

AFFECTIVE COMMUNITIES IN LATE-MEDIEVAL IBERIAN LITERATURE

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## AFFECTIVE COMMUNITIES IN LATE-MEDIEVAL IBERIAN LITERATURE

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My dissertation offers a new account of the explosion of sentimental literature in fifteenth-century Iberia and, at the same time, suggests a new way of reading that literature. Through the concept of the affective community, which suggests that political, religious, and literary communities (genres) are held together and shaped not so much by shared emotion as by a shared ethical attitude toward emotion, I analyze exemplary works of the principal genres involved in this explosion: *cancionero* poetry and sentimental fiction. Other important genres such as the chronicle and chivalric fiction also play key roles in my analysis, and my approach throughout is comparative, dealing substantially with works not only from Castile, but also from the kingdoms of Portugal and Aragon.

The most important texts in the dissertation are Pedro de Corral's *Crónica sarracina* (ca. 1430); Pedro, Constable of Portugal's *Sátira de felice e infelice vida* (ca. 1450); and the poetry of Ausiàs March (ca. 1397-1459). However, I also discuss moral, theological, and political treatises by crucial figures such as Alonso de Cartagena (1384-1456); Alfonso de Madrigal, el Tostado (1410-1455); Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo (ca. 1404-1470); Diego de Valera (1412-1488); Duarte I of Portugal (1391-1438); and the Infante Pedro, Duke of Coimbra (1392-1449). Through my discussion of these treatises, I show how the emotional asceticism of Stoic and early-Christian thought was increasingly held to be inadequate for the period's political challenges, giving way before a politics that emphasized psychological unity beyond the strict limits of reason.

It is in the more traditionally literary works, however, that these evolving political postures found their furthest-reaching development. I show that *Corral*, *the Constable*, and *March* each develops a novel affective rhetoric that reenvision or rejects their communities' preexisting affective paradigms, laying bare how mourning and compassion can form the basis for new communitarian possibilities. I argue, finally, that this rhetorical modeling of a communitarian politics of mourning and compassion – and the forms of subjectivity it articulates – is relevant to ongoing contemporary debates surrounding affect and community that seek new formulations of these concepts after the so-called death of the subject.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Henry Samuel Berlin was born on October 22, 1980 in Boston, Massachusetts. In 2002, he graduated from Earlham College, in Richmond, Indiana, with a degree in Spanish. From 2005 to 2011, he pursued graduate studies at Cornell University, in Ithaca, New York, under the direction of Simone Pinet. During this time, he studied Catalan in Barcelona, Spain and Portuguese in Lisbon, Portugal.

*To the memory of my father*

The first day after a death, the new absence  
Is always the same; we should be careful

Of each other, we should be kind  
While there is still time.

– Philip Larkin, “The Mower”

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## INTRODUCTION

### PASSION, EMOTION, AFFECT

[L]a idea es averiguar si el saber del que emanaron en un primero estadio los términos de la pasión guarda algún mensaje viviente y desconocido para nosotros, y examinar, al mismo tiempo, cuáles fueron las circunstancias – históricas, sociales, epistemológicas – que han nublado para nosotros ese conocimiento.  
– Ivonne Bordelois, *Etimología de las pasiones*

Iberia's fifteenth century saw the rise or resurgence of literature that was not just sentimental, as it is sometimes called, but about sentiment itself. *Cancionero* lyric and sentimental fiction are often studied as expressions of the affective system known as courtly love, and critics sometimes try to isolate particularly Iberian strains of courtly culture. Meanwhile, in genres we are less likely to think of as sentimental, such as wisdom literature and romance – which through its epic and chivalric themes colors a great deal of the period's historiographic production – ethical questions regarding both public and private emotion begin to arise persistently. Two critical tendencies have defined the study of affect in the literature of this period. The first is the modern tendency to understand literary works in general, and lyric poems in particular, as relatively transparent expressions of their authors' inner feelings. From this perspective, the emotional commonplaces still pervasive in fifteenth-century texts look like medieval residue, soon to be washed away by nascent humanism in a march toward the novel. But the second, and more common, tendency is to understand the emotions in particular texts as (mere) instantiations of widespread tropes, so that texts themselves are divided into rare masterpieces and their epigones. This critical practice may reflect a more “medieval” understanding of authorship, but it severely limits interpretive possibilities and makes it difficult

to account for literary change that, from a purely historical perspective, is evident. What is missing from the models of authorial self-expression and tropic instantiation is the sense that participation in an affective discourse can also be an intervention: placing an obstacle in a stream in order to divert it. The authors I study in the following chapters were not unmediated products of their period's affective discourses, but neither did they stand completely outside them, coldly assembling their texts from discrete encyclopedias of tropes. Rather, their texts are self-consciously rhetorical, advocating and modeling – and, thus, expressing – new affective possibilities.

As the preceding paragraph illustrates in its use of the terms “affect,” “emotion,” “sentiment,” and “feeling,” the first difficulty in fashioning a critical concept from affect is terminological. Why “affective communities” instead of “emotional communities,” “sentimental communities,” or even “passionate communities”? These terms resist definitional consensus and thus present a double instability: their medieval and modern usages are both inconsistent, so it becomes almost impossible to fix a critical starting point. In other words, neither critical subject (contemporary discourse) nor critical object (historical discourse) is stable. “Emotion,” which has been the dominant term since around 1800 (Rosenwein 3), suggests itself as an all-encompassing neutral term precisely because of its anachronism for the Middle Ages – but there is no contemporary agreement about what “emotion” describes. We might expect the field of psychology to have forged a technical definition, but as Theodore R. Sarbin writes, efforts in this direction have so far been unsuccessful:

One outcome of the opacity of the term “emotion” is the failure to achieve a common definition. Some writers talk of “having” an emotion, others of the “experience” of emotion; some equate emotion with visceral activity, some with the perception of visceral

activity; some use emotion and feelings as equivalents, others argue that feelings are constitutive of emotion; others treat emotions as patterned organismic responses.<sup>1</sup> (85)

The term is sometimes adopted openly as a convenience,<sup>2</sup> but its own resistance to definition – its “opacity” – means that it is as likely to hinder as to help a critical investigation. This is especially true because terms such as “affect” and “feeling” are often found in definitions of “emotion,” and not as pure synonyms. As such, adopting or asserting “emotion” as the broadest term is not necessarily a helpful heuristic strategy.

If modern usage turns out to be inconsistent, we might turn to a close examination of historical usage in an attempt to pin down our object of study. But what is true of modern authors is true of pre-modern ones: there was some consistency in their usage of terms such as “passion,” “affection,” and “sentiment” (Rosenwein 3), but there is enough variation among systematic treatments of the passions to give pause. Contemporary theorists often make lists of “primary” emotions, but “the number and type of emotions taken to be primary varies from one theorist to another” (Harré 3), and this is true of ancient and medieval categorizations as well. Attempting to delve deeper into history through etymology turns out to be, in a sense, a dead end:

In reality, there is no Indoeuropean lexical root from which a term equivalent to *passion* can be derived, and the reason alleged by specialists for this empty space in the originary vocabulary is that at that level of history there was not only no difference between emotion and passion, but the very abstract notions of “passion” or “emotion” did not exist as we perceive them today.<sup>3</sup> (Bordelois 29)

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<sup>1</sup> Compare James Hillman’s similar statement: “Yet when we come home to systematic (academic or theoretical) psychology to inquire quite naïvely: ‘What is emotion; how is it defined; what is its origin, nature, purpose; what are its properties and laws; everyone uses this concept “emotion” – what are we speaking about?’, we find a curious and overwhelming confusion” (5).

<sup>2</sup> “I use the term emotions in this book with full knowledge that it is a convenience: a constructed term that refers to affective reactions of all sorts, intensities, and durations” (Rosenwein 4); “In emphasizing the term *emotions* in this book, we are asserting that this concept subsumes the phenomena denoted by other labels – sentiments, affect, feelings, and the like – which are often employed by theorists and researchers” (Turner and Stets 2).

<sup>3</sup> All translations are mine unless otherwise noted. In the rest of her fascinating study, Bordelois makes clear that there are indeed deep etymological roots for particular emotions, such as anger and love (29).

This uncertain origin, along with the constantly varying usage that followed it, gives rise to a problem fundamental for this dissertation. We can look at particular authors' usage and try to work out what "passion," "affection," or "sentiment" meant to them. But the social nature of affect is at the conceptual center of my argument. How can we locate the usage of an individual author within broader, but unruly, social structures?

Social constructionists in the field of psychology have addressed this question, emphasizing affect's linguistic basis. They argue that varied usage (across time, space, and languages) does not obscure affect as an object of study – it constitutes it:

We can do only what our linguistic resources and repertoire of social practices permit or enable us to do. There has been a tendency among both philosophers and psychologists to abstract an entity – call it "anger," "love," "grief" or "anxiety" – and to try to study it. But what there is are angry people, upsetting scenes, sentimental episodes, grieving families and funerals, anxious parents pacing at midnight, and so on. There is a concrete world of contexts and activities. We reify and abstract from that concreteness at our peril. (Harré 4)

Eschewing reification is only the first methodological step, however. After all, we can no longer witness medieval anger, medieval love scenes, or medieval funerals: only their textual or visual representations. Some grounding in the abstract, reified thought of these representations' time is essential for analyzing them. And it is through studying ancient and medieval treatises on the passions that widespread patterns start to emerge: categorizations of the passions varied widely, but the problematics central to those categorizations remained relatively constant and limited and, what's more, are strikingly similar to the problematics of contemporary debates.

In broad terms, the explorations of affect carried out by Platonists, Peripatetics, Stoics, Church Fathers, Cartesians, early psychologists and evolutionary theorists, psychoanalysts, and social constructionists focus on a small set of problematics: the relationship of the soul or mind to the body; the participation of reason in the passions or the conflict between the two; passivity,

activity, and the subject/object relation; and, most broadly, ethics or practical wisdom, which includes discussions of virtue and vice or sin and also of sociopolitical relations. These problematics are more closely related than they may initially appear.

In his 1895 “Theory of Emotion,” John Dewey attempts a synthesis of Charles Darwin’s and William James’s theories of emotion; the chief claim of this synthesis is that emotions do not precede and cause their physical manifestations (such as crying or laughing), but rather are attitudes we adopt toward those physical movements, which were originally purposive (see, for example, 1: 568-9). Thus, Dewey is mostly preoccupied with the mind/body relation, but he mobilizes the ethical understanding of emotion in justifying his focus on behavioral rather than “psychical” emotion: “We certainly do not deny nor overlook the ‘feel’ phase, but in ordinary speech the behavior side of emotion is, I think, always uppermost in consciousness. *The connotation of emotion is primarily ethical, only secondarily psychical*” (2: 17; my emphasis). Dewey’s ultimately sociolinguistic observation that talk about emotion is talk about expressions of emotion (behavior) dovetails with the teleological Darwinian argument that those physical expressions must have served some purpose in the early stages of humankind’s development. Thus, when Dewey concludes that “the emotion is, *psychologically, the adjustment or tension of habit and ideal*, and the organic changes in the body are the literal working out, in concrete terms, of the struggle of adjustment” (30; emphasis in original), his adherence to the historical and social (which accounts for the “ideal” held to be in tension with the evolutionarily useful “habit”) demonstrates the ongoing theoretical link between questions of mind and body and questions of ethics.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> It should also be pointed out that the division between affect as feeling and affect as behavior is ancient as well: “The Emotions are all those feelings that so change men as to affect their judgements, and that are also attended by pain or pleasure” (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1378a). One might object that the disappearance of the concept of soul (rather than mind) marks an important contemporary break with ancient and medieval thought, but as Hillman reminds us,

This persistence of ancient problematics in modern theorizing would have come as a surprise to René Descartes, who must have thought he was making a definitive break in opening his *Passions of the Soul* with a denunciation of all previous theories of affect: “The defectiveness of the sciences we inherit from the ancients is nowhere more apparent than in what they wrote about the Passions” (18). In the treatise’s preface, he has already made clear that he has not sought to explain the passions “as an Orator, or even as a moral Philosopher, but only as a Physicist” (17). The modern reader, considering emotion an empirical phenomenon, might expect the first two of these professions to require more of an explanation than the last, but Descartes has identified here the two fields of inquiry, along with that of medicine, that had until the Renaissance provided the most extensive discussions and systematizations of affect. In fact, the methodological division of Descartes’s preface is anticipated in Aristotle’s *De Anima*:

[T]he natural philosopher and the dialectician would give a different definition of each of the affections, for instance in answer to the question “What is anger?” For the dialectician will say that it is a desire for revenge or something like that, while the natural philosopher will say that it is a boiling of the blood and hot stuff about the heart. And of these the one will be expounding the matter, the other the form and rationale. (403a)

Aristotle himself approached the problem both as a natural philosopher and dialectician, but this was not the rule in the centuries that followed. Rather, the two traditions rejected by Descartes – rhetoric and moral philosophy – tended to remain separate. Late-antique and medieval rhetorical and moral treatments of the passions sometimes incorporate “naturalistic” humorism, but they are much likelier to focus, like Aristotle, on the soul and perception; early Christian accounts add the element of demonic persuasion or suggestion. It is the dominance of these Stoic and patristic

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the soul lives on in still-prevalent concepts of psychic “energy”: “[W]here the soul is often denied a place in modern psychology, the soul is still represented in all its classic ambiguity by such concepts as psychonic energy, vital energy, bio-energy, nervous energy and the like, all combinations of mind and matter . . . In short, it is our contention that the flow of energy model as an explanation of emotion has replaced the soul model and that the energy model, untenable logically and empirically, is only intelligible on the basis of the earlier model, the soul” (77).

theories, with their ethical focus on reason and the will, in fifteenth-century Iberia that first suggests “affect” as the best term for this study.

As I will discuss in chapter one, Cicero and Seneca were the most influential Stoics in medieval Iberian thought, and two of the most important classical *auctoritates* in discussions of practical wisdom and politics. For the Stoics, and Cicero in particular, the fact that the cause of all emotion “is to be found entirely in belief” (*Tusculan Disputations* III.24) does not make emotions rational.<sup>5</sup> Cicero adhered to the four-fold Stoic classification of the emotions, in which pleasure and distress were reactions to present goods or evils, and appetite (or desire) and fear were reactions to future goods or evils (*Tusculan Disputations* III.25).<sup>6</sup> More specifically, pleasure, distress, desire, and fear were judgments (IV.14) that came about through a loss of control (IV.22) and to which the mind assented voluntarily (III.61-6). Cicero himself summarizes these points powerfully in Book IV of the *Tusculan Disputations*: “As far as I am concerned, the entire theory of emotion can be summed up in a single point: that they are all in our power, all experienced through judgment, all voluntary” (IV.65). In fact, knowledge of this “single point” also constitutes the “method of cure” for these “sicknesses of mind” (IV.83). For Cicero, then, the emotions constitute mistaken beliefs that can be purged through the exercise of reason.

The Greek name for this kind of self-control is *sōphrosunē*, which Cicero renders as “temperance,” “self-control,” or “moderation” (*temperantia*, *moderatio*, and *modestia*; *Tusculan Disputations* III.16). Cicero suggests, however, that the best term for it might be “frugality” (*frugalitas*), since it refers not only to “restraint” and “harmlessness” but to “all the other virtues as well” (III.16). That is, frugality “implies the three virtues of courage, justice, and prudence,” becoming in Cicero’s system the fourth principal virtue, whose defining characteristic “is that it

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<sup>5</sup> English quotations from the *Tusculan Disputations* are from Graver’s translations; Latin references are to the Loeb edition.

<sup>6</sup> For an excellent diagram of this system, see Knuuttila 52; cf. Rosenwein 39.



regulates and placates one's impulses to act, and so preserves that well-regulated consistency which on every occasion is opposed to desire" (III.17). The language of regulation, justice, and economy is key here because it is central to both Stoic social ethics and fifteenth-century Iberian political thought. Later in the *Tusculans*, Cicero argues that pity is not a useful emotion: "Why pity someone when you might assist him? Or are we incapable of being generous without pity? For our obligation is not to feel distress on account of others, but to relieve the distress of others if we can" (IV.56).<sup>7</sup> Here, frugality is not the opposite of generosity – clearly marked as a social virtue – but a reasoned commitment to helpful action whenever possible. In other words, an abstract, apparently "rational" duty replaces empathy as a spur to movement.<sup>8</sup> This is, in a condensed form, the tradition against which the authors I discuss in chapters two, three, and four will elaborate their own political and ethical systems of collective affect.

Seneca grounds his analysis of emotion in questions of reason and speech and a fundamental contrast with the animals. This is because, for Seneca, reason and speech define emotion: "[W]ild animals are incapable of anger, as is everything, apart from man. Anger may be the enemy of reason. It cannot, all the same, come into being except where there is a place for reason ... Without speech, animals are without human emotions, though they have certain impulses that are similar to them" (*On Anger* I.3.(4)-(6)). In *On Anger*, he goes further than Cicero in emphasizing the role of assent in his picture of emotion:

If you want to know how the emotions begin, grow or get carried away, the first movement is involuntary, a preparation, as it were, for emotion, a kind of threat. The next is voluntary but not insistent – I may, for example, think it right for me to wreak vengeance because I have been harmed or for him to be punished because he has committed a crime. The third really is out of control; wanting retribution not just "if it is

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<sup>7</sup> Pity has earlier been defined along Aristotelian lines as "distress over the misery of another who is suffering unjustly" (IV.18).

<sup>8</sup> This does not mean that empathy is never useful. Those seeking to soothe the distress of others will, like good rhetoricians, adapt their consolation to the nature of the situation and of their audience: "in soothing distress we must consider what sort of cure each hearer is able to accept" (III.79).

right” but at all costs, it has completely overcome the reason. The first is a mental jolt which we cannot escape through reason ... The other sort of movement, generated by decision, can be eliminated by decision.<sup>9</sup> (II.4.(1)-(2))

Seneca’s account is notable because it marries a classically rigid Stoic idealization of *apatheia* with an equally strident affirmation of reason’s place in emotion. In his system, reason and the passions do not battle to gain control of the mind (or soul), but to *become* it: “It is not the case that the mind stands apart, spying out its affections from without, to prevent their going too far – the mind itself turns into affection ... Reason and affection are the mind’s transformations for better or for worse” (I.8.(2)-(3)). Reason and affection are thus conceived of as *ontologically* contrary states of mind. Their conflict was always an ethical one, but here it becomes the central fact of the soul’s very existence.<sup>10</sup>

In echoing Seneca’s *affectus* and choosing the term “affect” to describe fifteenth-century notions of emotion, I am consciously invoking this tradition and this conflict, which remained dominant in Iberian thought. In addition to Stoic moral philosophy, I consider in the dissertation’s first chapter classical rhetoric and patristic monasticism, traditions that were also highly influential in fifteenth-century Iberia, some for the first time directly. As I show in this chapter, these traditions all explore affect in fundamentally social – communal – contexts, and “affect” conveys, then, not only the marriage of ethics and psychology in their thought, but also this fundamental intersubjectivity. The “passions” are associated with this view of affect, and I will use the term “emotion” to indicate that I am not referring to this particular tradition.<sup>11</sup>

For fifteenth-century writers, affect is not primarily important as an immediate experience of individual subjectivity; rather, its importance springs from the fact that it is how

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<sup>9</sup> Cooper and Procopé note that this account is “more articulated than anything to be found in our sources for early Greek Stoics” (45 n. 4).

<sup>10</sup> In this way, it becomes a different version of ethics as first philosophy.

<sup>11</sup> Lucía Díaz Mallorquín notes that by the sixteenth century, the term “affect” was associated with high rhetorical style, whereas “passion” was used “with pejorative connotations, as foreign to the ethical sphere” (27).

we *affect* others and how they *affect* us. This is why I argue that the novel rhetorics of affect developed by the authors studied here are primarily concerned with community (social, political, religious). For these authors, the best way to effect change in a time of crisis would be to change not only the emotions of the members of a community, but their very attitude toward emotion itself. This possibility is also apparent because of the difficulty of pinning affect down theoretically – a difficulty with which these authors, I argue, were very familiar. Their self-consciously novel modeling of innovative rhetorics of affect was at the heart of their texts, as they attempted to found new communities or disrupt or disperse those already around them.

My first chapter, “City, Desert, Cloister, Court: Reading and Writing Community in Fifteenth-Century Iberia,” traces the interrelated histories of community, affect, and rhetoric, showing how these concepts, as elaborated in traditions discussed above, were of central concern to fifteenth-century Iberian political and moral theorists. I demonstrate that in the affective, rhetorical, and hermeneutic theories most influential for these Iberian thinkers – those of Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, John Cassian, Augustine, Isidore of Seville, and Bernard of Clairvaux – the question of community arises persistently in dialectics of interiority and exteriority, the friend and the crowd or mob, and private and public virtue. I argue that the perceived conflict between reason, devotion, and the passions, coinciding perfectly with the central problematic of Iberia’s newly resurgent courtly literature, gave rise to a multi-genre exploration of collective affect in public life. I argue that the focus on psychological unity in questions of governance in texts by important authors such as Alfonso de Madrigal, Alonso de Cartagena, Diego de Valera, and Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo, as well as in the anonymous *Tratado de la comunidad*, reveals that the traditional view of affect as sinfully destructive of both individuals and communities was shifting to one that recognized its politically unifying possibilities.

Chapter two, “Ritual Mourning and National Nostalgia in Pedro de Corral’s *Crónica sarracina*,” provides a case study of an early text (ca. 1430) that adopts courtly and chivalric tropes in effecting a political rehabilitation of collective affect. Corral’s *Crónica* links the mythical lives of the Visigothic king Rodrigo, considered responsible for “Spain’s” fall to the Moors in 711, and Pelayo, the legendary first leader of the “Reconquest.” I argue that in his text, Corral explores the unifying and isolating aspects of private and public grief, ultimately deploying a ritualized, collective literary mourning to rehabilitate the figure of Rodrigo, thus rendering reappropriable the national unity this legendarily fallen figure was thought to represent. Furthermore, Corral contrasts only a lingering, individual mourning with an expiatory collective mourning; his circumvention of melancholy (a concept fully available to medieval authors) illustrates an alternative reaction to loss that can inflect modern theories of political affect. In the *Crónica*, as past death becomes the central fact of community, politics becomes the suppression of individual affect and molding of collective affect through historical discourse. The collective good does not require individual sacrifice; rather, Corral’s creative historiography portrays individual political subjectivity itself as a curse on the collective consciousness and an impediment to national self-realization.

Chapter three, “The Constable’s Reward: Will, Discretion, and Compassion in the *Sátira de felice e infelice vida*,” deals with this early (ca. 1450) work of sentimental fiction by Pedro, Constable of Portugal. Written during the Constable’s Castilian exile, the *Sátira* comprises an introspective narrative, with interspersed poetry, of the lovesick narrator’s debates with his own Discretion and his cruel lady’s Prudence, and over 100 self-penned glosses to this narrative. I argue that this complex structure represents a staged confrontation between the Stoic ideas prevalent in the Portuguese court of Avis and the courtly ideas typical of *cancionero* poetry.

Drawing on his uncle Duarte I's *Leal Conselheiro* (ca. 1430) and his father, the Infante Pedro's *Livro da Virtuosa Bemfeitoria* (ca. 1418-1430), the Constable elaborates in the glosses a four-part theory of will that privileges a "perfect will" purged of the passions and entirely subjected to the understanding. Meanwhile, the narrative articulates the courtly belief that – tragically – the passions will always triumph in their conflict with reason. I argue that the Constable attempts to demonstrate the inadequacy of these contrary but similarly binary affective systems through a forensic allegory in which the rhetoric of asceticism and courtly cruelty convicts itself; he thereby emphasizes the centrality of compassion to good governance, both private and public.

My final chapter, "Alone Together: Ausiàs March's Ethical Appeal for Shared Salvation," is devoted to the Valencian poet's lyric representation of the conflict between reason and the passions, or the soul and the body. Often considered the best poet ever to have written in Catalan and one of the fifteenth century's most important poets in general, March (ca. 1397-1459) emerges from the troubadour tradition only to announce his intention to break with it. I argue that his apparently systematic philosophical examinations of the troubadours' taxonomies of love are in fact an attempt to exhaust the poetic possibilities of those taxonomies, laying the groundwork for an alternative affective discourse in which individuals are linked to the community through both private erotic relationships and their public relationship with death. March is thus similar to the Constable in his rejection of the reason/will binary and to Corral in his identification of death as the central fact of community, but his communitarian thought goes farther than theirs in its articulation of a shared lyric subjectivity through moral self-scrutiny. His poetry suggests that what is most individual about us, our soul, can only be understood in intersubjective terms, articulating this shared subjectivity within an idiosyncratic context of confession and salvation.

## CHAPTER ONE

### CITY, DESERT, CLOISTER, COURT: READING AND WRITING COMMUNITY IN FIFTEENTH-CENTURY IBERIA

[Q]ui voluerit dare alicui politiae optimas leges, det eis leges monachorum. Quo quid stultius excogitari potest quam  
facere aliquam talem politiam?  
– Alfonso de Madrigal, el Tostado

Concepts of community in fifteenth-century Iberian thought drew on two principal intellectual traditions: Stoicism and Christian monasticism. Both of these traditions, drawing on earlier Platonic and Aristotelian models, conceptualized moral deliberation as a conflict between reason and the passions. These models nevertheless recognized that the passions participated in some way in cognition; in fact, the passions were blameworthy to the precise extent that they involved judgment, rational assent. The fact that the passions were at least partly cognitive, in turn, implied that the use of rhetoric to manipulate them could have a place in ethics and politics that was not purely contemptible. Through rhetoric, the passions were linked to action and practical wisdom, such that medieval Iberians considered rhetoric a moral science. Still, the rhetorical tradition that was most influential at the end of the Iberian Middle Ages – the Ciceronian tradition – maintained Stoicism’s stark affective asceticism. The passions were cognitive insofar as they constituted *mistaken* moral judgments.

The monastic tradition adopted a great deal of Stoic thought on the passions, but sought to cultivate certain forms of shared affect – charity and compassion – as approaches to moral purification and divine contemplation. This cultivation of affect involved the development of an epistemology of compassion in which compassion became a key tool of both rhetoric and

hermeneutics. Monastic asceticism still involved a rejection of worldly passions as part of the commandment to love God, but the commandment to love one's neighbor, which had been key in the development of Benedictine monasticism in particular (White, *Rule of Benedict* xviii-xix), was progressively transformed into a set of discursive practices of community.

These, then, were the traditions upon which fifteenth-century Iberian courtly writers – understood both as writers who participated in one way or another in court life, and as writers who were conscious participants in a literary tradition in which “courtesy” was both an ethical and aesthetic ideal – could draw. These writers confronted a violently divided political and cultural landscape in which communities of all kinds – political, social, religious, even linguistic – seemed hopelessly ephemeral, prone to internal strife and dissolution. At the same time, new dynasties had recently been founded in Castile and Portugal (the Trastámara and Avis dynasties, respectively), while Aragon was in the midst of a process of Mediterranean expansion. As such, there was a need to articulate bases for unity in young, unstable, and rapidly changing political configurations.

Faced with these circumstances, the courtly writers I will discuss in chapters two, three, and four of this dissertation tried to imagine new forms of affective community that went beyond the two traditions I have briefly outlined here and will shortly discuss in greater detail. In this first chapter, however, I want to outline the approaches to affective community manifested in a variety of fifteenth-century Castilian political and moral treatises, in order to frame that tradition and demonstrate more clearly how the courtly writers I study challenge it in proposing new communal configurations.<sup>1</sup> In the Castilian treatise tradition, the psychological unity of political entities – sometimes cities or kingdoms, but most frequently the court – is figured mostly in

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout the dissertation, I will also cite similar Portuguese and Catalan treatises when they are relevant to the literature being discussed; a survey of the political and moral literature of all three crowns is nevertheless beyond the scope of this chapter.

terms of friendship and mercy. In the first part of this chapter, then, I will explore the implications of taking the court as the main unit of political analysis, especially as this analytical foregrounding relates to the explosion of courtly literature in Castile toward the beginning of the fifteenth century. In the next section, taking Isidore of Seville's definition of rhetoric in the *Etymologies* as my starting point, I will explicate the classical background of rhetorical theories of empathetic participation. In the third section, I will discuss friendship and mercy as models of political unity in Castilian political and moral treatises, highlighting their grounding in Stoic thought. In the fourth and final section, I will trace the development in epistemological compassion in the monastic tradition to show how an emergent transition from mercy to compassion in political literature sets the stage for the farther-reaching explorations of communal affect that I will analyze in the dissertation's remaining chapters.

### ***Courtly Conflict, Courtly Literature***

What might it mean for conflict to be “courtly”? This is how Alonso de Cartagena, in a 1444 letter, characterized Castile's volatile political circumstances, in contrast to the “civil” conflicts at Rome:

E recolegid, si vos place, en vuestra memoria los tienpos que pasaron d'aquel Don Pelayo silvestre, en quien començó la real policía, so cuya sombra en esta citerior España vivimos. Ca ante dél era la monarchía más larga e extensa, e a la presente non tan semejable, e claramente veredes muy poco aver durado el sosiego, e aun quando contra enemigos guerra non era; porque tanta es la animosidad e brío de la nobleça de España, que si en guerra justa non exercita sus fuerças, luego se convierte a las mover en aquellas contiendas que los romanos *cibdadas* llamaban – porque sobre el estado del regimiento de su cibdat se movían, aunque después se extendían por diversas partes del mundo – e nos, propiamente hablando, podremos llamar *cortesanas*, pues sobre el valer de la corte se



mueven, aunque se extienden por las más provincias del reino.<sup>2</sup> (“*Respuesta*” 1: 237-8; emphasis added)

And recall, if you please, to your memory the bygone times of that wild Don Pelayo, in whom royal politics began, in whose shadow we live in this nearer Spain. For before him the monarchy was more extensive, and dissimilar to the present one, and you will see clearly that the calm lasted briefly, even when there was no war against enemies; because such is the animosity and spirit of Spain’s nobility, that if it does not employ its energy in just war, it begins to employ it in those conflicts that the Romans called *civil* – because they arose from the state of the city’s governance, although they later reached diverse parts of the world – and we, speaking properly, can call *courtly*, because they deal with the court’s worth, although later they reach the kingdom’s other provinces.<sup>3</sup>

Cartagena was bishop of Burgos, and his letter’s recipient was Íñigo López de Mendoza, Marqués de Santillana, one of Castile’s most celebrated poets, to whom I will return in chapter three. Indeed, Cartagena was urging Santillana to continue writing despite Castile’s ongoing crisis, which seemed likely to outlast both bishop and poet: “si esperamos a que la fortuna nos dé tranquilidad e quiete, e en tanto que dura el tiempo turbado, tenemos la péñola queda, ¿non temeremos con grand razón que por ventura passe nuestra vida ociosa, sin dejar de sí escriptura durable?” (237) “if we wait for fortune to grant us peace and tranquility, and leave our quills quiet during conflictive times, will we not have great reason to fear that our lives will pass idly, leaving no lasting writings?”

Cartagena had reason for pessimism: in his estimation, it had been a rule of Castilian politics since the time of Pelayo that the unruly nobles would focus their inborn animosity on the monarchy whenever it was not directed toward an external enemy – generally speaking, of course, the Moors. It was the stagnation of the so-called Reconquest, along with unrelenting conflict between the nobility, on the one hand, and Juan II and his close advisor, Álvaro de Luna, on the other, that led many to consider the first half of the fifteenth century in Iberia a time

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<sup>2</sup> For the letter’s 1444 date, see Serrano 239.

<sup>3</sup> All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

of crisis, a view held by many modern historians as well.<sup>4</sup> In contrast, Cartagena's view that writing was an appropriate, even necessary, activity for *caballeros* during times of conflict marked him as a cultural outlier: most Castilian thinkers believed that letters distracted knights from their central duties as *defensores*, and even those who defended letters as a knightly pursuit considered them a diverting pastime, not a culturally vital task (Russell 209). To what extent, then, can we read the "diversion" of courtly poetry as a reflection of, or response to, Cartagena's "courtly" conflict? Perhaps we should move in the opposite direction, reading it not even as diversion, but as an escape from a cultural reality as distressing as it was intractable.

The very magnitude of courtly poetry's rebirth in fifteenth-century Castile (and in the Castilian language) marks it as something more than a mere diversion: more than 400 different poets can be identified in the fifteenth century, of whom more than a third were members of the upper nobility (Boase 3-4). Roger Boase, the critic from whom these statistics are drawn, does indeed view this "troubadour revival" as a conservative reaction to social change:

[T]he troubadour revival in late medieval Spain was a conservative reaction to social crisis by those who belonged, or were affiliated, to a powerful, expanding and belligerent aristocracy; the crisis was produced by a discrepancy between social theory and social

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<sup>4</sup> For example, Teófilo F. Ruiz's recent history of late-medieval Spain is entitled *Spain's Centuries of Crisis: 1300-1474*. Ruiz explicitly links the period's cultural production to this turbulent context: "Spain's cultural revival ... took place in the midst of wars and violent social, economic, and political transformations. The Spanish realms also responded to the disasters of the age with a firm commitment to aesthetics and to turning the daily horrors of life into the beautiful" (165). Without denying the period's violence, a number of historians have rejected the view that what was at stake in the conflict between nobility and monarchy was "centralization." Luis Suárez Fernández, for example, calls the image of Fernando and Isabel as persecutors and destroyers of the nobility a "Romantic legend" and insists that "there is nothing approaching centralism" even at the end of the fifteenth century (*El proceso de la unidad española* 8-10; all translations are mine unless otherwise noted). Others question the historiographic emphasis on this conflict among the others that marked late-medieval Castilian life; thus, Julio Valdeón Baroque writes that, while it was natural for conflicts of this nature to be central to royal historiography, and while attempts to strengthen the jurisdictional power of the monarchy did conflict with feudal customs, "in the long-term the strengthening of the monarchy in no way constituted an obstacle for the expansion of the nobility as a social class; on the contrary, it was the necessary condition for the nobility to consolidate its economic interests and social preeminence, at the cost, of course, of recognizing that the basic sources of political power and jurisdiction were held by the Crown" (32-33). For my part, I think it is clear that fifteenth-century observers perceived conflict between the Crown and the nobility as a source of perpetual instability. The stability they sought in favoring a strong monarchy may not have taken the form of "centralization" in the modern sense, but the term holds for their conception of the king as the nerve-center of the body politic (see the third section of this chapter).

reality which could never be resolved, because the theory was based on the belief in a divinely pre-ordained system of social stratification in which change was inconceivable. (7-8)

From this point of view, the revival comes to look like a negative cultural phenomenon, its creativity stymied by political timidity and aesthetic traditionalism; to the political crisis of feudalism we must add the cultural crisis of feudalism's concomitant literary forms. Iberia's fifteenth century becomes a period of cultural transition, of "proto-Humanism" (both Cartagena and Santillana are often described in just this way, as proto-Humanists). Critics who adhere to this view tend to oppose "traditional" courtly poetry, with its rigid and inherited commonplaces, to emergent hybrid forms such as the sentimental romance, marked by classical erudition and the influence of Italian writers such as Boccaccio. This modern critical approach reflects a teleological reading of late-medieval texts in which literary creativity is understood as divergence from the tropes of courtly love. Without denying the novelty of the sentimental romance (or the novelties that emerge within Iberian *cancioneros*, *cancioneiros*, and *cançoners* as the fifteenth century advances), I want to suggest here that the hallmarks of Iberian humanism – the spread of lay literacy and the proliferation of vernacular translations of Latin texts, especially moral and didactic works, including rhetorical treatises (Lawrance, "Lay Literacy" 80-3 and 88-9; *ibid.*, "Vernacular Humanism" 66) – do not provide a contrast to the troubadour revival, but rather a crucial context for its understanding.

If, for the thinkers of the period, the paradigmatic conflict of late-medieval Castile is between monarchy and nobility, the paradigmatic conflict of courtly literature is between determined lover and reticent lady. This latter paradigm has come down to modern audiences most famously through Andreas Capellanus's *Art of Courtly Love* (1186-90), whose first two books comprise a manual for the aspiring courtly lover, a series of rhetorical jousts between

lovers and ladies of different social standings. Its third book, however, turns the tables on the first two, as Capellanus instructs his pupil to avoid worldly love altogether and turn toward the divine. The first two books' intersubjective conflict thus becomes an interior one between reason and the passions, and the *Art* itself becomes what Catherine Brown has called a "logical problem": "How is one to make sense of a text that poses the *quaestio* 'the love of women is the source of all happiness, *et contra*, the source of all damnation,' and in response delivers a double verdict at once for and against each opposing side?" (96). Brown is reading the *Art* within the broader currents of medieval exegesis and logic, but in the more limited context of lyric poetry, the lover's frustration is not a problem at all, as María Rosa Menocal has argued:

It is the disappointment itself, too often without logical reason, that is the subject of this poetry. The obstacles, when and if they are specified, are rarely if ever as significant as the simple fact of unfulfillment, which is clearly at the center of the poetry's concerns ... It is hard to escape the tentative conclusion that this is poetry very much for itself and conscious of itself as its own principal pleasure and subject, and that the recurring theme of unsatisfactory love is a thematic vehicle particularly well suited to this sort of poetic narcissism. (107)

Just as apparent contradictions in scripture drive the remarkable creativity of medieval exegesis and logical disputation drives Scholastic thought, the unresolved conflicts of courtly literature, both exterior and interior, constitute its condition of poetic possibility. Taking lyric for narrative, we see them as a chronological endpoint: the courtly poet narrates the failure (or, very occasionally, success) of his seduction and its painful aftermath. But in terms of Menocal's lyric pleasure, these explorations of unfulfillment are a creative motor; the pain of failure, real or imagined, gives way to wide-ranging lyric play involving all aspects of courtly life.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> A further advantage of this hermeneutic standpoint is that the question of courtly love's historicity falls away, while other sociopolitical questions are not obviated but brought to the fore. For a concise summary and critical appraisal of modern approaches to courtly love with particular reference to the *Art of Courtly Love*, see Moi 12-20.

The tropes by which modern critics identify a “courtly” text (and which were understood as tropes in the Middle Ages) – the lover’s servitude of his lady, and his sickness and suffering at her hands, among others – are the shared affective vocabulary that construct, rhetorically, courtly love’s creative unfulfillment. They are evidence that courtly writers constituted a community defined by this shared affective system. Indeed, Barbara H. Rosenwein has posited the existence of “emotional communities” – “groups in which people adhere to the same norms of emotional expression and value – or devalue – the same or related emotions” (2) – and has even noted that these communities may be “textual,” “created and reinforced by ideologies, teachings, and common presuppositions” (24-5). For Rosenwein, the existence of textual genres constitutes a danger for the historian of emotions: “The constraints of genre admittedly pose a problem. Might not the well-meaning historian mistake a particular genre, with its rules of expression, for an ‘emotional community’?” (27). In other words, the historian attempting to discern actual historical attitudes toward emotion might be hoodwinked by what was self-conscious conventional play in medieval texts. Here, I want to argue that historical genres do not obscure “true” emotional communities; rather, we should see the concept of the emotional community – or “affective” community, as I prefer, for reasons laid out in the introduction – as one of many possible *definitions* of “genre.” Self-conscious, conventional play, whether it holds to or diverges from tropic norms, implies a community of readers and writers interested in exploring the affective system they have inherited.

