre servidor que aquell tan lleal, tan noble e tan virtuós mort és en l'exili, al qual a gran tort l'haviets damnat. (442-3)

Melcior, like Leriano before him, and the clever women around him, again recreates the morbid, grotesque scenario of the courtly lover's speech, complete with the men's unburied carcasses whose flesh is eaten by dogs and other wild animals and bones that lay exposed on land, having no chance of being properly interred. As always, this imagery serves its purpose of igniting guilt in the heart of Güelfa. Not only that, but that all of this has occurred just like she wanted, according to Melcior: her hatred for him now had no need to further fester. Her "curses" had caught up to him, and she was avenged by the Moors; she had gotten what she wished for. In short, all of these gruesome events were her fault—she was the cause. For good measure, though, Melcior is sure to mention that the men had died before having the opportunity to confess their sins, a tactic used to stir up in Güelfa a feeling of moral culpability. Not only had she indirectly killed Curial and

his shipmates, she was undoubtedly responsible for their descent to purgatory or perhaps even hell, since they did not have time to clear their name before God. Not to mention the way in which Melcior includes the rant about the two envious old men; it is as if his words are still intended for Güelfa, especially in talking about Curial's loyal and virtuous service and making sure to emphasize that he died while in an exile which she had ordered.

Although Güelfa remains stoic throughout Melcior's speech, taking care to listen "sens mostrar en la sua cara algun torbament, sens respondre, manà a Melcior que se n'anàs e...tantost tancades les portes de la cambra, solament ab l'abadessa en un retret se tancà. E així com entrà, a grans crits cridà" (443). This is another instance in which Güelfa demonstrates complete control over her emotions, careful to reveal nothing of her heartache, again contradicting Melcior's beliefs about women. However, in hearing this news Güelfa becomes seized with guilt, and blames herself for Curial's fate once again:

> Curial meu! ¿On est? ¿On vas, Curial? Apareix-me! Vine a mi! Veja jo la tua cara! Espera'm, que jo et seguiré! Tu est vengut a la mort per mi! Jo he partida la companyia de l'ànima e del cos, jo he donades les tues carns a cans e a lleons, e los teus ossos estan sens sepultura...Oh, Güelfa, bròfega e cruel! ¿E com te tolguist la llum dels teus ulls? ¿E per què no els m'arranque en manera que altre home no sia vist per mi? Oh, Edipo! Preg-te que em prests los teus dits amaestrats e ardits!...Oh, falsa e cruel! Jo he mort aquell que los cavallers no podien matar, jo he vençut lo vencedor de tots, donant a exili lo pus virtuós e millor cavaller del món! (443)

Clearly, Melcior's words have made their desired impact on Güelfa. She wholeheartedly believes his graphic description of Curial's death, down to the dogs and lions feasting on

his dead body, and his bones lying in plain view without a proper grave. She chastises herself for being cruel and cold, even proposing to take her own life to follow him in death. In her regret, she also reflects on his good character, deeming him the best, most virtuous knight, who no one could ever defeat before her cruelty and her banishment to exile took his life.

The interesting thing is that Güelfa not only convinces herself of her own cruelty and Curial's loyalty, the abbess and Venus do too. When Güelfa agonizes over Curial's probable death in the battle against Boca de Far, the abbess replies bluntly,"Senyora, si vós mateixa, no em sé per què, vos tolets tots vostres plaers, ¿qui us n'ha culpa? Jo us dic certament que persona del món no es deu plànyer de vós" (205). Furthermore, part of the blame Güelfa undertakes, reflected here in the abbess' lecture as well as in her own admissions of guilt, is responsibility for having robbed herself of her own happiness.

When Venus appears to the two women in their joint dream, she reprimands Güelfa, exclaiming,

> Oh, amiga e molt amada mia! Oh, ingrata e desconeixent! ¿Com no et vols recordar que, entre totes aquelles que jo he elegides a mon servei, t'havia preferida e t'havia donat en sort un dels pus nobles e millors cavallers del món, del qual tu est amada e llealment servida? E tu, menyspreant los dons que jo, molt pus piadosa de tu que tu mateixa, graciosament t'havia donats, induïa per dues falses llengües de dos envejosos, falsos e mentidors ancians que dins casa tua tens, has fets vots e promissions contra tota consciència, en menyspreu de la mia divinal jurisdicció, cuidant apropriar a tu ço que és meu e no donaria lloc a tu ne a altri que de tal elecció usàssets. E si jo em

> volgués haver envers tu segons la tua repugnància e ingratitud, jo et faria treballar sens fruit tant temps com tu, per la tua superba crueltat, fist estar Curial en captiu. Vet allí Camar, la bella que es matà per ell, per ésser lleal a tu e passant per tu infinits treballs. Ara jo et man que d'ací avant l'ames tant temps com en aquest món hauràs durada. (515-6)

This command given to her by Venus is actually more of a gift to Güelfa, since all she wants is to be happily reunited with Curial. However, the way she reproaches Güelfa is undeniable: not only is Güelfa ungrateful for the loyalty, love and service of one of the noblest knights in the world, she also deserves the blame for Curial's captivity and Camar's suicide. The abbess expresses these same opinions earlier in the novel as she tells Güelfa about Camar's death. When Güelfa sardonically replies that she wasted her death on a cruel and thoughtless man, the abbess challenges her, replying, "Certes, ella morí per lo pus lleal home del món" (483). She insists that Curial is not to blame for Camar's suicide, but notes on the other hand that while Güelfa did not kill her directly, Camar "ne tampoc morira si vós no fóssets" (483).