In arguing that courtly writers were defined, as a community, by their tropes, I am not arguing that they were therefore *constrained* by those tropes. They “adhere to the same norms of emotional ... value” not in that they value the same emotions equally – here, I differ substantially from Rosenwein – but in that they emphasize the same emotions, or emotional

conflicts, in their acts of poetic creation and disputation. The mere repetition of affective tropes in a genre tells only part of the story of the formation and development of genres:

[T]he function of art in the process of this perpetual totalizing [i.e., the “critical and dialectical reproduction of the past”] can only come into view in its independence when the specific achievement of artistic form as well is no longer just mimetically defined, but rather is viewed dialectically as a medium capable of forming and altering perception, in which the “formation of the senses” chiefly takes place. (Jauss 15-6)

When viewed synchronically, genres seem to present stable rules of interpretation and composition. As Jauss argues above, however, we should always be aware of the dialectical processes active within genres; their conventions are reaffirmed or renovated as they are written, and they act on their cultural contexts as much as they are informed by them. This is especially true when we keep in mind that, as members of an affective community, writers are at once producers and consumers; sharing a vocabulary implies both speaking and listening.

What is shared at the heart of this dialogue is, to borrow Michel Maffesoli’s term, a “style”: “[S]tyle is the essential characteristic of a collective sentiment ... an all-encompassing form, a ‘forming form’ that gives birth to whole manners of being, to customs, representations, and the various fashions by which life in society is expressed” (5). The dialogic nature of this “collective sentiment” cannot be overstated: “style is above all the fact of existing only and through the look or the word of the other” (16). Just as Menocal identifies “pleasure” as courtly love’s poetic spur, Maffesoli writes that creation itself “may be less an action than a communal passion” (29). Maffesoli’s notion of style is helpful in showing that cultural phenomena such as literary genres that may seem static – for example, in the perpetual unfulfillment of the courtly lover – are in fact dynamic. They are a “passion” not in the sense that they passively record cultural developments, but rather in that the intersubjective dialogue that sustains them represents a form of productive affection. The key in the case of courtly love – and not only in its

Iberian manifestations – is that it is a communal passion *about* passion, in which the rhetoric that forms lyric subjects, collective and individual, revolves around the moral stakes of emotion, of passivity and activity, of inward contemplation and outward desire. How, then, did this particular conception of rhetoric develop?

### ***Rhetoric, Dialectic, and the Classical Model of Empathetic Participation***

If we accept that what is at stake in fifteenth-century Iberian courtly literature is the formation of an attitude toward emotion, the next step, as good rhetoricians, is to investigate *how* emotions became a communal passion and *why* they might be seen as an instrument of literary rhetoric addressing both private morality and public life. In other words, how did affect come to be (seen as) the principal articulation between concepts of community and rhetoric in late-medieval Iberia? We can begin by examining how rhetoric was defined by Isidore of Seville, Archbishop of Seville during the first decades of the seventh century, whose *Etymologies* (ca. 630) were a fundamental source of information of all kinds for later medieval writers. Isidore's definition of rhetoric draws an instructive contrast with dialectic: "While dialectic is indeed sharper for examining things, rhetoric is more fluent for those things it strives to teach. Dialectic sometimes appears in schools; rhetoric continually comes to the public forum. Dialectic reaches very few students; rhetoric often reaches the whole populace" (II.xxiii.2). The fundamental points of comparison here are instrumentality and audience. Dialectic finds the truth but communicates it to the few; rhetoric's relationship to the truth is undefined, but its capacity to reach the many is undeniable. This contrast draws, more or less directly, on both Platonic and Aristotelian discussions of rhetoric, and it is through a brief examination of those discussions

that we can see the implicit role affect plays here, and its implications for later discussions of affect's role in ethics and politics. In Plato's dialogues on rhetoric we find the seeds of debates about the relationship of reason to the passions, of rhetoric to truth and politics, and of orators to their audiences. In Aristotle, we find a practical analysis of this last relationship, with important implications for fifteenth-century attitudes toward the role of the passions in moral praxis.

Emotion has always been implicated in the attempt to separate rhetoric from dialectic. Plato famously treats emotion and rhetoric together in the *Phaedrus*. Like all of Plato's dialogues, the *Phaedrus* was unknown in medieval Iberia, but the importance of its tripartite division of the soul in the development of later theories of emotion cannot be overstated. In allegorizing the soul as a charioteer (its rational power) and two horses (its concupiscible and irascible powers), Plato provided a fundamental model of the soul divided against itself. This paradigm of inner conflict was preserved even in later models whose underlying cosmology was entirely different.<sup>6</sup> The fact that this is an *inner* conflict is also paramount here: they may be opposed, but cognition and affection are equally powers of the soul. Both those who would later condemn emotions as immoral or sinful and those who would defend their role in public deliberation seized on the fundamental point that emotions engage cognition, involving the willful exercise of judgment.

In an anticipation of Capellanus's *Art*, which teaches courtly actors to pursue and reject love through rhetorical persuasion, Socrates asks Phaedrus, "Isn't the art of rhetoric, taken as a whole, a certain guiding of souls through words, not only in the law courts and other places of public assembly but also in private?" (261a). For Socrates in the *Phaedrus*, the essence of this art is the erasure of difference: rhetoric "enables someone to make everything similar to everything else," in both public and private settings (261e). The moral stakes of rhetoric are thus set. The

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<sup>6</sup> For this allegory, see 246a-254e; on the concupiscible and irascible parts in particular, see 253d-254b.



soul is divided against itself, and moral deliberation requires the clear perception of difference – that is, discretion. The reduction of difference opens the door to deception (262a).

This reduction of difference is not the only way rhetoric closes distances in the *Phaedrus*. Just as doctors must understand the nature of the body, rhetoricians must understand that of the soul (270b); “having classified the . . . kinds of soul and how these are affected, [the teacher of rhetoric] will go through every cause, aligning each type of speech to each type of soul” (271a-b). This is an early iteration of one of rhetoric’s key concepts, *kairos*, glossed by Rita Copeland as “fitting persuasion to the right and appropriate circumstances of subject, audience, and moment” (19). Isidore, for his part, describes *kairos* in his advice on style (*elocutio*): “[I]t will be correct to use what the matter, the place, the time, and the character of the audience require, ensuring that profane things are not mingled with religious, immodest with chaste, frivolous with weighty, playful with earnest, or laughable with sad” (II.xvi.1). *Kairos* is thus clearly an expansive concept, but for Plato, a rhetorician’s success depends more than anything on knowledge of the audience’s souls (277b-c). This knowledge is key in both public and private rhetoric, and the content of the persuasion in question is irrelevant. To use a later term, *dispositio* – the *arrangement* of a speech’s formal aspects according to the audience’s emotional *disposition* – is everything. But not in moral terms: here, rhetoric’s promise lies only in its capacity to fortify discussions of the “just, beautiful and good” with *true* knowledge of the soul’s nature.<sup>7</sup> In this sense, “good” rhetoric becomes a kind of dialectic – in any case, a *science* – relying chiefly on the speaker’s certain knowledge.<sup>8</sup> Rhetoric can only be moral if it persuades its audience of something true.

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<sup>7</sup> On the question of truth, see Scully (trans. and ed.), *Phaedrus* 68 n. 155.

<sup>8</sup> As we will see, this anticipates certain early Christian attitudes toward the “rhetoric” of Scripture.

The question of truth is again taken up in Plato's most extended meditation on rhetoric, the *Gorgias*, when Socrates describes rhetoric as "belief-inspiring but not didactic" (455a).<sup>9</sup> For Socrates, speech cannot be truly didactic if its content is false. The *Gorgias* seems to reflect a more polemical attitude toward rhetoric, as Socrates engages three increasingly defiant interlocutors – Gorgias, the well-known Sophist; Polus, his student; and Callicles, a young politician – in a lengthy debate on its political and moral merits. In fact, as Seth Benardete points out, the very length of the dialogue and recalcitrance of Socrates's opponents represent one of the *Gorgias*'s central mysteries (5). For Benardete, the mistakes in reasoning made throughout the text by Gorgias, Polus, and Callicles, who tend to fall easily into Socrates's traps, constitute "the very mistakes of rhetoric that demonstrate its spuriousness" (7). By the end of the dialogue, there can be no doubt about Socrates's low opinion of rhetoric, and Benardete may be right that Plato's ultimate sympathies lie with Socrates as well. But what Plato dramatizes most consistently in the *Gorgias* is Socrates's attempt to separate rhetoric from dialectic cleanly, as his opponents persist in blurring this boundary.

Socrates's interlocutors in the *Gorgias* do not admit that dialectical reasoning leads to the truth. Rather, when they are led by Socrates toward undesirable conclusions, they characterize Socrates's victories as purely rhetorical, reliant on the manipulation of emotions such as shame that spring from social customs (see, for example, 461b-c). Furthermore, they frequently accuse Socrates of taking too much pleasure in his dialectical method, treating their engagement in dialogue as an indulgence of Socrates's will (510a; 513e; 514a; 516c). They perceive their dialogue to be a battle of wills, not reasons, and their indulgent attitude and condescending

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<sup>9</sup> Isidore names Gorgias, Aristotle, and Hermagoras as the founders of rhetoric, and Cicero and Quintilians as its continuers in Latin culture (*Etymologies* II.ii.1).

references to Socrates's pleasure and wishes emphasize that Socrates's dialectic is more rhetorical – as a method – than the philosopher believes.

Rhetoric is primarily a public activity in the *Gorgias*, and pleasure is, in fact, key in Socrates's attempts to distinguish it from the “true” politics in which he himself is engaged: “I think that with a few Athenians – so as not to say myself alone – I put my hand to the true political art and I alone of the men of today practice politics, inasmuch as it is not with a view to gratification that I speak the speeches that I speak on each occasion, but with a view to the best, not to the most pleasant” (521d-e). But Socrates himself recognizes that his politics, bereft of pleasure, is likely to fail as a public endeavor; echoing Isidore, James H. Nichols, Jr. has written that Socrates's “dialectical mode of speaking with one person at a time cannot work with the many” (*Gorgias*, “Introduction” 13). Callicles, Socrates's most intractable interlocutor, is skeptical of philosophy as a mode of communication at all, asking Socrates, “Couldn't you go through the argument yourself, either speaking by yourself or answering yourself?” (505d). The young politician suspects that philosophy, at least as Socrates practices it, is essentially an inner monologue, inappropriate for any kind of intersubjective deliberation. Experience – the term Socrates has used to dismiss rhetoric – is essential to politics (and to nobility and goodness) and anathema to philosophy, such that the philosopher seems ridiculous among politicians and vice versa (484c-e). It is here, dramatically, that Callicles chooses to remain: philosophy cannot bridge the gap between individuals, or between an individual and a crowd. When Socrates tries to use philosophy to persuade, he becomes nothing more than a rhetorician – and a ridiculous one at that.

What Plato dramatizes, Aristotle systematizes. Early on in his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle addresses the relationship between rhetoric and dialectic, on the one hand, and rhetoric and

politics, on the other.<sup>10</sup> His famous (and categorical) statement that “Rhetoric is the counterpart of Dialectic” (1354a) is accompanied by the more ambiguous claim that a rhetorician, in addition to reasoning logically and understanding human character and goodness, must be able

to understand the emotions – that is, to name them and describe them, to know their causes and the way in which they are excited. It thus appears that rhetoric is an offshoot of dialectic and also of ethical studies. Ethical studies may fairly be called political; and for this reason rhetoric masquerades as political science, and the professors of it as political experts ... As a matter of fact, it is a branch of dialectic and similar to it. (1356a)

Rhetoric is linked to ethics through the emotions, and thus seemingly through ethics to politics; but the latter is a science, whereas rhetoric and dialectic are merely “faculties for providing arguments” (1356a). Rhetoric seems to be tied to practical wisdom because “it is about our actions that we deliberate and inquire, and all our actions have a contingent character” (1357a), but “its status as a practical knowledge in Aristotle is debatable, since he compares it to dialectic as ‘an instrument of all sciences’” (Copeland 15).

There can be no question, however, that medieval Iberians held rhetoric, in both its Aristotelian and Ciceronian models, to be a mode of practical wisdom. Indeed, Alonso de Cartagena argued, in the preface to his translation of Cicero’s *De Inventione*, undertaken at the behest of Portugal’s then-prince Duarte, that Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* formed a moral trilogy with the *Politics* and *Ethics* (*Rhetórica* 30).<sup>11</sup> Although Aristotle insists that rhetoric and political science are not one, the relationship of rhetoric to politics through emotion and ethics holds. It is emotional persuasion that “come[s] through the hearers” (1356a), and, further, “of the three elements in speech-making – speaker, subject, and person addressed – it is the last one, the

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<sup>10</sup> The *Rhetoric* circulated in Latin translation in late-medieval Iberia, albeit not widely; Charles Faulhaber identified six manuscripts in his survey of Spanish libraries (48-9).

<sup>11</sup> This translation was begun ca. 1421-2 during a diplomatic mission to Portugal (*Rhetórica* 10). It survives in a single manuscript held by the Escorial (MS. T.II.12). For the effects of Cartagena’s embassy to Portugal on broader Iberian humanism, see Salazar.

hearer, that determines the speech's end and object" (1358a-b). Echoing Callicles subtly, Paul Ricoeur argues that rhetoric's fundamental intersubjectivity separates it from dialectic:

In particular, the orientation of argument to a listener – evidence that all discourse is addressed to someone – and its adherence to contents defined by the *topics*, keep “the persuasive as such” from turning into a logic of probability. Thus, rhetoric will remain at most the *antistrophos* (“counterpart”) of dialectic, but will not dissolve into it. (33-4)

In Aristotle's exposition, it is the hearer's predominance that gives rise to the well-known threefold division of rhetoric into the political or deliberative, the forensic, and the ceremonial or epideictic (1358b). Of these, political oratory is most concerned with action, oriented toward the future and aiming “at establishing the expediency or the harmfulness of a proposed course of action” (1358b). It is this focus on action, combined with the determinant role played by the audience, that makes emotion central to later discussions of public governance and virtue.

Aristotle's advice, at the beginning of Book II of the *Rhetoric*, that the orator must understand the emotions in order to provoke them in the audience (1378a) is not far from Socrates's reasoning in the *Phaedrus*. Rather, what is revolutionary is Aristotle's association of emotion and cognition through judgment and belief, for example in his definition of anger as “an impulse, accompanied by pain, to a conspicuous revenge for a conspicuous slight directed without justification towards what concerns oneself or towards what concerns one's friends” (1378a). As W. W. Fortenbaugh has explained,

By construing thought of belief as the efficient cause of emotion, Aristotle showed that emotional response is intelligent behaviour open to reasoned persuasion. When men are angered, they are not victims of some totally irrational force. Rather they are responding in accordance with the thought of unjust insult. Their belief may be erroneous and their anger unreasonable, but their behaviour is intelligent and cognitive in the sense that it is grounded upon a belief which may be criticised and even altered by argumentation. (Fortenbaugh 17)

Emotional appeals are thus not entirely unreasonable, not, as Fortenbaugh summarizes Gorgias's view, to be considered "charms and enchantments" (17). An emotion is a kind of judgment – and, at least sometimes, a correct one.<sup>12</sup>

Another key element of Aristotle's definition of anger is that the perceived insult may be directed at either oneself or one's friends. The *Rhetoric*'s definitions of the individual emotions are shot through with dialectics of the individual and collective, likeness and difference, proximity and distance. Anger is differentiated from hatred because the latter can be directed against "classes," whereas the former is "always concerned with individuals" (1382a).<sup>13</sup> Pity (which can be felt by the angry, but not the hateful) requires a judgment that the undeserved suffering we perceive could also befall us (1385b), especially when those suffering share our character or social standing (1386a). But some difference is required as well: when the sufferers are too like us, "we feel about them as if we were in danger ourselves" (1386a). The multiple relationships of the individual to the community are thus definitive, and knowledge of them permits orators to reproduce feelings of closeness or distance in their audiences.

Emotions, as judgments, rely on perception, and it is important to note that Aristotle considered perception itself an "affection" (*pathos*; *De Anima* 416b). The senses, as affections, function through a kind of perceptual participation in their objects: "the sense faculty is like the actual sense-object – it is affected as being unlike but on being affected it becomes like and is such as what acts on it" (418a). Now, perception is only one activity that differentiates the souled from the unsouled; the other is movement (403b), and movement is spurred by desire rather than intellect (433a).<sup>14</sup> Desire, in turn, depends on the "rational and perceptive imagination" (*phantasia*; 433b). As such, movement and desire rely on perceptual participation, an ontological

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<sup>12</sup> On this point, see Nussbaum, "Aristotle on Emotions" 309 and Striker 297.

<sup>13</sup> Here, Aristotle offers Socrates as an example of individuals against whom anger has been directed.

<sup>14</sup> This is because, unlike the intellect, desire and imagination can be mistaken.

closeness between subject and object. Perception, an affection – that is, a passion – functions as a kind of epistemological empathy. In Aristotle, then, both sensation and persuasion are forms of affective participation, which therefore governs the epistemology and practice of public deliberation. Affective rhetoric begins and ends in community.

Although his influence was almost always mediated, Aristotle’s theories of participation underlie fifteenth-century Iberia’s political and moral discourse as it is manifested in both theoretical and literary texts.<sup>15</sup> The chief mediators – whose mediation was, of course, far from transparent – were Roman Stoic thinkers such as Cicero and Seneca, on the one hand, and monastic thinkers such as John Cassian and Bernard of Clairvaux, on the other. Their ideas about the epistemological and even aesthetic potential – or necessity – of empathy mirror, at least through shared metaphors of closeness and distance, ideas about the rhetorical, practical, and communitarian potential of empathy. Stoic thought was particularly influential in Iberian theories of community and good governance, and it is to these intertwined traditions that I will now turn.

### ***Psychological Unity in Fifteenth-Century Castilian Political Thought: Friendship and Mercy***

As lay literacy spread in fifteenth-century Iberia, readers showed a marked preference for moral and didactic works. This preference may have been grounded in practical concerns; after all, “for the new lay readership of the fifteenth century, classical literature provided almost the only available texts for a study of statecraft, warfare and secular ethics based on empirical

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<sup>15</sup> Of course, these theories were taken up outside of Iberian (and outside of the Middle Ages) as well. Thus, Karl F. Morrison has traced a broad “hermeneutics of empathy” in which “[e]pistemology was expressed in the identity between knower and known (or subject and object), a proposition that ramified through doctrines affirming the identity of lover and beloved, actor and character (impersonation), and – a cluster of ideas that dealt with art – artist and work, subject and work, artist and subject, and beholder and work” (26). These doctrines “taught a personal union achieved through the affects. Union progresses through stages of knowing, desiring, and enjoying or emulating the other. The arguments found their vindication in the esthetic closure of joy” (28). I will return to these questions in the last part of this chapter.

examples” (Lawrance, “Vernacular Humanism” 67). Cicero was one of the dominant objects of this new interest; his *De officiis*, for example, was widely translated throughout Iberia, into Aragonese, Catalan, and Portuguese – along with Alonso de Cartagena’s Castilian version (Morrás 12). Cartagena’s translation differs from its Iberian counterparts, however, in that the bishop of Burgos considered Cicero’s text a moral treatise, not a manual of good government (Morrás 12-3). In his prologue to *De los oficios*, Cartagena explains that he chose this text (Juan Alfonso de Zamora had made a broad request for him to translate some classical work, not even specifying Cicero as author) not only for its moral doctrine, but for its rhetorical qualities (*Libros de Tulio* 207).<sup>16</sup> As I mentioned above, Cartagena (and he was not alone in this among medieval thinkers) considered rhetoric a primarily moral science, and it was the classical rhetorics – *De inventione* and *Ad Herennium*, then attributed to Cicero – that remained dominant (alongside the *artes dictaminis*) until the end of the Middle Ages in Iberia (Faulhaber 48-51). Cicero’s thought on the emotions was also an object of interest: in the fifteenth century, nobleman Nuño de Guzmán commissioned an Italian translation of the *Tusculan Disputations* (Morrás 11).

We should not be surprised to find Cicero’s fingerprints on political texts produced during a time when the concept of the *bien público* or *bien común* was consistently exalted by the ruling dynasty, the Trastámaras (Nieto Soria 205). But just how was the “common” understood in this literature? My answer will, by necessity, take the form of a survey, beginning with the anonymous *Tratado de la comunidad*, in which “community” (“comunidad”) is defined thus:

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<sup>16</sup> Nieto Soria has noted the “extraordinary diffusion” of Cartagena’s works in the fifteenth century (*Iglesia y genesis* 218), and Cartagena (whose 1420 embassy to Portugal has already been mentioned) was also active in royal and ecclesiastical politics. For Cartagena’s 1441 attempt to mediate between the crown (and Álvaro de Luna) and rebellious forces, see Serrano 166-170; for a recent assessment of Cartagena’s relationship with humanism, see Fernández Gallardo.



Comunidad es cosa bien regida e gobernada por un rey o príncipe, o por pocos omnes buenos e virtuosos, o por todo el pueblo si tal es que lo pueda fazer. La cual comunidad es ayuntamiento de gente por consentimiento de derecho e conplimiento de provecho, e es fecha de *personas* mayores e medianas e menores. Las quales quando son de un corazón e voluntat, la comunidad es bien regida e gobernada. (87).<sup>17</sup>

Community is something well governed by a king or prince, or a few good and virtuous men, or by all the people if they are capable of it. This community is a union of people by rightful consent and for their benefit, and it is composed of greater, average, and lesser people. When these people are of one heart and will, the community is well governed.

There is a definitional link here between psychological unity and good governance; that is, psychological unity is the definitional goal of good governance, through monarchy, oligarchy, or democracy. Furthermore, in this definition's insistence on the community's "one heart," there may be an echo of Title I, Law V of the second of Alfonso X's *Siete partidas*, which states that just as the body's unity springs from its one heart, the members of a community should be loyal in service to their one king (7). In this law, the king is compared not only to the heart, but also to the soul and head: as the soul resides in the heart and gives it life, justice resides in the king, giving life to his land, and as the body relies on the head's senses for guidance, so the people rely on their king. The *Tratado*'s definition does indeed extend the metaphor of the body politic: "Que como el cuerpo natural, las partidas del qual sirva la una a la otra, e la una encubre el fallimiento de la otra, e la otra defiende a la otra, e la una endereça e basteçe la honrra de la otra, así las partidas de la comunidad se deven amar e querer e ayudar e defender las unas a las otras" (87) "Like the natural body, the parts of which serve each other, one making up for the other's failing, one defending another, one sorting out and shoring up the other's honor, thus the parts of the community should love and help and defend each other." Communal life becomes here a

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<sup>17</sup> The *Tratado*, whose one fifteenth-century manuscript is held by the Escorial (MS &-II-8), is based largely on Juan García de Castrojeriz's *Glosa castellana al "Regimiento de príncipes"* (10). It is bound with several other didactic works; for a list, see 10-11.

kind of self-love whose intersubjective manifestation, will, in turn, be conceptualized through a Stoic model of friendship based on identification – indeed, as the *Tratado*'s anonymous author later explains, “amigo” means “yqual de mí” (127).

The *Tratado* may also have been drawing on the *Siete partidas* for its definition of friendship. In fact, many of the concepts central to fifteenth-century Iberia's communitarian debate – debt, concord, equality, communication – are present in this section (*Partida* IV, title xvii) of Alfonso X's encyclopedic legal code, and they are drawn explicitly from classical authority. Friendship is initially conceptualized as a kind of loving debt: “Amistad es cosa que ayunta los corazones de los homes para amarse mucho; ca segunt dixieron los sabios antiguos, et es verdad, amor pasa todos los debdos” (IV.xxvii) “Friendship is something that joins men's hearts so that they love each other greatly; for as the wise men of Antiquity said, and it is true, love surpasses all debts.” It is not, however, the same as love, and it is also different from beneficence (*bienquerencia*) and concord, because it is necessarily mutual and symmetrical. Love and beneficence may not be reciprocated, and concord is possible without friendship (IV.xxvii.1). Cicero is named specifically as the authority for the claim that when friends communicate, it is as if they were talking to themselves (IV.xxvii.3), and a reference to Augustine confirms the absolute equality among friends (IV.xxvii.5).

Mutual debt, love, and equality are all figures for empathetic participation, and they are all identified as important elements of broader forms of community. Parents and children feel natural friendship toward each other, as do spouses and fellow countrymen; this natural friendship is inferior, however, to that felt between men who have shared pure goodwill (*bondat*) for a long time (IV.xxvii.4). Although the cited authority for this distinction is Aristotle, the *Siete partidas* appear to be echoing Cicero's discussion of human community in *On Obligations*.

Cicero's analysis moves from broad to narrow, and then from narrow to broad. He begins by seeking a natural basis for universal human unity:

It seems necessary, however, to probe deeper into the fundamentals of community and human fellowship ordained by nature. First comes that which we see existing in the fellowship of the whole human race. The bond which unites them is the combination of reason and speech, which by teaching, learning, communicating, debating, and evaluating endears men to each other, and unites them in a kind of natural alliance. This more than anything separates us from the nature of the beasts. We often concede that animals such as horses and lions have courage, but lack justice, fairness, and goodness. This is because they lack reason and speech.<sup>18</sup> (I.50)

The communitarian potential of pedagogy and debate to “endear men to each other” thus gives speech – and rhetoric, as a key subset thereof – definitional importance. Rhetoric is the point at which definitions of the human and of human community converge.<sup>19</sup> From this broad base of universal human fellowship, Cicero traces a set of ever-narrower levels: from those united by “race, nation and tongue,” to those from the same city-state, friends and business associates, and, finally, family members (I.53). In analyzing the inner workings of the family, however, Cicero broadens the picture once again. The universal urge to procreate leads to the primary bond of marriage and the secondary bond between parents and children. As these bonds expand (between brothers and sisters, first and second cousins, through marriage), they cannot be contained in a single household: “From such procreation and resultant offspring states have their beginnings” (I.54). It would seem, then, that the family structure is both the end and beginning of human community.

This is not, however, Cicero's conclusion. As in the *Siete partidas*, friendship, not family, is key: “Of all bonds of fellowship, however, none is more pre-eminent or enduring than the

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<sup>18</sup> Walsh notes that this doctrine is adopted from Aristotle (136 n. 50).

<sup>19</sup> See chapter three for a discussion of Cicero's related account of the origins of human community in his youthful rhetorical treatise *De inventione*.

friendship forged between good men of like character” (I.55). “Likeness” here manifests itself as a kind of ethical attraction that, in the end, verges on participation:

True, every virtue attracts us towards it, and causes us to feel affection towards those in whom we observe it, but justice and generosity induce this response most of all. Nothing inspires greater affection or intimacy than decency of character which is shared. When two people have the same ideals and aspirations, they take the same pleasure in each other as in themselves. (I.56)

*On Obligations* is a moral treatise in which Cicero sets out to establish a rational basis for human community; the virtues of wisdom, justice, generosity, and magnanimity, which constitute the sources of obligation, are analyzed with particular regard to the role they play in “communal adherence” (I.20). Here, the mechanism by which justice and generosity effect “communal adherence” becomes clear. When an ethical outlook is shared, it generates a kind of friendship, or affection, that manifests itself empathically as communal pleasure. Individual virtue and friendship represent processes that reinforce each other through speech – a case in point is *On Obligations* itself, dedicated, as it was, to Cicero’s own son. Speech guides individual ethics and defines the broadest possibilities of human fellowship.

This conception of friendship as communication was extensively developed, and its political implications explored, by Alfonso de Madrigal (ca. 1410-1455), also known as “el Tostado” (possibly owing to his dark hair). Madrigal was professor of moral philosophy at the University of Salamanca; he was friendly with Juan II, dedicating several texts to him, and it was Queen Isabel herself who instigated the printing of Madrigal’s collected works (*El gobierno ideal* 15 and 36). At Salamanca, Madrigal was the instigator of a movement for “moral renovation” along broadly Aristotelian lines (Castillo Vegas 11), but he diverged from Aristotle in emphasizing “the necessity that social life, as human, must engender friendship among citizens” (Belloso Martín 99). For Madrigal, in his *Breviloquio de amor y amiçia* (ca. 1437-

1441), friendship should be conceived of in terms of both communication and debt. Thus, he writes that “... el acto de los amigos es comunicar e syn comunicacion nunca fue causada alguna amición” (cited in Belloso Martín, 100 n. 3) “the act of friends is to communicate and without communication no friendship was ever caused” and, furthermore, “[t]oda comunicacion tiene entre sy algun debdo o obligacion e al debdo, necesario es que se consigna amor” (cited in Belloso Martín, 100 n. 5) “all communication contains in itself some debt or obligation, and to this debt some love must be consigned.”<sup>20</sup> This form of friendship, which anticipates certain contemporary theories of community to be discussed later in this dissertation, such as that of Roberto Esposito, is such a powerful force of political unity that it obviates the need for law itself (Belloso Martín 108). This “communicative” force comes to be known as “civil friendship”:

Sin comunicacion no es posible la amistad, “syn comunicacion nunca fue causada alguna amición.” No se trata de un simple intercambio de ideas o de sentimientos. Se trata de algo más hondo que produce el amor en perfecto grado. Son amigos los “comunycantes” que “obran entre sy enteramente cosas de amygos” ... Esto eleva en grado sumo la amistad que se da “entre los çibdadanos.” Es la amistad que [Madrigal] llama política o civil, “la amición llamada politica o çivil.” No se reduce a una convivencia ordenada que permite a cada miembro su personal desarrollo y perfeccionamiento. Es, en este sentido, una sublimación de la comunidad asentada sobre las bases de la justicia y del derecho. (Belloso Martín 112-3)

Without communication friendship is imposible, “without communication no friendship was ever caused.” This is not a simple exchange of ideas or feelings. It is something much deeper that produces the most perfect degree of love. The “communicants” are friends who “fashion among themselves only friendly things” ... This elevates to the highest level the friendship that “arises among citizens.” It is the friendship that Madrigal calls “political” or “civil.” It cannot be reduced to an orderly coexistence permitting its members their own personal development and perfection. It is, in this sense, a sublimation of the community founded on the bases of justice and law.

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<sup>20</sup> On the *Breviloquio*, in addition to Belloso Martín, see Cátedra 17-39.

This friendship is produced by what Madrigal calls the “concordia de las obras,” “concord of works,” whose function is “to create and unite friends” (Beloso Martín 114). Affection and action are unified through speech among citizen-friends; the classical function of rhetoric has thus been, in a way, democratized.<sup>21</sup> It remains to be seen, however, what kind of political entity arises from the united efforts of these friends.

The question of united human effort is central to *De optima politia* (*The Ideal Government*), a *repetitio* delivered by Madrigal at Salamanca in 1436 that has come down to us incomplete.<sup>22</sup> Public psychology and political unity are tied together in a surprising way in *De optima politia*, in which Madrigal aims to explicate and then *reject* certain arguments found in Book II of Aristotle’s *Politics* (129). Following Aristotle, Madrigal defines government as a “form of participation” (*quaedam communicatio*; 129), in a close parallel to classical (and his own) conceptions of friendship. Because cities are the basic unit of classical politics, he almost immediately begins a lengthy digression about the founding of the first cities – a digression that relies heavily on literal (that is, historical) biblical exegesis. If we accept Cartagena’s point that the court, and not the city, is the correct structural analytic for fifteenth-century Castile’s predicament, Madrigal’s approach seems hopelessly anachronistic. Where Cartagena has reduced the scope of politics from city to court, and from empire to kingdom, Madrigal returns the city to its place of honor and analyzes it in the context of *universal* history. Madrigal’s reasons become clearer, however, when we take into account his understanding of united effort as the basis of civil concord: his exegesis in *De optima politia* focuses on the Babel episode as the paradigmatic collective work.

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<sup>21</sup> Madrigal has indeed been praised for his proto-democratic tendencies as a conciliarist; see, for example, Castillo Vegas 19-20.

<sup>22</sup> For an overview of Madrigal’s repetitions at Salamanca, see Carreras Artau.

In his analysis of the Babel episode, it also becomes clear that Madrigal accepts the reduced scope of worldly politics, while recognizing affect's crucial place therein. For Madrigal, what is at stake in the famous episode is not the confusion of languages; in fact, he concludes that this was "most healthy" for the human race. Rather, Madrigal asks what the crime of Babel was, framing the question, perhaps ironically, as a dispute between the Hebrew and Latin versions of the episode. He begins by discussing the Tower's original purpose:

The most true cause of this tower consisted, according to what is expressed in the text of chapter 11 of Genesis, in the fact that men, now multiplied, were thinking of spreading throughout the different parts of the world; in order that something great and admirable, made by the entire human race, would remain, they began to build that great tower and a greatly fortified city. And that intention seemed sufficiently honest, at least superficially, so that, supposing that men would later produce many works, *at least none would be as excellent as the one that the entire human race had built together.*<sup>23</sup> (140-1; my emphasis)

This "superficially honest" intention is, according to Madrigal, the one expressed in the Vulgate, but it is here that the Hebrew text differs:

The Hebrew text presents itself in another way, that, let us make a name for ourselves, so that we will not be separated throughout the lands. Which certainly constitutes a very different claim, namely, that the men of that time wanted to live together, since they were relatives and loved each other because of their similarity as a species. (141)

In the Hebrew version, the Tower was not to be a mere monument to human unity, but an actual beacon allowing the peoples of the Earth to reunite – a mechanism for literally achieving absolute human unity again at some future point (90). This is truly scandalous, justifying divine condemnation, and Madrigal therefore prefers the Hebrew text:

In my opinion, the Hebrew text is more appropriate than ours. For, looking at our text, one cannot see the reasonable cause for which God should have been moved to act against those building such a tower. However, looking at the Hebrew text, which I have now

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<sup>23</sup> For this and my other translations from *De optima politia*, I have consulted Nuria Beloso Martín's Castilian translation.

followed, God was appropriately moved to punish them by destroying their tower. For, if as they wanted, they had built such a high tower and a city where all people could live, God did not want that. For it would have caused many problems. It was even most healthy for the human race that the unity of language was destroyed there, which had existed since the beginning of the human race. (141)

For Madrigal, then, nostalgia for human unity is divinely sanctioned; absolute human unity is divinely prohibited.<sup>24</sup> Civil unity through friendship is the only practical political ideal, and it is not easily attained. In fact, the *Siete partidas* describe a kind of friendship particular to Spain: “Et aun hi ha otra manera de amistad, segunt la costumbre de España, que posieron antiguamente los fijosdalgo entre sí, que se non deben deshonnar nin facer mal unos á otros” (IV.xxvii.4) “And there is yet one more kind of friendship, according to Spanish custom, established long ago among the *hidalgos*, that they should not dishonor or harm each other.” By the fifteenth century, experience had placed the viability of this “noble” ideal into great doubt, a fact to which Cartagena’s letter, cited above, attests.

Perhaps it is for this reason that other fifteenth-century treatises subject friendship to other political ideals of psychological unity. Placed under the heading of loyalty, friendship is only one of the qualities according to which a community should be governed according to the *Tratado de la comunidad*; the others are justice, concord and unity, good advice, good customs, and “ordenada e derecha entinción” (87). Without the latter, the others are worthless: “Las cosas susodichas non son bastantes a buen regimiento de la comunidat si las partidas de aquella non tienen una mesma entinción” (90) “The things said above are not enough for the good governance of the community if its parts do not share the same intention.” Intention is one of the

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<sup>24</sup> The Babel episode in the *Siete edades del mundo* (ca. 1416-8), a universal history in verse by Pablo de Santa María (Alonso de Cartagena’s father, a former chief rabbi of Burgos who converted to Christianity and became bishop of the same city), provides an interesting counterpoint to Madrigal’s version. While Santa María is never explicit about the sin of Babel, it appears to be pride, and its punishment, the confusion of the languages, is central to the episode’s narrative (Sconza 66-7, stanzas 53-7). For a recent study of Santa María’s poem, see Szpiech.



key terms of Seneca's *De beneficiis*, indispensable for judging the virtue of a gift or favor.<sup>25</sup> If Cicero's political works were sometimes taken to be moral treatises, the opposite is true in the case of Seneca, or "nuestro Séneca," as Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo, Juan II's secretary, called the Cordovan philosopher in the dedicatory epistle of his *Suma de la política* (31), a text to which I will return shortly. In the legendary versions of Seneca's life prominent in Iberia until the end of the Middle Ages, he is not a moralist – as he was generally considered to be in the West – but a political adviser (Blüher 82). Thus, *De clementia* was read as a mirror of princes, and *De beneficiis* as a "treatise on the *Liberalitas* of kings" (Blüher 65; see also 102). In the early Middle Ages, Seneca's texts were not widely available in Iberia, but in the fifteenth century, Seneca becomes "an author whose production is widely read and easily accessible not only in its original Latin text, but also in numerous translations" (Blüher 113) – some of them, as in the case of Cicero, carried out by Cartagena.<sup>26</sup>

The *Tratado*'s invocation of intention seems to indicate, then, that the king's generosity is at issue, as it is throughout, for example, the *Secreto de los secretos*, a mirror of princes guided by a taxonomy of royal generosity (71-2).<sup>27</sup> It is royal mercy, however, that is most strongly recommended in the *Tratado*:

*El príncipe deve ser misericordioso e benigno, que razonable cosa es quel padre de la tierra sea piadoso e benigno ... Que el rey segunt umanidad non es mayor que aquél sobrel qual él quiere usar de poder absoluto o echar su saña; que los reyes e príncipes son omnes e deven benignamente usar de su señorío sobre aquéllos que son de su natura. (91)*

The prince should be merciful and benign, for it is reasonable for the land's father to be pious and benign ... For the king is not greater in humanity than him against whom [the

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<sup>25</sup> See, for example, *De beneficiis* I.6.(1).

<sup>26</sup> For a list of Iberian translations of Seneca from the thirteenth to seventeenth centuries, see Blüher 597-601.

<sup>27</sup> Translations of this text, thought to be Syrian in origin and to date from the eighth century, are to be found throughout medieval Iberia; the earliest is a Castilian translation, known as the *Poridat de las poridades*, from the thirteenth century, upon which Jaume I of Aragon drew heavily in the production of his own *Llibre de saviesa/Llibre de doctrina* (*Secreto* 2-6). There are also several Portuguese translations; this Castilian version, which is a translation of the longer "Eastern" version of the text, dates from the late fourteenth century (*Secreto* 47).

king] wants to use absolute power and cast his anger; for kings and princes are men and should benignly use their lordship over those who are of the same nature.