Before I continue to illustrate more cases of feminine self-blame, I would like to raise the question of Curial's loyalty. As we can observe here in the abbess' conversation with Güelfa, loyalty is a quality constantly attributed to Curial, both as a lover and a knight, by just about everyone in the novel, male or female. However, he is never truly exposed in the novel for his disloyal, two-timing behavior with the women. After all, he does indeed have feelings for Laquesis, despite his claims of simply completing his due service to her.

During his stay in Bavaria, when the duchess asks what he thinks of her daughter, Curial replies, “Certes, senyora, jo crec que vós havets la pus bella e pus donosa filla del món” (164). The duchess persists, asking what Curial values most about her, to which he responds, “Senyora, totes les coses que jo veig en Laquesis són les pus belles del món, emperò los seus ulls són tan bells que jo no crec que Déu sàpia tornar altra volta a fer-ne altres tals” (164). It is understandable that as a knight Curial is expected to be courteous and charming, thus I am not proposing that he would have avoided the duchess’ sly questioning; rather, that he would have responded with some platitudes instead.

Curial’s feelings for Laquesis exceed mere obligation, and this is confirmed several more times. Upon first seeing her, he is immediately tempted to recant on his commitment to Güelfa: “Curial miràs aquesta atentament e contemplàs particularment totes les sues belleses, tantost furtà lo seu cor a la Güelfa, a la qual primerament l’havia donat, e es començà a dispondré de presentar-lo a Laquesis” (163). He even refrains from requesting more wine, “per ço que Laquesis anant la copa no li giràs l’esquena” (164). He also admits to her that “cert és que no és cosa en lo món que per vostre servei pusca fer que no ho faça abans que per doncella que en lo món sia […] us spulic tractets vós bé a mi, qui pas no menys pena per vós que vós diets que passats per mi” (177). Even though Curial is warned by both Melcior and Arta, it seems as though the other characters scold Güelfa for her anger toward Curial on more occasions than they do Curial for his behavior.

Camar also engages in self-blame to some extent, for while she acknowledges that her father's death was not directly her fault, she does admit that she is the cause, and, like Güelfa and our female protagonists of the sentimental novel, she reflects on *el qué dirán*:

"lo rei matà mon pare per causa mia e jo sens colpa….He escampada la sang de mon pare, de què pus ésser apellada parricida, e que no escampe la mia!" (461).

Laquesis also considers her own reputation as Curial's battle with the Boar approaches, assuming the blame for the precarious situation in which she feels she has placed him. She pleads with her mother to intervene and stop the battle, pleading,

> Senyora, segons jo he entes, ells no han raó de combater ne hi has cas per lo qual batalla haja lloc. E així, a vós, que sots dona ja en dies, se pertany tractar tals paus e llevar de camí aquest fet, sabent certament que si, ço que Déus no vulla, los fets succeïen mal a Curial, de mi devets esperar la mort, car ja no plàcia a Déu que jo visca tant que oja males noves de Curial, ne el veja morir mala mort ne en peril d'aquella. E d'altra part, que açò tot és gelosia e enveja que li han per mi e tothom diria «Per Laquesis vénen aquestes coses». E pensats quina honor me'n ve. Ja plagués a Déu que nulls temps l'hagués vist o almenys no fos venguda ací. (334)

Again, Laquesis astutely utilizes the death motif of courtly love to persuade her mother to intervene. However, like all her female counterparts, she also fears for her reputation if Curial is to be killed by the Boar. Both Laquesis and Güelfa end up experiencing the same feelings of culpability, as both feel guilt for what might happen to Curial, and both end up wishing that they had never met him or fallen in love with him. Laquesis expresses this here in her lamentation to her mother, while Güelfa wishes aloud several times that Camar were still alive, and that she were the one to have ended up with Curial instead, as she exclaims to the abbess: "Plagués a Déu fos viva e Curial hagués bé ab ella!" (483). At the most basic level, all three of Curial's lovers wish that they could

change the sequence of events, each one regretfully acknowledging that their behavior was a catalyst for battle, and, worst of all, bloodshed; whether that of Curial, his opponents, Camar, or her father Farax.

Even Laquesis' mother has to be mindful of her own reputation when considering her daughter's pleas to stop the battle between Curial and the Boar. She declines to interfere, explaining to Laquesis that "que jo em meta a fer tracte, que diguen que interès propri m'empeny, e no humanitat, a moure aqueix fet, par-me molt dura cosa, veent que en ma vellesa, per créixer ma honor, cobre renom d'alcavota" (334). Her response is intriguing for two reasons: the first, because her reputation did not stop her from openly interrogating Curial about his attraction to Laquesis, or from arranging for him to sleep in Laquesis' room, in hopes that by being surrounded by her things, his attraction to her would grow. Furthermore, she coyly laughs and slips away when Curial picks up on her motives. The other reason this response is so intriguing is because both mother and daughter find themselves in the same feminine predicament: Laquesis wants her mother to stop the battle in part so that she is not defamed as a killer, and the duchess feels that she cannot impose herself also because she will be defamed as a matchmaker. Camar also considers both her own and her mother's reputation as she refuses to marry the King of Tunis. She vows to take her own life if necessary, just to escape being the wife of her father's murderer. She insists that death would be better than being defiled by the King, and her mother replies, "lo morir no és venjança. E si tu, morint, mataves lo matador, alguna glòria te seria, e no gran. Mas morir tu e l'altre viure e haver tots los plaers del món, follia és pensar-ho e seria major metre-ho en obra. E com tu fosses morta, al rei no li fallirien mullers e tu series jutjada per folla e morries sens virtut" (459-60). Camar replies,