The appeal to shared humanity, a natural basis for mercy, is striking. It is paired, however, with a more traditional Stoic appeal to reason. The benignity that should exist between ruler and ruled is, in turn, paired with a loyalty that will also foster friendship (“amistad o bien *querencia*”) among subjects (89). The anonymous author mentions that this political virtue was highly esteemed by classical thinkers (“los antiguos”), but that it is also, sadly, hard to come by in the court: “*Que verdadero amor es en aquéllos que han verdadera caridad, que verdadera amistaça apenas es fallada en aquéllos que están en grant onrra, e much[o] yerra el que busca amigo en la corte; porque cada uno de aquéllos siguen la corte más por provecho que por amor de otro, que cara cosa es amor*” (115) “For true love is in those who possess true charity, and true friendship is hardly found among those who enjoy great honor, and he who seeks a friend in the court is in great error; for they all follow the court more for their own benefit than for the love of another, since love is a costly thing.” Cartagena’s diagnosis thus finds its echo in this political treatise.

When the *Tratado*’s author referred to classical thinkers who held mercy in high esteem, he was likely thinking of Seneca, who, like Cicero, deemed certain “reasonable” affective phenomena to be virtues. Thus, in *On Mercy* (dedicated, ironically, to Nero), mercy represents both the central characteristic of good governance and also the most “humane” virtue of man, “a social animal born for the common good” (I.3.(2)). Pity, on the other hand, is a moral failing, irrational because it ignores causes: “Pity looks at the plight, not at the cause of it. Mercy joins in with reason” (II.5.(1)). A wise man assists the community not out of pity, but out of the realization that he was born “to ... promote the common good” (II.6.(3)).

In what way is mercy reasonable, especially on the part of a ruler? Seneca answers this question with a metaphor that we have already encountered in both the *Tratado de la comunidad*

and the *Siete partidas*, and that will be variably interpreted throughout medieval Iberia (it will also be familiar to any modern student of politics, albeit perhaps from a different source). The ruler is conceived of as part of a civic body, construed alternately as its mind or head. In the first case, the relationship is one of command:

Compare the way in which the body is entirely at the service of the mind. It may be ever so much larger and more impressive. The mind may remain hidden and tiny, its very location uncertain. Yet hands, feet and eyes do its business ... In the same way, this vast multitude of men surrounds one man as though he were its mind, ruled by his spirit, guided by his reason; it would crush and shatter itself by its own strength, without the support of his discernment. (I.3.(5))

In the latter case, the relationship is one of mutual dependence: “He [the ruler] needs the strength, and the commonwealth needs a head” (I.4.(3)). The case for mercy is clear: cutting off a limb (that is, a citizen) may sometimes be necessary, but it will (and should) always be painful. Or, in Seneca’s words: “You are sparing yourself, when you appear to spare another” (I.5.(1)). The metaphor of the ruler as mind or soul thus brings together two ethical controversies. The conflict between reason and the passions is definitively resolved in favor of reason, and the politics of fellow-feeling – whose potency was never denied by even the most rigid Stoic – are rescued through a figure of absolute psychological and physical unity. It is impossible – indeed, a categorical error – to distinguish between private and public virtue.<sup>28</sup>

This fusion of private and public was worked out in Iberian texts in terms of the relationship between ruler and subject. For example, Diego de Valera (1412-1488), a Castilian nobleman and tutor for the powerful Stúñiga family, wrote a series of texts intended for the

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<sup>28</sup> Curiously, one of Seneca’s strongest arguments for mercy comes toward the end of “On Anger,” in the metaphor of the bull and the bear: “We regularly see, in the morning show at the amphitheatre, the match between bull and bear tied together; when the one has worn down the other, the slaughterer awaits them both. Our act is the same; we assail an opponent who is tied to us, while the end, and that right early, looms alike over victor and vanquished” (III.43.(2)). Here, the previously important distinction between the human and the animal is overshadowed by the assertion of absolute human unity in death. What is left unclear is whether this “tie” could bear a positive ethical program, or merely an ethics of, at best, tolerance, and at worst, indifference.

moral instruction of princes.<sup>29</sup> His *Doctrinal de príncipes* (dedicated to Fernando el Católico and thus posterior to 1474) makes explicit reference to the *Siete partidas* passage describing the king as head, soul, and heart of the kingdom (174), and both the *Doctrinal* and the earlier *Exortación de la pas* (ca. 1448; see Penna, *Prosistas* CXXII) make use of the argument that the king's subjects, as members of the king's own body, should be treated mercifully (*Doctrinal* 187 and *Exortación* 82-3). In the *Doctrinal*, Valera praises Alfonso I of Asturias (693-757) for his vigorous Reconquest activity, only to note that the king received the nickname "El Católico" for his "merciful works" and "humanity" (176). In this way, Valera links mercy with political rebirth, just as Cartagena traces the roots of Castilian discord to Alfonso I's father-in-law, Pelayo. Mercy begins to emerge as an antidote to Castile's fractious political culture.

In his *Suma de la política* (ca. 1454-5), Rodrigo Sánchez de Arévalo notes that many books have been written about politics, "en tal manera que fazen e constituyen una entera sciencia llamada política, avnque subalternada a la scientia moral" (32).<sup>30</sup> He thus follows Aristotle rather than Cicero in asserting that the primary goal of civil society is to allow citizens to live virtuously, not to protect their property (109). The preeminence of the moral is also reaffirmed when Sánchez de Arévalo identifies the management of public affect through mutual love as the prince's key task: "Primeramente, todo rey o príncipe deue amar sus súbditos, e, amándolos, fazer entre ellos gran vnidad e paz e concordia, lo qual fará si procurare que entre ellos sea amjcia uerdadera, lo qual el tirano no faze" (93) "First, all kings and princes should love their subjects, and, loving them, foster among them great unity and peace and concord, which they will do if they promote true friendship among them, which a tyrant does not do." The counterpart to the cultivation of friendship is the avoidance of conflict: "E por quanto el principal

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<sup>29</sup> For an analysis of a poem by Lope de Stúñiga, see chapter three.

<sup>30</sup> The *Suma* survives in a single manuscript held by the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid (Ms. 1221).

impedimento que corrompe toda çibdad o república es la diuisión e jntestina discordia de los çibdadanos e súbditos, por ende es muy cumplidero a todo príncipe e buen político escusar las tales discordias e diuisiones, e trauajar porque la çibdad o reyno sea mucho vnida e concorde” (111) “And to the extent that the principal impediment that corrupts any city or republic is division and internal discord among the citizens and subjects, it is therefore very appropriate for all princes and good politicians to avoid such discord and division, and to work so that the city or kingdom will be very united and harmonious.”

Now, the principal cause of these divisions has already been identified as affective strife: “Onde si los çibdadanos en su çibdad han mengua e angustia de cosas delectables e solazes, necessario es que jnjurien a los otros uezinos de qujen temen auer tristezas e pesares” (57) “Where the citizens in their city suffer the lack and anxiety of delightful things and relaxation, it is necessary that they injure their other neighbors whom they fear as sources of sadness and sorrow.” Sánchez de Arévalo proposes public entertainment as a solution to this problem: the prince should hire “maestros de prosas e famosos cantores para delectable armonja, e poetas e otros ministros, ordenando avn ciertas representaciones e juegos públicos en días sennalados para alegría e consolación de los abitantes en la tal çibdad” (58) “masters of stories and famous singers for delightful harmony, and poets and other ministers, ordering certain public performances and games on certain days for the joy and consolation of the city’s inhabitants.” These public poets will be, however, the emissaries of a hidden prince who loves his subjects from a safe distance:

[T]odo rey e príncipe no ha de ser mucho familiar a las gentes, pero puesto que no se comunjqe a todas las gentes, deue fazer los fechos de todos, onde dize el nuestro Séneca en el primero De Clemencia al emperador Nerón, que el rey es assí como el ánjma en el cuerpo vmano, a la qual todos los mjembros siruen e con gran lealtad la obedecen, puesto quel ánjma esté encerrada, e en lo oculo no cessan de la serujr e obedecer avnque la non uean nj la acaten nj sepan en dónde se asconde, e todos siempre, las manos e los pies, los

ojos e los otros miembros, la sirven, e las cosas que ella manda en lo escondido, ellos las cumplen el lo público. (94)

Kings and princes should not be very familiar with their people, but although they should not communicate with all the people, they should do the tasks of all, whence our Seneca says in the first book of *On Mercy* to the emperor Nero, that the King is like the soul in the human body, served and obeyed by all the body's members with great loyalty, although the soul is enclosed, and while it is hidden they do not cease to serve and obey it although they neither see it nor observe it, nor do they know where it is hidden, and they all, the hands and feet, the eyes and other members, always serve it, and the things that it orders while hidden, they carry out in public.

Sánchez de Arévalo cites Seneca as the source for his metaphor of the prince as the city's soul.

We have seen, however, that for Seneca, this was a metaphor of the city's obedience; here, the central political advice is about the prince's public (or, rather, private) persona. Where other texts have stressed unity between ruler and subjects in matters of the soul – that is, in intention, will, sorrow, and joy, concepts whose psychological reality was often, although not always, located in the soul – the *Suma de la política* emphasizes the need for affective distance (“[T]odo rey e príncipe no ha de ser mucho familiar a las gentes”). Royal authority is *clandestine* like that of the soul in the body, and this hiddenness is the basis for the virtues of loyalty and obedience. Public affective interactions are crucial to political unity, but they are also the immediate task of poets, not princes.<sup>31</sup>

### ***From Mercy to Compassion: the Epistemology of Monastic Community***

In his *De optima politia*, Alfonso de Madrigal proposes a civic ontology of stability – “las ciudades y cualquier otra cosa, cuánto más se unen son más ser y más estables” (*El gobierno ideal* 142) – that leads him to favor monarchy, since a single ruler is more “unified” (144). Like

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<sup>31</sup> It should be noted that the *Suma* also contains a more traditional image of the ruler as the city's “heart” (127).

an orator, this single legislator must consider the nature of his subjects while crafting laws: “the legislator, in promulgating laws, has to consider, not only how to craft simply the best law, but the law most consonant with the concrete form of the government. For, perhaps, the people upon whom this law is imposed are imperfect and thus cannot bear a most perfect law” (145). This “most perfect law” would be *monastic* law, but asking citizens to conform to a monastic rule would be politically untenable:

Given that the best form of government is that which greatly discourages evil and incites and inspires virtue above all, and given that there exists no law or constitution better for this purpose than the monastic rules in which each offers a vow of obedience, chastity, and poverty, whosoever wishes to provide a political regime with the best laws should impose those of the monks. But, who could think of something more foolish than such a politics? God, in imposing imperfect laws upon the Hebrews, did not give them the best law, but one that contained some deficiencies in relation to the perfect law. And this was nevertheless the most appropriate law for that people. (145)

It has been remarked that Madrigal the exegete focused maniacally on literal interpretation (Belloso Martín 38). We have already seen this tendency in his solution to the riddle of Babel; here, the ruler as legislative rhetorician is put in the place of God, crafting Scripture. The idea that Scripture’s obscurity is a reflection of humanity’s fallen nature has been called, by Catherine Brown, “mimetic Scripture”:

Scripture seems dark, then, not because it is so different from human thinking but because it is such a precise imitation of it ... Mimetic Scripture thus fits both mind and world, and by doing so, assures a mysteriously adequate match between word, audience, and teaching. A fit as perfectly matched to the human condition as that of the incarnate Christ, “who saw fit to make himself congruous with such infirmity as ours” ... becoming for humanity both flesh and book. (24; the quotation is from Augustine’s *On Christian Doctrine*)

Just as exegesis is not an everyday activity, monastic life is not, for Madrigal, a practical model for civil life. Rulers who seek to achieve peace and concord through communication must foster, first and foremost, common works. However, in comparing the ruler-as-lawgiver to God, who

fits His laws to his people, Madrigal unintentionally suggests Christ as a model for political thinkers. Monastic thinkers from the Desert Fathers to the Cistercians, taking Christ's compassion as their starting point, developed an epistemology of compassion that grounded their communal and moral life, and this tradition is crucial for understanding emerging trends of communitarian thought in fifteenth-century Iberian literature.

It is important to keep in mind that throughout this period, "political science" was still dominated by elements of theology and law (Penna xxxvi). Many of Castile's principal political theorists, as we have already seen, were ecclesiastics or held chairs of theology. Furthermore, although the well-known concept of Sacred Monarchy was not dominant in Iberia – in Teófilo F. Ruiz's pithy phrase, "Those who ruled and those who wanted to rule had, more often than not, one body instead of two" ("Unsacred Monarchy" 131) – the Trastámaran dynasty was deeply involved in ecclesiastical politics, and its kings did not shy away from promoting themselves through religious imagery.<sup>32</sup> The most common form of royal portrait during the Trastámaran reign was that of the "rey orante," and liturgical ceremonies played a much wider role in Trastámaran propaganda than they had in that of previous dynasties (Nieto Soria, "Rey oculto" 18, 22). Private devotion was also a political matter; thus, the royal confessor played an increasingly important role in the Castilian court, and was often a key liaison between the Crown and the confessor's monastic order (Nieto Soria, *Iglesia y genesis* 141). The Franciscans were particularly involved in Castilian political culture, to the extent that Álvaro de Luna was buried in a Franciscan monastery (Nieto Soria, *Iglesia y genesis* 245). Although it initially faced resistance from the Galician factual monastic tradition, broadly speaking, from the thirteenth century on, Benedictine monasticism in its various forms was dominant in Iberia (Bishko 41). It

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<sup>32</sup> For an overview of ecclesiastical involvement in fifteenth-century Castilian politics, see Nieto Soria, *Iglesia y genesis* 262-72.



is worthwhile, then, to examine briefly the intellectual heritage of this tradition as it relates to ideas of mercy and compassion, which necessarily shaped the Iberian inheritance of Stoic ideas about the same concepts.

Early Christian thinkers took many cues from the Stoics, particular in their identification of affect as the central problem of ethics and theological virtue. At the same time, their commitment to *caritas* and compassion as elements of Christian dogma changed their ethical approach to questions of affect; thus, Thomas Dixon has written of a “Christian desire to say both – against the Stoics – that some human feeling or affection is proper and necessary to this life, but also that God, the angels and perfected humans are free from the turmoil and perturbations of sin and the passions” (61). The emotion of pity was one of the key pivots of these changes, as these thinkers revised Stoic ideas about pity (some of which were discussed above) in order “to avoid a disastrous scenario in which pity’s moral intelligence degenerated into a fallacious logic of justice unbecoming of the gospel’s injunctions of indiscriminating love of neighbor” (Blowers 8). In this revision, “the higher goal was the christocentric reconstruction of pity and empathetic mercy as *theologically virtuous* emotions, deifying emotions” (Blowers 27; emphasis in original). In other words, Christ himself and Christ’s Passion became the models for the rehabilitation of pity as compassion. As the Middle Ages progressed, the ascent implied by this “deification” took on increasingly epistemological tones, as compassion became not just an ethical obligation but a tool for exegesis and the rhetorical composition of prayer in monastic settings.

Early Christian monastics sought impassibility, their own *apatheia*, but they did so in communities. Through an examination of how they codified the emotions, or “thoughts,” as deadly sins, it will become clear how compassion and empathy became central concerns of

hermeneutics, which itself took on increasingly rhetorical characteristics as the Middle Ages progressed. The use of “thoughts” for what we would call “emotions” is telling here. Ultimately, the Desert Fathers and their medieval followers bent the cognitive elements of emotion toward the pursuit of divine knowledge through affective prayer and contemplation. It should be remembered, of course, that as this transformation took place, affect never lost its preeminent role in theories of vice and virtue.

It was Evagrius of Pontus (ca. 345-399 CE), an early Desert Father from the town of Iborra in Helenopontus, who first identified “eight thoughts” that troubled monks: gluttony, fornication, avarice, sadness, anger, acedia, vainglory, and pride.<sup>33</sup> The model of how these thoughts overcome a monk in his “Treatise on the Practical Life” owed much to Stoic theories that emphasized assent or decision: “Whether or not all these thoughts trouble the soul is not within our power; but it is for us to decide if they are to linger within us or not and whether or not they stir up the passions” (97-98).<sup>34</sup> Evagrius also accepted Plato’s tripartite division of the soul, arguing that the practical life purified its two passionate parts (110). Thus, in its early forms, monastic thought internalized both Platonic and Stoic models of soul and emotion, seeking, through a shared holy life, an “impassible” tranquility from which to practice divine contemplation.<sup>35</sup>

At the same time, affect played an increasingly important role in monastic prayer. In his *Conferences*, one of the most important texts of the early monastic tradition, John Cassian (ca. 360-ca. 430 CE) adopts Evagrius’s ideas on the “thoughts” and assent (1.17.1), but he also

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<sup>33</sup> On Evagrius’s life and thought in general, see Sinkewicz xvii-xl. These eight thoughts, reduced to seven and lightly modified, would eventually be codified by Gregory the Great as the Seven Deadly Sins (Knuuttila 141-2).

<sup>34</sup> Richard Sorabji has noted the similarity between Evagrius’s doctrine and the Stoic doctrine of unavoidable “first movements” that become emotions only with reason’s assent (359-60).

<sup>35</sup> As Geoffrey Galt Harpham has noted, early cenobites were well aware that they could not achieve divine impassibility, and so the ascetic practices meant to facilitate divine contemplation constituted “a quest for a goal that cannot and must not be reached, a quest with a sharp caveat: ‘seek but do not find’” (43). In this way, they are similar to the courtly lover’s erotic quest, whose unfulfillment, as I argue above, is its condition of lyric possibility.

consistently associates prayer with the tears provoked by a feeling of compunction, saving sorrow. Forced tears are discouraged because, like Evagrius's demonic thoughts, they "drag down the mind of the person praying, to lower it, submerge it in human concerns, and displace it from that heavenly height whereon the awed mind of the one praying should be irremovably stationed" (9.30.1-2), and the sources of compunction are many and varied, but the power of compunction to move the heart to prayer (and thereby to contemplation) is not condemned as necessarily contaminated with sinful passions or carnal desires.

Cassian goes farther in carving out a productive role for affective participation in his recommendation of contemplating and memorizing the Psalms. Repetition of the Psalms leads to identification with the prophet, and an initial feeling that the repeated words are "daily borne out and fulfilled in [the monk]" (10.11.4). This phenomenon is developed into a broader paradigm of empathetic hermeneutics:

Thriving on the pasturage that [the Psalms] always offer and taking into himself all the dispositions of the psalms, [the monk] will begin to repeat them and to treat them in his profound compunction of heart not as if they were composed by the prophet but as if they were his own utterances and his own prayer. (10.11.4)

Interpretation and composition are melded here in a process parallel to the empathetic melding of prophet and monk through compunction.<sup>36</sup> Eventually, "experience" becomes the monk's guide

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<sup>36</sup> Knuuttila has noted a similarity here to Schleiermacher's hermeneutics (150), although one of the German theologian's recent editors has rejected this "empathetic" reading (Bowie xxix). Schleiermacher held that every utterance must be understood as both "derived from language" and "a fact in the thinker" (8). The first understanding leads to "grammatical interpretation," whereas in "psychological interpretation," "every utterance is to be understood only via the whole life to which it belongs, i.e., because every utterance can only be recognised as a moment of the life of the language-user in the determinedness of all the moments of their life, and this only from the totality of their environments, via which their development and continued existence are determined, every language-user can only be understood via their nationality and their era" (9). The broader areas of investigation implied by this last clause lead Schleiermacher to go further than Cassian, suggesting that interpreters can come to understand utterances better than their original speakers did (23). But Schleiermacher's method proceeds through critical self-abnegation: "To the extent, therefore, that one wants to understand completely one should free oneself from the relation of what is to be explicated to one's own thoughts, because this relationship precisely does not at all have the intention of understanding, but instead of using as a means that which in the thought of the other relates to one's

to the meaning of the Biblical text: “When we have the same disposition in our heart with which each psalm was sung or written down, then we shall become like its author, grasping its significance beforehand rather than afterward” (10.11.5). This passage’s move from audience and interpreter to author suggests the close relationship that will develop between rhetoric and hermeneutics in the later Middle Ages, and it is no coincidence that affect serves as their articulation, allowing for the temporal jump to the moment before meaning is enunciated. This is crucial not only for scriptural interpretation but, as Cassian suggests, for the broader project of communal pedagogy represented by the monastic movement. The experience of shared affect is the best hermeneutic for grasping “the very nature of things” – worldly and divine.

Two important phenomena are forming here. The first involves the status of praxis in the “hermeneutic spiral,” in which, as Douglas Burton-Christie has argued, “interpretation both derived from and led toward praxis” (165). In the desert, “Scripture was seen as the source of praxis; praxis acted as an organizing principle which sent one to search for particular texts; these texts in turn deepened and purified praxis and clarified its purpose and meaning” (171-2). This belief led to a kind of experiential hermeneutics of personification: “The ultimate expression of the desert hermeneutic was a *person*, one who embodied the sacred texts and who drew others out of themselves into a world of infinite possibilities” (300; emphasis in original). This hermeneutics, in turn, leads Cassian to emphasize judgment and community in discussing discretion, which is achieved through humility, submission to the elders’ exemplarity. Those who lack discretion trust disastrously in their own judgment: “Whoever lives not by his own judgment but by the example of our forebears shall never be deceived, nor shall the crafty foe be able to take advantage of the ignorance of a person who does not know how to hide all the

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own thoughts” (135). Cassian’s empathetic monk does not vanish in becoming prophet; rather, we could say in Senecan terms that the monk’s mind becomes the prophet’s affection.

thoughts coming to birth in his heart” (2.10.2). Those seeking to avoid temptation consulted exemplary figures in hopes of receiving a “word,” such that “[t]he words of elders and of Scripture constituted a double tradition of authority for those living in the desert” (Burton-Christie 110). This lays bare how at least one form of “authority” implied the necessity of community for interpretation; communal experience and example are the best hermeneutic for the sinful temptation of the affective thoughts whose source, more often than not, is demonic.<sup>37</sup> The outcome of willful individual affect is misinterpretation. Courtly authors in fifteenth-century Iberia will become conscious of themselves as members of an affective interpretive community, and their moral literature will reflect this consciousness.

The affective rhetoric of this courtly literature will reflect a second important phenomenon involving the *productivity* of affect (compunction) for both interpretation and what Mary Carruthers has called the “craft of thought.” Carruthers takes as her starting point the Desert Fathers’ concept of *mneme theou*, “memory of God” (2), noting further, however, that for the Desert Fathers, “memory” means something closer to “cognition,” “the construction of thinking,” such that “[m]onastic meditation is the craft of making thoughts about God” (2). It was for this reason that monastic rhetoric emphasized “invention” and was thus “practiced primarily as a craft of composition” (3) whose main material was *phantasiai*, mental images that were “emotionally laden” (14). Contemplation based on these images is thus tied, through affect, to rhetoric’s productive *inventio* and to its central place in practical wisdom: “The matters memory presents are used to persuade and motivate, to create emotion and stir the will ... Though it is certainly a form of knowing, recollecting is also a matter of will, of being *moved*, pre-eminently a moral activity rather than what we think of as intellectual or rational” (67-68). As Carruthers later notes, the compunction provoked by this process was both “the beginning of

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<sup>37</sup> Mary Carruthers has noted the intensely rhetorical nature of this model of sin (107-8).

prayer” (96) – as a process of rhetorical invention – and an essential element of monastic reading practices (100). The productive space carved out for compunction by the Desert Fathers thus brought rhetoric and hermeneutics into very close contact, and this space of contact was morally charged through concepts of praxis, example, and sin.<sup>38</sup>

It was Augustine who, entering into this morally charged space, began to develop an epistemology of compassion. In the final and most openly rhetorical book of *On Christian Doctrine*, Augustine takes a scriptural approach, adopting Cicero’s doctrine of teaching, giving pleasure, and moving audiences (4.17.34) and illustrating it through examples from the gospels.<sup>39</sup> This last method, when used by a teacher, leads to a collapse of speaker and audience, teacher and learner similar to that described by Cassian for monks reading the Psalms: “For so great is the power of sympathy, that when people are affected by us as we speak and we by them as they learn, we dwell each in the other and thus both they, as it were, speak in us what they hear, while we, after a fashion, learn in them what we teach” (*First Catechetical Instruction* 12.17). These models of reading and preaching illustrate how, as Copeland has written, “medieval exegesis replicates rhetoric’s productive application to discourse” (64). Compassion, a step in the individual ascent toward divine knowledge through correct interpretation, becomes a pedagogical tool for the preacher, who is also, through the practice of charity, purifying his own will.

Christ’s example is pivotal in this pedagogical approach since exegetical mysteries can be explained as the result of concessions to our human condition, concessions that were also reflected in the Incarnation (Brown 24). In later monastic thought, then, Christ-like purification through compassion becomes an explicit epistemological model. This is especially true in

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<sup>38</sup> It should also be notified that the medieval theory of the four levels of meaning “received its definitive formulation” from Cassian (Grondin 31).

<sup>39</sup> This doctrine is also taken up by Isidore in his *Etymologies* (II.xvi).

Bernard of Clairvaux's "On the Steps of Humility and Pride" (ca. 1124), which takes as its starting point Benedict's chapter on humility. Here, Bernard elaborates a three-step approach to Truth through humility: "For we seek truth in ourselves, in our neighbors, and for its own sake ... We seek it in ourselves in judging ourselves (1 Cor 11:31), in our neighbors by suffering with them (1 Cor 12:26), and in itself by contemplating it with a pure heart (Mt 5:8)" (III.6). Bernard echoes Augustine when he writes that the merciful will have "hearts purified by brotherly love" (III.6). Experience again plays a crucial role in this compassionate ascent, with Christ's Passion as a key example:

But to have a heart which is sad because of someone else's wretchedness you must first recognize your neighbor's mind in your own and understand from your own experience how you can help him. We have an example in our Savior. He wanted to suffer so that he should know how to suffer with us (Heb 2:17), to become wretched so that he could learn mercy, as it is written, "He learned obedience from the things he suffered" (Heb 5:8). He learned mercy in the same way. It is not that he did not know how to be merciful before. His mercy is from everlasting to everlasting (Ps 102:17). But what he knew by nature from eternity he learned from experience in time. (III.6)

Christ's entrance into time was the scandal of early Christianity (Cullmann 24), and here, Bernard makes the potentially scandalous claim that Christ learned something – mercy – during his time as a man. Conversely, mercy becomes here an explicitly "deifying" emotion, as we emulate Christ's example and, in doing so, make contemplative progress. Christ's suffering also raises the question, alluded to by Blowers above, of divine impassibility:

I do not doubt that [God] was impassible before he emptied himself and took the form of a servant (Phil 2:7), for just as he had not experienced wretchedness and subjection, so he had not known mercy or obedience by experience. He knew by nature, but not by experience ... He lowered himself to that form in which he could suffer and be in subjection, for, as it is said, what he could not suffer in his divine nature he learned by the experience of suffering: mercy, and to be obedient in subjection ... Yet by that experience there grew, as I have said, not his knowledge but our faith, when by this wretched mode of knowledge he who had gone far astray brought himself near to us (Eph 2:13). When should we have dared to approach him if he had remained impassible? ... But now, with

the Apostle's encouragement, we are urged to come in faith to the throne of his grace (Heb 4:16), for, as it is written elsewhere, we know that he bore our weariness and grief (Is 53:4), and we can be sure he will have compassion on us because he has suffered himself (Heb 2:18, 4:15). (III.9)

Bernard answers the objection that the impassible divine cannot truly suffer by attributing to the incarnate Christ a similar rhetorical motive to the one that accounts for mysterious scriptural passages:

He did not intend to remain wretched among them, but to free those who were wretched as one made merciful. "Made merciful" (Heb 2:17), I say, not with that mercy which he who remained happy had had from eternity (Ps 102:17), but with that mercy which he discovered as a mediator who was one of us. The work of his holiness, which began at the prompting of the first mercy, was completed in the second; not because the first mercy was not enough, but because only the second kind could fully satisfy us. Both were needed, but the second kind fitted our condition better. (III.12)

The Incarnation becomes here a kind of divine *kairos*: Christ's suffering is fitted to our condition, not God's, and therefore it is our faith, not Christ's knowledge, that it feeds. Not just our faith, however – our knowledge, as well. Bernard admonishes his audience that if they are not merciful, neither will they be good teachers (IV.13). Mercy is a pedagogical and pastoral necessity.

Mercy remains, however, key to spiritual ascent as well. Bernard analyzes the three steps of the ascent (humility, compassion, and contemplation) to the Persons of the Trinity, and explains that the first step is achieved through reason, the second through affection, and the third through purity (VI.19). Through this epistemological model based on compassion, Bernard resolves the conflict of reason and the passions. The Son empowers our reason, whose judgment makes us humble; the Holy Spirit empowers our compassion, which purifies the will. The Father then gathers this soul purified in reason and will to himself, allowing for divine contemplation



(VII.21). Affective participation, possible everywhere but fostered in monastic communities as a devotional practice, fosters both individual virtue and divine wisdom.

The concepts of affective participation developed in monastic thought left an impression on fifteenth-century Iberian conceptions of political community. Alfonso de Madrigal, for example, defines love of one's "tierra natural" as piety, following a common definition according to which piety is the virtue directed toward those on whom we depend: our country, our parents, God (Belloso Martín 111). For Alonso de Cartagena, in his *Oracional* (ca. 1454), ostensibly a work of private, intimate devotion, our dependence on God can also be conceived of as a kind of friendship, based as it is on a kind of communication:

[La] propia amistad ... es quando el uno ama al otro e el otro a el; e este comun amor procede de la comunicacion que han los omnes en uno. E como del onbre a Dios aya alguna comunicacion segund que El por su infinida clemencia comunica con nos su bienaventuranca, conveniente cosa es que como sobre la comunicacion de los omnes unos con otros se funda la amistad humana. E asi sobre la comunicacion que es de Dios a los omnes desciende alguna amistad mas alta. E esta es la caridad que es aquel amor e amistad que es del omne a Dios e de Dios al omne. (58)

Proper friendship ... is when each loves the other; and this common love proceeds from the communication that the men have as one. And since between man and God there is some communication according to which He in his infinite mercy communicates with us his grace, it is an appropriate thing that human friendship be founded upon communication among men. And thus from the communication between God and man a certain higher friendship is derived. And this is charity which is that love and friendship that is between man and God and God and man.

Here, human communication leads to the "common love" of friendship, whereas divine communication (that is, prayer) leads to friendship as *caritas*. This charity is itself based on divine mercy ("clemencia"). Later in the *Oracional*, Cartagena will insist that charity cannot be the basis of political community, precisely because we are commanded to feel charity toward all of humanity (86). Piety, on the other hand, is linked inextricably with *patria*:

[L]a virtud que se llama *piedad* estrechamente tomada consiste en fazer honrra e ayuda razonable a los padres e a otros asçendientes e parientes segund su grado e proporçion e a la tierra de su naturaleza e a los çibdadanos [e amigos] della. E aun podemos esto considerar acatando el vocablo que lo paresçe mostrar. Ca dezimos *pietat* commo sy dixiesemos *patriedat* que es por respecto a los padres e patria e non enbarga a esto que comunmente dezimos *piedad* a la *compasion*. Ca esto es generalmente fablando e aun respectivamente a debdo e parentesco alguno porque entre todos los omnes se puede dezir que ay algund debdo. (86)

The virtue that is called *piety* taken narrowly consists in giving honor and reasonable help to our parents and other ancestors and relatives according to their degree and proportion and to our native land and its citizens. And we can even consider this by observing the word that seems to show it. For we say *piety* as if we said *patrimony*, which has to do with parents and the fatherland [*patria*], and this does not prevent us from commonly referring to *compassion* as *pity* [*piedad*]. For this is a general way of speaking, and [can even be said] with regard to some debt and relationship because there can be said to be some debt among all men.

The semantic link between *piedad* and *compasión* is not coincidental and does not contradict that between *piedad* and *patria*.<sup>40</sup> Rather, Cartagena argues that usage here reflects the debt men feel toward one another, which, although Cartagena describes it as “general,” is immediately contrasted with truly universal charity, since we feel the “debt” of compassion more acutely toward those who are in some way closer to us (86). Cartagena thus goes further than Madrigal in his assessment of the political potential of essentially religious virtues. His *clemençia*, like Seneca’s, can be a civic virtue, but unlike Seneca’s, is a cosmological fact. Divine mercy was not limited to monastics, so its potential as a model for unity through communication and friendship extended to political communities.

Concepts of affective community were thus dominant terms in the political thought of Castile in the first half of the fifteenth century. Political theory was subjected to moral

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<sup>40</sup> As José Antonio Maravall has noted, in the Middle Ages, *patria* was often used to refer to all of humanity, whereas *nación* almost always implied some form of plurality (1: 459). Cartagena’s use is odd, then, in that the association of *patria* with *piedad* implies plurality in the latter term’s contrast with *caridad*. As Maravall goes on to note, the universalist understanding of *patria* would eventually give way as a new association between *patria* and *príncipe* consolidated itself (1: 462).

thought, and as such, a certain Stoic affective asceticism was present in discussions of political virtue. At the same time, Stoic concessions to virtues such as mercy were not preserved in their purely rationalist forms; Christian valorations of mercy and love as deifying emotions were creeping into political thought as well. However, Iberia's courtly writers, having embraced a tradition of shared literary affect, would go further than the foregoing thinkers in rehabilitating shared affect as a political force as well, undoing the traditional opposition, still frequent even in monastic thought, between reason and the passions. Before addressing two attempted resolutions of this moral-political problem, however, I want to show how one writer, Pedro de Corral, in his *Crónica sarracina*, pointed to shared affect as a solution to Castile's political turmoil even as he narrated, in pseudo-historical prose, the danger that private affect could pose to national unity.

## CHAPTER TWO

### RITUAL MOURNING AND NATIONAL NOSTALGIA IN PEDRO DE CORRAL'S *CRÓNICA SARRACINA*

Muerto es el que todo su cuydado es dolerse de los muertos.  
– Enrique de Villena, *Tratado de la consolación*

From the outset, the questionable historicity and generic ambiguity of the *Crónica sarracina* have provoked wildly different readings.<sup>1</sup> While some authors considered it a reliable historical source, Fernán Pérez de Guzmán referred to it as a “trufa o mentira paladina” and to its author as a “liviano e presuntuoso onbre” (60). The problem of historicity also framed early-twentieth-century philological debate, but focus soon shifted from condemnations of Corral’s overactive imagination to the exploration of his historiographical intentions. In particular, critics analyzed Corral’s treatment of what Ramón Menéndez Pidal referred to as “the old theme of the Goths’ fierce blood” (*Floresta* XCVII).<sup>2</sup> Corral was embellishing and thus breathing new life into the myth of continuity between the last Visigothic king and Pelayo, legendary beginner of the Reconquest, a myth that began in tenth-century Asturias and gained steam in the historiographical work of Lucas de Tuy and Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada (Cacho Blecua 44).<sup>3</sup> Critics working in this vein began to study the literary invention underlying the historiographic

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<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this chapter appeared as “Ritual Mourning and National Nostalgia in the *Crónica sarracina*” in *La corónica* 37.2 (2009): 107-32. I am grateful to *La corónica*’s editor, Sol Miguel-Prendes, for granting permission to include this chapter here.

<sup>2</sup> Menéndez Pidal’s text includes an indispensable detailed summary of the development of the Rodrigo legend in the chronistic tradition. For a briefer summary, see Menéndez Pidal, *Romanceros* 3-12.

<sup>3</sup> For the continuity between Rodrigo and Pelayo as a narrative construct, see Pardo 21.

project.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, another avenue of research was opened up, as critics, sometimes the same ones, began studying not the divisions the *Crónica* provoked, but those it embodied. In particular, work continues to be done on the text's interweaving of history, hagiography, epic, and chivalric fiction.<sup>5</sup> The *Crónica*'s generic complexity makes its presence known even in studies of which it is not the explicit object.<sup>6</sup>

A number of scholars have noted in passing the *Crónica*'s sense of nostalgia, tragedy, or loss. In his account of the Visigothic empire in Iberia, Corral projects the unity he desires for the present into a distant past – a clear case of national nostalgia in a period in which the project of the Reconquest has been interrupted by civil wars between the nobility and a distracted king, Juan II.<sup>7</sup> Corral seeks to compress historical distance through a series of structural tactics in the narrative, such as the framing mentioned above. Thus, Menéndez Pidal argued that by tying together the deeds of Rodrigo and Pelayo, Corral “gave his novel national value and tragic greatness” (*Floresta* XCIII). The work's historiographical compression is hortatory in that it seeks to stir up a more unified national feeling, but it also raises the problem of Rodrigo's guilt in the fall of “Spain” to the Moors. How, in other words, can the perceived unity of the Visigothic past be reappropriated without the present's falling victim to the taint of Rodrigo's sins? It is in this context that scholarly attention has constantly returned to the scenes of Rodrigo's sin and redemption, but this focus has, in turn, led to a broad disregard for the chivalric action that makes up the bulk of the narrative. However, an analysis of the work's almost unending battles and jousts reveals the centrality of the theme of mourning – in both its

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<sup>4</sup> In addition to Cacho Blecua, see Lauzardo 106-11.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Drayson 194.

<sup>6</sup> Thus, Israel Burshatin's important essay, “The Moor in the Text: Metaphor, Emblem, and Silence,” takes into account problems of “chivalric, epic, and courtly” configurations of time and space, and of Rodrigo's failure as an interpreter of emblems (see, in particular, 104-109).

<sup>7</sup> For an account of the stagnant state of the Reconquest during Corral's time, see O'Callaghan 213.

ritualistic and affective manifestations – to Corral’s literary-national project; it is also a focal point around which the *Crónica*’s different genres revolve. Mourning is an integral structural element of Corral’s battle narrations, coming up again and again, almost compulsively, in innumerable *plantos* throughout the text. At the same time, it explains the early emphasis on Rodrigo’s siege of Córdoba and the anachronistic placement of Rodrigo’s penitence and burial only after the narration of Pelayo’s early triumphs. In composing his *Crónica*, Corral sought, through a ritualistic narrative of mourning, to explore grief as a social rather than personal phenomenon with the potential either to divide or to unite the populace. At the same time, by exploiting the communal elements surrounding penitence and burial during his era, he sought to rescue Rodrigo from historical condemnation in order to render reappropriable the cultural unity represented by the last Visigothic king.

### ***Mourning as a Source of Division and Unity***

The *Crónica*, when it is familiar to modern readers, is known mostly through a handful of famous scenes, such as Rodrigo’s violation of the Tower of Hercules and his rape of La Cava, daughter of the traitorous Count Julián. The Tower scene has been studied in light of its probable Eastern origin and its similarity, as a “sealed shrine,” to certain typical elements of hagiographic narrative (Burshatin, “Narratives” 16-7), while La Cava has been of interest because the ambiguity of her guilt (she is “both victim and victimizer”) raises important questions about the writing of history (Brownlee 126). Almost exclusive attention to these few scenes is not a purely modern phenomenon; they are the scenes that captured the popular imagination even at the time, a fact reflected in their overwhelming prominence in the *romancero* tradition. The *Crónica*’s

final act, Rodrigo's penitence, in which La Cava reappears in the form of a demonic temptation, was also important *romancero* material, and it has drawn increasing critical attention, most notably in Drayson's 2005 article, in which she argues that the scene's sensuality intentionally undermines its ostensible Christian didacticism.<sup>8</sup>

It is interesting to note, then, that the so-called popular tradition – and the critical tradition after it, with the important exception of Gloria Álvarez-Hesse<sup>9</sup> – for the most part left behind the most classically popular element of the text, the chivalric action that makes up its bulk.<sup>10</sup> Mourning is fundamental to the *Crónica's* opening episode, in which the nobles of Córdoba oppose Rodrigo's coronation on the grounds that he was only supposed to be regent while the sons of the fictitious king Acosta grew up. Inés de la Flor Cramer points out that the emphasis on this episode is new in the history of Rodrigo's legend; for her, this new emphasis is possibly meant to show the harmful effects of partisan conflict on a nation (70). Also, Álvarez-Hesse has argued that Rodrigo's coronation reveals his arrogance, “the first failing of the king's chivalric spirit” (85). What is most startling about this episode, however, is its sheer number of apostrophic *plantos*, which inaugurate the affective frame that is fundamental to the entire work. An example of these *plantos*, in this case in the mouths of the “dueñas e donzellas” of Córdoba, can be found in chapter fifteen:

— ¡Ay Señor Dios!, ¿cómo te plazze que la tierra se yerme de la noble gente que la honrava e sostenía en aquella honra que merecía?, que ya son muertos en estas batallas más de doze mil cavalleros, tales que si el mundo todo fuese perescido por ellos se cobraría; e ora se pierde la flor del mundo ...

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<sup>8</sup> For an early assertion of the importance of the *Crónica's* penitential theme, see Satorre Grau 169.

<sup>9</sup> Álvarez-Hesse's study carefully traces the presence of chivalric themes and *topoi*, such as courtly love and the joust, in the *Crónica*; the text's chivalric philosophy is also analyzed as exemplified by a series of antithetical characters.

<sup>10</sup> Satorre Grau emphasizes the importance of the scenes of the Tower and La Cava, despite their relative brevity: “They are not important for their length. On the contrary, there are briefly developed plots (Tower of Hercules: two chapters; *amores* of the King and La Cava: eighteen very short chapters), whose significance in the whole is much greater than that of other longer plots” (169).

E dezían otros:

— ¡O España!, ¡cómo te vas apocando de los buenos que en ti avía!, ca si esta plaga mucho te dura no quedarán otras gentes sino los labradores e gentes viles por donde gentileza perescerá. E creemos que apenas se fallará bondad ninguna entre las gentes que quedarán, pues que de cada día fallescien del señorío los fijos dalgo que todavía la tierra sostovieron en grande honra.

E las donzellas dezían:

— ¡Ay mezquinas!, e ¿qué será de nosotras?, que ora por fuerça, ora por grado, avremos de entrar en religión e ser de orden, pues la tierra se despuebla de la noble gente, e Dios nunca quiera que nosotras vengamos en poder de las gentes pastoras e nescias por que nos señoreen. (1: 132-3)

— O Lord! How can it please you that the land grown barren of the noble people who honored it and maintained it in the honor it deserved? For already these battles have killed more than twelve thousand knights, so worthy that if the entire world perished, for them it could be regained; and now the flower of the world is lost ...

And others said:

— O Spain! How you are losing the good men you once possessed! For if this plague lasts for long, none will remain but laborers and vulgar people, and gentility will perish. And we believe that goodness will barely be found among the remaining people, since every day more of the noblemen who maintained the honor of the land are lost.

And the maidens said:

— O unfortunate! And what will become of us? For either by force or willingly, we will have to enter orders and become nuns, since the land is emptying of noble people, and may God never wish that we fall into the hands of the foolish rural folk so that they rule over us.

The apostrophic objects are god, Spain, and the women themselves (“ay mezquinas”); the *planto* thus expresses an overwhelming mourning that touches each aspect of the world in a trajectory from the transcendent to the most personal and interior. The women do mourn the deaths of so many good knights, but if the emphasis on their loss presages military defeat, that is not what preoccupies the mourners, who instead lament a domestic, social crisis: the decadence of a system of values, the absence of honor, the danger that they will lose their privileged status among the nobility. Their cries of despair even reach an ironic note when they worry that the lower classes will wind up lording it over them – their fear of domineering peasants is, of course,



woefully misplaced. Crucially, it is at the moment when their mourning turns inward that it becomes a divisive force. Meanwhile, the interiority of the crisis is underscored by the epitaphs inscribed on the graves of the fallen: “Cavalleros somos de España naturales, que por defender nuestras honras entrados somos en cárceles; no morimos en las camas, antes en las batallas campales. *Los godos nos mataron que non gentes de otras partes*” (1: 133; my emphasis) “We are natural-born Spanish knights, who for defending our honor have entered prisons; we did not die in bed, but on the battlefield. *The Goths killed us, not people from other places.*” The epitaphs stress the civil nature of the war, which leads to the strange third-person reference to “the Goths.” Mourning is thus established as a way to explore collectivity and division at the same time: it is verbalized by a community that speaks in unison, but they are revealed to be speaking about civil conflict that goes beyond the battlefield. Cultural unity, and the power of mourning to foster or destroy it, will be what is at stake throughout the *Crónica*’s first part.

The contemporary (for Corral) stakes of mourning are emphasized in another lengthy stretch of chivalric action that has received little critical attention, the episode of the knight Sacarus and the Duchess of Lorraine. The Duchess inherited her husband’s lands when he died, on the condition that she maintain her chastity and not remarry for two years. Her brother-in-law, Lembrot, advised by two malicious uncles, decides that he should have inherited the land and begins to take it by force. However, the Duchess and Lembrot call a truce and take the matter before the Emperor, where Lembrot falsely accuses his sister-in-law of having broken her chastity and offers to prove the truth of his accusation in battle. When no one in the Emperor’s court will take up her cause, the Duchess is given three months to find a champion. She travels to Rodrigo’s court, which is holding tournaments in celebration of Rodrigo’s coronation, and a knight named Sacarus offers to battle Lembrot. Lembrot arrives and is defeated by Sacarus, but

the conflict does not end there: the Duchess and Lembrot return to their lands, where hostilities are renewed and Sacarus takes charge of the Duchess's armies. There follows a series of bloody battles, during which Rodrigo, curious to know how many knights have died since he took power, asks each city in Spain to put down in writing the names of its dead knights and send them to the king. Rodrigo discovers that between the siege of Córdoba and the current fighting, he has lost 57,466 knights; as a result, he orders that those sons of the dead knights who are at least fifteen should receive their fathers' full pay, while the younger ones should receive half. The narrator explains that the people appreciated the king's gesture, since it took away some of their sadness:

Ca ciertamente podedes creer que en la mayor parte del tiempo que el Rey don Rodrigo reinó, nunca fue año que en España no oviese duelos y tristezas, e perdimientos de cavalleros de tal guisa que nunca fue tierra al mundo que tanto pesar de los moradores della biviesen a tan luengo tiempo. E de estonces en adelante todos los cantares que en España se fizieron, las razones, e los sones, o de muertes, o de grandes pesares como si de alegría. Ca tanto les duró los perdimientos de las gentes que les quedó por costumbre los cantares pensosos. E aun creo que para sienpre lo usarán. (1: 387)

For you can certainly believe that for most of the time that King Rodrigo reigned, a year never passed without mourning and sadness, and such loss of knights that there was never a land in earth whose inhabitants spent more time in great sorrow. And from then on, all the songs made in Spain, the stories, and the tunes, were of deaths and great sorrows rather than joy. For the loss of people lasted so long for them that they acquired the custom of pensive songs [*cantares pensosos*]. And I even believe that this will always be their custom.

The narrative voice thus points out that Rodrigo's reign provoked not just a political loss, but also an extended mourning that dictates the subject-matter of a wide variety of genres. The speaker's focus on custom and what is usual ("lo usarán") draws attention to the social nature of this affective state. It is clear that the *Crónica* itself fits comfortably into the "pensive" artistic tradition thus defined by its author (that is, the tradition formed by the "razones," "sones," and

“cantares pensosos” in the above passage), who by drawing attention to the tradition – not just through this *planto*, but through sheer repetition – seeks to change or even end it. At the same time, the mourning described here, rather than working to console the mourners, is extending indefinitely into the future. The preliminary objection may be raised, then, that despite Corral’s words, the *Crónica* really presents a case not of mourning, but of melancholy.<sup>11</sup>

Indeed, in *Stanzas*, Giorgio Agamben reminds us of the historical link between the melancholic and poetic temperaments, a link towards which the passage from the *Crónica* seems to gesture (12). According to Agamben, the *acedia*, or sloth, that preyed on cloistered monks was regarded as both a vice, world-weariness, and also a virtue, saving sorrow, desire for God (7). *Acedia* became associated with melancholy because the latter was also bivalent: the melancholic pined for some lost, desired object, but also had a marked tendency toward inward withdrawal and contemplation (12).<sup>12</sup> This disorderly play of outward desire and inward withdrawal leads Agamben to define medieval melancholy as “that which would possess and touch what ought merely to be the object of contemplation” (18).

Agamben now turns to Freud’s “Mourning and Melancholia,” noting that in the case of the Freudian melancholic, it is unclear what, if anything, has actually been lost; the libido merely withdraws into the subject in a narcissistic gesture. It is here that Agamben sees a parallel with medieval melancholy:

As, in the case of *acedia*, the withdrawal is not from a defect, but from a frantic exacerbation of desire that renders its object inaccessible to itself in the desperate attempt

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<sup>11</sup> Indeed, in a study of melancholy in Early Modern Iberia, Roger Bartra describes melancholy as a “mal de frontera,” a suffering common to displaced peoples living the “fragile life of people who have suffered forced conversions and confronted the threat of great reforms and mutations of the religious and moral principles that governed them” (31). Of course, in the period studied by Bartra, this described the life of the *moriscos* better than that of the Christians.

<sup>12</sup> It should come as no surprise, then, that Miguel de Unamuno, writing in the aftermath of the decline of Spanish empire, should describe *acedia* as a national characteristic; in Spain, even the worthy and the brave were frequently attacked by a “civil or secular” form of the sadness brought about by the “collective poverty” left behind in the wake of imperial decline (755 and 757).

to protect itself from the loss of that object and to adhere to it at least in its absence, so it might be said that the withdrawal of melancholic libido has no other purpose than to make viable an appropriation in a situation in which none is really possible. From this point of view, melancholy would be not so much the regressive reaction to the loss of the love object *as the imaginative capacity to make an unobtainable object appear as if lost*. (20; my emphasis)

This last sentence seems a perfect description of Corral's pseudo-historical gesture: an unobtainable, indeed *imaginary* unity in "Spanish" history – still seemingly unobtainable in Corral's conflictive present – is made in the *Crónica* to seem merely to have been lost (and, therefore, to have existed in the first place). The appropriation of Visigothic unity as a direct antecedent to hypothetical Castilian unity is made possible through Corral's imaginative gesture, which creates the past it seeks to absorb.

To begin to answer this objection, it is important to point out that while Agamben's study focuses on melancholy, there are some elements of Freud's original analysis of mourning that are directly relevant to the case of the *Crónica*, and in particular to the guilt attributed to Rodrigo for entering the Tower of Hercules and for raping La Cava. For Freud, "where there is a disposition to obsessional neurosis the conflict of ambivalence casts a pathological shade on the grief, forcing it to express itself in the form of self-reproaches, to the effect that the mourner himself is to blame for the loss of the loved one" (161). This self-critical element – again, for Freud, a part of mourning's transformation into melancholy – is clearly visible in Rodrigo, a figure who in his bravery and arrogance encapsulates both the virtue and the vice of his "fuerte sangre goda" and, as king, stands in for an entire people. It is thus that when Rodrigo is overcome by what could be called a desire to touch and possess what should only be contemplated – the Tower of Hercules and La Cava – his bad actions condemn all of Spain, as symbolized by the spreading of the

Tower's ashes by "little black birds" over the heads of those who would die in the Moorish invasion, an element added to the legend by Corral (Menéndez Pidal XCII-XCIII):

E a poco de ora llegaron unas avezillas negras e anduvieron por de suso la ceniza, e tantas eran que davan tan grande viento de su buelo que se levantó toda la ceniza e esparcióse por España toda quanto el su señorío era, e muy muchas gentes sobre quien cayó los tornava tales como si los untasen con sangre. E eso acaesció todo en un día, e muchos dixieron después que a todas las gentes que aquellos polvos alcançaron morieron en las batallas que adelante oiredes de quando España fue conquistada e perdida. (I: 181)

And after a Little while there arrived some little black birds that passed over the ashes, and they were so many that their flight raised such a great wind that it swept up all the ash and spread it throughout all of his kingdom in Spain, and it was as if many of the people upon whom it fell had been anointed with blood. And that happened in just one day, and many said later that all of the people touched by the ash died in the battles, of which you will soon hear, in which Spain was conquered and lost.

Was Corral, then, mistaken – did he mean “melancholy” when he wrote “mourning”? Notice in the above passage that while the event of the spreading of the ashes is recounted as historical fact, its ominous interpretation is attributed to popular tradition (“muchos dixieron”) – the same popular tradition accustomed to “cantares pensosos.” It is this *collective* element that melancholy misses. Mourning is deployed in Corral's *Crónica* not only through an affective tone, but through its collective, ritualistic nature, which characterizes the battles and jousts that run throughout the text, often preceding the *plantos*.

In the first part of the *Crónica*, the question of collective sin and collective mourning also arises in scenes that do not involve Rodrigo directly. The twin ideas of penitence and punishment emerge from the interplay between the *plantos* placed directly in the mouths of the people and those of the authorial voices (that of the narrator, but also those of the *Crónica*'s fictive historians). If the Córdoba ladies' *planto* cited above demonstrates an ironic ignorance of the devastation to come, the following one expressed by the narrator is remarkably sophisticated in its treatment of national destruction:

¡O tierra desaventurada!, ¡cómo has contraria ventura que así eres robada e destruida de tan buena cavallería como oy en este día muere, por donde a todo el mundo verná grand daño e pérdida! ¡O España atribulada!, ¡cómo la tu planeta es oy abaxada e echada de las alturas donde sea e será escondida por grandes tiempos!; ¿quál fue el pecado que tanto mal por él es venido en el mundo que más de diez mil cavalleros de ambas partes mueren oy en este día que grand mengua verná por ellos en España? ... ¡O cruel nación!, ¿cómo no avedes piedad unos de otros, que todos sodes de una sangre e de un señorío, e todos venidos del alto linaje de los godos (1: 150-151).

O unfortunate land! How unlucky you are, to be robbed and destroyed of such good knights as die today, whereupon great harm and loss will come to all! O troubled Spain! How your planet is brought low today, tossed from the heights to where it is and will be hidden for a long time! What was the sin that brought such evil into the world, that ten thousand knights of both sides should die today, whose great lack will be felt in Spain? ... O cruel nation! How can you not take pity on one another, when you are all of one blood and domain, and all descend from the noble lineage of the Goths.

Here, the apostrophic trajectory is from “tierra” to “España” to “nación”: the national concept (represented by its name) is tied to both the physical world and the population. At the same time, national unity is understood as both kinship and political cohesion (“todos sodes de una sangre e de un señorío”). The rueful division among the people is also lamented as an eventual division between the land and its name, the integrity of the national concept undone by invaders. Sin is introduced here as a possible underlying cause of the invasion, but the introduction is tentative, accomplished through a question that fails to suggest a sinful actor; the implication is that the sin, too, belongs to the nation.

The *planto*'s closing link between pity and kinship is significant in the context of fifteenth-century mourning practices. The right of the bereaved to grieve openly for the dead may seem uncontroversial, but in fact, gestures of mourning were a site of theologically-charged and classically-informed polemic in fifteenth-century Iberia. In a study of Castilian conciliar and synodal records throughout the Middle Ages, Ariel Guance has documented a recurring preoccupation with exaggerated mourning gestures. In brief, Guance shows that the Church,

following especially Leviticus 20, prohibited excessive gestures of mourning, and that members of the clergy in particular were forbidden from manifesting their grief; lay authorities often joined in this prohibition (42-4). Guance goes on to argue that the persistence of these gestures, evidenced by the repeated need to prohibit them, differentiates Iberia from the rest of medieval Europe (44). In any case, of note here is that specific provisions were made for clergymen to mourn their kin (43); thus, the Church recognized the necessity of mourning this special class of loss. The *Crónica*'s rhetorical emphasis on lineage and shared blood, then, does more than conjure up images of past glory. It legitimizes the affective frame of grief and insulates the text from charges of a lack of faith.

The other charge an excessively mournful text might have faced would be that of effeminacy; as Laura Vivanco has noted, the traditional gestures of mourning were, by the fifteenth century, identified mainly with women (155). This attitude is present, for example, in Enrique de Villena's *Tratado de la consolación* (1423-4), in which he advises his former secretary, who has lost his entire family to the plague, to leave such gestures to women, since they are not becoming to a "constant" man, who should react to death with song rather than tears (52). In fact, Villena's text, heavily influenced by the Stoic and early-Christian genre of the *consolatio*, rehearses a variety of classical reasons to avoid excessively emotional responses to death.<sup>13</sup> Villena cannot avoid, however, recognizing the social nature of mourning, even if he does so in a negative context:

Estas tristezas que los omnes fuera de medida toman de la usança que tienen desde pequeños en ver a los con que se crían dolerse tanto por los parientes amisos e muertos, fazen sigan aquella vía non de razón dictada, e la usança dello confirma la vana obra, ca estas dos cosas tiran a su natura e la desvían del ordenado curso. (110)

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<sup>13</sup> For a brief introduction to the *consolatio* as a genre and to its reception in Iberia, see Derek C. Carr's introduction to the *Tratado*, particularly LCXXIV- LXXXVI.

These sadnesses that immoderate men take from the custom they have from youth of seeing those with whom they are raised grieve for distant and deceased relatives, make them follow that path not dictated by reason, and the custom of it confirms the vanity of the act, for these two things tear at their nature and divert it from the ordained path.

Here, Villena posits mourning as an unnatural and irrational behavior learned mimetically in youth; his focus on habit and custom (“usança”) in the development of mournful behavior echoes Corral’s description of how Castilian culture came to be overwhelmingly “pensive.” Of course, in discussing the Visigothic period Corral could, from his own perspective, be said to be narrating Spain’s youth. Thus, even one of mourning’s staunchest fifteenth-century opponents recognized it as a social phenomenon and not just an individual failing, while the Church went further in establishing its validity in certain circumstances. In fact, Guance notes that at times when Reconquest activity was particularly high, the Church issued many fewer mourning prohibitions (47). The Church’s temporary silence on the issue can be read as an implicit recognition of mourning’s essential role in the Reconquest effort – a recognition, shared by Corral, that becomes increasingly explicit throughout the first part of the *Crónica*.

In the *Crónica*, mourning is by no means associated exclusively with women, but gender is a fault line in the work’s exploration of divisive grief. As the siege of Córdoba drags on, public measures must be taken to control the women’s behavior:

Fue ordenado que ese día ninguna dueña ni donzella ni otra muger no saliese de su casa, ni fuese a la honra destos cuerpos, ca tanto era el duelo e el llorar e los alaridos que davan que los coraçones de los ombres no los podían sufrir. E con pesar que avían ívanse a las armas, e querían salir a los de fuera, e no curavan de estar por las treguas, e dezían que más querían ser muertos que sufrir tantas penas. Esto dezían ellos por lo que las dueñas fablavan; ca estrañamente maltraían a los que avían quedado bivros, ca ellas en esa ora todos los ombres del mundo quiseran que fueran muertos, e no los podían mirar tanto les parecían de mal. (1: 165)

It was ordered that on that day no lady, maiden, or other woman should leave her home or go to honor those bodies, for such were their grief and sobbing and cries that the hearts



of the men could not bear them. And with their sorrow they went to arms, and wanted to attack those outside, and paid no heed to the truce, and said that they would rather die than suffer such pain. They said this because of the ladies' conversation; for they mistreated terribly those who had survived, wishing in that hour that all the world's men were dead, and they could not look at them, so lowly they seemed.

The Cordoban men prefer physical violence and even death to the affective (and not purely verbal) violence of the women's mourning. The women, for their part, would prefer to give themselves over wholly to mourning, so that both genders agree that the men would be better off dead. This popular fatalism ties in to the public frame given to this episode, in which the law ("fue ordenado") seeks to reassert itself in the face of overwhelming affect. This struggle is made clear in the desire of the overwhelmed men to fight and die despite a temporary truce that has been established ("no curavan de estar por las treguas"). The affective mechanism by which political unity can be dissolved is thus exposed, as the will of men to remain "constant" before excessive emotion is shown to be lacking. The mechanism by which the land itself is made subject to affect is laid bare in a later episode in which a field is renamed after a particularly bloody battle: "e aquel llano llaman el *Campo de Bar* ... e después que estas gentes fezieron ende su batalla e morieron en él, todos los de la tierra le llamaron el *Campo del Lloro*" (1: 423) "and that plain was called the *Field of Bar* ... and after these people had their battle there and died on it, everyone from that land called it the *Field of Tears*." The event that causes the popular renaming of the field is not the battle itself, but the mourning that followed it.<sup>14</sup> Thus, if national unity implies a government, people, and land unified under a common name, each element of that unity, including the name itself, is shown to be susceptible to division or disruption through affect.

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<sup>14</sup> I am grateful to Simone Pinet for pointing out this detail to me.

### *Individual Combat as Ritual Mourning*

It is important to remember that Rodrigo's decision to crown himself despite having been named regent, not king, is what sparks the *Crónica's* first military conflict. In contrast, the tournaments he orders to celebrate his coronation seem at first to be the antithesis of the mourning provoked by the siege of Córdoba; they are celebratory and successful in that many great knights participate in them. In fact, however, the many tournaments throughout the text complement rather than contradict the many battles, sharing a fundamentally symmetrical narrative structure that maintains thematic stability. In the tournaments' jousts, two characters unfamiliar to us in all but their names engage in individual combat that runs through repetitive steps familiar to readers of epic literature, such as the breaking of the lance and the piercing of the *loriga*. The epic trope of individual combat is infused with ritualistic character in the context of the tournaments, and this recontextualization of its repetitive structure extends that ritualistic character to the battles as well, since the latter closely mirror the former in terms of narrative structure. In this sense, the *Crónica's* jousts, battles, and mourning come together in their embodiment of ritual. The jousts do so explicitly, at the level of plot, since they are narrations of what is already ceremonial. In the cases of battle and mourning, however, the ritual takes place at the level of the text itself, as the prose takes on (and draws the reader into) the codified rhythms of ritual practice.

As Marina Brownlee has noted, this conflation of battle and tournament may reflect Corral's historical circumstances, in which "ceremonial jousting had replaced true chivalric combat" (121). These three ritual elements are only signs of societal decadence, however, insofar as they are attempts to reverse it through a self-conscious appeal to the past and to national

sentiment.<sup>15</sup> As conceived by Émile Durkheim, ritual unifies a community, providing stability in troubled times:

When a society is going through circumstances which sadden, worry or irritate it, it exercises a pressure upon its members to give evidence, by various significant actions, of their own sorrow, anxiety, or anger. It imposes upon them the duty of weeping, groaning or inflicting wounds upon themselves or others, for these collective manifestations, and the moral communion which they show and strengthen, restore to the group the energy which circumstances threaten to take away from it, and thus they enable it to become settled. (236-7)

Reinforcing a sense of shared identity often implies, of course, the creation of a hostile exterior force; in the *Crónica*, this is famously accomplished through the figures of the Moors, whose conquest of the peninsula is recounted, along with the suffering and grief it provoked, in the beginning of the second part. However, the portrayal of the Moors themselves is unexpectedly dispassionate, neither particularly detailed nor hostile except in the most general of terms. Satorre Grau perceived the same lack of intensity in the conquest scenes despite their length, arguing that they function merely as a narrative bridge between Rodrigo and Pelayo (171). But in fact, the suffering staged in the conquest scenes ties in to Durkheimian ritual: “It is this experience which men interpret when they imagine that outside them there are evil beings whose hostility, whether permanent or temporary, can be appeased only by human suffering. These beings are thus collective states objectified; they are society itself seen under one of its aspects” (237).<sup>16</sup> This is not a case, then, of radical otherness, but rather of the exteriorization of an internal discomfort, a projection. The exterior force (the Moors) is not “imagined” because it does not exist materially or historically, but rather because it has been imbued with autochthonous values and fears. Thus, although Corral’s *Crónica* has (justifiably) served until

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<sup>15</sup> In this way they are similar to the attempt to close historical distance by interweaving and, in a sense, unifying the figures of Rodrigo and Pelayo.

<sup>16</sup> Durkheim notes that a similar process is undergone in the case of celebratory rituals: “We know, moreover, that the beneficent powers are formed in the same way; they, too, result from the collective life and express it” (237).

now as a source of information about fifteenth-century Castilian attitudes toward Muslims, the role of the Moors in the text reveals much more interior disquiet than hatred of the invaders. Mourning, jousts, and battles are narrative rituals that, just as Durkheim describes them, objectify the preoccupations of an author who tries to purge them through their very objectification and through the obsessive, expiatory repetition of literary suffering throughout the text.<sup>17</sup>

The generic studies of the *Crónica* that have been carried out up to now have not taken into account this element of the jousts' meaning. De la Flor Cramer sees in the jousts, for example, nothing more than another opportunity to lament, ominously, the noble deaths they produce (49), and Menéndez Pidal asserts the influence of mozarabic and Arabic historiography, which turned the legendary material away from epic and toward the novel (*Floresta* LXXXIX). But generic traditions do not constrain or exhaust the meaning of the chivalric and epic elements; rather, they broaden it. The jousts and battles – characterized structurally, again, by repetition, symmetry, and chaining-together – reveal the fundamental narcissism behind the supposed intercultural conflict. This inward focus is reflected even in the image of two knights charging each other on horseback and is another manifestation of Corral's overall preoccupation with internal, rather than external, strife. The following example, taken from a battle between Christians and Moors, illustrates the ritualistic tone taken on by the prose in descriptions of individual combat:

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<sup>17</sup> Also relevant here is David Nirenberg's discussion of the integrative, rather than merely destructive, possibilities of ritual violence. These integrative possibilities are not just inter-, but also intracommunal; for example, he argues that "Holy Week violence served to reinstitute differences and emphasize boundaries while displacing violence from the interior of the community. By alluding to and containing the original act of vengeance at the foundation of Christian-Jewish relations in the diaspora, Holy Week attacks flirted with but ultimately avoided the repetition of that violence in contemporary society" (218). As I am arguing in the case of mourning, Nirenberg argues that ritual violence in medieval Iberia "made possible both stasis and explosive historical change" (230).

E Mahomet, cormano de Muça, vio a Arlistas, hermano de Polus, que fazía mucho mal en sus gentes, tomó una lança bien azerada, e fue para él. E así como se estava combatiendo con Amalec, primo de Tárif, vino por las espaldas, e diole un golpe tan mortal que armadura que toviese no le prestó cosa, e cayó luego en tierra desuso de su cavallo.

E Tomedus que esa ora llegava allí, e vio que Arlistas era muerto, tomó una lança a un donzel suyo ... E tomó su lança en la mano, e non paró ojo como iva, o si estava cerca dél quien lo acorriese, e da de las espuelas a su cavallo e pone los ojos en Mahomet, e no paró fasta que le dio tal golpe con su lança por el costado derecho que gela echó de la otra parte. E Mahomet cayó muerto en tierra. (1: 507)

And Mahomet, Muça's brother, saw Arlistas, Polus's brother, who was doing great harm to his side; he took a sharp lance and went at him. And because [Arlistas] was doing battle with Amalec, Tárif's cousin, [Mahomet] came from behind, and dealt him such a mortal blow that no armor would have protected him, and he fell to the ground below his horse.

And Tomedus, arriving at that moment, saw that Arlistas was dead and took a lance from one of his squires ... And he took his lance in hand, paying no heed to what was around him or who might charge him, and he spurs his horse and sets his eyes on Mahomet, and he did not stop until he dealt him such a blow with his lance on the right side that it pierced through to the other side. And Mahomet fell to the earth dead.

Tomedus, in the next paragraph, dies in a similar manner. In this borrowed element of epic narrative, death comes at the end of a series of codified narrative actions – but the code here has been altered in the mixing of the epic and chivalric genres. Rituals do not depend on concrete people, but rather on established roles that wait to be filled; even in the text itself, these almost anonymous deaths rarely provoke personal emotional reactions beyond desire for revenge, which is seen in the above excerpt to be one of the codified (chaining-together) elements of the ritual battle narrative. On the other hand, these deaths consistently provoke collective mourning – the *Crónica's* battles are punctuated by *plantos*, which bring each scene to a close. Taken together, these elements represent an invented, literary suffering, an attempt to respond to intolerable circumstances with a ritual expiation that will eventually unify Corral's society. And just as in the case of that society and its internecine conflicts, the author has not truly been able to focus on

the exterior; intercultural conflict in the *Crónica* is a background against which internal suffering is portrayed. To return for a moment to an earlier question, this is emphatically not a case of Freudian melancholy – the interiorization of an imaginary desired object that provokes self-criticism – but rather its opposite, the external objectification of an internal disquiet that requires rituals of sacrifice.

Whose are the sins that must be expiated? Rodrigo's are the clearest: the violation of the Tower of Hercules and the rape of La Cava. However, in the case of the Tower, the guilt is spread symbolically to a large portion of Rodrigo's subjects, and Juan Manuel Cacho Blecua has argued that, in fact, the entire Spanish population has sinned and must do penance (48). What's more, there are several other possible guilty parties in the legend and even in this particular version of it: La Cava, who may have seduced rather than merely succumbed to Rodrigo (Brownlee 126); her vengeful uncle, Julián, whose anger may have been righteous but whose betrayal of Spain to the Moors most certainly was not; Julián's duplicitous ally, Orpas; and, of course, the Moors themselves, who could have been portrayed as greedy or fanatical aggressors. It is Rodrigo himself who, speaking to himself as he escapes clandestinely from the disastrous battle of Guadalete, resolves this ambiguity: "porque digo que no fue la fuerça del Conde don Julián, ni el ardimiento de Muça, nin el saber de Tárif so la traición de Orpas que España fuese vencida e sus cavalleros despedaçados e muertos. Antes digo que esta destrucción es mía, e aquestos vencimientos e asolaciones son míos, e yo lo he fecho" (1: 637) "because I say that it was not Count Julián's strength, or Muça's courage, or Tárif's knowledge from Orpas's betrayal that caused Spain's defeat and the dismemberment and death of its knights. Rather, I say that this destruction is mine, and these defeats and devastations are mine, and I have caused it."<sup>18</sup> Here,

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<sup>18</sup> Rodrigo's acceptance of full responsibility is in keeping with the rules for confession laid out in the *Breve confesionario*, a didactic treatise published together with the *Arte de bien morir* by Pablo Hurus in 1479-1484: "se

the apostrophic trajectory is outward, from the king to “Spain” as a kingdom and as a people.

Rodrigo prescribes two courses of action:

¡O España, mortiguada e decepada del triumpho eres puesta a recibir el yugo de la servidumbre! ¡O amigos e vasallos españoles e compañía mía, cesen vuestros lloros que sostenedes por las crueles andanças de mí, triste rey, e desaventurado!; *fazed justicia cruel sobre mí que toda esta cruel persecución he merecido, e comiencen vuestros ojos a llorar el vencimiento del grand triumpho de las nobles cibdades de España, e la sojuzgación della de que yo fue la ocasión.* (1: 638; my emphasis)

O Spain, dimmed and cut back from triumph, you are set to receive the yoke of servitude!  
O Spanish friends and vassals and my companions, cease crying for my cruel fate, sad and unfortunate king! *Judge me cruelly, for I have deserved all of this cruel persecution, and let your eyes begin to cry for the defeat of the great triumph of Spain’s noble cities, and its subjugation, which I caused.*

On the one hand, Rodrigo directs the people away from fruitless mourning for his personal suffering and toward a unifying, national mourning (note the emphasis on an already “triumphant” Spain that has fallen), while on the other, he calls for his own punishment, “fazed justicia cruel sobre mí.” This juridical language, which cannot, of course, be wholly separated from a theological worldview, frames the *Crónica*’s grandest historiographic gesture. National greatness cannot be recuperated through the unification of Rodrigo and Pelayo if Rodrigo himself remains irrecoverably stained with sin. The figures of Rodrigo and Pelayo may be structurally intertwined in the narrative, but Rodrigo’s penitence and burial represent the real work of Corral’s revisionism.

### ***Participatory Penitence and the Judgment on Rodrigo***

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requiere confesión de la boca, sus pecados enteramente confessando, a sí mesmo redarguyendo, e a ningund otro, si puede buenamente, acusando” (133) “verbal confession is required, confessing his sins completely, condemning himself, and, if possible, accusing no one else.” Rodrigo will need to keep this latter admonition in mind when the devil, disguised as Julián, tempts him with vainglory (see below).

In the final chapter of the first part of the *Crónica*, the stakes of grief are set. On the one hand, grief can unite: “Al pueblo doloroso es fuerte e dulce cosa fartarse en lloros, ca dulce cosa es llorar e gemir en los lloros a la gente que ha compañía de mucho pueblo que continúan semejante dolor e llanto a gemido cumplido” (1: 647) “For a grieving people, it is a powerfully sweet thing to have its fill of tears, for crying and moaning is sweet to those accompanied by many others carrying the same grief and tears to their end.” On the other, grief is a stagnating force in isolation, and this is the true risk of the invasion:

¡Ay tristes nosotros españoles!, ca non nos alegraremos de aqueste remedio de los miserables dolorosos, ca como la multitud de los bárbaros se moverá por toda España, e la desmanpararán, los unos irán a un parte, e los otros a otra, segund las sus fortunas; esa hora departirá la tierra a la nuestra triste compañía, *e cada uno llorará por sí mismo*. (1: 648; my emphasis)

O we sad Spaniards! For we will not take heart in this remedy for the miserably grieving, for as the barbarian multitude moves throughout all of Spain, and the people abandon it, some will go to one place, and others to another, according to fortune; in that hour the land will divide our sad company, *and each will cry for himself*.

If the land and people are divided, collective mourning will be impossible; thus, by the end of the first part, the fears about internecine conflict intersect with the theme of grief and mourning. The second part of the *Crónica* begins with the narration of the Moorish advance, and it is in this context that the exploration of collective grief reaches its apogee. Betrayal, a theme raised in the first part through the figures of Julián and Orpas, is a central element of the second part’s moral economy: the narrator decries both the Jews who betray Toledo and the Christians who fight alongside Muça, the Moorish commander. In this environment conditioned by betrayal, mourning, the only unifying ritual left to the Christians, who can no longer fight and have nothing to celebrate, becomes a duty and even a calling: “ca entre ellos no avía grande ni pequeño que a otro conortase, antes le ponía mayor lástima en el coraçón, e si alguno dexava de



llorar todos eran con él e lo maltraían, e dezían que no guardava bien lo que Dios le avía dado por compañía que eran los grandes duelos e aborrencias de bevir” (2: 281) “for among them no one old or young comforted another, but rather each provoked more pity in all, and if one of them stopped crying the rest berated him, saying that he did not respect what God had given them for company, great grief and abhorrence of life.”<sup>19</sup> Mourning becomes the constitutive element of life itself: “E agora dexemos los lloros que llorando nascimos, y en duelo fue nuestra vida, e llorando nos partimos deste mundo; quiera Dios no nos acaesca tal en el otro” (2: 303) “And let us now leave crying behind, for we were born crying, and our life was passed in mourning, and we abandon this world crying; pray God such will not be the life of the other.” And in fact, after the hopeful recounting of Pelayo’s youthful exploits up to the battle of Covadonga, Corral presents Rodrigo first as a focal point for collective mourning, through his penitence, but then as a way to leave mourning behind, through his burial and the discovery of his tomb.

Rodrigo, wandering away from the battle of Guadalete, comes upon a hermitage and, weeping, begins confessing his sins to a crucifix hanging there. The hermit who lives there, and who is going to die in three days, writes out a rule by which Rodrigo can live in order to do penance. After the hermit’s death, the devil appears to Rodrigo in the guise of a holy man, tempting him first with vainglory and then with comforts denied him in the hermit’s penitential rule. What follows is a series of brief chapters (CCXLIII-CCXLVIII) in which the devil, in various guises, attempts to convince Rodrigo to abandon his penitential lifestyle, while Rodrigo

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<sup>19</sup> In his *Tratado*, Villena condemns this pernicious social pressure to mourn: “el que pierde los parientes, ge lo ternán a mal las gentes entre quien bive sy non muestra por ello grant sentimiento. Non cuidarían esto si biviesen entre gentes muy virtuosas, de quien tal non podrían esperar reprehensión, e por esto más se muestra doler que non se duelen” (111) “he who loses his relatives will be condemned by those among whom he lives if he does not show great feeling because of it. This would not worry them if they lived among very virtuous people, from whom they would not expect such condemnation, and for this reason they appear to grieve more than they actually do.”

insists on maintaining it. This dialogic structure is very similar to that of the *Arte de bien morir*, composed in Latin by an anonymous Dominican monk between 1414 and 1418 (there are several surviving fifteenth-century manuscripts and incunables of the Castilian translation of the *Arte*).<sup>20</sup> The *Arte*, a step-by-step guide for the laity on achieving a good death, notes that the dying man (*Moriens*) faces more temptations on his deathbed than ever before: “E es de saber, que en el artículo de la muerte los que han de morir han mayores e más graves temptaciones del enemigo que jamás ante uvieron” (84) “And it should be known that those in the moment of death face more and graver temptations from the enemy than ever before.” The text then lays out, in alternating chapters accompanied by woodcuts, the five demonic temptations and their respective angelic refutations (in chapter CCXLIX, Rodrigo is visited and encouraged by the Holy Spirit).