"Emperò d'una cosa podets ésser segura, que no us apellaran mare de l'adúltera ne ensutzada" (462).[98]

Again, this is proof that vigilance of one's reputation had no endpoint for medieval women, as neither age, class, nor marital status could exempt any woman from this preoccupation of transgressing society's standards of acceptable feminine behavior, or the threat of what would be said about a woman if she did. Laquesis and Camar's mothers are just as concerned about their own and their daughters' social standing as Laureola and Mirabella's mothers are; their status as queens, wives and mothers does not matter in the slightest.

Despite all the blame the women assume, Curial, on the other hand, shirks the blame attributed to him regarding Güelfa. When Arta warns him about being too involved with Laquesis, instead of simply heeding her advice and thanking her for the reminder, he becomes defensive and frustrated. He claims that he cannot refuse Laquesis' compliments,

[98] In this same conversation, Camar's mother Fàtima marvels at her daughter's refusal to marry the King, declaring, "Jo et promet, en ma bona fe, que jo no conec en tot lo regne tan gentil cos d'home ne tan graciós" (458). However, in the very same utterance, Fàtima confirms that once he finds out about Camar's refusal to accept his proposal, "lo rei farà un castig dels grans del món" (458). She goes on to ask Camar,"¿E no tems la furor e crueltat del rei, lo qual, com vol una cosa, no escolta raó ne demana consell, ans faent llei de voluntat pèssima, no tement superior ne reprensió dels seus, mana e covø que es faça ço que vol, e mata aquells qui, per ventura contra raó, ha en oi e no és qui lo hi gose demanar?" (459). Here, the King of Tunis is proven to be of the same temperament as those of the sentimental novel, like the fathers of Laureola and Mirabella: by reputation very kind and just rulers who become vengeful tyrants when it comes to women's agency in romantic affairs. Just as Laureola's father "tanto deseava" for his daughter to be innocent of Persio's accusations but imprisons her anyway, the King of Tunis is kind and gracious but will surely unleash his ire if he is not granted the woman he desires. Thus, the men have a broad range of acceptable behavior and are much more entitled to express their anger than the women, since, as I pointed out, Güelfa's anger and petulance was only met with lectures from her confidants about Curial's loyalty and worth. Meanwhile, in all of these texts, the kings have a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde like personality, oscillating between the two poles of kindness and fury. Furthermore, like Laureola's father, Güelfa's brother the marquis entertains the two old men's allegations about Güelfa, again illustrating the instinct the men characters have to trust one another more than their own sisters, daughters, and wives. The marquis also appears to have the same explosive temperament as the kings, since after hearing the old men's claims, "tot s'estremí e fonc ben prop de moure's cuitadament sens altra deliberació per fer alguna novitat a aquells dos amants" (130).

and wishes that he had never come to Germany since he will not be able to behave in a way that Güelfa will find satisfactory. He then turns the blame back onto Güelfa, insisting that her and her confidants are vastly exaggerating their interactions, and that she should be confident in his dedication to her:

> ¿pusc vedar jo a Laquesis que no em faça festa ne honor ne em vulla bé, o refusaré l'honor que em voldrà fer, que no ha rei en lo món que no aceptàs los bons acollirs e les festes de tal senyora com aquella e no ha cavaller en lo món, per enamorat que sia, que, guardant la sua llealtat, no servís a Laquesis de tot son poder? Bastar deu, a mos vijares, a la senyora, que jo en tot cas sia seu e no d'altra persona del món. No em sé què més li pusca fer e jo em penit molt per què hi son vengut, car, per ma fe, jo no pusc creure que em sàpia regir en la forma que a mi seria mester e los absents creen massa lleugerament. Per què us preg que vós no li escrivats sinó veritat, car d'aquella seré content e jo he tant desplaer perquè aquesta donzella m'ha encontrat[.] (280-1)

His reaction to Arta's warning serves primarily to absolve himself of the blame, as he asserts that accepting Laquesis' doting is part of his knightly service, but it also makes Güelfa all the more accountable for the effects his behavior has on her. She is simply overreacting; she should trust him, and understand that his interactions with Laquesis have been much less significant than how she has interpreted them. He also insinuates that Güelfa's expectations and restrictions on his conduct are outlandish, since he feels that he does not know to behave in a way that will appease her. Now he is the one wishing that things had not turned out this way.

What is interesting is the disparity between Curial's unwillingness to take responsibility for his actions and the way in which his two lovers desperately blame themselves when they feel they have transgressed the boundaries of acceptable feminine behavior. First of all, this is guilt that the reader obviously does not witness in the male courtly lover; never once does Leriano regret the endless blackmailing he has put Laureola through, nor does he truly take blame for getting her imprisoned by her father, despite his defense of women before his death. When Fiometa confesses to Pánfilo the pain his absence and infidelity have caused her in *Grimalte y Gradissa*, he points out that their adulterous relationship had been damaging to her honor anyway. Not only does this help him to evade any responsibility for participating in the affair, but it reiterates once again that men, even when equal participants in illicit relationships, did not have to fear the loss of their good name or social standing as women did. In identical fashion, Curial does not retreat with his tail between his legs, contrite about having hurt Güelfa or having led Laquesis on. He justifies his actions by reducing them to knightly service while aggrandizing Güelfa's demands of his conduct.