Critics who study this portion of the *Crónica* tend to focus on the moment when the devil disguises himself as La Cava.<sup>21</sup> However, the devil first assumes the form of count Julián, tempting Rodrigo away from penance by assuming all of the guilt for the Moorish conquest and by calling on Rodrigo to return to the battlefield:

Señor, como yo sea aquel que te haya errado de aquella manera que ombre traidor a su señor, e lo oviese fecho con grand ira e saña que al mi corazón vino con ayuda e esfuerço del diablo. E como Nuestro Señor Dios es poderoso ovo piedad de la mi ánima, e no quiso que yo me perdiese ni que España fuese destruida, ni tú, señor, abaxado de la tu grand onra e estado ni del tu grand señorío que en España tienes; hame mostrado por revelación cómo estavas aquí e esta hermita faziendo penitencia de tus pecados, porque te digo que fagas justicia de mí, e tomes de mí vengança como de aquel que te lo meresce, ca yo te conosco que eres mi señor, e así mismo la grand traición en que te caí; por ende, señor, te ruego e pido por un solo Dios que tomes el poder de España que allí está esperándote, e que vayas a defender la fe del Salvador. (2: 388-389)

Lord, as I am the one who failed you as a traitor, and I did so with great anger and fury that came to my heart with the devil’s help and effort. And as our Lord is powerful, he

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<sup>20</sup> For more information on the manuscript tradition of this text in Iberia, see Francisco Gago Jover’s introduction to his edition of Pablo Hurus’ 1479-1484 impression of the *Arte* (31-36).

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, Drayson 198-200.

took pity on my soul, and did not wish that I be lost nor that Spain be destroyed, nor that you, lord, be lowered from your great honor and estate, or the dominion you have in Spain; he has revealed to me that you were here in this hermitage doing penance for your sins, so I ask you to judge me, and take deserved vengeance on me, for I recognize you as my lord, and I recognize the great betrayal into which I fell; therefore, lord, I pray and ask by the one God that you take power in Spain, for it is there awaiting you, and that you go to defend the Saviour's faith.

The devil, as Julián, cleverly tempts Rodrigo with both spiritual and worldly vainglory: he attempts to undermine Rodrigo's penitential guilt by insisting on the role of his treason in the fall of "España" while also calling Rodrigo back to his position of temporal power – a power that he wielded, Julián reminds him, by the grace of God.<sup>22</sup> At the same time, Julián closely echoes Rodrigo's own penitential language in calling for Rodrigo to judge him; he thus tempts Rodrigo back toward the path of personal vengeance and away from the collective responsibility that Rodrigo has taken on. In short, Julián seeks to return the two figures to their traditional, complementarily culpable places in the story of Spain's fall – Julián the traitor, Rodrigo the arrogant and power-hungry. Rodrigo, however, meets this temptation (as he does the many others) with silent tears: "E el Rey en todo esto no fazia sino llorar e nunca les fabló cosa ninguna" (II: 390). The penitential tears that represent Rodrigo's simultaneously collective and personal guilt are the way forward, and the way to leave Julián behind.

My purpose here is not to suggest that Corral was drawing specifically on the *Arte* while writing the scenes of Rodrigo's penitence, but rather to show that, as the ideas and practices of individual confession and Christian conscience gained ground in Western Europe, there was a popular textual tradition in which the communal aspect of penitence was maintained.<sup>23</sup> In fact,

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<sup>22</sup> In the *Arte*, the devil tempts Moriens with vainglory by arguing that "mucho te debes gloriar porque non eres assí como los otros que han fecho e cometido males sin número" (105) "you should glory greatly in your difference from others who have committed innumerable sins."

<sup>23</sup> One of the *Arte*'s final recommendations is to seek out a faithful deathbed companion, a difficult task given that many of Moriens' friends and family will only be seeking to gain possession of his worldly goods (118-119).

public expressions of grief – that is, collective mourning – were part of everyday life in the Iberian Peninsula from the very beginning of the Middle Ages.<sup>24</sup> At the same time, the penitential theme of the *Crónica*'s closing act is one of its clearest examples of the influence of hagiography (Drayson 197). But the conflation of hagiography and historiography was not new in Corral's time, and was in fact relatively commonplace in the portrayal of royal deaths in Castilian chronicles.<sup>25</sup>

Thus, Corral's revisionist invention of the scenes of Rodrigo's penitence do not necessarily lead him so far away from the historiographic tradition invoked by the term *Crónica*.<sup>26</sup> The role of the law in its tension with social affect –already raised in the case of the siege of Córdoba – is also crucial to the question of revisionism in the similarity of historical judgment to a legal sentence. In the case of Rodrigo, whose express desire to be judged already reflects well on him, new evidence (his penitence and ultimate self-sacrifice) is introduced that mitigates his guilt. In an analysis of the close relationship between historiographic practice and trials – or, as he puts it, between the historian and the judge – Paul Ricoeur argues that one important goal of a trial is the reappropriation of the crime itself, achieved through memory and mourning:

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<sup>24</sup> For example, the penitential aspect of the Visigothic end-of-life liturgy was public and participatory: the priest invited the crowd to express its grief (through shouts and tears) in order to help the person who was dying achieve "los frutos de la penitencia."<sup>24</sup> Public grief as a crucial element of penitence would later become part of the royal funeral ceremony in Castile (Guance 51), and José Manuel Nieto Soria has argued that the pain displayed at the king's death served to justify the need for dynastic continuity (100-101).

<sup>25</sup> Guance shows that like saints in medieval Castilian hagiographies, many kings have a presentiment of their deaths in medieval chronicles from the 13<sup>th</sup> century on, and there is also a chronicist preoccupation with the exemplarity of kings' good or bad deaths, although the representation of good deaths does not necessarily imply sacralization (297-299).

<sup>26</sup> For Alfonso X's rhetorical manipulation of the *llanto*, see Tudorica Impey. Corral's *Crónica* does defy Hayden White's (admittedly broad) definition of the chronicle as a historiographic form lacking a narrative ending: "The chronicle ... often seems to wish to tell a story, aspires to narrativity, but typically fails to achieve it. More specifically, the chronicle usually is marked by a failure to achieve narrative *closure* ... the chronicle represents [historical reality] *as if* real events appeared to human consciousness in the form of *unfinished* stories" (9; emphasis in original). White links the desire for narrative closure to a desire to find moral meaning in historical events (24), and Corral, in his *Crónica*, certainly seems to be providing just such a moral interpretation of putatively historical matter.

[T]he trial puts on stage a reconstructed time of the past, in which the facts that are targeted have themselves already constituted tests of memory: in addition to the physical harm inflicted on persons defined by their own history, the breaking of contracts, the disputes over the attribution of goods, positions of power and authority, and all the other infractions and crimes constitute so many wounds inflicted on memory that call for a work of memory inseparable from a work of mourning, with a view toward the reappropriation of the infraction, of the crime, by all the parties despite its essential strangeness. (319)

The crime must be reappropriated so that it is not completely destructive of the public order; in the same way, for Corral, Rodrigo's crimes cannot be allowed to stand outside of Spanish history as instigators of a historical annihilation. Similarly, the historical verdict against Rodrigo cannot be left intact. The most daring revision would have been to erase the crimes completely, but Corral opts instead for two practices that Ricoeur, citing Ernst Nolte, identifies as central to historical revision: "temporal widening of the context" and "comparison with similar contemporary or earlier facts" (328). Corral widens the historical context by including – inventing – the scenes of Rodrigo's penitence; at the same time, through a contrast of burials, he compares the penitent Rodrigo favorably to the treacherous Julián.

Indeed, another area in which medieval Iberian hagiography and historiography come together is their shared emphasis on entombment. Just as the discovery of saints' tombs and recovery of their remains was an important motif in hagiography, chronicles placed increasing emphasis not just on kings' geographic place of inhumation, but also on their manner of interment (Guance 122, 309-18). While the late-Roman tradition recorded in Gothic histories tends not to include the location of the tomb, from Alfonso II on, the locations were systematically indicated since the tombs represented "the secular and uninterrupted succession of the kings and their tutorial protection of the kingdom" (Mattoso 83). In fact, just as Corral does in his own *Crónica*, Jiménez de Rada went so far as to invent tombs for a number of late-

Visigothic kings. The veneration of royal tombs was a key element of the sacralization of monarchy – and its chronistic representation was thus an important form of royal propaganda (Mattoso 83-84).

José Mattoso has argued that public participation in royal funerals, “the lamentations and crying of the multitude,” allowed the collective assumption of the fact of death in order to “vomit” it back out of the community (88). This is not the case, however, in Corral’s *Crónica*; in fact, Rodrigo’s penitence and burial allow his reappropriation by the Spanish nation. His death, no longer an interruption, becomes instead an element of continuity. This recuperation of Rodrigo through the discovery of his tomb is in keeping with Ricoeur’s concept of historiographic sepulcher. For Ricoeur, history can be recounted either as a past that has already occurred (a “being-no-longer”) or as a patrimony or inheritance (a “having been”) (363). The “having been” predominates when we recognize our debt to the past – that is, our status as its inheritors. However, since the recounting of the past tends to become a long meditation on those who have died (364), there is a risk that readers will come to view history as merely a “suspended sentence of death” (365) from which we can only escape by “considering the historiographical operation to be the scriptural equivalent of the social ritual of entombment, of the act of sepulcher” (365). This act of historical sepulcher is akin to mourning and the construction of material tombs in that it restores contact with the lost object by transforming it into an “inner presence” (366).

Corral does not produce, of course, a physical monument to Rodrigo, but creates for him a literary sepulcher at the same time that he suggests, through the supposed historicity of the *Crónica*, that the monument really exists. It is a way of rescuing Rodrigo and the past he represents, of tying it definitively to Pelayo, of possessing it again as an “inner presence.” The

long process of narrative ritual mourning carried out by Corral ends, then, with a literary entombment that attempts to liberate the author and Christian Spain from their death sentence. In this context, it is important to remember that the penitence and burial of Rodrigo are preceded by another, failed act of burial: Alarbot, Julián's son, cannot escape his own death sentence at the hands of the Moors by hiding in the tomb of La Cava. The denial of mourning for Julián himself is the theme of Rodrigo's epitaph: "Aquí yaze el Rey don Rodrigo, el postrimero rey de los godos. Maldita sea la saña del traidor Julián ... amargo es el su nombre ... e pesar faze la su remembrança en el corazón de aquel que lo mienta" (2: 405) "Here lies King Rodrigo, last king of the Goths. Damn the fury of the traitor Julián ... his name is bitter ... and his memory provokes sorrow in the heart of him that mentions him."<sup>27</sup> The prohibition of mourning for Julián takes the form of a curse, ensuring that he will remain part of elapsed history and not part of the expiated Gothic patrimony that will be the basis of the victory to come.

Corral, desiring to link the present moment of civil strife with a supposedly glorious past of national unity, needed to find a way of reinscribing the fall of that past into a trajectory toward victory. This reinscription begins with the unifying rituals of mourning in the jousts and battles that predominate in the first part of the text. In the second part, the tension between collective and divisive mourning is resolved through the presentation of Rodrigo's penitence and entombment; grief can be manifested as participatory penitence, and the tomb allows the final reabsorption of Rodrigo into the continuity of Spanish cultural strength and unity. The entire process ends with the literal inscription of Rodrigo's epitaph, which separates the Gothic patrimony of Rodrigo from the betrayal of Julián. The entombment of Rodrigo is necessary to emerge from the "pensiveness" that has engulfed Castilian culture, harnessing collective grief only to release it so that the project begun by Pelayo can reach its end.

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<sup>27</sup> This epitaph is also the epigraph of Juan Goytisolo's 1970 novel, *Reivindicación del conde don Julián*.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE CONSTABLE'S REWARD: WILL, DISCRETION, AND COMPASSION IN THE *SÁTIRA DE FELICE E INFELICE VIDA*

Quen en carçel sole biuir  
en carçel deseia morer.  
– “Cantiga de Maçias para su amiga”

The *galardón*, a Castilian relative of the Provençal tradition's *bel accueil*, is one of the most easily identifiable tropes of the courtly lyric, likely to figure in even the most cursory overviews of the poetic genre. As such, it is a site at which critical faculties are often shut off: having established the conventionality of a given line or phrase, the critic moves on to more original territory. This is particularly true in medieval studies, where the foreignness (temporal if not geographic) of medieval literary practices, with their dominant aesthetic of thematic variation, makes their apparent conventionality stand out. But then as now, conventionality was both relative and pliable, and scholars must pay attention to recontextualizations and juxtapositions of conventions in seeking to understand medieval texts. A case in point is Pedro, Constable of Portugal's *Sátira de felice e infelice vida* (ca. 1450-53), a text that exemplifies the structural and discursive complexity of the nascent genre of sentimental fiction.<sup>1</sup> The *Sátira* comprises three literary modes, sentimental prose, courtly poetry, and encyclopedic glosses, and numerous cultural traditions, especially Stoic and ascetic moralism (deeply rooted in the Portuguese court of the Aviz dynasty) and courtly literature. The result, however, is hardly syncretic. Rather, the text is characterized by both open and clandestine polemic: the narrator

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of the *Sátira*'s date of composition, see Gascón Vera 75.



debates allegories of his own Discretion and of his cruel lady's virtues, and the dispassionate glosses (authored by the Constable himself) are a stark counterpoint to the exaggerated sentiment of the almost eventless narrative. The one constant feature of this fractured text is a rejection of cruelty in favor of compassion, an insistence on the moral possibility and necessity of the *galardón*. In the *Sátira*, the Constable rejects the traditional links between the passions and sin, on the one hand, and the passions and suffering, on the other, stripping away the tropic stylization of the compassionate *galardón*.<sup>2</sup> The *Sátira*'s staged confrontation between emotionally ascetic moralism and courtly sentimentality is an attempt to make a space for compassion – a central space – in ongoing debates about princely education and good governance. To the binary of reason and will, common to moral philosophy and courtly literature, the constable seeks to add an axis of compassion and cruelty.

The Castilian version of the *Sátira* (claimed by the Constable to be based on an earlier Portuguese version, now lost) was produced while the Constable (1429-66) was in Castilian exile. His father, the Infante Pedro, Duke of Coimbra, was the brother of Duarte I (r. 1433-38) and served as regent during the minority of Afonso V after Duarte's death.<sup>3</sup> When Afonso V took control of the kingdom, Pedro soon fell out of favor, touching off a series of events that culminated in Pedro's death at the Battle of Alfarrobeira (1449) and in the Constable's exile to Castile from 1449-56. Even before this period of exile, the constable had met several of Castile's leading literary figures, chief among them the Marquis of Santilla (it is likely but uncertain that he knew Juan de Mena as well) – in fact, he is still perhaps most famous as the recipient of Santillana's "Prohemio e carta." He returned to Portugal in 1456, participating in domestic

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<sup>2</sup> Throughout this chapter, I will refer to the *Sátira*'s author as "the Constable," to avoid confusion with the Constable's father (and namesake), the Infante Pedro.

<sup>3</sup> In the modern world, the most famous brother of this so-called *Ínclita Geração* is certainly the Infante Henrique, Duke of Viseu (1394-1460), better known as Prince Henry the Navigator.

politics and in several expeditions to northern Africa. It was during one such expedition, to Morocco in 1463, that he received an invitation to become king of Aragon and Catalonia, which were enmeshed in civil war. The invitation was occasioned by the fact that the Constable's mother was the daughter of the last Count of Urgel, whose own aspirations to the Aragonese crown were dashed in the Compromise of Caspe (1412). The Constable proved to be an ineffectual ruler (he is remembered as the "Intruder King"), and he died of natural causes in 1466.<sup>4</sup>

The Castilian influence on the *Sátira* is not merely linguistic; rather, the text reflects and responds to several trends in early-fifteenth-century Castilian culture, many of them important in recent scholarly debates, alluded to in chapter one, about the status of that century as, on the one hand, resolutely medieval, or on the other, "proto-Humanist" or "pre-Renaissance."<sup>5</sup> The *Sátira* opens with a dedicatory letter to the constable's sister Isabel, wife of Afonso V.<sup>6</sup> The sentimental narrative then begins in the prison of love, where the lovesick narrator holds a conversation with cruelty and lodges a complaint against fortune before being scolded by his own Discretion, to whom he responds silently, with tears and sighs (43).<sup>7</sup> The narrator then leaves the prison, only to be confronted by the seven virtues; Prudence and Pity engage him in debate, praising his lady and defending her from his accusations. The narrator eventually wins the debate (at least in his

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<sup>4</sup> For a full biography, see Adão da Fonseca, *O Condestável*; for a good condensed version, see Gascón Vera 7-32.

<sup>5</sup> On this debate in general, see (in chronological order) Boase (1-8), Russell, Maravall, Lawrance (1985 and 1986), and Weiss (11-24). The debate turns for the most part on the attitudes of the social and intellectual elites of Castile and Aragon, who were often resistant to Italian humanism (Julian Weiss notes the influence of France and Burgundy as well [12]). A famous case in point is the polemic between Leonardo Bruni, translator of Aristotle's *Ethics* into Latin, and Alonso de Cartagena, who believed that the former's "insistence on the rhetorical value of Aristotle's work would obscure the true purpose of the *Ethics*" (Pagden 306). Although this debate is not of central relevance to my argument, I tend to agree with P. E. Russell that, far from a forward-looking and culturally revolutionary phenomenon, Castilian humanism "was rather a classicizing humanism preoccupied with widening and revitalizing that part of medieval culture that descended from the classical tradition" (229). A similar debate has taken place among Portuguese critics and historians with respect to the writings of Duarte and Pedro (see below).

<sup>6</sup> I will return to this letter and each of the following plot points later in this chapter.

<sup>7</sup> Throughout this chapter, I use capital letters when referring to explicitly allegorized characters in the text (Discretion, Prudence) and lower-case letters when referring to the broader concepts these characters represent.

estimation), and there follows a poem exhorting the lady to pity and warning her of the risks of her cruelty. The sentimental narrative closes as the desperate narrator tries to decide whether to kill himself or live on, suffering, in the dubious hope that his beloved will eventually grant him the *galardón* of her pity (174). Accompanying this narrative are 102 glosses, comprising mainly explanations of the constable's numerous classical allusions, but also a number of miniature treatises on crucial concepts of moral philosophy, such as the will.<sup>8</sup> Thus, in its courtly setting, staging of the conflict between reason and love, preoccupation with feminine virtue, and ostentatious display of erudition in the service of moral exemplarity, the *Sátira* embodies many of the cultural complexities typical a period widely recognized, even at the time, as one of crisis and flux.

It was perhaps that feeling of crisis that led Castilian humanism to have a “dominant concern for the education of the statesman” (Weiss 12). As Jeremy Lawrance has shown, in the fifteenth century, “[r]eading became not merely a means to an end for a professional minority, but an end in itself for a whole privileged section of society” (“The Spread” 80). As I described in chapter one, this new readership sought out vernacular translations of classical authors, eschewing the lyric poetry, satire, and drama that would become popular later in favor of didactic and moral works. The understanding of classical allusion as a primarily didactic mode suggests the contexts of princely education and theory of statecraft for the *Sátira*, and indeed, Luís Adão da Fonseca, in his introduction to the text, characterizes the constable as a resolute patriot: “the Constable valorizes the necessity of a link between the subject and society, in which the love of the ‘*pátria*,’ the citizen’s responsibility, and the urgency of an attitude oriented toward serving the community are constant references” (XI). On the other hand, this point of view stems from an almost exclusive emphasis on the *Sátira*’s glosses, whose relation to the rest

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<sup>8</sup> The Constable claims that there are only 100 glosses (12).

of the text is in fact a contentious point.<sup>9</sup> After all, the sentimental narrative, while still overwhelmingly concerned with virtue, is focused almost entirely on the narrator's inner life, leading Gascón Vera to claim that for the Constable, "man's duty is to himself, dedicating his activity to the pursuit of individual virtue" (55). This dual tension, between, on the one hand, interiority and exteriority, and on the other, the disparate structural elements of the *Sátira*, can best be approached initially through an examination of the genre to which it belongs, that of sentimental fiction, itself often adduced as evidence of nascent Castilian humanism.

### ***Structure and Introspection in Sentimental Fiction***

There are several relationships to untangle here: that of the structural elements of the text (prose, poetry, gloss) among themselves; that of private and public virtue; and, from the broadest perspective, that of interiority and exteriority, of dramatized sentiment and historical example. This group of tensions is present, to various degrees and in various forms, throughout the genre of sentimental fiction, whose very existence has been grounds for vigorous scholarly debate. Those who accept its critical validity tend to identify two axes around which the genre is said to spin: structural hybridity and the predominance of psychological action.<sup>10</sup> In this vein, Alan D. Deyermond summarizes the genre's main characteristics thus: "brevity, the predominance of psychological interest over external action, a tragic vision of love, autobiographism (first-person narration, or a narrator who is also a character), and the inclusion of letters or poetry (or, often,

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<sup>9</sup> In fact, Antonio Paz y Meliá's 1892 edition of the *Sátira*, included in his *Opúsculos literarios de los siglos XIV á XVI*, includes only a small selection of the glosses.

<sup>10</sup> For those interested in the existential debate surrounding sentimental fiction, a good starting point is Keith Whinnom's *The Spanish Sentimental Romance, 1440-1550: a Critical Bibliography*, since it establishes a canon of twenty-one works belonging to the genre (of which the *Sátira* is the third, chronologically). A good recent summary of the debate is found in Cortijo Ocaña (7-18). Other important texts are Brandenberger, Blay, the various essays in Gwara and Gerli (*Studies*), Rohland de Langbehn (*La unidad genérica*), Deyermond (*Tradiciones*), and recent special issues of *La corónica* (29.1) and *Ínsula* (651).

both) in the narrative” (*Tradiciones* 47).<sup>11</sup> Structural factors such as brevity and the inclusion of letters or poetry are adduced alongside psychological ones such as a tragic vision of love, and they are not always presented as merely complementary. For example, E. Michael Gerli relates the genre’s psychological focus to its roots in *cancionero* poetry:

The sentimental romance seeks to be lyrical through narrative. Like the courtly lyric from which in large part it doubtless developed, the sentimental romance sets out to express intimate experience, to create mood and sympathy before explaining or justifying the origins of those feelings ... Through the exploitation of verse, epistles, and allegory, the romancers sought to create the aesthetic effect of poetry in order to represent and investigate in detail the hidden world of emotion and motivation. (“Poetics” 476)

Gerli goes further, arguing that sentimental fiction’s focus on emotion to the detriment of “battles and thrilling adventure” was a crucial step in the development of the novel (480).<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, the representation of emotion in sentimental fiction is not necessarily recognizable from a modern point of view as psychological realism (Varela 11), and a focus on emotion is not necessarily an end in itself, but can be a polemical claim: “a vociferous reaffirmation of sentiment as a faculty and noble, trustworthy form of human perception” (Varela 32). As such, the critical debate around sentimental fiction reproduces, in its own way, the tensions already present in the works themselves: emotion can be an escape from fantasy or from reality; it can transfer “poetry’s function as a timeless and spaceless medium of self-analysis” (Gerli, “Poetics” 477) to the realm of prose or make an epistemological claim valid for both the interior and exterior world; poetry, letters, and glosses can be present as vestiges of a medieval past or harbingers of a modern future. In the end, what the critical debate highlights is the need to move away from panoramic or synchronic views (while not ignoring the relationships among

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<sup>11</sup> Deyermond also lists the four main sources of the genre: books of chivalry, Italian fiction (especially Boccaccio’s *Fiammetta*), Ovid’s *Heroides*, and *cancionero* poetry (49).

<sup>12</sup> In this sense, Gerli’s article is also an entry in the debate on the modernity of fifteenth-century Iberian culture.

individual texts) – that is, away from what Jauss calls the “rule-and-instance” conception of genre (80) – and toward a hermeneutic that considers individual authors’ recontextualizations and structural juxtapositions from a wider, but fluid, perspective. This chapter represents an attempt at analysis according to this hermeneutic.

Identifying sources and conventions is important from this perspective – but only as an analytical starting point. When employing this methodology, scholars often place too much weight on the past and even present of a work, ignoring the “socially formative” function of literature (Jauss 45). Writers working within a contemporarily identifiable tradition may evoke for readers a “horizon of expectations,” but they are not obligated merely to validate those expectations. Rather, what at first seems familiar in a new text, the apparent “rules of the game,” “can ... be varied, extended, corrected, but also transformed, crossed out, or simply reproduced” (Jauss 88). It is this possibility of transformation rather than reproduction that can be socially formative:

The horizon of expectations of literature distinguishes itself before the horizon of expectations of historical lived praxis in that it not only preserves actual experiences, but also anticipates unrealized possibility, broadens the limited space of social behavior for new desires, claims, and goals, and thereby opens paths of future experience (Jauss 41).

The question, then, is not what change the *Sátira* effected, but what change it could have effected (and it is precisely this counterfactual formulation that makes it and other medieval texts relevant to contemporary debates). The *Sátira*’s combination of sentimental prose, courtly poetry, and encyclopedic gloss is certainly, in retrospect, exemplary of the modern category of sentimental fiction. But the concept of exemplarity fails to give a full account of the work (of any work), and not only because of its unique characteristics, such as its single-minded focus on the compassionate *galardón*. Rather, the *Sátira* must also be analyzed as a rhetorical document, since rhetoric’s aspirational quality brings the future into analytical focus. This is true for any

text, but is of particular relevance to the *Sátira*, which bears the formal mark of medieval rhetoric (a point to which I will return shortly) and seeks to take advantage of the classical relationship between rhetoric and affect.

Thus, it is not sufficient explanation to show, as Guillermo Serés has indeed convincingly shown, that the *Sátira*'s main sources are, for the sentimental narrative, Juan Rodríguez del Padrón's *Siervo libre de amor* ("Ficción" 38),<sup>13</sup> and for the glosses, Alfonso de Madrigal's *Las diez questões vulgares* (39), and then dismiss the Constable as a typical nobleman – and a young one at that – eager to show off his second-hand erudition:

The *Sátira* is thus a product typical of the mode of composition employed by most of the "caballeros" interested in approaching the *auctores* and demonstrating a certain degree of erudition; in both cases, however, they do not manage to escape from encyclopedic culture, which, in this case, is represented by the bishop of Ávila [i.e., Alfonso de Madrigal]. (Serés, "Don Pedro" 982)

If nothing else, the very juxtaposition of Rodríguez del Padrón and Madrigal is novel and in need of some explanation; beyond that, it is hard to see how a work that is part of a *nascent* genre can be dismissed as conventional. In fact, some revolutionary claims have been made on the *Sátira*'s behalf: not just that it is a stepping-stone on the way to the novel, but, as Marina S. Brownlee has argued, that it subverts both "the amorous discourse which it purports to valorize" (475) and allegory and gloss themselves as heuristic modes (481-85).<sup>14</sup> To understand (and evaluate) the grounds for these claims, it will be necessary to enter into the work itself through an analysis of the Constable's introductory letter, wherein he explains his own didactic intentions and the role the glosses play in furthering them.

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<sup>13</sup> The constable makes explicit reference to Rodríguez del Padrón in the *Sátira* (137), although it is to his *Triunfo de las donas*, not to the *Siervo*.

<sup>14</sup> On the ambiguous relationship of the *Sátira*'s glosses to medieval notions of *auctoritas*, see Agnew.

## Reprehensión

Toward the beginning of the letter, the Constable offers a definition of “sátira,” one that holds none of the comedic connotations now associated with satire: “quiere dezir reprehension con animo amigable de corregir; e aun este nombre satira viene de satura, que es loor, e yo a ella primero loando, el femineo linage propuse loar, a ella amonestando como siervo a señora, a mi reprehendiendo de mi loca thema e desigual tristeza” (5) “it means scolding [*reprehension*] in a friendly, corrective spirit; and this name ‘satire’ comes from ‘satura,’ which is praise, and I, praising her first of all, set out to praise the entire feminine lineage, admonishing her as a servant to his lady, and scolding myself for my mad theme and unequalled sadness.” This definition is not original to the Constable: similar ones are found in Santillana’s *Comedieta de Ponça*, Mena’s *Coronación*, Diego de Valera’s *Defensa de las virtuosas mugeres*, and Enrique de Villena’s *Los doze trabajos de Hércules* and *Eneyda*, and the definition originates in Saint Isidore (Serés, “Ficción” 36). That said, the first point to be noted here is that the Constable fails to carry out this “satirical” program, triumphing in his debate with the personified virtues and thus making his lady, and not himself, the ultimate object of moral critique. More important is the use of *reprehensión* to describe the *Sátira*’s central project. *Reprehensión* is not just a moral practice, but a rhetorical one. Or rather, rhetoric is itself part of moral philosophy: in his *Cinco libros de Séneca*, Alonso de Cartagena writes that “la rhetorica se trabaia en loar lo honesto & reprehender lo torpe, segund que por los libros della asi de aristotiles com(m)o de tulio paresçe” (cited in Kohut, “Der Beitrag” 194 n. 37) “rhetoric is exercised in praising the honest and admonishing the misguided, as can be seen in the books of Aristotle and Cicero dedicated to it.” Furthermore, we have already seen, in chapter one, that Cartagena considered Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* the final



part of a moral trilogy comprising the *Ethics* and *Politics* as well (*Rhetórica* 30).<sup>15</sup> In the Constable's cultural milieu, then, rhetoric was understood as an instrument and constitutive element of moral philosophy. Cartagena's translation also includes a slightly different definition of *reprehensión*: "Reprehensión es aquella por la qual argumentando omne o destruye o aflaca o adelgaza la confirmación de los adversarios" (92) "*Reprehensión* is that through which the debater either destroys, weakens, or narrows the claim [*confirmación*] of his adversaries." This understanding of *reprehensión* as rebuttal reveals the extent to which the structure of debate characterizes the entire *Sátira* – it not only includes dialogic debates, but is polemical to its core, an extended moral refutation. But just what is condemned in the text, if, as I claim, it is not the Constable's passionate love?

The dedicatory letter also explains the presence of the glosses, comparing them to the 100 eyes of Argus, himself said to represent prudence (12). As eyes take in light and guide the body, the glosses will guide the reader, clarifying the text's obscure points. However, as Brownlee points out, Argus – who failed to protect Io when Hermes lulled all of his 100 eyes to sleep – is an astoundingly bad choice as prudence's representative (478). For Brownlee, this inapt allusion is part of the text's subversive program. But Argus's death at the hands of Hermes is not the end of the myth, nor of the Constable's retelling thereof: "porque en la narración precedente dize la piadosa Juno, *de compasion movida*, la cabeça de Argos muerto trasmutar en la hermosa cola de pavon, la qual muchos ojos grandes e pequeños posee" (13; emphasis added) "because as the foregoing narrative relates, the pious Juno, *moved by compassion*, transformed the dead Argus's head into the peacock's beautiful tail, which has many eyes, large and small." Thus, compassion itself is placed at the mythic origin of the glosses, and it is also, therefore, placed in an

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<sup>15</sup> Readers should recall that the translation of Cicero's *De Inventione* where this claim appears was undertaken at the request of the Constable's uncle Duarte.

epistemologically primary position, an originary element of the enlightenment (and adornment) the glosses provide. If Argus's eyes are a figure for perspectival instability, the multiple perspectives they represent are nonetheless rooted in Juno's compassionate gesture. The Constable offers compassion, not prudence's failure, as the hermeneutic key to the *Sátira*. And it is the moral and epistemological privileging of dispassionate prudence – along with discretion and reason – that is the target of the constable's *reprehensión*.

The next, and more difficult, question is to whom the *confirmación* of prudence, discretion, and reason should be attributed. There was, of course, a long tradition of poetic debates between the will (representing the passions) and reason; one example, in which the will emerges as the eventual victor, can be found in the next (chronological) work of sentimental fiction, the *Triste deleytación* (3-18).<sup>16</sup> One of the chief features of the *TD*'s debate is Reason's wariness of the Will's rhetorical ability. Thus, Reason says of the Will, “[V]uestras fengidas razones con alguna color de verdat reçitadas no dan a mí causa de alguna neçesidat uviese de dar fe en ellas” (4) “Your feigning arguments, recited with a certain color of truth, give me no necessary reason to believe them.” “Color” here recalls the rhetorical “colors” or techniques found in medieval rhetorics.<sup>17</sup> Rhetoric is thus aligned with the passions against the truth (as it had been in Plato's dialogues). Cartagena, again in the introduction to the *Rhetórica*, also draws attention to the link between rhetoric and affect – although without condemning the latter as false – when he writes that the “princes of eloquence” did not just write composition guides, “mas dieron sus generales doctrinas para argüir e responder, para culpar e defender e para mover los coraçones de los oyentes a saña o a misericordia o a las otras pasiones que en la voluntad humana cahen” (33; emphasis added) “rather, they gave general doctrines for arguing and

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<sup>16</sup> For a survey of these debates in the Castilian *cancionero* tradition, see Green 83-91.

<sup>17</sup> For the *colores grammatici* and *colores rhetoricae*, see Murphy 20 n. 38 and 189-90.

responding, accusing and defending, *and for moving the audience's hearts to fury or mercy or the other passions of the human will.*" This last rhetorical operation is, of course, the subject of the second book of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, and thus is also a moral operation. And in Iberia's fifteenth-century discussion of moral philosophy, all three operations – debate ("argüir e responder"), judgment ("culpar e defender"), and affect – come together in the single concept of discretion.

### **Discreción**

As an essential element of judgment, discretion was a key topic of princely education. For example, according to the *Tratado de la comunidad* the king who "non ha discreción" is incapable of judging (94). But in the fifteenth century there was no real distinction between discretion (understood as discriminating prudence) as a public and private virtue:

Aristotle differentiates between prudence as the power of discrimination, and the virtues as the forces necessary to act honorably. However, this is not reflected in the medieval system of virtues: in the Middle Ages prudence is in fact one of the virtues. This accounts for the reticence to describe politics as a domain of the practical world as opposed to a system of moral values. Medieval authors deal only with the moral system, which accounts for every human action ... The king's role is seen only from the perspective of his function as ruler, and the moral system only from the perspective of free will, vice, and responsibility. There is no distinction between the ethical character and the social condition of the king or the duties that concern him. (Rohland de Langbehn, "Power and Justice" 202)

In fact, prudence's role in medieval moral theory can be usefully analogized to the king's role in feudalism: just as the king was the most powerful, but not the only, lord, prudence is preeminent among the virtues, both of them and prior to them. As Santillana writes in his *Proverbios o Centiloquio* (written at the request of Juan II for the instruction of the future Enrique IV):

[Ç]iertamente bien meresçe  
Preminençia  
quien de doctrina e *prudencia*  
se guarnesçe.  
El comienço de salud  
es el saber  
*destinguir* e conosçer  
quál es virtud. (*Poesías completas* 383, l. 117-124; emphasis added)

He certainly deserves preeminence who furnishes himself with doctrine and prudence.  
The foundation of health is knowing how to *distinguish* and recognize what is virtuous.

The ability to resolve internal moral dilemmas is perfectly analogous to the ability to judge difficult cases – the latter an ability Santillana considers essential for winning the affection of one’s subjects (Rohland de Langbehn, “Power and Justice” 210). Furthermore, prudence is superior to eloquence: “Si fueres gran eloquente, / bien será; / pero más te converná / ser prudente, / que el prudente es obediente / toda vía / a moral filosofía / e sirviente” (383-4, l. 137-44) “It is good to be very eloquent, but better to be prudent, for the prudent are always obedient servants to moral philosophy.” There is a strangely unresolved tension here between eloquence and moral philosophy encapsulated in the words “toda vía.” On the one hand, they seem to imply, through their homonymity with “todavía,” that the eloquent are *no longer* morally obedient. On the other, if it is taken to mean “in all ways,” it points to the moral neutrality of eloquence, showing prudence to be the fundamental activator of eloquence’s moral possibilities.

Already in Cartagena’s *Rhetórica*, eloquence is posited as a morally neutral source of social cohesion. In a speculative passage on the origins of civilization, Cicero argues that a great, eloquent man must have arisen from the savage masses to persuade them to organize themselves. This man met first with resistance, but soon was able to persuade the others: “E luego a comienço reclamavan con la sobervia que tenían, e después por la razón e por la eloquencia oían más voluntariosamente e de fieros e crueles que eran, tornó-los mansos e paçíficos” (36) “And in

the beginning they complained out of their arrogance, and after, through reason and eloquence, they listened more willingly, and he made them, cruel beasts that they were, meek and peaceful.” The key here is not the meek state to which the audience was reduced, but the fact that they were persuaded to listen willingly. The sentence reenacts in miniature the conflict between reason and the will, and eloquence’s target is shown to be the passions. But Cicero is also speculating about a supposed neglect of rhetoric in ancient times, and he posits that it came into disrepute because of some eloquent but bad-intentioned men who brought “muy grandes destruimientos e dapños” to the cities they came to rule through their eloquence (38). Eloquence is therefore placed at the origin of both political community and bad governance; it is no wonder that medieval authors sought to avoid destructive eloquence by advocating prior discretion.

In this way, the private virtue of discretion becomes the key to both virtuous eloquence and good governance. The king protects and foments communal morality through a two-fold exercise of discretion that, again, blurs the public/private distinction. The explicitly public element of the king’s moral leadership is the administration of justice, but the king whose superior discretion leads to virtuous private behavior also serves his subjects as an exemplar of morality. For Santillana, these two roles (judge and exemplar) are inextricably linked: “pues devémonos forçar / a bien fazer, / si queremos reprehender / o castigar” (388, l. 213-216) “we should exert ourselves doing good if we want to admonish or punish.” Note, too, that the concept of *reprehensión* has made its return here, corresponding to the exemplary role of kingly virtue. The *Proverbios* are an important precursor to the *Sátira*, since in them Santillana anticipates the Constable’s self-glossing. But even erudition should serve the goal of *reprehensión*: “non cobdiçies ser letrado / por loor, / mas sçiente *reprehensor* / de pecado” (382, l. 101-104; emphasis added) “do not desire to be a *letrado* for praise, but a knowing *reprehensor* of sin.”

Discretion, knowledge, and eloquence (in that order) enable the king to watch over public morality.

In the *Sátira*, the Constable seems also to be exercising his erudition and eloquence in the service of *reprehensión*. It should alarm us, then, that his narrator defeats personifications of his own Discretion and his lady's Prudence in debate, only to end up in a moment of supreme indecision (incapacity to judge), able neither to take his own life nor to endure patiently his ongoing suffering. If we take the narrator to be merely a negative example whose bad end is a lesson to others, then the claims about the *Sátira*'s adoption of lyric confession must surely be wrong: the narrator's emotions would be rhetorical instruments of the Constable's overarching moralism, and his eloquence in relating and defending them would simply lay bare rhetoric's moral vacuity. If this were the case, however, the narrator's full-throated condemnation of cruelty would also be fatally undermined. In effect, to ask readers simply to take the narrator's bad end at face value as a warning of love's risks is to leave unresolved the conflict between reason and will: reason's triumph is also cruelty's, and as the narrator himself says early on in a complaint against fortune, no two things are more opposed than cruelty and virtue: "Et quales son o a do se fallaran mayores contrarios que crueldat e virtud? Tu los ayuntaste en la mas perfecta señora que bive, tu fesiste que su virtud e beldat engañassen mi coraçon, que de libre fuesse cativo e subjecto, e que su crueldat amenguasse e destruyesse en mi juvenil edat muy apressuradamente la mi vida" (33) "And what are, or where can be found, greater opposites than cruelty and virtue? You joined them in the most perfect lady alive, you made her virtue and beauty trick my heart, which went from freedom to captivity and subjection, and you made her cruelty diminish and destroy, very quickly and at a young age, my life." In other words, to take the narrator as a negative example is to ignore the text's central tension. On the other hand, to

take the narrator at his word that compassion – the *galardón* he seeks from his virtuous but cruel beloved – is the solution is to reject the model of virtue as subjugation of the will (that is, the passions) to reason. And it is through discretion that this subjugation takes place. Thus, the Constable dramatizes in the *Sátira* two moral conflicts: alongside the traditional one between reason and the will is another between compassion and discretion. Now, the moral model that exalts reason and discretion – from which the Constable wishes to escape – is drawn directly from the writings of the Aviz court. We must therefore turn now to texts from this cultural context in order to better understand the Constable’s gesture of admonishment.

### ***Duarte’s Leal Conselheiro: Will, Experience, Example***

The Castilian tradition described above provides the form of the *Sátira*’s debate and certainly affected the Constable’s thinking; however, the Portuguese tradition best represented by the Constable’s uncle, Duarte I, in his *Leal Conselheiro* (*LC*; ca. 1436-38), and father, the Infante Pedro, in his *Livro da Virtuosa Bemfeitoria* (*VB*; finished ca. 1430), played a more direct role in providing the debate’s terms. In the *Sátira*, Prudence explains that the narrator’s lady has removed her carnal, spiritual, and tepid wills from herself, now following only her praiseworthy and virtuous will (97-8). In his gloss on “Voluntad carnal, spiritual e tibia,” the Constable explains that although for Aristotle the virtuous will is the only true will (the other three are “beastly appetites”), we can speak of four kinds of will “segund comun e vulgar locuçion, la qual no solo de muchos scientificos varones, mas aun de nuestro soberano Señor en la Sancta Escriptura algunas veses es aprovada” (98) “according to common and vulgar speech, which is confirmed not only by many knowledgeable men, but also several times by our sovereign Lord in

Holy Scripture.” Although it goes unmentioned here, the likeliest immediate source for this theory of four wills is Duarte’s *LC*, in which the concept is explored at length and given great moral weight. Duarte explains, in an opening letter to his wife, that the *LC* is a collection of various writings dedicated to “the good management (*regimento*) of our consciences and wills (*voontades*)” (7), an “ABC of loyalty” in which A refers to the “powers and passions” we all have, B to the good that follows from virtue and kindness, and C to the correction of “evils and sins” (9). The text contains a “brief section” on the understanding, “our most principal virtue” (8; “*nossa virtude mui principal*”), to which Duarte has attached a hodge-podge of other writings – mostly his own, such as three autobiographical chapters about his own struggle with melancholy, but also by others, such as chapter 59, “Sobre a prudencia, feito per o doutor Dieg’ Afonso.”<sup>18</sup>

Duarte presents his four-part theory of will, whose declared source is John Cassian’s *Conferences*, in the section on the understanding. He condemns carnal will (“*voontade carnal*”) because it leads to vicious desires and laziness. In a manner perhaps surprising to the modern reader, he also condemns spiritual will (“*voontade espiritual*”), because it “*quer seguir aquelas partes em que se mais inclinom as virtudes e faz, aos que se despõem a vida de religiom, requerer que jejüem, vigiem, leam e rezem quanto mais poderem, sem nehũa descliçom*” (21; emphasis added) “wishes to follow those parts [of the will] most inclined toward the virtues, and it makes those who enter orders wish to fast, stay awake, read, and pray as much as possible, *without discretion*.” Here, Duarte is following Cassian closely, since for the latter, discretion is “the begetter, guardian, and moderator of all virtues” (87).<sup>19</sup> The risk of spiritual will, then, is that it

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<sup>18</sup> In fact, the degree of unity or organization in the *LC* has been the subject of considerable scholarly debate. The traditional view has been that the text is a miscellany, following no unifying plan; recently, however, James A. Grabowska has argued that the text is a kind of sermon on loyalty, noting that its division of the theme into three (ABC) and its focus on personal anecdote are evidence of “sermonic influence” (44, 52).

<sup>19</sup> Cassian, in condemning the spiritual will, has in mind those monks tempted by demons into self-destructive acts of extreme asceticism. In his conference “On the Goal and End of the Monk,” he names God, demons, and ourselves as the three possible sources of thoughts [i.e., emotions] (I.xix.1). Discretion “holds the supreme and first place”



leads to *immoderate* fasting and praying. The constant conflict between these first two flawed wills leads to the third and most harmful will, tepid will (“voontade tibia”), which seeks to satisfy each of the first two without offending the other (21). All three of these wills are contrary to discretion in that he who obeys them will “vãir a morte, sandice, ou enfermidade, perdimento de toda sua fazenda, pois nom guarda descliçom no que ha de fazer” (22) “come to death, foolishness, sickness, or loss of all his possessions, for he does not exercise discretion in what he must do.” But tepid will is more dangerous than the others precisely because, in seeking “pleasant” moderation, it refuses to judge: “E a terceira por querer complazer a estas ambas e as de todo concordar, o que fazer nom pode por seer batalha que Nosso Senhor Deos nos ordenou por nosso proveito, faz seguir as virtudes tam friamente que jamais nunca trazerá aquel que per tal voontade se governar a nem ãu boom estado” (22) “And the third [will], because it wants to please the first two and maintain them in concord, which it cannot do because their battle was ordered by God for our benefit, makes one follow the virtues so coldly that it will never lead one governed by it to a good state.”

The “perfect and virtuous” fourth will (“voontade perfeita e virtuosa”) stands in stark contrast to the tepid will in that, in deferring to the understanding, it refuses to placate the carnal and spiritual wills:

E a quarta todo per o contrario, porque totalas cousas que se apresentam ao coraçom de cada ãa destas tres as oferece ao entender *que julgue* se som de fazer ou leixar ... assi esta quarta voontade totalas cousas faz ou leixa de fazer per exame de entender e razom ... E naquesto se desvaira esta quarta voontade muito da terceira, porque aquela nom consente em tal guisa contradizer as duas primeiras que algũu agravamento sentam, e

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(I.xxiii.1) among the virtues precisely because it allows us to surmise the source of a particular thought and act accordingly. It is important to keep in mind that the thoughts themselves, even those of demonic origin, are not sins and cannot be avoided altogether: “It is, indeed, impossible for the mind not to be troubled by thoughts, but accepting them or rejecting them is possible for everyone who makes an effort. It is true that their origin does not in every respect depend on us, but it is equally true that their refusal or acceptance does depend on us” (I.xvii.1). In later thinkers such as Duarte, discretion is conceived of not so much as a way to identify the source of thoughts (or emotions), but as a way to react appropriately to them.

aquesta de todo lho contradiz quando determina o entendimento e razom que é bem de o fazer assim. (22-3; emphasis added)

And the fourth [will] is the complete opposite, because everything the first three offer to the heart, the fourth offers to the understanding *so that it can judge* if it should be done or abandoned ... thus, this fourth will does or abandons everything according to the analysis of the understanding and reason ... And in this it differs greatly from the third, because the latter is not so willing to contradict the first two when they are aggrieved, and the former contradicts if the understanding and reason determine that something is good to do.

Duarte's system, then, reinforces the close relationship of discretion and judgment that has been noted in the Castilian context.<sup>20</sup> And although it seems to focus on individual virtue, its vocabulary of self-government – “que jamais nunca trazerá aquel que per tal voontade se governar a nem ãu boom estado” – suggests a broader application. The combined metaphors – probably already dead – of “boom estado” and “governar-se” indicate once again this period's constitutive analogy between the private and the public.

Duarte's enumeration of the specific errors caused by the tepid will in the next chapter further demonstrates the social aspect of his general theory of the will.<sup>21</sup> The chapter begins with a description of society's five estates: in addition to the familiar *oradores*, *defensores*, and *lavradores*, there are *oficiaes* (“conselheiros, juizes, regedores, veedores, scrivães e semelhantes”) and a fifth, unnamed category of artisans and professionals (26). Duarte warns that “o mal que vem desta tibia voontade é que *querem* seguir as partes doces do mester ou officio em que vivem, e leixar o amargoso sem o qual d'el bem nom podem usar” (28) “the evil that comes from this tepid will is that they want to follow the sweet parts of their vocation or office,

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<sup>20</sup> It also reinforces the close relationship between these two concepts and that of prudence, since “sobr'esta quarta voontade faz fundamento a real prudencia per que scolhemos o bem do mal” (24) “prudence, which distinguishes good from bad, is founded upon this fourth will.”

<sup>21</sup> The social relevance of the *LC* has been recognized by a number of critics in general terms. Thus, José Gama describes the text as a reflection of both “the dominant society and thought of the Portugal of the first half of the fifteenth century” and the forward-looking “motivating spirit” of the *Ínclita Geração* (50).

and avoid the bitter without which they cannot carry out their tasks well.” For example, the *defensores*, who as such receive numerous social and economic benefits, may be led by tepid will to try to avoid the dangerous responsibilities of their estate by, on the one hand, taking religious orders, or on the other, entering the mercantile economy (27). Thus, the private failings of the tepid will – in this case, a kind of greedy cowardice – are seen primarily as a threat to the existing idealized sociopolitical structure. At the same time, the limits of that idealization are starting to show, in that even the nuance Duarte adds to it (the two new estates) is inadequate to preserve the rigidity of its categories. And crucially, if we take into account the way Duarte differentiates tepid from perfect will, the refusal of the king’s subjects to adhere to his own structural idealization is presented as an unreasonable failure to exercise judgment.

In the subsequent chapters, Duarte describes a second four-fold taxonomy of the will, this one more in line with traditional philosophical psychology. In this system, which complements the other one, the first three wills correspond to the vegetative, sensitive, and rational souls, and the fourth is free will (32). None of these wills is inherently good or bad; rather, they are divided according to the behaviors they regulate and the level of creation to which they belong. That is, the vegetative will regulates activities, such as eating, drinking, and sleeping, that we share with trees; the sensitive regulates that which we share with the animals; and the rational will, “in which men participate with the angels,” regulates that which has to do with virtue, honor, discretion, and pleasure (32-4). Finally, the free will reigns “como senhor antre todas” (34) “as lord among them all,” and “no consentimento dela está o pecado e virtude” (35) “in its consent lie sin and virtue.” Despite this last statement, however, it is clear that vice and virtue are at stake throughout this taxonomy, and emotion is at its center: the sensitive will regulates the twelve

passions,<sup>22</sup> and “por quanto em esto se resolve a maior parte de todos nossos feitos, me parece bem consiirarmos sempre como nos governamos em estas paixões” (33) “because the majority of our actions are resolved in this, it seems good to me always to consider how we govern ourselves in our passions.” The fact that Duarte attributes to the passions “the majority of our actions” demonstrates their centrality to moral (that is, practical) philosophy. And, again, the free will’s judgment (in the form of “consent”) is the highest arbitrator, which is why the cardinal virtue that corresponds to the free will is justice (35; the understanding requires prudence, desire temperance, and irascibility strength).

As in the above case, psychological explanations throughout the *LC* are often subordinated to moral pedagogy. On the one hand, this element of Duarte’s psychology has been noted by António José Saraiva for its distance from social reality (235). On the other, the same critic has already recognized in the specific case of Duarte what has been claimed generally about the status of politics in fifteenth-century Iberia: “For Duarte, there is no specifically political sphere, different from the moral and religious spheres” (234). The taste for abstraction is not general throughout Duarte’s moral pedagogy, however. Or rather, at least in pedagogical terms, that taste is accompanied by a suspicion of imagination. Thus, although the moral example was a crucial genre of wisdom literature in Castile (and Duarte himself owned a copy of Don Juan Manuel’s *Conde Lucanor*<sup>23</sup>), Duarte announces in his introductory letter that the *LC* will not be a “livro d’estorias, em que o entendimento pouco trabalha por o entender ou se nembrar” (10) “book of stories, which the understanding hardly works to understand or remember.” Indeed, later in the *LC*, he associates storytelling, even in the context of “conselhos

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<sup>22</sup> The sensitive will is itself divided into two parts, desiring (“desejador” – what others call “concupiscible”) and irascible (“iracivel”). To the *desejador* belong, on the positive side, love, desire, and delight, and on the negative side (“enna parte do mal”), hate, abhorrence, and sadness. To the *iracivel* belong, on the positive side, meekness, hope, and daring, and on the negative side, anger, desperation, and fear (33).

<sup>23</sup> The entire inventory of Duarte’s library can be found in Nascimento 284-86.

proveitosos,” with the sin of idleness (106). The few examples there are in the *LC* are overwhelmingly personal; along with the above-mentioned chapters on Duarte’s bout of melancholy, there is a long chapter (349-61) about his father, João I (1357-1433), and a mention (56) of his cousin Henry V of England’s exemplary determination in the Battle of Agincourt (1415). In other words, experience is preferred to imagination, and in fact, Duarte claims that “experience and practice” (229) are crucial to the attainment of prudence, whereas emotion is an unreliable guide: “Sobre o que pertence aa virtude *da* prudencia, a mim parece que nom convem a pessoas que virtuosamente desejom viver creer-se per seus corações em qualquer estado, por as grandes mudanças de seus sentimentos” (205) “Regarding the virtue of prudence, it seems to me that those who wish to live virtuously should not follow their hearts in any state, because of the great changes in their feelings.” Duarte is remarkably interested in emotion, but shares the suspicion of it found throughout his period’s moral literature; his own moral teaching combines schematic explorations of emotion and vice and virtue with a strong emphasis on the related concepts of reason, judgment, discretion, and prudence. And among the methods of transmitting moral lessons on these concepts, Duarte emphasizes familial exemplarity.<sup>24</sup> In fact, he recounts his own bout of melancholy “por tal que minha speriencia a outros seja exempro” (73) “so that my experience can be an example to others.”

The dearth of narrative examples in the *LC* is truly striking and sets it apart from a great deal of its contemporary moral literature. From this perspective, the Constable’s didactic

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<sup>24</sup> One way in which Duarte’s emphasis on familiar exemplarity manifests itself in the *LC* is the repetitive presence of the verb “filhar.” According to José Pedro Machado’s *Dicionário etimológico da língua portuguesa*, the original meaning of *filhar* was to attract or adopt (as a child); it later came to mean “take account of” or “come over to” (“apossar-se”), and its final meaning was to rob or kidnap (1042). Viterbo’s *Elucidário* (1798) defines it as “Tomar, receber, conquistar” and notes that it is “do século XIII, XIV e XV” (271). Duarte uses the verb to describe his inclusion of passages from Cassian’s *Conferences* (21), the onset of certain emotions (“suidade propriamente é sentido que o coração filha por se achar partido da presença d’algũa pessoa” [98]), the adoption of virtues such as patience (33), and the conquest of cities (74). As such, the filial metaphor operates inwardly and outwardly, once again reflecting the implicit analogy between private and public governance.

adoption of the classical allusion as *exemplum* is important in considering the communitarian aspect of his moral thought. Charles Heusch has argued that in the absence of scholarly study of Aristotle's *Ethics* in Castile, an independent tradition formed in which "moral thought closes itself off in 'maxims' ... it shapes itself as a petrified code in which a certain wisdom constitutes itself as an authority ... The moral is an example that should be followed" (96). Duarte's familial or personal exemplarity lacks this appeal to authority in the sense that it is not axiomatic, depending rather on experience. If, as Giorgio Agamben argues in *The Coming Community*, the example is a "concept that escapes the antinomy of the universal and the particular" in that it embodies both (9-10), then the Constable's readoption of narrative exemplarity in his classical allusions places emphasis on the (supposedly) universal, in contrast to Duarte's embrace of the particular. The Constable's communal gesture (in the sense that it refers readers to a body of knowledge authorized by others) is certainly not what Agamben has in mind, since for the latter the example's communitarian possibilities depend on its eternal situation between the universal and the particular; however, his understanding of the example helps suss out the orientational distinctions between the didactic strategies of Duarte and his nephew.

### ***Communal Reciprocity as Participation in the Infante Pedro's Virtuosa Bemfeitoria***

Duarte's familial exemplar of discretion is Pedro, his brother and the Constable's father (LC 91). Pedro's historical reputation has fluctuated wildly over the centuries, and even during his life he was viewed as either a model of chivalry and selfless servant to the Portuguese nation

or a sinister slave to his own ambition.<sup>25</sup> In any case, he took his regency seriously enough in the early going to ask Vasco Fernández de Lucena to translate Pier Paolo Vergerio's pedagogical treatise *De ingenibus et liberalibus studiis* (*The Character and Studies Befitting a Free-Born Youth*; ca. 1402) into Portuguese (Gascón Vera 35); Gascón Vera suggests that this treatise would therefore have formed part of the Constable's education (35). Like Duarte, Vergerio stresses the pedagogical importance of moral exemplars: "Thus a young man inclined toward study who is aroused by the desire for virtue and true glory ought to select one man or a number of men who seem morally excellent to him, and whose life and character he will imitate to the extent that his age will allow" (13-5). And again, Vergerio's description of books as "a kind of second memory" (45-7) is recalled in Duarte's somewhat facetious affirmation that writing things down is the "mais certa maneira da arte memorativa" (20). But perhaps the most important element of Vergerio's pedagogy is his insistence that the education of young noblemen is crucial to the good governance of "our cities" (21). Whether or not the Constable read Vergerio's treatise, there is no doubt that many of the *Ínclita Geração's* cultural enterprises were public-minded; even Duarte's bout of melancholy was brought on by his excessive sense of duty in managing Portugal's domestic affairs, which had been delegated to him while his father attempted to conquer Ceuta (*LC* 73-4).

Pedro himself translated Cicero's *De officiis*, and his *Livro da Virtuosa Bemfeitoria*, dedicated to Duarte, is based on (it might be more accurate to say "inspired by") Seneca's *De beneficiis*.<sup>26</sup> Pedro's initial definition of *benefício* is largely psychological, emphasizing that a

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<sup>25</sup> Joaquim Costa's introduction to his edition of the *Livro da Virtuosa Bemfeitoria* (1946) is dedicated almost entirely to this historical controversy; Costa is an unabashed partisan of the Infante but recounts the charges against him, both during and after his life, quite thoroughly.

<sup>26</sup> For a recent discussion of the *VB's* date of composition, see Gomes 269-270. The text is actually a collaboration between Pedro and his confessor, Frei João Verba: Pedro began composing the *VB* alone in 1418, Verba expanded on Pedro's work sometime after that, and Pedro gave the text a final retouching toward 1430 (Urbano Afonso 106). As Francisco Elías de Tejada notes in comparing the *VB* and *De beneficiis*, "the shared theme gives rise to many

favor must be voluntary – in the strict sense of having “sua naçença en o querer da uoontade” (33) – and disinterested: “Beneffício *propriamente* he chamado, o quall homem da *nom* sguardando o proueyto de si meesmo, mas aquelle que de sy recebe sguardando seu proueyto o outorga” (39) “A man is properly said to do a favor when he does so without thinking of his own benefit, but only in that of the favor’s recipient.” Ultimately, these psychological considerations will be grouped under the heading of intention, since “*entençom* he aucto da uoontade, e o beneffício proçede della meesma” (43) “intention is an act of will, and favors proceed from it.” In its focus on the giver’s mental state, Pedro’s definition of a gift or favor closely follows that of Seneca:

What then is a favour? An act of benevolence bestowing joy and deriving joy from bestowing it, with an inclination and spontaneous readiness to do so. Thus what matters is not the deed or the gift but the mentality behind them: the kindness lies not in the deed or gift but in the mind itself of the person responsible for the deed or gift. (I.6.(1))

For Seneca, these psychological requirements mean that favors can only be carried out between individuals: “favours should not be showered on the crowd, and it is not right to cast anything about – least of all, your favours. Take away the element of judgment and they cease to be favours” (I.2.(1)).<sup>27</sup> It is here where Pedro departs radically from his source; favors are necessarily intersubjective – “Nem chamaremos piedoso a *quem* se perdoa, nem misericordioso ao que sente e ha compayxam dos seus padeçimentos” (41) “We will not call ‘pious’ one who pardons himself, nor ‘merciful’ one who feels compassion for his own suffering” – but furthermore, they are a crucial medium of communal adhesion, for which political leaders are responsible. Thus, just as doctors err in treating acute pains without curing the general malady,

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common perspectives and inevitable parallels; but, in general, [Pedro’s] argument follows independent paths, developing along its own lines” (8).

<sup>27</sup> In their introduction to *On Favours*, John M. Cooper and J.F. Procopé write: “*On Favours* is a work about acts of kindness by individuals to other individuals. Seneca is not concerned with the spectacular benefactions – the erection of lavish public buildings, the financing of festivals and so forth – by monarchs, magistrates, and local notables – to entire communities, important though these were in the ancient world” (186).



rulers err in addressing their own problems without purging those of the community (*comunydade*) (86).<sup>28</sup>

This generally communal outlook unfolds into an analysis of the feudal social structure as Pedro explores the exchange of favors between different estates.<sup>29</sup> According to Pedro, there are three links (“*lianças*”) that oblige people to help each other. The first is spiritual, based on divine love or charity (100). The second is natural; it is felt between those who “share the same nature,” and its strength is proportional to the degree of relation between two people (101). It is the third link, “political and moral,” that is most relevant to governance:

A iij *liança* he politica e moral. E faz *per* concordauel e rrazoado deseio de muytos, *pera* se manteerem bem em *aqueste* mundo fazendo uida comuñ. E em *aquesto* ha *desuayramento*, porque segundo q o senhor he mais uniuersal, tanto deue seer mais deseiado a seu proueyto. E esto se *entende* se o proueyto he tall q faça melhoria em a *comunydade*. (101)

The third link is political and moral. It is made through the concordant and reasoned desire of many, to live well in this world making a common life. And in this there is confusion, because the more universal the ruler, the more desirable his benefit. And this can be understood if the benefit is such that it improves the community.

In a community well governed through favors, reason cannot purge desire (Pedro has already cited approvingly Augustine’s claim that “*nunca se pode fazer obra rrazoauel, se a uoontade nom tem em ella sua tençom*” [43]); hence, a “reasoned desire” is called for. There is also a fundamental but tenuous reciprocity to this *liança*: the leader’s greater cosmological weight (“*mais uniuersal*”) means that his profit is most to be sought, and, by implication, most likely to

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<sup>28</sup> Later in the text, Pedro insists on this point: “E consyrando nos q o bem comuñ he melhor q o *perssoal* principalmente *acorreremos a elle*” (99) “And considering that the common good is better than the personal, we will attend to the former principally.”

<sup>29</sup> For Tejada, Pedro’s concrete social analysis is the source of the political in the text: “The political manifests itself in the conception of the theory of political community as the exchange of external benefits, as the weaving-together of men appreciative of concrete and palpable favors” (17).

benefit the entire community – although the final subjunctive construction makes it clear that this process is not automatic.

If the benefits of this *liança* are reciprocal, so are its obligations: “O príncipe e a comunydade teem antre sy special e stremada liança, *per* cuio aazo som theudos de acorrerem aas neçessidades commuunes. E cada hũa perssoa q uiue em a comunydade, a esto meesmo he obrigada” (107) “The prince and the community have between them a special and unparalleled link, through whose tie they are obliged to attend to common needs. And each person who lives in a community is obliged to this.” The mechanism that assures this sense of mutual obligation is *bemquerença* itself: “E porem deue a benquerença seer antre o príncipe e o poboo tam firme q ambos aiam ygual sentimento de hũa desauentura e tomem huũ mesmo prazer pollo bem q ouuerem” (108). “And therefore the good will between the prince and the people should be so strong that both suffer a misfortune equally and take the same pleasure in the good that comes to them.” Thus, the concept of *bemquerença* goes beyond “good will” or even “love” (which is how Duarte defines it [LC 167]) into empathetic – or compassionate – terrain.<sup>30</sup> The leader, “sentindo a door da comunydade auera compaixom dos menbros q o suportam” (135) “feeling the community’s pain, will have compassion for the members that support him,” and the subjects, “sentindo ... *per* afeição leal as neçessidades do príncipe, deseiam de comprir a sua uoontade” (138) “feeling ... through loyal affection the needs of the prince, will desire to do his will.”<sup>31</sup> Psychological unity – the compassion, affection, and shared intention, desire, or will between leader and subjects, all of which are based on *bemquerença* – is not the sign of a well-

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<sup>30</sup> Pedro, like the Castilian thinkers discussed in chapter one, goes so far as to say that two friends should have no fear in counseling each other, “pois homem strangeyro *nom* sta antre elles, mas cada huũ he tornado em outro, e ambos som feytos hũa perssoa” (117; emphasis added) “since there is no discrete man between them, but rather, each has become the other, and both have become one person.”

<sup>31</sup> In the *Sátira*, the constable focuses on compassion rather than affection as an element of communal cohesion, but as Josiah Blackmore has shown, *afeição* was a crucial term for fifteenth-century Portuguese thinkers. Blackmore notes several occurrences of *afeição* connoting goodwill in the *VB* (16), and points out that it is explicitly opposed to reason in Duarte’s *LC*, where it furthermore “clouds the mind that must act judiciously” (17).

governed kingdom, but the cause. Public *bemfeitoria* – the active outcome of the *bemquerença* at the heart of the third, political and moral *liança* – is the participatory manifestation of this unity.<sup>32</sup>

The characteristic that governs *bemfeitoria* is not compassion, however – and this is where the *Sátira* will ultimately differ from the *VB* – but *discreçom*: “todos deuemos seer principalmente fazedores das benffeyturias. E porquanto pera esto auemos mister aiudoyro, he neçessayro de seer nossa guyador a uirtuosa discreçom” (95) “we should all be granters of favors above all. And to the extent that we need help in this, it is necessary that our guide be our virtuous discretion.” Discretion is yet another articulation between the interior and exterior, since, as Pedro, echoing Duarte, explains, it contributes to *bemfeitoria* principally by allowing us to understand our place in society: “E a discreçom ... diz a cada huñ que direytamente quiser dar benefiçios q primeyro conheça sy meesmo sguardando queiando he o seu stado” (96) “And discretion ... tells each person who wants to do favors right away that he must first know himself, considering which is his estate.” Furthermore, discretion “beautifies” (“afremosenta”) a favor by allowing its author to recognize its potential benefit (170). For Pedro, then, the conflict between reason and the passions is understated, as discretion is imagined as a guide that allows the unified, reasoned desires of a given society to be carried out.<sup>33</sup> The Infante differs in this way from his brother, whose keen interest in emotion runs up against a more traditional faith in reason and prudence. Of the two brothers, Pedro is more often accused of archaism, and it is true

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<sup>32</sup> As we have seen, a less articulated form of this same psychological unity is at the heart of the Castilian *Tratado de la comunidad*, whose definition of “community” reproduces not only the connection between shared will and good governance, but also, in referring to “*personas mayors e medianas e menores*” (87), Pedro’s concern for social hierarchy.

<sup>33</sup> It cannot be said that this conflict is completely absent; early in the *VB*, Pedro makes the familiar assertion of the understanding’s superiority among our faculties: “Segundo q ueemos q o entender porque he fundado em natureza *spiritual* he mais *perffeyto* q o sentir, o *quall* em a corporall sensualidade tem seu *naçimento*” (67-8) “We see that the understanding, because it is grounded in our spiritual nature, is more perfect than perception, which is born of bodily sensation.”

that his Scholastic style seems backward-looking next to Duarte's confessional idiosyncrasy.<sup>34</sup> However, in political terms, the *VB* probably anticipates future events better than the *LC*, since within its feudal structure one can perceive a defense of the prince's political standing in line with other European trends toward the centralization of royal power (Gomes 267).<sup>35</sup> And while the Constable "adopts" relatively intact Duarte's theory of will in his glosses, it is the close relationship of discretion, interior and exterior governance, and compassion that he explores most thoroughly in the *Sátira*.

### ***Discretion's Plea***

In the *Sátira*'s introductory letter, the Constable twice emphasizes his work's novelty: he translated it into Castilian because "todas las cosas nuevas aplazen," and his self-glossing is also a novel feature (9). He asserts self-glossing's novelty by contrasting it with ancient practice: "Ffize glosas al testo, aunque no sea acostumbrado por los antiguos auctores glosar sus obras" (9) "I made glosses for the text, although it was not usual for ancient authorities to gloss their works." The daring of these novel practices should not be confused with arrogance, however; the Constable has already clarified that he wrote in Castilian "mas costreñido de la neçessidat que de la voluntad" (9; this is a reference to his exile) "more out of necessity than desire," and he added

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<sup>34</sup> Already in 1919, Manuel Paulo Merêa wrote that Pedro could only be considered a precursor of the Renaissance in the general way in which the entire Middle Ages were its precursor (21), and Joaquim de Carvalho argued in 1949 that, in contrast to the practices of the Italian Humanists, the classical references in the writings of the *Íncrita Geração* are merely made to reinforce ideas already dominant at their court (57). More recently, Armando Luís de Carvalho Homem and Isabel Beceiro Pita contrast Duarte, as a "modernizing exponent of fifteenth-century Portuguese political thought," with Pedro and the "archaizing sense of the theory of the feudal favor palpable in the *VB*" (943 and 943 n. 66). Gascón Vera describes *bemquerença* itself as a "feudal principle" (41).

<sup>35</sup> Along these lines, but from a purely biographical perspective, it should also be noted that in his struggles against other feudal lords during his regency, Pedro almost always had the support of the people (Costa XI).

glosses out of the fear that his text would raise more questions than it answered (9-10).<sup>36</sup> This letter's content may, in broad outline, contain all of the elements of medieval *accessi ad auctores* (Serés, "Ficción sentimental" 48), but its discussion of novelty and fortune also introduces the theme of the overcome will. The Constable's will was not, however, overcome by his reason or discretion; rather, circumstances led to his adoption of Castilian, which is only retrospectively justified as an aesthetic choice. The glosses follow the opposite path: the Constable's classical allusions were first the product of his increasing "gozo" in writing about the "worthwhile lives of Antiquity" that he discovered (10) – only later did he realize that they would require explanation. In narrating the production of his novel work of moral instruction, then, the Constable emphasizes aesthetic choices based on circumstance and pleasure, thus undermining any universalist or encyclopedic pretensions that might have been imputed to him. At the same time, the ultimate motive of his writing is his romantic suffering, which led him to try to "declarar mi apasionada vida" (4). Even the didactic goal of *reprehensión* is retrofitted into these emotional circumstances, so that the *Sátira* is ultimately presented as a work in which the moralistic impulse occasioned by emotional suffering is successively hijacked by historical circumstance, the pure pleasure of study, and, finally, the alternative moral response of compassion, exemplified by Juno's transformation of the eyes of her imprudent, murdered sentinel into those of the peacock's tail.

The rhetorical nature of the *Sátira*'s opening (both its letter and introductory chapter) is not exhausted by its reference to *reprehensión* or its structural similarity to the *accessi ad auctores*. The first chapter opens in the prison of love, where the narrator is a captive; he gives the day, month, and hour in which the narrative begins, and also tells readers of his young age

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<sup>36</sup> The constable makes a similar claim about the necessity of the work as a whole in his gloss on "Luçio Sila": "[L]o fago mas como cosa neçessaria que voluntaria" (30).

(15-20). In his gloss on “En el comienzo de la tercera edad de mis años,” he explains that the inclusion of this information is evidence of the “author’s” (“auctor”) emotional state, since those who are suffering mark time more closely (23). Furthermore, he specifies his age in order to provoke the compassion of “aquella persona a quien se quexava” (“the person to whom he was complaining”), since he was too young for such suffering (23). In this way, novelty, youth, and suffering are linked, given that “toda nueva dolor al humano corazón mas llaga e fiera que otra alguna” (23) “each new pain wounds the human heart more fiercely than any other”; this is the mirror-image of the introductory letter’s association of novelty with pleasure. The formulation “aquella persona a quien se quexava,” which superficially should refer to the author’s beloved, is in fact ambiguous: the narrator has not yet begun to speak (or complain), and in the very sentence in which he reveals his age, he explains that even now he lacks the daring to speak of or write about “tan desiguales penas e desmesuradas crueltas” (20-3) “such unparalleled pains and immeasurable cruelties.” In other words, in the sentimental narrative the narrator tells us that to this day he lacks the daring to complain, whereas in the gloss we are introduced to an *auctor* who is already complaining in an effort to provoke compassion. The *auctor* and narrator are identified with one another, which implies that the sentimental narrative is itself the complaint, but that its audience (the narrator’s beloved) is therefore different from that of the glosses (the reader). In this way, readers can imagine themselves reading the sentimental narrative alongside the beloved, but with the exegetical advantage of the glosses, which foster the compassion the beloved lacks. And it is no surprise that this appeal to the audience’s compassion is phrased in terms of the narrator’s novel and unique suffering. Alonso de Cartagena’s translation of *De inventione* ends with a discussion of the *conquestión* or *quexamiento*, “aquella fabla que procura mover a los oyentes a misericordia e compasión: e en esta conquestión e quexamiento conviene

primeramente fazer el corazón del oyente misericordioso, porque más ligeramente se mueva a la misericordia que le piden” (109-10) “that speech that seeks to move the audience to mercy and compassion: and in this *conquestión* and complaint one should first make the listener’s heart merciful, so that it can be more easily moved to mercy asked of it.” The gloss on the narrator’s age, which closely associates complaint (“se quexava”) and compassion, certainly carries out this rhetorical operation *primeramente*, and it does so through one of Cicero’s recommended methods: “declarar los tiempos e dezir por quien e en quales males fueron e son e serán” (*Rethórica* 110) “declare the times and explain who is responsible and in which bad circumstances [the speaker] finds and will find himself.” The gloss makes this operation explicit but specifies a misleading target, so that the rhetorical seeking of compassion from the beloved becomes itself a technique for arousing the compassion of the reader. This rhetorical doubling will recur throughout the *Sátira*.

As the first chapter comes to a close, the narrator imagines how cruelty might respond to his complaint (by arguing that the examples of historical suffering he has adduced far outstrip his own), and then condemns fortune for having united cruelty and virtue, which should be the greatest opposites, in his beloved (33). The figures of cruelty and fortune are not allegorized, however; this dialogue is consciously imagined, taking place in the realm of *pensamiento*, and the narrator’s interlocutors never speak directly for themselves. After condemning the conflation of cruelty and virtue in his beloved, the narrator experiences a crucial mental break: “Assy estando, a oras fablava, a oras callava ... Ya mis sentidos enmortesçidos, ya mi seso, ya mi entendimiento, cansados de tan continuos males, me reprehender mi libre voluntad en contra de quantos biven, desseava mi mal e mi final perdimiento” (33-4) “In this state, I sometimes spoke, sometimes kept silent ... My senses had swooned, my brain, my understanding, were tired of

such continuous suffering, my free will admonished me that against all the living, I desired my own ill and my final loss.” The allegorical debates that follow this break are thus set beyond the reach of the understanding, after its failure to cope with romantic cruelty, and the narrator’s Discretion steps in as reason’s last champion. The battle has probably already been lost, however, since it takes place on definitively affective terrain, and Discretion’s very personification shows that the ground has shifted. Furthermore, Discretion is represented as having been blindfolded for the last five years (34) – when compassion is elsewhere in the *Sátira* associated with sight. Finally, Discretion speaks “mas por faser lo que devia que por contrastar mi infinito querer” (34) “more to do what it should than to contradict my infinite desire” and is thus associated, as it is in Duarte and Pedro, with duty, which turns out to be an inadequate moral motive – as Discretion’s failure in the ensuing debate makes clear.

Discretion quickly identifies the will – particularly the free will – as the central variable in the narrator’s moral equation: “O çiego ombre, conosçe lo que fases! Piensa lo que faras! Que te puedo dezir, salvo el mas malaventurado de los nascidos, *pues tu pena quieres, e tu pena siguiendo desseas?*” (35; emphasis added) “O blind man, recognize what you are doing! Think about what you are going to do! What can I call you but the most unfortunate of the living, since you want your pain, and pursue it in your desire?” Predictably, then, Discretion tries to draw the debate into the familiar moral territory of action (“Piensa lo que faras”) and decision; if the narrator’s actions can be ascribed to his free will, he becomes the only responsible moral actor. Discretion’s short speech ends with a plea for the narrator to free himself from the prison of love by fighting against his will (*voluntad*, not *libre albedrío*): “O ombre cativo, desencarçela tu libertad de la tenebrosa e muy amarga carçel! Pelea, pelea con tu voluntad e, otra ves te digo, pelea, e non con otro, synon contigo mesmo, e non seas contento nin seas deseoso de tantas



penas sufrir, syn aver piedat de ty e de la triste vida tuya” (41) “O captive man, release your freedom from its dark and most bitter prison! Struggle, struggle against your will and, I say again, struggle, and not with another, but with yourself, and do not be content to suffer such pain and even desire it, without pity for yourself and your sad life.” This final plea is emblematic of the moral tradition that stresses individual virtue. Morality, understood as the purging of the passions (this, after all, is what it would mean to free oneself from the prison of love), is reduced to a battle between will and free will; the inwardness of this battle is stressed by the emphatically repetitive call to have pity on himself and on his sad life.<sup>37</sup> The Constable’s goal in the rest of the *Sátira* will be to reassert intersubjective compassion (through the figure of the beloved who takes pity on her servant) as a vital factor in moral calculation, in essence highlighting the mortal affective stakes of mutual obligation.

### ***The Courtly Lover and the Frozen Rider***

The Infante Pedro’s rendering of this mutual obligation in the *VB* does not go far enough in seeking a moral role for the passions; the Constable finds in the tradition of *cancionero* poetry a different evaluation of their moral weight. Although the *Sátira*’s debt to the *cancionero* tradition has been suggested, the exact nature of this debt – beyond a borrowed affective palette – has not been explored.<sup>38</sup> The general attitude toward emotion found in this poetry is in fact not terribly far from the skepticism of moral philosophy; Rafael Lapesa lists among the most typical elements of the courtly tradition “the ponderous description of suffering, pleasure in pain,

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<sup>37</sup> It is useful to recall here Pedro’s pronouncement that those who have compassion for their own suffering are not to be called *piedoso* (41).

<sup>38</sup> Gerli has noted that the *Sátira* “has numerous elements in common” with this lyric tradition, and it was he (to the best of my knowledge) who first made the explicit link between the constable’s pursuit of compassion and the lyrical concept of the *galardón* (“Revaluation” 112-13).

struggle between reason and desire, fear of death, [and] confusion before the beloved” (148).<sup>39</sup>

As this list makes clear, *cancionero* poets tended to view the passions not just as morally risky, but as mortally dangerous. The will is furthermore almost always victorious in its debates with reason; in this strong appraisal of desire’s power, these poets were the pessimistic counterpart to the Stoic moralists. At the same time, *cancionero* poetry, in its very pessimism and also in its formal attributes, makes manifest a communal writing practice and a tendency toward collective sentiment that are highly relevant for both the analysis of the *Sátira* and modern debates about the communitarian possibilities of writing itself.