This is a recurrent theme with the male characters in *Curial e Güelfa*. We see various instances of men absolving themselves or other men of blame, by minimizing or justifying their actions. Now that I have discussed Curial's defense tactics, I will move on to illustrate some other pertinent examples in which men absolve themselves or other men of blame.

When Curial stops at the monastery on Mount Sinai to pray a novena, he meets a friar who seems to know much about him, even though Curial does not recognize him. Realizing that this friar is his former battle rival the Boar, Curial ends up confessing to

him everything that has transpired between him and Güelfa, in part cursing Fortune for the catastrophic turn of events. Even though the friar vacillates and, ultimately, does chastise Curial for his behavior, he starts his response by blaming Fortune, just as Curial has done: "Tu has bé raó de dir mal de Fortuna, e jo no et sabria reprendre si te'n clames, ans me maravell com no te'n clames pus fort, car molts llaços t'ha parats en diverses llocs e maneres, en algun dels quals és maravella com tan tard est caigut. Mas lleixem-la, car és llenegable, sorda e orba e no sap què es fa, ni sap a qui dòna ne a qui toll" (404). Here it is as if the friar is disdainfully describing a real woman. Fortune becomes another feminine figure who, akin to the men's descriptions of the flesh-and-blood women in the novel, acts impulsively according to her emotions, causing irreparable damage in her wake. However, he does not leave the blame for Curial's hardships on Fortune; rather, he implores Curial to appreciate the great deal of good fortune she has bestowed on him. He advises him to leave his hedonistic behavior behind, and offers him hope for the future: "Has regnat en la terra, e ara, si vols, regnaràs en lo cel...après de la gloria terrenal te venga la celestial, la qual, si la Fortuna no t'hagués mostrades les feres e brunes espatlles, no coneixeries" (405). He tells him that if he can renounce earthly pleasures, he will enjoy eternal salvation. While the friar does his best to make Curial see that his actions breed consequences, what is problematic about their exchange is that he gives some credence to Curial's blaming of Fortune, and that he uses religious faith to offer Curial the path to redemption. Furthermore, there is an optimistic tone to the friar's advice, which ultimately grants Curial the forgiveness that the women never get.

Another example of masculine absolution is Arta's exchange with the four Aragonese knights. One presents her with a gold chain, complimenting her beauty, and

she responds gratefully, "Senyor cavaller, certes, pus cortès sots vós que no és aquell qui em pres per les tresses" (269). From there she recounts the story of the knight who took her by the hair, and their reaction is disappointing: "en part rieren e en part hagueren malenconia e açò per la vilania que els fonc vejares que hagués feta. Emperò totstemps digueren que certament devia ésser bon cavaller, car, encara que fallís a cortesia, no havia fallit a cavalleria" (269).

Despite having made a physical attack on Arta, the Aragonese knights feel the need to find some redeeming quality in the knight, and thus, end up minimizing his behavior under the guise of knightly obligation. The knight himself had reasoned to Arta that hair-pulling and force was simply the tradition, and that it was actually her fault for not going with him straightaway: "jo no he res fet que cavaller errant no deja fer, car prendre una donzella que vaja en conduit de cavallers errants, usança és de cavallers e, si jo la pris de les tresses, fonc colpa sua, que no em volia seguir e, així, no em donets colpa de ço que jo em cuid ésser quiti" (235). All of these examples coincide with the way in which both Curial and Güelfa attempt to excuse his dealings with Laquesis: it becomes classified as customary under the code of knighthood, and thus should not be challenged.

These instances of male defense and absolution illustrate the imbalance between the ease with which the men can excuse themselves and one another, and that with which the women can blame themselves and one another. They call to mind not only the scorned lover's entitlement to revenge, but also the disparity between what was considered acceptable sexual behavior by the Fathers of the Church for men versus for women. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, St. Augustine deems a large quantity of sexual partners necessary for a man to widely disseminate his seed, but reproaches "common intercourse" by women

as a "rather whorish evil," as many partners are not necessary for a woman to become pregnant (*On Christian Doctrine* 91).

Furthermore, Curial is not only absolved of his sins, but he is also granted sympathy from other men in times of despair. Although Melcior consistently threatens Curial with Güelfa's rage and her indubitable death as a result of his actions, he becomes attached to Curial as well, and as a result there are also times in which Melcior defends him to Güelfa. When her anger sends him into exile, Melcior chastises her quick temper: "Veritat és que Laquesis...s'enamorà de Curial, emperò si ell, recordant-se de vós, ho ha tot relleixat, ¿per què el blasmau? Per ventura tota persona qui ho sabés lo hi tendria a follia ço hque ha fet, emperò l'amor que us ha és tanta que tot lo món sens vós tendria en poc. E així, clam-vos mercè que em façats aquesta gràcia, que li parlets e ordonets d'ell en què manera vos serà plasent que es regesca, car ell no ha a fer sinó obeir" (219). He swears to Curial that "ell se treballaria tant com li fos possible que ella el volgués oir"and when Curial is moved to tears, Melcior "s'esforçava consolar-lo" (308, 384). His fighting for Curial is interesting since we do not see this type of emotional tug-of-war in men's mediators like the *Auctor*, who never once tries to see Laureola's side of things nor offers her the type of consolation and hope Curial is offered by his fellow men.[99] And, while it makes sense that Neptune is the god that saves Curial's life from the perils of the sea, there is an undeniable gender division even between the mythical characters, which seems to motivate Neptune even more to save his fellow man. He calls Fortune a "falsa tragitadora" and insists that he will not be ordered around by her:

[99] There is one instance, however, in which Melcior shows more loyalty to Güelfa than to Curial, and that is in his decision not to tell Curial that Laquesis has fallen ill and wishes him to return to her bedside.

> E penses tu que son jo la tua roda, que em menes e gires en la manera que tu vols? No serà certament així, ans susara, a despit teu, jo atorgue guiatge e salconduit al cavaller e, certes, no el malmenaràs en lo meu regne...car ací, aquesta volta, no serà donat lloc a la tua variable volentat. Oh, bé est fembra en tots tos fets, que ara vols, ara no vols, ara plores, ara rius, ara donés, ara tolls e, finalment, en tu no ha sola una hora de fermetat! (414)

Therefore, while it is logical that Neptune would use his command of the seas to ensure Curial's safety, he is also driven by his scorn for Fortune, replicating the anti-feminist versus pro-feminist debate of the sexes observed in *Grisel y Mirabella* between Torrellas and Bracayda, as well as many other Medieval Iberian texts. Like Torrellas and Juan Ruiz, Neptune points out Fortune's allegedly feminine tendency to be fickle, frequently changing her mind based on her mood. However, as many times as this descriptor is universally applied to women in these texts, it is never applied to men. As I have already explained, the Kings are permitted to be at once fair and kind and irrational and punitive; yet they are never branded as fickle, or easily manipulated by their emotions. While masculine displays of sadness or weeping are rejected as feminine and weak, masculine displays of anger are permissible and, in fact, common. Güelfa's justified fits of anger over her lover's infidelity are subdued by her confidants' claims that she brought her own misery upon herself, and that Curial is not deserving of such anger or punishment.

This feminine incursion of blame upon oneself is an over-arching theme in all of the texts studied here: Eve's agony in childbirth is a direct result of her decision to listen to the serpent; Ussell claims that his revealing of his lady's sexual secrets does no damage to her reputation, as she has already ruined it by being publicly promiscuous; Leriano and the

Auctor repeatedly insinuate that their threats toward Laureola are well-deserved, as she hesitates to do what they ask; and finally, Melcior and the abbess blame Güelfa's hastiness for Curial's shipwreck and Camar's death, and well as her separation from her beloved. Neptune wants to fight for the survival of his fellow man, just as Fortune and Venus are inclined to punish him for the pain he has caused their fellow woman. What is more, Neptune echoes Melcior's sexist mentality when he tells Fortune that not only does he refuse to let her control him as she pleases, he also does not wish to earn "nom d'efeminat que em governe per tu" (414).

This sympathy for Curial is even present in the novel's narrative voice. Even though the narrator insists that "la obra present sie sua" (460), referring to Güelfa, the reader is compelled to pity Curial, and to see him as the "loyal" knight and lover the other characters believe him to be. When Curial parts with Güelfa to live in exile, the narrative voice suddenly assumes the demeanor of a father looking down on his downcast son:

> Trist-e molt dolorós me trop, vista la desaventurada e molt congoixosa partença que Curial fa de la Güelfa, e dic-vos que, si lo dit Curial plorant, tenint los genolls ficats a la polleguera de la porta de la cambra de la Güelfa, pogués esclatar, jo em pens que aquella mort haguera acabades totes les sues mundanals penes...encara, com me recorda, convidat per les llàgremes d'aquell dolorós Curial, li cuid fer companyia. (386)

As agents in patriarchal literary worlds that to some extent reflected the patriarchal real world of the Middle Ages, Curial and the other male characters of both the sentimental and the chivalric novels have more liberty: liberty to behave according to their whims, to make mistakes relating to their life path, personal character, and love lives, and

to shirk the blame ascribed to them for these mistakes. They are just as free to absolve themselves of the blame as they are to absolve one another, whether it be by blaming the woman's irresistible beauty, her unreasonable standards for his conduct, or simply adhering to his vows of knightly service. On top of this absolution, when Curial does suffer as a result of his actions, he is extended sympathy, consolation, and outright help from the other men (and women!) around him.

Finally, another vast distinction between the way in which blame is experienced by men and women characters is the aforementioned threat of "publishing" one's wrongdoing.[100] Leriano often threatened to "publish" Laureola's cruelty toward him: that is, to publicly discuss her alleged indifference to his amorous suffering, thus circulating rumors of her flawed character, her refusal to uphold her end of the bargain, and her transgression of the parameters of appropriate feminine behavior. The threat of what people would think and say about Laureola helped Leriano to greatly manipulate the situation in his favor and win Laureola's compliance with his wishes. Curial's three lovers also lend much consideration to what might be thought and said about them if he dies, and the mothers preoccupy themselves doubly, for their daughters' reputations as well as for their own. Also, as I pointed out in Chapter 3, Persio's *cartel* illustrates the way a man's "publication" of a woman's behavior might have looked, and of course demonstrates the consequences that would await her once the public (or in Laureola's case, her father) found out.