Courtly poetry bears out Michel Maffesoli’s description of style’s inherent dialogism (see chapter one) in generic terms, in its trading of insult poems and, most prominently, in its poetic debates, which could involve six or seven poets; these are forms of poetic creation that presuppose not just an audience, but the intervention of foreign poetic wills.<sup>40</sup> This phenomenon can be perceived outside of literal exchanges of poetry between more than one poet, however. Maffesoli’s identification of collective sentiment as an important stimulus of artistic expression is also made explicit in the stylized suffering of, for example, Lope de Estúñiga:

Llorad, mis llantos, llorad,  
llorad la pasión de mí,  
llorad la mi libertad  
que por amores perdí;  
llorad el tiempo pasado  
pasado fyn galardón,  
llorad la triste pasión  
de mí, muerto et non finado (*Cancionero de Estúñiga* 6.1-8).

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<sup>39</sup> Lapesa also notes as particularly Castilian the tendency to avoid “the physical portrayal of the lady, concentrating on the psychological interiority of the lover” (150). Regarding the enjoyment of suffering, this is the very accusation leveled at the narrator by his Discretion (see above); the second motto adopted by the Constable was “Paine pour joie” (Gascón Vera 44).

<sup>40</sup> Joaquín Gimeno Casalduero discusses one such debate, found in the *Cancionero de Baena*, whose topic is free will and whose contributors included the chancellor of Castile, a Jeronymite monk, a Muslim physician, and one of the king’s *converso* scribes (1). Debate poetry is not, of course, exclusive to the Iberian *cancioneros*, but they are the Constable’s likeliest direct model.

Bewail, my sobs, bewail, bewail my passion, bewail my freedom lost for loving; bewail the time that has passed, passed without reward, bewail my sad passion, I, dead but not deceased.

According to the modern punctuation, the first line is an apostrophic command addressed to the poet's own sobs, and this is certainly one intended reading. However, another plausible reading, "Llorad mis llantos, llorad," is consistent with the structure of the stanza's remaining lines, in which each noun is the direct, rather than apostrophic, object of the command, and reveals how readers of the poem would feel themselves directly addressed by its relentless imperatives. In fact, the poem's subjective play – it moves from further second-person plural commands to third-person singular ones, and thence to first-person declarations, to arrive finally at third-person plural commands – increases this ambiguity of address. The tropes of lost liberty, service without reward, and living death are part of a collective system of creation in which repetition and recognition sharpen, rather than blunting, readers' affective responses. In other words, the courtly aesthetic invoked here is one of empathy, in which the immediate collective recognition of an emotion signifies not its banality but its depth.

*Cancionero* poetry is, of course, thematically and formally diverse, and it changed constantly throughout its century of flourishing in Castilian culture. However, its concern with collective sentiment was present from its inception. As the following lyric complaint against love itself by Macías – who would become the prototypical courtly lover for later Castilian literature – shows, questions of sentiment were intimately, if metaphorically, connected to social structure and judgment.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Macías's example is deployed by Discretion as a warning to the narrator; the accompanying gloss begins, "Natural fue de Galisia, grande e virtuoso martir de Cupido" (39). The Galician poet is also revealed to be one of love's tortured souls toward the end of Santillana's *Infierno de los enamorados*, a work often cited as a precursor to sentimental fiction in general and the *Sátira* in particular. He is a transitional figure in the relocation of the Iberian center of courtly poetry from Galicia and Portugal to Castile (and thus, in linguistic terms, from Galician-Portuguese

Rey eres sobre los rreyes  
 coronado enperador,  
 do te plase van tus leyes,  
 todos an de ty pauor;  
 e pues eres tal sseñor  
 non fases comunalesa,  
 sy entyendes que es proesa  
 non soy ende judgador (*Cancionero de Baena* 308.13-20).

You are king of kings, emperor crowned, your laws go where you wish, all fear you; and since you are such a lord, your behavior is uncommon; whether you understand it to be a great deed, I cannot be the judge.

Macías's hyperbolic estimation of love's temporal power (*caritas* hardly receives the same treatment in contemporary moral treatises) leads him to criticize the inequality with which that power is wielded. Love's injustice produces public fear, and the poet's condemnation thereof is carried out through an ironic withholding of judgment ("non soy ende judgador") that stands in stark contrast to love's poor – or malicious – judgment. The meaning of "comunalesa" here is ambiguous but key. Fundamentally, the poet is expressing an expectation of equal treatment from love as king, but this does not exhaust his complaint's subtleties. Viterbo's *Elucidário* defines "comunal" as "[c]omum, ordinário," such that love's injustice takes on a coloring of abnormality. Meanwhile, "comunalesa" (noted as an antiquated term) is defined in the *Diccionario de autoridades* as "[c]omunicación, trato y comercio." Thus, love is also criticized as distant and opaque – in contrast to the fear and sadness felt communally by love's subjects.

Macías's poem ends with another ironic complaint, this time about the supposed reward for service to love: "quien te sirue en gentylesa / por galardon le das morte" (308.35-6) "you give to those who serve you courteously death as a reward." This raises the question of what a truly

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to Castilian); this transition was more or less complete by the second half of the fourteenth century (Deyermond, "Baena, Santillana, Resende" 208). On the other hand, the Aviz court had its own taste for troubadour poetry (Gascón Vera 43), and from this point of view, the the *Sátira*'s courtly elements cannot be said to show a purely Castilian influence.

appropriate *galardón* would be. Pity, rather than amorous acquiescence, was the traditional reward – but admitting to seek more than mere pity was itself a courtly trope (Green 60-4). In a similar vein, while debates between reason and will were a courtly commonplace, these lyric debates actually included a wide variety of allegorical participants (for example, *sensualidad* or *amor* could replace *voluntad*). The Constable’s dogged insistence on compassion or pity for his *galardón* and his choices of Discretion and Prudence as his principal opponents cannot therefore be dismissed as “mere” tropes or borrowings. Furthermore, the Constable often adapts courtly tropes to his own purposes. For example, when Discretion finishes admonishing the narrator for voluntarily abandoning his free will, his wordless response – “Gemir, sospirar e plañir le di por respuesta ... Por ende, dexe el fablar, e recogime al pensoso silencio” (43) “Moaning, sighing, and wailing I gave him in reply ... Finally, I stopped speaking, and retired into pensive silence” – recalls the courtly poet’s embarrassed silence before his lady, but attributes that silence to a moral system rather than to chastity, humility, or even shame. Having left behind the realm of the understanding and admitted the defeat of his Discretion, the narrator compares himself to those who, “pasando los *Alpes*, el terrible frio de la nieve e agudo viento dan fin a sus dolorosas vidas; et, assy pegados en las sillas, elados del frior, siguen su viaje, fasta que de aquellas, non con querer o desquerer suyo, son apartados, e *dados a la fria tierra*” (44; emphasis in original) “while crossing the Alps, the cold snow and sharp wind bring their painful lives to an end; and, stuck to their seats, frozen solid, they continue their journey, until they are separated from their seats, neither willingly nor unwillingly, and fall to the cold ground.” This image of death in life – the frozen riders remain on their horses for a way before falling to the ground – again recalls a courtly trope, but here it emphasizes a lack of will that goes beyond captivity to death, thus foreshadowing the mortal dilemma of the *Sátira*’s closing scene.

## *Cruelty*

Before that closing scene, the narrator engages in a lengthy debate with Prudence – not his own now, but that of his beloved. When Prudence first appears (accompanied by the other six virtues), she is described in her gloss as “sovereign” among the non-theological virtues; charity is the highest theological virtue, but the present work “mas fabla de moral doctrina que de theologico documento, e a cosas mundanas se dirige et no a divinas” (51) “speaks more of moral doctrine than theology, and is dedicated to worldly, not divine, affairs.” In medieval Iberian moral theory, prudence has as its object the understanding, the “reasonable” part of the soul, and is therefore an intellectual virtue, whereas the other virtues are “moral” in that their object is the appetitive part of the soul. Prudence’s sovereignty consists in the fact that it acts upon both parts of the soul (“no solo tiene acto çerca de las intelectuales mas aun çerca de las morales”), determining on behalf of the appetitive part “quales son las cosas convenibles para proseguir, e quales para desechar” (51). As such, prudence’s psychological role bleeds into that of discretion, sorting out willful impulses to produce moral behavior. In contrast, the theological virtues cannot be achieved through will or understanding, but only through grace (53) – which is why they are mute in the *Sátira*.

Prudence, in her defense of the narrator’s beloved, claims that her mistress has achieved – effortlessly – the “heroic degree” of strength (82). In the accompanying gloss on “Eroyco grado,” the Constable explains that there are four degrees of any virtue: perseverance, constance, temperance, and the heroic degree (82-3). Affect is the central element of this scale: the perseverant fall into vice but climb back out; the constant “feel the passions,” but abstain from

sin “with pain and sadness”; the temperate take pleasure in resisting temptations but are still subject to them; and finally, the heroic “do not feel the passions” (83). These latter “son mas marmorinas estatuas inmutativas o dioses de la humana vida que mugeres o ombres” (84) “are more like immutable marble statues or gods of human life than women or men.” These statuesque heroes are perhaps a bitter echo of the frozen rider crossing the Alps, equally stiff but for the opposite reason.<sup>42</sup> Continuing along these lines, Prudence explains that her mistress rejects the Epicureans in favor of the Stoics, and the gloss on the Epicureans explains that virtues should be valued in themselves, not for the pleasure (“delectación”) we feel when acting on them (93). Finally, as mentioned above, Prudence says that the lady has rid herself of desires based in carnal, spiritual, and tepid will, and follows only her praiseworthy and virtuous will (98). The accompanying gloss hews closely to Duarte’s theory of will, adding that the heroic degree of virtue can only be achieved by those who follow their virtuous will (99). In essence, then, Prudence’s argument and the glosses it engenders combine to paint the narrator’s beloved as the embodiment of passionless virtue, the perfect realization of a dense field of emotionally ascetic moral systems. Totally free of affect’s pull – in Prudence’s words, “ni puede faser tanto alguna passion que dexe de estar en un compas tan perfecto que, farto en pensarlo, esto maravillada” (123) “no passion can do enough to shake her from her perfect measure, [and] having thought of it endlessly, I am amazed” – she is the opposite of the narrator, mortally subject to his will. Her perfect *compás*, Prudence argues, makes up for her lack of *compasión*. But this is just the view the narrator refuses to accept in the *Sátira*’s closing pages.

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<sup>42</sup> In an amusing sixteenth-century coda to this image of virtue, Juan Luis Vives would violently condemn the Stoics, and Cicero and Seneca in particular, for their views on pity, arguing that “[n]othing is more human than to sympathize with those who suffer,” and concluding, “But let us forget the Stoics, who through pedantic cavils tried without success to convert their human natures into stones” (46-7).

## Compasión

Toward the end of her defense, Prudence claims that her mistress would be found “syn yerro o reprehension” even if she were invisible (125) – but in the *Sátira*, the eyes examining her are those of compassion. This is why the narrator, whose brief response to his beloved’s Prudence stands in contrast to his silence before his own Discretion, accuses his beloved only of cruelty: “si esta mi sola e perpetua señora contra mi ... fue llena de crueldat, como en tal extremo o grado qual dexistes sera perfecta e virtuosa?” (135) “if this, my only and perpetual lady ... was filled with cruelty against me, how can she be as perfect and virtuous as you say?” It is Pity, not Prudence, who answers this attack, “porque esta culpa a ella solamente o mas prinçipalmente tañia” (136) “because this accusation touched only or principally on her.” She repeats the charge that the narrator chose to enter his current predicament freely, and she adds, crucially, that having done so, he is now an “indigno juez” (137) “unworthy judge.” The indictment of the narrator is now complete: having subjected himself to his own will, he can no longer carry out the morally central task of judging. His brief *reprehensión* – rebuttal and condemnation – of his beloved’s cruelty is empty because it is enunciated from a fatally compromised moral position.

It is precisely here, when his capacity to judge has apparently been completely undermined, that the narrator states his decisive reply – that he desires not his lady’s love, but her compassion:

mas, solamente, movida a clemencia, deseava que de mi mal se doliesse e que mi desigualado pesar sintiesse, pues non es alguna cosa mas conveniente ni que mas cara deva ser al gentil, alto e virtuoso coraçon que aver merçed, dolor e sentimiento de los tristes infortunados. De aver compassion e piadat de mi, mucho mas que de todos los mortales, *razon lo mandava, virtud lo consentia.* (141-2; emphasis added)



I desired only that she, moved to mercy, would grieve for me and feel my unparalleled suffering, for there is no more appropriate or dearer thing to the courteous, high, and virtuous heart than to feel pity, pain, and sadness toward the unfortunate. *Reason commanded, and virtued consented*, that she should have compassion and pity for me, more than any other mortal.

Compassion and pity are not depraved passions; rather, they are themselves both reasonable and virtuous. Furthermore, his beloved has not truly mastered her will:

E que otra cosa, salvo su no piadosa voluntad, esto causava? Como no sea dubda que, adoha e mora cruel voluntad, el serviçio buelve en deserviçio, el amor en desamor trastorna, porque tanto puede la voluntad llena de crueldat que çiega los ojos de la discreçion, judgando el bien por mal, la virtud por viçio, e la verdat por mentira o falsedat. (142)

And what other thing than her pitiless will caused this? There can be no doubt that, where there is a cruel will, service becomes disservice, love is twisted into indifference [*desamor*], because the will filled with cruelty is so powerful that it can blind discretion's eyes, taking [*judgando*] good for evil, virtue for vice, and truth for lies or falsehood.

By introducing the element of willful cruelty, which blinds discretion and turns moral judgment around, the narrator disrupts the (former) binary that opposed virtuous reason to vicious will. In essence, malice replaces temptation as the primary moral risk, and its antidote is not restraint but compassion; this is why cruelty, not the passions, is now repeatedly associated with blindness.

These arguments vanquish Prudence, Pity, and the lady's other virtues, who retreat before them, and the narrator argues that his victory was not rhetorical: "claramente conosco que, vençidas, de mi se partieron, no con eloquente e fermosa fabla, mas con verdat e justiçia que posseya, no con fraudulentas, sotiles o agudas questiones, mas con verdaderas" (153) "I saw them depart from me, clearly defeated not by eloquent or beautiful speech, but by truth and justice; not with fraudulent, sophistic, or sharp questions, but with true ones." In a final reversal, the narrator accuses the fates of having frozen his lady's will against him: "Por que teneys elada, o fados cruales ... la voluntad de aquella cuyo perpetuo esclavo so contra mi?" (153-4) "Why

have you frozen against me, o cruel fates . . . the will of her whose perpetual slave I am?" The narrator's will was frozen when his Discretion abandoned him, but it is the *cruelty* of the fates that freezes the will of his lady, already blinded by her own pitilessness. The narrator cannot make a decision; his beloved can make only one. It is from this perspective that the compounding indecision with which the *Sátira* comes to a close must be understood. The narrator's first indecision is whether or not to continue speaking at all:

O dessentido, no se que faga, sy fable o si calle! Mi fablar nadie no oye, mi callar no me trahe provecho, sy fablare, no avera reposo mi pena, sy me callare, no se apartara de mi. Mas fablare yo, por çierto, contra vos mi soberana e obedesçida señora; dexare el fablar contra tan muchas passiones e varias afflicçiones mias, enderesçarlohe a la señoria vuestra. (155)

O confusión, I do not know what to do, speak or be silent! No one hears my speech, silence does me no good; if I speak, my pain will find no rest, and if I stay silent, it will not leave me. But I will speak, certainly, against you, my sovereign and obeyed lady; I will stop speaking against my many and varied passions and afflictions, and my speech against your rule.

In the poem that follows, the narrator holds true to this promise; the culpability of his own emotions is rejected, and it is his beloved who is in moral peril:

Doledvos de mi passion,  
e de mi gran perdimiento,  
quered, vuestra perfecçion  
no queriendo mi tormento  
desyqual,  
mi firme querer leal,  
vuestro muy mas que devia;  
libradvos, ydola mia,  
de dolor pestilençial (159, l. 19-27).

Grieve for my passion and my great loss; desire, your perfection not desiring my unparalleled torment, my own loyal desire, more yours than it should be; free yourself, my idol, from pestilential pain.

In keeping with the numerous inversions of the *Sátira*'s precipitous conclusion, this stanza revisits a number of foregoing themes. First, "passion" here recuperates its connotation of suffering, rather than vice, so that it calls for compassion rather than condemnation.<sup>43</sup> The perfect will, furthermore, is desirous of loyal service, not indifferent or hostile toward it. In fact, it is the narrator's lady, not the narrator, who is a captive – to a painful fate. As such, the narrator's reference to his lady as his "idol" is a wry comment on her statuesque – and thus morally incomplete, inhuman – "perfection."

Having finished speaking, the narrator is met with a new, and final, dilemma:

E yo, sin ventura, padesciente, la desnuda e bicordante espada en la my diestra mirava, titubando, con dudoso pensamiento e demudada cara, sy era mejor prestamente morir o asperar la dubdosa respuesta me dar consuelo. La discriçion favoreçe e suplica la espera, la congoxosa voluntad la triste muerte reclama, el seso manda esperar la respuesta, el aquegado coraçon, gridando, acusa la postrimería. (174)

And I, unfortunate, suffering, looked at the naked and double-edged sword in my right hand, doubting, with halting thought and altered face, whether it was better to die quickly or wait for the doubtful reply to console me. Discretion favors and begs for waiting, the sorrowful will demands sad death, the sense commands to wait for the response, the suffering heart, crying out, reveals the end.

This ending has been construed variously as a sign "that allegory's fundamentally heuristic function has failed" (Brownlee 484), an attempt to provoke compassion in the reader (Serés, "Ficción" 46), or as evidence that the courtly conflict between desire and honor is unresolvable (Gascón Vera 87-8). One could add to these interpretations another, consistent with a literal reading of the *Sátira*'s dedicatory letter, in which the narrator's bad end is evidence of his immorality, although of course the very existence of the letter would do away with this mortal fiction. The conflict described in this final indecision is between, once again, discretion and will, brain and heart. Compassion and cruelty, whose opposition had been added to this moral system,

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<sup>43</sup> This is thus similar to passion's connotative force in Estúñiga's poem, above.

are once again absent. The opposition between will and discretion, which characterizes the moral thought of Duarte and Pedro, and whose fatal outcome is highly stylized in courtly poetry, is here compared to a double-edged sword. For the Constable, it is an inadequate moral palette, and further subjection to it – not just to the passionate side of it – is intolerable. Mercy had always been a desirable quality in a judge, but here, the Constable makes compassion an essential element of moral decision by dramatically laying bare the paralysis to which the old bipolar moral system leads.<sup>44</sup>

Although the Constable's subject matter in the *Sátira* seems relentlessly personal, there is reason to believe that his ideas about cruelty and compassion are significantly broader in their targets. In his gloss on the pharaoh of *Exodus*, he condemns cruelty in the following terms:

O detestable viçio enemigo de toda humana naturaleza, e muy contrario a toda natural razon, fiero a los amigos, amigable a los adversarios, muy poderoso no para fazer solamente subvertir el exerçito de pharao en las marinas ondas, mas de despoblar las poderosas çibdades, de destroyr los magnificos regnos, de annular los altos poderios e de distinguir las muy antiguas e esclareçidas linages! El qual viçio en nuestros tiempos es usado e seguido como si fuesse virtud famosa e loable. (144)

O detestable vice, enemy of all human nature, and very contrary to all natural reason, fierce toward friends, friendly to adversaries, powerful enough not only to subvert pharaoh's army in the waves of the sea, but also to depopulate powerful cities, to destroy magnificent kingdoms, to annihilate high dominions, and to extinguish the most ancient and noble lineages! This vice is customary in our times and followed as if it were a famous and praiseworthy virtue.

And in his poem of warning to his beloved, he calls cruelty “de todos los viçios reyna, señora, / mal enemiga de real alteza” (169, l. 21-2) “queen of all the vices, lady, enemy of royal highness.” Cruelty is thus a sociopolitical vice, particularly unbecoming in rulers and

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<sup>44</sup> Rodríguez del Padrón's *Siervo libre de amor* contains a similar scene of paralysis; the unloved narrator has been abandoned by his understanding and feels himself to be in mortal peril (81-83). In the *Siervo libre*, however, these circumstances *introduce* a new narrative element, the *Estoria de dos amadores*. The *Sátira*'s scene of indecision is, in contrast, definitive, bringing the narrative to an unsettling close.

representing a mortal danger not just to courtly lovers, but to courts themselves, to cities, kingdoms, and lineages. It is tempting to explain this in biographical terms, since the constable is writing in exile, his father having been killed in a civil conflict with his own nephew. It is also tempting to see the constable's faith in compassion – especially in light of the rather more ribald treatment the *galardón* receives in much courtly poetry – as a youthful (that is, immature) enthusiasm. But the fact remains that in infusing compassion and cruelty with moral weight, the Constable was trying to destabilize a longstanding system of moral thought, one whose logic dominates both the treatises of his uncle and father and the poetry of Santillana and his other Castilian influences. The poles of the reason-will binary were assigned different power by these two traditions, but in his *Sátira*, the Constable seeks to alter this system radically, seeking to make the granting of the compassionate *galardón* a real, communally potent possibility. In the next and final chapter, however, we will find, in Ausiàs March, a writer who sought not to complicate this inherited tradition, but to exhaust it.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ALONE TOGETHER: AUSIÀS MARCH'S ETHICAL APPEAL FOR SHARED SALVATION

Nunc itaque in quantum ipse adiuuat creator mire misericors attendamus haec quae modo interiore quam superiore tractauimus, cum sint eadem ...  
– Saint Augustine, *De Trinitate*

I argued in the previous chapter that Pedro, Constable of Portugal seeks, in his *Sátira de felice e infelice vida*, to instill a new ethical force in the courtly trope of the Lady's compassion, and I read this as an attempt to complicate the moral framework that underlies political thought on community in fifteenth-century Iberia. This moral framework, again, takes the conflict between reason and the passions as the paradigm for moral deliberation. Here, I will argue that the Valencian poet Ausiàs March (ca. 1397-1459) goes further than the Constable, seeking not just to renovate this moral framework but to exhaust its discourse of body and soul, reason and the passions.<sup>1</sup> This may seem paradoxical, since these are precisely the dominant themes throughout March's 128 surviving poems, in which he develops a three-fold theory of love based on hylemorphic doctrine. Indeed, March's poetry constitutes, from one perspective, a startlingly dense and focused exploration of the lyrical possibilities of human love as a conceptual and moral problematic involving the mixture of the carnal and the spiritual. It is all March seems to want to talk about, and he does so with an incredibly limited lexicon of about 700 words, much smaller than those of his Valencian contemporaries (Casanova 137 n. 7). This lyric focus reveals not investment in the moral system but an attempt to exhaust its possibilities rhetorically.

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<sup>1</sup> Some modern critics place no accent on "Ausiàs" because none appears on the manuscripts of his poetry; throughout this chapter, I follow the more common critical tendency to include the accent.

Through a poetics of introspection and self-judgment, and, ultimately, through an exploration of death and salvation, March shows that what is most intimate in us is shared, and that if the conflict between reason and the passions is real and deeply felt, it is not to be resolved individually. Rather, erotic love in its confrontation with mortality produces a shared subjectivity grounded in compassion, a subjectivity that March describes – exceptionally, in his *oeuvre* – in explicitly Christian terms. March adopts this rhetoric of salvation in order to blur the borders of erotic love, opening the empathetic identification it generates onto a broader community of readers and lovers.

Ausiàs March is often considered the best poet ever to have written in Catalan and one of the fifteenth century's most important poets in general. His grandfather, Jaume March, was knighted by Pere III in 1360, and the family enjoyed noble status from then on. March participated as a representative of the military estate in the Valencian courts of 1415, was knighted himself in 1419, and participated in military expeditions to Sardinia, Corsica, Naples, Sicily, and Africa from 1419-1424. He was royal falconer from 1425-1428. After that, he probably retired to his lands in Gandia, administrating them and writing poetry. March's poems, which survive in thirteen manuscripts, have traditionally been divided into four groups: the *cants d'amor*, the largest group, addressed, for the most part, either to *Plena de seny* ("Wise lady") or *Lir entre carts* ("Lily among thorns"); the *Cants Morals*; the *Cants de Mort*, a series of six poems thought to be inspired by the death of one or the other of March's wives; and the long *Cant Espiritual*.<sup>2</sup> Neither the chronological order of the poems' composition nor the poet's own arrangement of them is known (Bohigas 7; Archer, *Pervasive Image* 6); most critics follow Amédée Pagès's ordering in his 1912 *Auzias March et ses prédécesseurs* as, in Robert Archer's

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<sup>2</sup> This division first appeared in the first edition of March's poems, published by Baltasar Romani in Valencia in 1539. On the question of which wife inspired the *Cants de Mort*, see Archer, *Pervasive Image* 184-5 n. 5.

words, a “good working order” (*Pervasive Image* 6).<sup>3</sup> The primary audience for March’s poetry is thought to have been Valencia’s “local petty nobility” and “urban patricians” (Alemany 10).

It should be noted that March’s youth, before he started writing, coincided with a time in which Catalan literature “was courtly in every sense” (Smith 297-8); indeed, it was March’s own uncle, Jaume March, who in 1393 founded Barcelona’s *Jocs Florals*. We should not be surprised, then, that critics aware of this troubadour tradition are hesitant to identify *Plena de seny* and *Lir entre carts* as either of March’s wives. His first, Isabel Martorell, was the sister of Joanot Martorell, author of *Tirant lo Blanc*. After her death in 1439, he married the Valencian lady Joana Escorna, whom he also survived; neither marriage produced an heir, although his two wills reveal that he had five illegitimate children. As Pere Bohigas writes, all indications are that, in life, March was a typical feudal lord, dedicated to protecting and increasing his possessions (6). But, as Joan Fuster famously added, March was a feudal lord “with a problem of conscience” (12-3).

The innumerable lyric manifestations of March’s bad conscience have led critics to speak frequently of the poet’s tendency toward sincere introspection or confession and of March’s own assertions of exceptional individuality. The most celebrated of these assertions is found in the penultimate stanza of poem XCIV, which concerns the pleasure the poet, having abandoned human love, takes in his own sadness:

Puix que lo món ne Déu a mi no val  
a rellevar la causa d’on só trist,  
a mi plau bé la tristor que yo vist:  
delit he sent mentre yo·m trobe tal.  
Axí dispost, dolç me sembla l’amarch,

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<sup>33</sup> This is also the order followed by Bohigas in his edition of March’s *Poesies*, from which I will be quoting. For an in-depth discussion of the problem of the order of March’s poems, see Archer, *Pervasive Image* 6-11. My argument does not depend on a chronological development of ideas in March’s poetry, but rather draws on themes that arise repeatedly, in varied guises, throughout the poems. For a brief history of the publication, translation, and reception of March’s poetry, see Fuster 44-52.



tant és en mi enfeccionat lo gust!  
A temps he cor d'acer, de carn e fust:  
yo só aquest que·m dich Ausiàs March. (CXIV.81-8)

Since neither the world nor God helps me to root out the reason for which I am sad, I am content with the sadness I wear; I feel joy, while I am in such a state. Thus disposed, what is bitter seems sweet to me: so corrupted is my taste! I have a heart of steel, flesh and wood, all in one. I am this man who is called Ausias March!<sup>4</sup>

In a representative reading of this stanza, Bohigas writes that the last line in particular

is of great significance in such a personal and concentrated poet. His works, so stark and arid, still suggest to us a certain pride consonant with his individualism. Perhaps it is a manifestation of his inclination toward making confessions, even unfavorable to himself, in which we can see, however, the desire to safeguard the integrity of his ego, whatever the judgment they might provoke. (6)

March's introspection and sincerity are often asserted to differentiate him from the troubadours, whose formal structures he never abandoned, or even to mark him as a "modern" poet.<sup>5</sup> The adoption of Catalan rather than Occitan is also considered a gesture of sincerity (Casanova 139) directed toward bourgeois Catalan culture (Sobrer, "Myth of Language" 331).<sup>6</sup> The poet's bitter attacks against his own person, his admissions against interest, are a tactic of persuasion: "The poet wants us to believe his confession literally, since he offers us his poems as a confession" (Fuster 61).

My interest here is not in showing that March was insincere, but rather in examining the process of subjectivization carried out through his lyrical introspection. In this question I follow Sarah Kay in understanding lyric "subjectivity" as "the elaboration of a first-person (subject) position" (*Subjectivity* 1). It seems clear in the stanza of poem CXIV cited above that we are meant to take March's lyric persona as a literal representation of the historical poet: "I am this man who is called Ausias March!" March's relationship with the Christianity was famously

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<sup>4</sup> All translations are from Terry, *Ausias March: Selected Poems*; here, at 133.

<sup>5</sup> On the first point, see Archer, *Pervasive Image* 2; Archer notes that this is not a question of absolute difference, but of degree. For the "modernity" of March's introspection, see Bohigas 33 and Terry, *Selected Poems* 20.

<sup>6</sup> On the question of sincerity and originality in March's poetry, see Zimmermann.

ambivalent; as he declares to God in the *cant espiritual*, “Yo tem a Tu més que no·t só amable” (CV.57) “I fear, rather than love, you” (119). Here, however, the poet represents himself as a penitent: “the sadness I wear” recalls an earlier declaration that “l’esperit meu tostemps està trist / per l’àbit pres, que lonch temps és que vist / d’un negre drap o celici molt gros” (CXIV.46-8) “my spirit is continually sad because of the kind of dress it has adopted, (and) which for a long time it has worn, of black material or coarse sackcloth” (131). The entire poem is framed as an almost literal confession, and its *envoi*, which immediately follows the stanza quoted above, takes the form of an indirect prayer:

A Déu suplich que·l viure no m’allarch,  
o meta·n mi aquest propòsit ferm:  
que mon voler envers Ell lo referm,  
perquè anant a Ell no trobe·nbarch. (CXIV.89-92)

I pray God not to prolong my life, or (else) to instil in me this firm intention: to strengthen my will towards Him, so that, travelling towards Him, I shall meet with no obstacles. (133)

March was no mystic, and he confesses here, above all, that his desire is not inclined toward God, nor does he wish to be severely tested if he is to journey toward the divine.<sup>7</sup> The poet’s own surname provides the rhyme for both the wish for death (“que·l viure no m’allarch”) and the obstacles to salvation (“no trobe·nbarch”). And, indeed, it is in the confrontation with death and its implications for salvation that March forges himself as a lyric subject – and one not necessarily identifiable with the individual.<sup>8</sup>

March’s lyric subjection to moral scrutiny, even if we read it in a confessional mode, indexes his participation in literary community. Michel Foucault has argued that the moment “when the task and obligation of truth-telling about oneself [was] inserted within the procedure indispensable for salvation” was a crucial turning point in the history of subjectivity in the West,

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<sup>7</sup> On the rejection of Neoplatonism in March, see Lledó-Guillem.

<sup>8</sup> See Kay, *Subjectivity* 6.

adding that this was not just a matter of personal salvation but also “a necessary element in the individual’s membership of a community” (363-4). March’s admission in poem CXIV both that his will is misguided and that his senses themselves are corrupt – “infected” – places his own manner of truthful confession squarely within a Scholastic ethical framework concerned with a particular model of the soul and the implications of that model – whose central principle Mark D. Johnston identifies as *recta ratio*, “right reason” (384) – for proper worldly behavior. This hylemorphic model, reflected obliquely in the “steel, flesh and wood” of March’s heart in poem CXIV, is most commonly expressed by March in terms of a tripartite typology of love: spiritual love, in which only the rational soul is engaged; carnal love, in which the body’s appetites reign; and human or mixed (*compost*) love, in which the soul and the body participate together, if not always in cooperation.<sup>9</sup> Numerous scholars have noted that March is not truly consistent in this systematization throughout his works, while others have shown that the preoccupation with transcendence and immanence inherent in this paradigm, far from isolating March as an author, in fact puts him in dialogue with the *cancionero* poets and other fifteenth-century Iberian writers.<sup>10</sup> The question of March’s direct knowledge of Thomistic and other Scholastic texts is less important here than his possibly “paradoxical” application of the Scholastic ethical framework to the “implicitly immoral conduct of courtly love” (Johnston 387).<sup>11</sup> March’s theory of love was also influenced in important ways by the mendicant preachers (Alemany 11), a fact reflected in his thoroughly Augustinian theory of mind and his use of the powers of the soul

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<sup>9</sup> March’s most famous explication of this system is found in poem LXXXVII, although there he uses different terminology: spiritual love is *honest*, carnal love is *delitable*, and mixed love is *profitable*.

<sup>10</sup> On the first point, see Archer, “Theorist of Love” 4; Fuster 96; and Terry, *Selected Poems* 14. On the second, see Cocozzella, “Ausiàs March’s *Imitatio Christi*” 428-9.

<sup>11</sup> Arthur Terry notes, however, that despite their apparent rigidity, the moral vocabularies of Scholasticism and *fin’amor* are in practice almost infinitely flexible (“Introspection” 169-70). For a brief overview of Aristotelian thought in medieval Aragon, see L. Cabré 50-3.

(memory, will, and understanding) as an analytic.<sup>12</sup> In the rest of this chapter, then, I will explore how March's assertion of difference and rhetorical performance of moral self-scrutiny, within a framework of Scholastic hylemorphism, Augustinian theory of mind, and troubadour love, through a confrontation with death – both one's own and others' – articulates a particular form of collective subjectivity that bridges personal and political salvation. To this end, the rest of my discussion will be centered around a series of exemplary poems: XXIII, X, XIII, and the *Cants de Mort* (XCII-XCVII).

***XXIII: "Lexant a part l'estil dels trobadors ..."***

March's most famous assertion of stylistic difference from the troubadours is found in the opening of poem XXIII, a poem that constitutes, in the end, a failed attempt to speak the truth:

Lexant a part l'estil dels trobadors  
qui, per escalf, trespassen veritat,  
e sostrahent mon voler affectat  
perquè no·m torb, diré·l que trob en vós. (XXIII.1-4)

Leaving aside the manner of the troubadours, who, carried away by passion, exceed the truth, and restraining my own amorous desire so that it does not distract me, I shall say what I find in you. (53)

I will return to these lines shortly, but first, I want to consider the question of just what March considered himself to be leaving behind in his abandonment of the "manner of the troubadours."

Troubadour poetry first arrived in the Crown of Aragon through the patronage of Alfons II of Aragon (1162-96), known contradictorily as both the Chaste and the Troubadour, and its cultural

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<sup>12</sup> The authors most commonly cited as sources for March's thought are Aquinas, Aristotle, Ramon Llull, and Seneca; Augustine, Dante, and Petrarch are also named with some frequency. For a critical appraisal of the literature on these sources in March, see Archer, *Pervasive Image* 11-20. The critical tendency is to downplay Italian influence (see, for example, Bohigas 28 and Fuster 15-7, although both critics do admit certain similarities). Bohigas also notes the possible influence of Capellanus's *Art of Courtly Love*, which was translated into Catalan in the fourteenth century, but he contrasts Capellanus's "frivolous" text with March's "serious" appropriation of it (15).

foothold was reinforced with the arrival of the *faidits*, exiles fleeing the aftermath of the Albigensian Crusade in the early thirteenth century (M. Cabré 129 and 133). Occitan remained the language of lyric poetry in Aragon until March chose to write in Catalan, which had been dominant in prose (alongside Latin) since the thirteenth century. Although I do not have space for a broad consideration of the enormous cultural legacy of the troubadours, I want to highlight here some features of troubadour culture of particular relevance to my discussion of March.

Troubadour poetry encodes both feudal ties and religious devotion in a discourse of erotic love. As Stephen C. Jaeger as argued, it represents at its origin an “aestheticising of manners” and an “intense refinement in sentiment and emotion” that allow above all for increasingly subtle communication – either genuine or deceitful – among a cultural and political elite (13). Chief among these refined sentiments was love, whose semantic field went far beyond the erotic. The word *drut*, “lover,” connoted political as well as erotic love, describing the relationship between lover and lady but also that between lord and vassal (Cheyette 235). This discursive codification (or aestheticization) of fundamentally political ties made them more visible, rather than obscuring them, in its use of erotic language. In this way, the troubadour poetic code came to define courtly communities: “the troubadours can be seen as determining the limits and members of polite society, and binding together an exclusive community in which an appreciation of the courtly lyric and practice of the courtly virtues of hospitality, generosity and affability were seen as marks of status and cultivation” (Harvey 20). The fact that courtly language serves to signal status does not mean, of course, that its “refined” emotions are false; rather, as I argued in chapter one, the management of deeply held attitudes toward emotion is common to a wide variety of rhetorical practices and prior to judgments of truth.

Questions of truth and irony also dominate discussion of the so-called *religio amoris*, in which troubadours, as is well known, adopted the discourse of religious devotion to express worldly love.<sup>13</sup> The ambiguity of this apparently sacrilegious gesture arises at least in part from the erotic language of mystical texts and of scripture itself, and its recontextualization within the courtly system should not lead modern readers to assume ironic intent. In fact, ironic and earnest images of devotion coexisted throughout the entire period of troubadour production (Gaunt, *Love and Death* 5). Indeed, at the broadest level, it is difficult to untangle the secular from the sacred in the Middle Ages, and troubadour poetry may represent a lyrical exploitation of this ambiguity rather than a secular challenge to religious doctrine. Still, it is undeniable that the professed willingness of the courtly lover to die for love (echoed frequently, as we will see, by Ausiàs March) increases the ethical stakes of the erotic beyond traditional questions of sin and chastity; as Simon Gaunt has argued, this lyrical sacrifice “engenders a space for an engagement with ethics that is removed from the sphere of organized religion” (“A Martyr to Love” 500). March certainly does not abandon this space in abandoning the troubadours. It is the space *par excellence* of the confessions entailed by his claims of difference.

The later troubadours tended to present themselves as love’s initiates, privileged bearers of a knowledge born of rare experience (Wilhite 764). March also portrays himself as the bearer of special knowledge, but despite frequent critical references to his didacticism and its ties to courtly culture,<sup>14</sup> he is not confident in his teaching ability. Rather, shared experience is the condition for understanding his poems: “Qui no és trist, de mos dictats no cur, / o·n algun temps que sia trist estat” (XXXIX.1-2) “Anyone who is not sad or has not at some time been sad should

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<sup>13</sup> This trope was famously parodied in Fernando de Rojas’s *Celestina*, published in 1499.