[100] In his introduction to Max W. Wheeler's edition *Curial and Güelfa: A Classic of the Crown of Aragon*, Antoni Ferrando details the similarities between the novel and *Le Petit Jehan de Saintré*. He says that when the Dame des Belles Cousines has entered into a relationship with an abbott, the jealous and betrayed Saintré "gives the abbot a beating, and at the point of slapping the Dame, refrains from doing so in consideration of the benefits she granted him in other times, but not without proclaiming to the court her infidelity in love, and, in consequence, his own refusal to serve her" (22).

However, this same issue seems non-existent for Curial. Not once in any of the reprimands he receives from Güelfa, Melcior, the friar, or Fortune, is his public reputation mentioned. While many times the other characters do note how indebted he is to Güelfa for his ascent up the social ladder, or his great irresponsibility with her financial support, they never urge him to consider what people might say about his actions, nor does he ever appear to agonize over his reputation in his expressions of regret to his confidants.

I hope to have pointed out the ways in which the female characters in *Curial e Güelfa* do not conform to the typical mold of the "damsel in distress" in the chivalric novel; and that the instances in which they do adhere to these behaviors are refreshingly fleeting. By being capable, independent, and multi-faceted in their traits, emotions and talents, and by many times doing the "rescuing" rather than being rescued themselves, they invert the gender roles of the model found especially in the sentimental novel. I hope to have further confirmed that this inversion is mainly demonstrated in Güelfa while introducing new discussion of the secondary and tertiary female characters. While their roles as rescuers, advisers, and problem-solvers is central to the inversion of the damsel in distress paradigm, their characterization is not limited to these traits alone; the women characters in *Curial e Güelfa* also exhibit a broad range of personality traits, emotions and talents that are accentuated and built upon throughout the course of the novel. In addition to the inversion of this model, I have also demonstrated the inversion of the culpability model endlessly found in troubadour lyric poetry and the sentimental novel, shifting as it does in *Curial e Güelfa* from the woman to the man as the object of blame.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has sought to identify the strategies through which men use the motif of feminine culpability to justify the blaming and shaming of the woman in the courtly love relationship. Albrecht Classen maintains that courtly love poetry is fraught with the projection of male fantasies: "Male sexual fantasies in fact tend to dominate courtly love poetry, which we have begun to deconstruct increasingly since feminism has taught us to see through the web of poetic deceptions and innuendos that pretend to project idyllic scenarios of erotic wooing, but in reality represent nothing but straightforward male efforts to conquer the female body" (16). To Classen's claim I would like to add that in courtly love literature, both poetry and prose, men project their own desire onto their beloved lady, rationalizing that although her desires indeed match his own, it is the parameters of acceptable feminine behavior which restrict her from verbalizing this corresponding desire. This is obviously problematic. Because a man assumes a woman's unspoken desire, first and foremost, he imposes on her the role of his beloved lady. Therefore, she gets roped into the dramatization of courtly love without her consent.

This is precisely what happens in the case of the characters of *Cárcel de amor*, Leriano and Laureola. As I mentioned in Chapter 3, Henry John Chaytor points out that the courtly tradition called for an aspiring lover to pass through a series of steps outlined by Andreas Capellanus in his courtly love manual *De amore* in order to ascend to the status of a lady's "accepted lover." The most important of these steps for this study are those of "recognized suitor (*entendedor*)" and "accepted lover (*drut*)" (Chaytor 15). Furthermore, given that courtly love adopts its tenets from the Germanic theory of knighthood, the cult of the Virgin and feudal vassalage, Maurice Keen's discussion of the

votal orders of the Knights of the Band of Castile concerning service is also applicable to Leriano's case.

The concepts of upholding feminine honor, being bound to service for an indicated period of time, and helping any woman who needed it are all codes violated by both Leriano and the troubadour poets, who promptly "renege" their service when they are not promptly compensated with the sexual favor to which they feel entitled. Keen adds, like Chaytor, that the lady's acceptance of service is essential in the courtly love tradition: "[The lady's] acceptance of her admirer's service [...] meant her acceptance of his amorous service, not admission to her bed" (30). Chaytor also notes the exchange of tangible goods (he suggests a ring; *La Celestina*'s Melibea dutifully hands over her sash) or physical contact (a kiss) to ratify the contract, but like Keen, he clarifies that this "contract" merely signaled the lady's consent to be paid homage in a particular troubadour's song. Both Keen's and Chaytor's contentions illustrate, then, that the lady never expressly agreed to any sexual obligation.

Therefore, taking into account the processes outlined by Chaytor and Keen, Leriano takes no such steps. In fact, his "courtship" of Laureola reads more like an ambush. Diego de San Pedro does not lead us to believe that there is even a trivial history between them (such as the glance exchanged by Calisto and Melibea in the *huerto*). Nevertheless, the story begins *in medias res* with Leriano, who while being dragged to his allegorical Prison of Love, meets the *Auct*or. The *Auctor*, motivated by Christian, Aristotelian or Machiavellian ideals, feels utterly compelled to help Leriano. Immediately, the *Auctor* transforms into the messenger between Leriano and Laureola, as well as the work's narrator. Almost instantly after meeting Leriano, the *Auctor* visits Laureola's court,

perfectly trained in the rhetoric of blame so that he can participate in the same manipulative discourse Leriano is using in his letters. I say "trained," at times imagining that Leriano has coached him on exactly how to speak to Laureola to make her feel guilty. If we look at the way in which Biblical, patristic, and philosophical teachings propagated in the Middle Ages and the way in which these teachings shaped medieval gender ideologies, however, it is clear that the *Auctor* would have already been prepared for such a dialogue. Therefore, in the first place, there is no acceptance of either "service" or courtship on Laureola's part, nor any recognition of Leriano as her suitor. She is simply thrust into this dramatization of courtly love that Leriano and the *Auctor* are enacting around her. Therefore, the role of willful participant in the relationship is imposed upon her.

Secondly, this projection of desire and reciprocation onto the lady is problematic because in many cases, it presumes the lady's sexual consent as well, forgoing any verbal articulation of this consent on her part. We see this at work in Torrellas' assertions during the gender debate between him and Braçayda in Juan de Flores' *Grisel y Mirabella*. Torrellas asserts that feminine speech is of no importance; it is their body language, the "signals" they emit, that betray their true desires: "aparejos halla en la muger de senyales. Assí en el mirar como en el reír y otras condiciones que quieren tanto dezir: 'si queréis queremos.' Ansí que non faze menester que lo digáis. Pues havemos por más cierto lo que la voluntad consiente: que lo que la lengua dize" (Francomano, *Querelle* 136). Furthermore, Torrellas insists that for the lover, any display of exasperation or even anger on the part of the lady is perceived merely as concealed desire: "Mas como sabéis que nuestro es el seguimiento: en cordura cabe que nos lo vendáis caro. Mayormente porque

conocéis tanto de la condición vuestra: que la que más lo encarece tenemos en mayor stima…Que quanto más os defendéis: mas me dais lugar de sospechar. Pues que sé lo deseáis quanto más lo encarecéis" (Francomano, *Querelle* 122). For Torrellas, if the lady puts up a fight, she is simply "raising her price," that is, playing hard to get. The *tenso* credited to a *trobairitz* called Domna H that Sarah Kay references also illustrates this problem of the disparity between what a woman says and what she actually wants. This is the projection of male desires onto the beloved lady. Not only are they forcibly drawn into the relationship by the men's dramatization of their love and suffering, integrating them as if they were willful participants in this relationship; but the emotional and physical boundaries they set are repeatedly violated under the pretext that they are socially restricted from verbalizing their desire.

In *Grisel y Mirabella*, Torrellas' words prove that what a woman says does not matter anyway, which becomes evident in the actions of the *Auctor* in *Cárcel de amor*. Whether Laureola appears exasperated, angry, or compassionate, the *Auctor* interprets her reaction each time as a signal of love. The fact that the lady truly has no way to say no to being courted, then, helps the dramatization to continue, and the rhetoric of blame escalates more and more. The strategies employed by the courtly lover within this rhetoric of feminine culpability I have outlined in Chapter 3 include: the lover's suffering caused by the lady's beauty; the social and spiritual redemption of the lady in alleviating his suffering (since it is far better to be recognized as a savior than condemned as a murderer); the promise of religious salvation (since surely God will grant her entrance into heaven for her mercy toward the lover); and, most importantly, the threat of public defamation. Her petulance and hesitation only serve to prolong his suffering, so if the

lady does not cooperate, he can resort to the threat of publicizing her behavior. This behavior can encompass a few things: if, like troubadours Joan Berenguer de Masdovelles and Gaucelm Faidit, the scorned lover has already had sexual relations with the lady in some capacity, he can publicize this, which either will tarnish her honor as an adulterer or as a fornicator; he can simply let the world know that despite his suffering, her cruelty kept her from helping his situation; or, for even more dramatic flair, he can threaten to commit suicide, and his mourning friends and family will publicize her behavior in his place. Not only will this "public" condemn her as a murderer, but she will have to wrestle with the guilt of knowing that she killed the lover for the rest of her life.

Leriano surpasses the projection of simply his desire onto Laureola, thus imposing on her the role of the willful participant. He also imposes on her the role of damsel in distress. As scholars have already illustrated, Leriano undertakes his courtship of Laureola without having completed for her any manner of the service Keen describes. Therefore, he creates the very situation from which he can rescue her: as a result of Leriano and the *Auctor*'s lurking around the Macedonian court, Laureola's other suitor Persio sees the couple talking and in all his jealousy, tells the King. An archetype of the dualistically-tempered king/father figure of the sentimental novel, Laureola's father reacts predictably to Persio's declaration. He immediately believes him, locking his daughter in a prison cell in the castle. This is where Leriano springs into action, challenging Persio to a duel, defeating him, rescuing Laureola and fighting off the King's army. Sanda Munjic says that Leriano's oscillation between the medieval masculine ideals of subjugated lover and knight-warrior, along with *Cárcel'*s non-linear, atemporal structure permit this "sudden awakening from apparent passivity into battle-readiness" (211). Because Leriano

knows that to assume the role of courtly lover means to complete service in his lady's name, he gets her into a situation that will help him to fulfill that requirement. Therefore, being imprisoned by the cruel King, Laureola is suddenly transformed into the typical damsel in distress, and Leriano, into the valiant knight.

Now, Leriano's leverage against Laureola increases even more: surely now, gratitude for her salvation from imprisonment and death at the hands of her father would compel her to reciprocate Leriano's love with some token or show of affection. However, since Leriano's "service" does nothing to change Laureola's feelings toward him, she seems all the more cruel, and Leriano all the more heroic when he decides to let himself starve to death (but not without first delivering a defense of women and swallowing the pieces of Laureola's torn letters).

Therefore, Leriano's language of blame becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy: he completes the service for which he "deserves" a *galardón*, which is rescuing his damsel in distress, and in refusing to grant one, Laureola becomes the cruel, indifferent woman Leriano and the *Auctor* had accused her of being from the beginning. Above all, the "publication" he has threatened with has already taken place: not only do his sobbing mother and his friend Tefeo witness his self-martyrization, but the reader does as well.[101] It does not matter that we never know whether or not Tefeo runs shouting the news of Laureola's murder of Leriano from the rooftops of the court, or if he posts a *cartel* in the *plaza*, as Persio had done. In a figurative sense, the reader is Leriano's "public," free to

[101] Emily C. Francomano notes that Tefeo and Leriano's mother were not the only witnesses to his death. She contends that Leriano's death is "the first time in the romance that Laureola's letters take on a public role, as Leriano performs his ritual in the company of friends, servants, and mourners" (*Prison* 101). Here Francomano reminds us once again of both Leriano's aristocratic status, subdued in his interactions with Laureola, and of the scope of the "public" that observed his theatrical demise and, therefore, discovered the secret of their interactions.

judge and condemn Laureola as we please. As I discuss in Chapter 3, this does in fact happen with a contemporary reader of the *Cárcel de amor* named Nicolás Nuñez. Dissatisfied with the tragic, abrupt ending, he decides to append San Pedro's text with a short conclusion of his own. Because as a reader he interprets Laurerola's behavior toward Leriano as callous, for Nuñez his conclusion serves as the long-awaited moment of Laureola's penitence.

Consequently, the perpetual ascription of culpability, slanderous words and threats of public defamation posed by Leriano and the troubadours not only violate the codes of courtly love and the oaths of knighthood, they also violate medieval canon law. In Chapter 2, I introduced James A. Brundage's discussion of determining the culpability of a criminal according to medieval canon law. As Brundage explains, the degree of culpability was contingent on the offender's intention at the time of the alleged crime. As we can see, based on this juridical principle, Laureola would be completely innocent, since, as I have attempted to illustrate, she had no intention of even being courted by Leriano, of participating in the interactions with him or the *Auctor*, as she was granted no agency in the courtship from the outset, let alone any intention of hurting Leriano in any capacity. What is more, the aspect of intention is especially pertinent to Leriano's charges against Laureola, as Leriano himself asks Laureola not to blame him for what he has actually done, which is her imprisonment in the castle and condemnation to death by her own father; but rather, that she judges him based on his intention: "Suplícote no me tengas enemiga por lo que padeces, pues como tengo dicho no tiene la culpa dello lo que hize, mas lo que mi dicha quiere" (*Cárcel* 41). In another double standard, Leriano pleads that Laureola judge only his intentions and not the actual outcome of his actions, yet he blames

Laureola from the beginning for his desire, his longing, his suffering and finally his suicide, rather than judging her by her intentions.

Thus, this dissertation has aimed to illustrate how the misogynistic gender ideologies propagated by Biblical, patristic and theological writings of the Middle Ages sedimented into mainstream *mentalités*, finding a home in courtly love literature, and pervading the consciousness of medieval women as well. This can be witnessed in the way the motifs of feminine culpability imbue women's inner monologues and dialogic exchanges between women in the texts I have discussed here. This is to say, not only do the female characters of the texts internalize these culpability motifs, using them to chastise or second-guess their own actions, they also use them to blame one another.

I have also shown that male literary characters are, for the most part, exempt from the same verbal and psychological ensnarements of culpability the female characters find themselves in, and that even when women do "flip the script" on their male counterparts and use these same motifs against them, men have a repertoire of tactics to shirk the blame, in turn granting themselves and other men absolution—a luxury the women deny themselves and other women. While Leriano evades the blame by highlighting the purity of his intentions, Curial does so by ascribing his actions to mere knightly service, claiming that Güelfa is exaggerating the tone of his interactions with Laquesis, and furthermore, that her expectations of his behavior are unrealistic.

I believe that the importance of this study lies in that it solicits a re-reading of the troubadour love lyric, the sentimental romance and the chivalric novel through the lens of feminine culpability rather than to interpret these exchanges between lover and lady as mere adhesion to the code of courtly love behavior. In effect, what I have aimed to

illustrate in this dissertation is that from a juridical perspective, that of medieval canon law, and the Lacanian psycholinguistic perspective that Rouben C. Cholakian takes, noting the breach between desire and its verbal expression, the male poets and protagonists of courtly love literature subvert the concept of culpability, assigning it to women when they in fact are the culpable ones themselves. They not only violate medieval canon law, but also the codes of chivalric service by which courtly love is influenced. Therefore, in the process of subverting culpability, the lover publicly defames and further objectifies his beloved lady, thus debunking the conventionally upheld notion that courtly love discourse operates in praise of women, or is a "pro-feminist" genre.

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