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, Sobrer, *Doble soledat* 22.

pay no attention to my works” (55). This disavowal of rational pedagogy is a crucial counterpoint to XXIII’s opening claim, which I will now quote in its entirety:

Lexant a part l’estil dels trobadors  
qui, per escalf, trespassen veritat,  
e sostrahent mon voler affectat  
perquè no·m torb, diré·l que trob en vós.  
Tot mon parlar als qui no us hauran vista  
res no valrà, car fe no y donaran,  
e los vehents que dins vós no veuran,  
en creur·a mi, llur arma serà trista. (XXIII.1-8)

Leaving aside the manner of the troubadours, who, carried away by passion, exceed the truth, and restraining my own amorous desire so that it does not distract me, I shall say what I find in you. All my speech will be in vain to those who have not seen you, for they will not believe it; and those who see you, if they cannot see within, will be sad at heart when they believe me. (53)

At least one critic has read this opening as a “troubadouresque” assumption of authority (Sobrer, “Myth of Language” 333), while another notes that elsewhere in March’s *oeuvre*, sentiment and knowledge are complementary, not opposed (Ramírez i Molas, “El saber del sentiment” 340). In fact, however, the explicit opposition between affectation and truth finds a deeper echo in the third line’s juxtaposition of *torbar*, “to disturb,” and *trobar*, literally “to find,” but also, of course, the verb that describes lyric composition. Affect, it is implied, precludes worthy speech, which also suffers in comparison to sight. This sight, which obviates the need for faith, is in turn inferior to the poet’s *insight*, which can only be believed – in a process that leaves believers with their own spiritual sadness (“en creur·a a mi, llur arma sera trista”).<sup>15</sup> But if the truth cannot be expressed by an affected soul, how can it be understood by one? This impasse – between speech and sight, sight and insight – will be explored in hylemorphic terms throughout the rest of the poem.

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<sup>15</sup> D. Gareth Walters notes the tension between the expectation of dispassionate realism created by the poem’s opening lines and the need for “visionary, even mysterious, perception” expressed at the end of the stanza (46).

That hylemorphism is primarily a problem of knowledge and speech in this poem is made clear in the second stanza:

Quant és del cors, menys de participar  
ab l'esperit, coneix bé lo grosser:  
vostra color y ell tall pot bé saber,  
mas ga del gest no porà bé parlar. (13-6)

Whatever belongs to the body but does not share in the spirit, the coarse man knows well. He may be familiar with your colour and bearing, but he will not be able to speak properly of your gesture. (53)

This sentiment is reinforced in the next stanza in one of March's rare assertions of commonality: "Tots som grossers en poder explicar / ço que mereix un bell cos e honest" (17-8) "We are all coarse when we try to express what a fair and honest body deserves" (53). The soul is thus associated with the lyrically inexpressible because of its role in movement (the "gest" that cannot be expressed by the coarse).<sup>16</sup> Belief is not at issue. Sarah Spence has argued that the troubadours rework the relationship between rhetoric and the body "so that the body can re-enter the field of rhetoric since desire is situated in the language of the body – or the vernacular – even as reason retains its connection to the tangible, visible world" (166). Here, however, March denigrates the lyrical value of the corporal. Of what, then, should the exceptionally wise, or experienced, man speak?

March attempts, in the following stanzas, to praise his lady for her *seny*, "wisdom" (this poem, it should be noted, is perhaps surprisingly part of the *Lir entre carts*, "Lily among thorns," rather than the *Plena de seny*, "Wise lady," cycle), claiming that her mind is more peacefully ordered than the Venetian government (33-4). The delight provoked by this well-ordered mind makes baser desires impossible:

Tan gran delit tot hom entenen ha

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<sup>16</sup> In medieval Catalan, "gest" could refer to both a body's movement and appearance (Faraudo, "Gest," def. 1 and 2).



e occupat se troba·n vós entendre,  
que lo desig del cors no·s pot estendre  
a leig voler, ans com a mort està. (37-40)

All who understand (these things) feel great delight and make it their occupation to understand you, since desire for the body cannot extend to base impulses: rather it is as though (it were) dead. (55)

We return here to the question of lyric understanding as March continues punning on *trobar* in line 38. Like the “understanding” man who *es troba* attempting to understand the lady, March performs this process as he explicates it, dedicating his own lyric endeavor to spiritual matters in such a way that his own body appears dead. The carnal will is described in visual terms: it is “ugly,” *leig*. It seems, then, that March’s lyric is indeed up to the task of spiritual expression.

Unsurprisingly for those accustomed to March’s contradictory *envois*, this turns out not to be the case:

Lir entre carts, lo meu poder no fa  
tant que pogués fer corona·nvisible;  
meriu-la vós, car la qui és visible  
no·s deu posar lla on miracle stà. (41-4)

Lily among thorns: my power is not so great that it could make for you an invisible crown. You deserve one, since a visible crown should not be placed where there is a miracle. (55)

Thus, March’s “power” (of invention, *trobar*) is in the end inadequate for the “invisible” praise *Lir entre carts* deserves. The final contrast between the visible and the invisible is complicated by March’s comparison of his lady to a miracle, a phenomenon whose association with the visual is reinforced by the phonic echo of *mirar*, a verb of sight. The return to the passion of sadness in the poem’s opening stanza – which resulted from a belief in spiritual insight – finds its own thematic echo in the poet’s inability, or unwillingness, to abandon sensation. Body and soul, passion and truth cannot be fully disentangled lyrically; sight and sadness resurface inevitably.

**X: “De ffet que fuy a sa mercé vengut ...”**

Poem X is a portrait of the mind of the poet in love according to the Augustinian powers of the soul. It opens with an extended simile, as March compares his mind to a king ruling over three cities and engaged in long-running war with another king; the situation remains a stalemate until the enemy king hires a mercenary who helps him conquer all three cities. The conquered king is allowed to retain control, as the conqueror’s vassal, of two of the cities, but he must abandon the third and avoid even thinking of it (1-16). In the poem’s third stanza, March reveals that Love is his enemy, and *Plena de seny* the mercenary:

Lonch temps Amor per enemich lo sent,  
mas jamés fon que·m donàs un mal jorn  
qu·en poch instant no li fes pendre torn,  
fforagitant son aspre pensament.  
Tot m’ha vençut ab sol esforç d’un cors,  
ne l·ha calgut mostrar sa potent força;  
los tres poders qu·en l’arma són me força,  
dos me’n jaqueix, de l’altr·usar no gos. (17-24)

[F]or a long time I have felt Love to be my enemy, but he has never given me a bad day without my instantly making him change, banishing from me his bitter thoughts. (Now) he has totally defeated me with the strength of a single body; he has had no need to display his might power: he overcomes the three faculties of my soul; he leaves me two, (and) I dare not use the other. (39)

We are confronted here by two kinds of allegory: the kind that seeks to “make the invisible visible” (Terry, “Introspection” 171), expressing the inner through the outer (the opening simile), and *psychomachia*, which portrays inner conflict between, in this case, allegorized powers of the soul and Love.<sup>17</sup> This *psychomachia* makes an initial move away from the visibility of the opening simile in that Love’s *hidden* power (“ne l·ha calgut *mostrar* sa potent *força*”) overcomes

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<sup>17</sup> As an allegorical mode, *psychomachia* takes its name from the Late Antique Latin poet Prudentius’s *Psychomachia* (ca. 400 CE), which portrays a battle between, on one side, faith and the cardinal virtues, and on the other, idolatry and the vices.

(*força*) the powers (*poders*) of the poet's soul. The rest of the poem explores the moral consequences, for the lyric voice, of the expressive insufficiency of the *psychomachia*, which finds its echo in the poet's lost memory (this is the power forbidden to him).

Troubadour poetry is replete with antagonistic figures such as flatterers and spies; March's enemies are always allegorical.<sup>18</sup> At the same time, the kind of psychological allegory deployed in poem X was also frequent in troubadour poetry, playing a key but ambiguous role in the development of troubadour subjectivity: "If the subject position is extended, by allegory, into a 'self' where Love and other forces interact, then the boundaries of this 'self,' and its relationship to other selves, are fundamentally unclear. Since the notion of the 'self' is obscure, the relationship to it of the first-person subject is likewise problematic" (Kay, *Subjectivity* 55). Through this process, a moral scheme that began as a way of asserting community can become a way of asserting difference (Kay, *Subjectivity* 52), and this is indeed what happens in poem X's next stanza:

Jamés vençó fon plaer del vençut,  
sinó de mi que·m plau qu·Amor me vença  
e·m tinga pres ab sa·nvisible lença,  
mas paren bé sos colps en mon escut. (29-32)

Defeat was never a pleasure for the defeated except in my case, for I am glad that Love should defeat me and keep me prisoner in his invisible net: his strokes fall gratefully upon my shield. (39)

Through this *psychomachia*, March declares himself an exceptional – indeed, unique – lover. He also, however, subtly recalls once more the image of the penitent, gratefully receiving Love's invisible lashes. Terry translates *lença* here as "net," but Bohigas glosses it as poetic license for *lança*, "lance" (97 n. 31); the lance's *colps*, "blows," call to mind the poet's *colpa*, "guilt." Indeed, critics have read this poem as an admission of guilt, March's confession of having ceded

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<sup>18</sup> For a similar point with particular reference to the *cant espiritual*, see Sobrer, *Doble soledat* 53.

moral judgment in ceding control of his memory (Pujol 308-9). However, March does not frame this concession in terms of absolute surrender, but rather of intersubjective participation.

Poem X does not describe, after all, an intact, discrete mind; rather, the poet's mind is "at the mercy of" another's will:

De ffet que fuy a sa mercé vengut,  
l'Enteniment per son conseller pres  
e mon Voler per alguazir lo mes,  
dant fe cascú que may sera rebut  
en sa mercé lo companyó Membrar,  
servint cascú lealment son office,  
sí que algú d'èls no serà tan nici  
qu'en res contrast que sia de amar. (33-40)

As soon as I fell into Love's hands, he took my Understanding as his adviser and appointed my Will executor, each promising that their companion Memory would never be admitted to their grace, each one loyally performing his duty, so that neither would be so foolish as to oppose anything which had to do with loving. (39-41)

What is at stake in this portrayal of love as a disorder of the faculties, one in which memory in particular is silenced?<sup>19</sup> Memory does not just instigate cognitive processes in the Middle Ages; it also informs them morally, bearing "emotionally laden" intentions to the intellect along with, or rather as integral parts of, its images (Carruthers 14). In this sense, relinquishing control of the memory implies an affective, and therefore ethical, opening to the other's will – an opening that March figures in terms of intersubjective "mercy."

This figuration thus raises the question of subjectivity in terms of both self-consciousness, in its moral self-scrutiny, and subjection, the submission to Love's (and, by implication, the lady's) will. In the Middle Ages, the Latin *subjectum* translated Aristotle's *hupokeimenon*, "substance" or "essence," which fused the physical subject as a "substrate for accidents" with the "logical subject" as a "support for the predicates in a proposition" (Balibar et al. 16). In a "transition from *subjectum* to *ego*," modern (Cartesian) notions of subjectivity make

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<sup>19</sup> On the question of disorder in poem X, see Rubio, "Les tres potències" 167.

this *subjectum* “the basis of any psychology of the subject” (Balibar et al. 18). What is remarkable about medieval psychology is that these two notions have yet to be fused:

[T]he Middle Ages had a theory of the ego or I-ness (*égoïté*), or a theory of the *subject* in the obvious philosophical sense of the term *mens*, but that theory did not require the implementation of the notion of a *subjectum*; it also offered a complete theory of subjectivity in grammar, logic, physics and metaphysics, but was reluctant to export it into psychology in the form of a theory of *mens humana*. (Balibar et al. 19)

Indeed, the Augustinian theory of *mens*, operative in poem X and throughout March’s poetry, resisted this fusion as a matter of doctrine. This resistance is grounded in Augustine’s theory of perichoresis, “the mutual indwelling of the Persons of the Trinity” (Balibar et al. 22). This theory, also known as circumincession, explained how, in the Trinity, a substance could be both simple and multiple.

Augustine famously argued, in *The Trinity*, that the human mind was the image of this model of the Trinity’s substance. God is not subject to accidents, differing in this essential way from the *subjectum* discussed above. If the *mens humana*’s faculties constitute, as the image of God, a single substance, then they also must not constitute a *subjectum*, and this latter concept must be “banished from the field of psychology, on pain of reducing mental acts to mere accidents that befall the mind ... The *hupokeimenon* is incompatible with the transposition of the theological notion of mutual immanence to psychology” (Balibar et al. 22). In the *Trinity*, then, Augustine develops a Trinitarian theory of the human mind doctrinally opposed to modern notions of subjectivity. He was spurred on toward this by the Delphic injunction to *Know thyself* (X.12), and makes self-certainty the main element of his argument for a similar reason: “The whole point of its [i.e., the mind’s] being commanded to know itself comes to this: it should be certain that it is none of the things about which it is uncertain, and it should be certain that it is that alone which alone it is certain that it is” (X.16). Self-certainty, then, is the mortal endpoint

of human attempts to understand the nature of God, and it is essential to the human mind – but it is not a “subjective” quality as modernity understands the term.

The invocation of the Delphic injunction in the *Trinity* puts Augustine’s thought in line with what Foucault has called the “ascetic-monastic” model of self-knowledge (255). This model calls for Christians to practice introspection as a search for moral truth:

[S]elf-knowledge is arrived at through techniques whose essential function is to dispel internal illusions, to recognize the temptations that arise within the soul and the heart, and also to thwart the seductions to which we may be victim. And this is all accomplished by a method for deciphering the secret processes and movements that unfold within the soul and whose origin, aim, and form must be grasped. An exegesis of the self is thus required. (255-6)

Readers will recognize in Foucault’s exposition Cassian’s model of discernment, the practical virtue that allows monks to identify the demonic, divine, or human sources of their affective “thoughts.” This practice is, of course, part of the broader practice of *mneme theou*, the “memory of God” (Carruthers 2). In this way, the monastic *mneme theou* and the particularly Augustinian *gnōthi seauton* (“know thyself”) come together to form the crucial background for understanding March’s confession, in poem X, that he has abandoned his memory and ceded control of – that is, subjected – his understanding and will to another.

It is also important to bear in mind here that for Augustine, the disordered will is the result of original sin, and those who through ascetic discipline have gained perfect control of their will have in fact given their will over to God (Burrus and MacKendrick 92). March’s will, however, is at the mercy of Love, leading, in poem X’s *envoi*, not only to a loss of memory but to a loss of the power of speech:<sup>20</sup>

Plena de seny, vullau-vos acordar  
com per Amor vénen grans sentiments,  
e per Amor por ser hom ignoscents,  
e mostre-u yo qui n’he perdut parlar. (41-4)

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<sup>20</sup> For a survey of March’s invocations of his own silence, see Sobrer, *Doble soledat* 11-40.

Wise lady: please remember how from Love there comes great suffering and that through Love one may be reduced to childishness: I, who have lost the power of speech, am evidence of this. (41)

March invokes here, in one dense hemistich, his lady's will and memory ("vullau-vos acordar"). The poet has traded, unwillingly but with pleasure, those powers for Love's *sentiments*, becoming *ignoscents* – a term Terry (correctly) translates as “childish,” but which also serves as an ironic contrast to the penitent guiltily receiving Love's harsh blows at the end of the fourth stanza. This play of innocence and guilt is further emphasized in the poet's claim of his own visibility – “mostre-u yo” – as he is forced to submit to Love's invisible lance. Through the guilt of subjecting himself to Love's and his lady's will, March has lost the power of speech – and yet, as in poem XXIII, he retains his lyric voice. In retaining control of his understanding and will, but not his memory, that “emotionally laden” (and morally essential) basis of human cognition and creativity, March presents himself as a lyrical subject moved primarily from without at his lady's “mercy.” To be “at another's mercy” is here not a mere figure of speech, but a strong figure for intersubjective participation. Through this participation, the lover is silenced but somehow retains the capacity to communicate lyrically. How, then, and with whom, does this lyrical subject communicate?

***XIII: “e vaja yo los sepulcres cerquant ...”***

Poem XIII is March's most direct declaration of his affective isolation. In it, he contrasts public happiness with his macabre private sentiments:

Colguen les gents ab alegria festes,  
loant a Déu, entremesclant deports;  
places, carrers e delitables orts

sien cerquats ab recont de grans gestes;  
e vaja yo los sepulcres cerquant,  
interrogant ànimes infernades,  
e respondran, car no són companyades  
d'altre que mi en son contínuu plant. (1-8)

Let people celebrate feast days and be glad, praising God (and) playing games between times; let squares, streets and pleasant gardens be filled with tales of great deeds; and let me walk among tombs, questioning the souls of the damned; and they will reply, for they have no one but me to accompany them in their continual lament. (43)

In the Dantesque image of the poet interrogating damned souls, there is a conflation of empathy and communication: the dead respond because of March's accompanying laments. Perhaps, then, this is the communication that becomes possible after poem X's "grans sentiments" have robbed the poet of his worldly voice. In fact, the image of March accompanying the dead in their "continual lament" is reminiscent of courtly poems from both the Occitan and Castilian traditions in which the lyric voice pleads with the audience to join in its suffering. In this context, the imperative that opens poem XIII ("Let people celebrate") is an ironic reversal of this poetic commonplace, and it is not coincidental that the other poets are to be found among the celebrating crowd, telling "tales of great deeds." March's affective distance from these poets is reinforced by the repetition of the verb *cercar*, which meant both "to fill" or "surround" (as in the case of the other poets) and "to seek out" (in the case of March's visit to the cemetery) in the fifteenth century. Furthermore, the popular praise of God that opens the stanza stands in stark contrast to March's "damned" lamentations.

The assertion of difference in poem XIII's opening stanza gives way to a Scholastic sentence about similarity:

Cascú requer e vol a son semblant;  
per ço no·m plau la pràtica dels vius.  
D'imaginar mon estat són esquius;  
sí com d'om mort, de mi prenen espant. (9-12)



Everyone seeks and desires his like; thus I take no pleasure in the company of the living.  
They are reluctant to imagine my condition; they are terrified of me, as of a dead man.  
(43)

Similarity generates desire, and for this reason March takes no pleasure in the living. Terry renders *pràtica* as “company” in his translation, perhaps to recall the previous stanza, but the term more literally meant both “practice” and “conversation” in March’s time (Faraudo, “Pràtica,” def. 1 and 2); it thus continues the meditation on communication, and renders the silence between March and the living as a failure of imagination (“D’imaginar mon estat són esquius”).<sup>21</sup> As we will see, the confrontation with death in this poem seems to revive the poet’s lyric imagination, as he here accuses the joyous crowds of the lack of imagination that plagued poem X’s amnesiac version of himself.

The question of desire returns March, as always, to his hylemorphic schemes. His imagination may be intact, but love is attacking both his intellect and body, inflicting pain worse than that inflicted on Tityos by the vulture,

car és hun verm qui romp la mia pensa,  
altre lo cor, qui may cessen de romper,  
e llur treball no·s porà enterrompre  
sinó ab ço que d’aver se defensa. (21-4)

... for one worm gnaws my thoughts, another my heart, and neither rests, and their work  
can only be interrupted by that which is forbidden to me. (45)

Unrequited love – the absence of his lady’s “mercy” – causes a suffering that overwhelms March in body and soul and somehow prevents the release of death. Meanwhile, the figure of the worm, which represents a pain more severe than the pagan vulture, moves the poem into ascetic-monastic discursive territory, recalling more than anything Bernard of Clairvaux’s figuration of conscience in “On Conversion”: “Let us not meanwhile resent the gnawing of that worm within.

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<sup>21</sup> It also recalls the possible pun on “àbit” as both the penitent’s sackcloth and the affective “habit” of melancholy in poem CXIV.

Nor let a dangerous tenderness of mind or pernicious softness persuade us that we want to hide our present trouble. It is far better for it to gnaw now, when it can be destroyed by gnawing itself to death” (V.7). The “conversion” of Bernard’s title marks a boundary between ascetic Christian self-knowledge and Platonic models of return to the truth: “[T]he function of self-knowledge in Christianity is not to turn back to the self in an act of recollection in order to discover the truth it had once contemplated and the being that it is: rather, as I said a moment ago, if we turn round on the self, it is essentially and fundamentally in order to renounce the self” (Foucault 256). We should expect, then, March to hope that his two devouring worms finish the job, but the imagined confrontation with death in this poem belongs to the strain of March’s thought that is skeptical of salvation:

E si la mort no·m dugués tal offense  
 – ffer mi absent d’una tan placent vista –,  
 no li graesch que de tera no vista  
 lo meu cors nuu, qui de plaer no pensa  
 de perdre pus que lo ymaginar  
 los meus desigs no poder-se complir;  
 e si·m cove mon derrer jorn finir,  
 seran donats tremens a ben amar. (25-32)

And (even) if death did not inflict such a penalty – to deprive me of so pleasant a sight – I should not thank it for not clothing in earth my naked body, which expects to lose no other pleasure than that of imaging that my desires will never be achieved; and if I must end my last day, there will also be an end to good loving. (45)

The lyric imagination that survives in the poet subjected to Love and his lady has, as its object, only the unfulfillment cited by Menocal as central to courtly poetry (see chapter one). The lost “pleasant sight” of the lady’s body – March is not praising here her invisible intellect – is a consequence of the poet’s imagining of his own death, not the apparently real death that inspired the *Cants de Mort*. The poet’s own body is “clothed” in earth – the material of grief rather than the sackcloth of penitence from poem XCIV – its visibility emphasized by the repetition of

“vista” at the end of line 26 (referring to the “clothing” of the poet’s cadaver with earth, rather than the “sight” of the lady’s body in line 25). This imagined end to the poet’s life implies a true end to poetic composition, at least that tied to the system of “good love,” *ben amar*.

In fact, March persists in imagining the consequences of his death, and his lady’s imagined grief resuscitates *fin’ amor*’s tropic pleasure in pain through an image of compassion:

E si·n lo cel Déu me vol allogar,  
part veur·a Ell, per complir mon delit  
serà mester que·m sia dellay dit  
que d’esta mort vos ha plagut plorar,  
penedint·vos com per poqua mercé  
mor l’ignoscent e per amar·vos martre:  
cell qui lo cors de l’arma vol departre,  
si ferm cregués que us dolrríeu de se. (33-40)

And if God wishes me to dwell in Heaven, apart from seeing Him, for my pleasure to be complete, it will be necessary for them to tell me there that it has pleased you to shed tears at my death, repenting that, because of your meager favours, there dies an innocent man and a martyr to loving you: he who would (gladly) separate body from soul, if he could really believe that you would pity him. (45)

Pleasure and pain are joined here not only in the poet’s imagining of death as the culmination of his pleasure, but also in the alliterative “vos ha plagut plorar” of line 35. The poet’s assumed salvation places the lady’s salvation in question, as she takes on the penitent role elsewhere occupied by March.<sup>22</sup> At the same time, the poet becomes the audience for the communication figured by March in the poem’s opening stanza (“serà mester que·m sia dellay dit”); his community with the dead is complementary to his lady’s grief. This grief, in turn, has replaced the *mercé* of good love, as the fact of the poet’s death again overwhelms hylemorphic *fin’ amor* through the dense phonic group of *amar/martre/arma* in lines 38-9. The sacrifice of the troubadoursque love martyr is recontextualized within the discourse of Christian salvation, and the poem’s *envoi* turns around questions of belief and faith:

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<sup>22</sup> Readers should not overlook the humor of the sacrilegious understatement of “part veur·a Ell,” “apart from seeing Him,” whose one hemistich is dwarfed by the poet’s almost juvenile delight in his lady’s imagined regret.

Lir entre carts, vós sabeu e yo sé  
que·s pot bé fer hom morir per amor;  
creure de mi, que só en tal dolor,  
no fareu molt que y doneu plena fe. (41-4)

Lily among thorns: we both know that a man may well die of love; the least you can do is believe with all your heart that my suffering is as great as I say. (45)

Terry's translation elides the similarity implied by the poet's plainspoken and emphatic "you know and I know" ("vós sabeu e yo sé"), which implies in turn that questions of desire (since "[e]veryone seeks and desires his like") do not lose their relevance in the context of salvation. The lady's belief here seems to stand in for the audience's, who perhaps will now be able to imagine the poet's state of mind. Empathetic grief here is thus presented as a way out of courtly love's hylemorphic tangle, but March's solution will change when that grief becomes his own.

***The Cants de Mort: "... mescladament partirem nostres cossos."***

March's *Cants de Mort* represent both the poet's deepest exploration of the conflict between reason and passion, body and soul, but also his most daring escape to exhaust the ethical paradigm in which that conflict was central. March brings his grief at his beloved's death to bear lyrically on all of the philosophical structures that have dominated his *cants d'amor*: carnal, spiritual, and mixed love; memory, will, and understanding; pleasure and pain. The analysis focuses sometimes on love, sometimes on grief; March considers the fate of his own and his beloved's souls and bodies. But what might seem like the apotheosis of March's Scholastic inclination is in fact its end. Grief leads March's lyrical subject to a new self-awareness as a potentially *shared* subject, sharing in particular its will through its capacity for compassion. This shared, compassionate subject moves March beyond the ethical paradigms, courtly and

Scholastic, that had opposed virtuous spirit to sinful flesh, and the passions become a means to the salvation, rather than damnation, of body and spirit.

Poem XCII, the first of the *Cants de Mort* according to Pagès's order but probably the last to be written (see below) concludes with an almost certainly sacrilegious image of shared perception and shared will: "Lo jorn del Juhy, quant pendrem carn e ossos, / mescladament partirem nostres cossos" (249-50) "On the Day of Judgement, when we take on flesh and bone, we shall share out our bodies without distinction" (99). This final image is March's attempt to escape the moral conflicts of courtly love through a reimagination of a will whose subject is the lovers, not the lover. It is certainly not Christian in an orthodox sense, but perhaps there is an echo here of Christ, who, for monastic thinkers such as Bernard of Clairvaux, incarnated divine mercy more perfectly precisely because his body housed two natures (because Christ's human nature allowed him to suffer, it taught him to suffer with us). March, going farther than Pedro de Corral and the Constable, imagines a kind of compassionate subjectivity made conscious of itself *as shared* through death. His few poetic inheritors did not follow him down this particular road, but perhaps March's defiantly sacrilegious reimagination of the Resurrection, spurred by his grief at the discovery of mortal truth, can serve as a model for a new communitarian subjectivity. I will return to poem XCII shortly, but in order to see how March arrives at this communitarian model, we must first examine another *Cant de Mort*, poem XCVII, whose overwhelming concern is the fate of the beloved's soul, reflecting the broader concern for salvation evident throughout the *Cants de Mort*.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> On salvation in XCVII in particular, see Archer, "Against Consolation" 148. For a perceptive overview of the entire series of the *Cants de Mort*, see Zimmerman, "Els 'Cants de Mort'."

In poem XCVII, March does not present his anguish in altruistic terms, instead returning to the ethical examination of his own status as lover. Thus, the poem begins with the poet accusing himself of insufficient love in the aftermath of his wife's death:

Si per null temps creguí ser amador,  
en mi coneix d'amor poch sentiment.  
Si mi compar al comú de la gent,  
és veritat qu'en mi trob gran amor;  
però si quart algú del temps passat  
y el que Amor pot fer en loch dispost,  
nom d'amador solament no m'acost,  
car tant com dech no só passionat. (1-8)

If at any time I thought myself a lover, I can recognize little feeling of love in myself. If I compare myself to the majority of people, it is true that I find great love within me; but if I consider any (lover) from the past and what Love can do in a place which is prepared (for it), I simply cannot aspire to the name of lover, for I am not as passionate as I should be. (109)

As this stanza reveals, March continues to consider idealized love through questions of what is and is not shared. This is evident not only in the explicit comparison to the "common people," whose love pales in comparison to that felt by the poet, but also in the poet's consideration of his place in a tradition of lovers ("però si quart algú del temps passat") and in lexical choices around variations of *par/part*, as in line three's "compar." The experience of an apparently real death makes the question of a poetic tradition more, rather than less, relevant in March's introspection. He wonders if he can consider himself a lover, but he aspires to the *name* of lover, to be *known as* a lover.

The lyric portrayal of the lady's death focuses, however, on what can be shared between two lovers. Here, a final memory occasions a reflection on compassion:

Enquer està que la vida no finí,  
com prop la mort yo la viu acostar,  
dient plorant: "No vullau mi lexar,  
hajau dolor de la dolor de mi!"  
¡O cor malvat d'aquell qui's veu tal cas,

com pecejat o sens sanch no roman!  
Molt poc·amor e pietat molt gran  
degra bastar que senyal gran mostràs. (17-24)

(Her) life had still not come to an end when I saw her draw near to death, saying with tears: "Please do not leave me, have pity on my suffering!" O wretched heart of him who finds himself in such a situation, since it is not broken into pieces or left without blood! Little love and great pity should be enough for it to show great signs. (109-11)

March narrates here the lady's actual transition to spiritual invisibility. He sees his lady approach death fearfully ("prop la mort yo la viu acostar"), just as he, in lines 7-8, is wracked with doubt in his own approach to the name of "lover." The theme is emphasized in his reference to the heart of him who sees himself ("qui-s veu") in a similar situation. The approach of death also reverses the traditional courtly roles, as the lady's direct speech (extremely rare throughout March's poetry) is a macabre imitation of the lover's plea for mercy: "No vullau mi lexar, / hajau dolor de la dolor de mi!" Here, compassion becomes the figure for the subjected will, the latter emphasized in the command "no vullau."

In this moment of extremity, pity or mercy replaces love as the central unifier.

Compassion is the matter of the final attempt to stay together. The rest of the poem, however, explores compassion's inadequacy (carved harshly into the poet's memory) to the task:

¿Qui serà·quell qui la mort planyerà,  
d'altre u de ssi, tant com és lo gran mal?  
Sentir no·s pot lo dampnatge mortal,  
molt menys lo sab qui mort jamés temptà.  
¡O cruell mal, donant departiment  
per tots los temps als coratges units!  
Mos sentiments me trob esbalaÿts,  
mon spirit no té son sentiment. (32-40)

Who will mourn for death, his own or another's, such is the great evil? One cannot feel the mortal injury; he whom death never tempted knows still less of it. O cruel evil, for ever separating hearts (which were) united! I find my feelings stupefied; my spirit has lost its feeling. (111)

Both grief and self-pity are incommensurate with the pain of death, which furthermore is beyond our powers of perception (“Sentir no·s pot lo dampnatge mortal”), even if death has tempted us before – which presumably, March seems to be implying, is the case for any courtly lover. The cruelty of death lies in its splitting, *departiment*, of previously united *coratges*. This latter term, well translated by Terry as “hearts,” could refer to any or all of the passions to which the heart was subject (Faraudo, “Coratge,” def.). Death is no longer the occasion for hypothetical compassion, but rather for real separation: whereas before the lover proclaimed his willingness to die by separating his own soul from his body (XIII.39-40), here death separates two united spirits. The poet’s *sentiments* no longer silence him; rather, they themselves are “stupefied” in this separation.

These vanished *sentiments* are contrasted in the poem’s final stanzas with the poet’s passion, *passió*, which cannot be alleviated by his friends’ compassion (*complanyiment*, lines 41-2). The poet is now only accompanied by his sad memory of his beloved’s life, whose pain he tries to match with his own grief: “en tristor visch, de sa vida membrant, / e de sa mort aytant com puch me dull” (51-2) “I live in sadness, remembering her life, and I mourn her death as best I can” (111).<sup>24</sup> The poet’s will is subjected to that of his own grief: “No bast en més, en mi no puch fer pus, / sinó·behir lo que ma dolor vol” (53-4) “I cannot do more: all I can do is obey what my grief demands” (111). The best state to which this self-subjection can lead, however, is absolute isolation, as the poem’s *envoi* shows:

Tot amador d’amar poch no s’escús  
que sia viu, e mort lo seu amat,  
o que almenys del món visca·partat,  
que solament haja nom de resclús. (57-60)

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<sup>24</sup> Rubio calls this the “tragic” memory of the *Cants de Mort* (“De Llull a March” 121), arguing for an exact equation between memory and grief in this series of poems (“Les tres potències” 158). As this poem in particular shows, however, March’s grief is inadequate, in his own estimation, to the tragic memory of his lady’s life and death.



No lover can escape the charge of loving little if he remains alive when the one he loves is dead; or he should at least live in retirement from the world and be known only as a hermit. (113)

The *envoi*'s "nom de resclús" stands in obvious contrast to the opening stanza's "nom d'amador." Ultimately, poem XCVII shows the poet's failed subjection to his dying lady's grief, and thereafter his realization that subjection to his own grief is insufficient for establishing empathetic continuity. This insufficiency is emphasized in the sentence that the failed lover should live as a hermit, *apartat* from the rest of humanity – echoing in life the *departiment* brought about by death. This poem narrates, then, the failure to overcome death through empathetic grief, and the hermit-lover of its *envoi* is a failed reflection of the anchorite. Poem XCII, in contrast, portrays an attempt to imagine postmortem unity within an economy of Christian salvation.

As I mentioned above, poem XCII is the first of the *Cants de Mort* in Pagès's ordering, but some critics, citing its lexical style, formal structure, and treatment of the question of time, have argued that it was the last to be written.<sup>25</sup> At 250 lines, it is among March's longer poems, and many critics have sought to explicate its complex structure. Some see a clear progression, from death to God and from "bodily" to "intellectual" (Sobrer, "The Architecture" 274 and 277), while others detect a pivot toward the middle, with *pietat* becoming central from the twelfth stanza on (Terry, "Per la mort" 235). Sobrer sees in the poem's many antitheses the structure of a church nave, along which the reader progresses toward God in a "process of conversion" ("The Architecture" 274).<sup>26</sup> As we have seen, Christian processes of conversion in the ascetic-monastic model tend to lead toward a final denial of the self. This is not the case, however, in poem XCII;

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<sup>25</sup> See, for example, Ramírez i Molas, *La poesia* 296. For a contrasting view, see Terry, "Per la mort" 231.

<sup>26</sup> More broadly, Cocozzella sees in all of March's poetry the intuition that "the symbiosis between the human and the divine is effected, metaphysically, through the mediacy of suffering," allowing erotic love to be perfected, through the human lover's *imitatio Christi*, into a kind of *agape* ("Ausiàs March's *Imitatio*" 433).

rather, the poem ends with a striking affirmation, drawing on biblical and Augustinian models as an answer to the paradigms of courtly ethics, of a self shared eternally between two lovers.

The contradictory nature of this *Cant de Mort* cannot be denied, but neither can it be reduced to a series of antitheses. Rather, the poem has a cyclical structure, as the poet tries to explain the feelings of love that have survived his lady's death in hylemorphic terms, fails, and tries again. In the first stanza, March describes the role of grief in preserving memory:

Aquelles mans que jamés perdonaren  
han ja romput lo fil tenant la vida  
de vós, qui sou de aquest món exida,  
segons los fats en secret ordenaren.  
Tot quant yo veig, e sent, dolor me torna,  
dant-me recort de vós, qui tant amava.  
En ma dolor si prim e bé·s cercava,  
se trobarà que delit s'i contorna;  
donchs, durarà, puys té qui la sostinga,  
car sens delit dolor crey no·s retinga. (1-10)

Those hands which never pardoned have now broken the thread which held the life of you who have left this world, as the fates secretly decreed. All that I see and feel turns to grief, reminding me of you, whom I loved so much. In my suffering, if one looks closely, one will find that pleasure is mixed with it; therefore my suffering will endure, since it has something to sustain it, for, without pleasure, I believe suffering does not remain. (85)

The poem's opening thus figures death's mercilessness in corporal terms ("Aquelles mans"), while the poet's sensations – particularly sight – are converted to grief. March discerns an element of pleasure in his grief, this troubadouresque note accented by the use of *trobar* in line 8. This epistemological grief (in that sensations and memory are the roots of cognition in medieval psychology) becomes, appropriately enough, a matter for investigation ("si prim e bé·s cercava"). Once again, then, the fellowship March sought among the dead becomes a matter of introspection in his own moment of grief. Here, then, March echoes Pedro de Corral's

observation that grief functions both individually and collectively, but he reaffirms individual grief's capacity to unite.

Each of the next four stanzas repeats, with slight variations, the idea that now that March's love has died, only his spiritual love will remain. Carnal love is no longer possible, and mixed love will eventually die out despite its partial participation in the spiritual. March insists twice that his "honest" love will last forever (19-20 and 29-30), but in his final reworking of the claim, his certainty disappears:

Aquell voler qu'en ma carn sola·s causa,  
si no és mort, no tardarà que muyra;  
l'altre per qui dol contínuu m'abuyra,  
si·m deffaleix, no serà sens gran causa.  
Ell pot ser dit voler concupiscible,  
e sol durar, puys molt de l'arma toque,  
e d'un costat és apetit sensible.  
Aquests volers l'amor honesta·m torben,  
perqu'entre mal e bé mes penses orben. (41-50)

That desire which arises from my flesh alone, if it is not dead, will not be long in dying; that other (desire) by which I am watered with continual suffering, if it fails in me, it will not be without great cause. It may be called concupiscible desire, and generally lasts, since it greatly concerns the soul, but it fails in time, since it does not call upon virtue, and in part is sensual appetite. These desires disturb honest love in me, since, between good and evil, they blind my thoughts. (87-9)

March's confident assertions of his spiritual love's survival are replaced here by an admission of confusion, instability, and blindness ("entre mal e bé mes penses orben"). Sight had earlier been associated with the carnal, but here the association is reversed. His blindness seems to explain the confused nature of his apparently philosophical exploration of his grief: March's formal Scholastic vocabulary cannot shape the confused matter presented to it by his grieving senses. How then can we explain the continued effort to express his grief in these terms?

To begin to answer this question, we should recall that while March's theory of love combines courtly and Scholastic ideas, his psychology is thoroughly Augustinian. The

compositional approach of poem XCII, in which ideas are tried out, expressed fully, but eventually rejected or overwritten, recalls Augustine's search for the divine image in the *Trinity*. Augustine continually proposes and disqualifies Trinitarian structures he finds in the human mind and perception before settling on the self-conscious activity of the mind's three powers, and in the end he rejects even this final image, affirming humanity's fundamental dissimilarity from the divine (XV.39). The structure of the *Trinity*, then, anticipates the "apophasis-by-kataphasis" (Burrus and MacKendrick 81) of negative theology. Augustine, by saying everything about the Trinitarian structure of the mind, ultimately exposes its absolute incommensurability with the divine Persons. It is my argument, then, that March engages in a similar maneuver in poem XCII, saying everything about the hylemorphic theory of love in order to demonstrate its insufficiency in the task of describing love, an insufficiency exposed by the experience of grief.

In the middle part of the poem, March tries out various descriptions of the relationship of body and soul. The first are traditional, laying out in the clearest of terms their contrary natures, although they are combined in one being. As in the case of the stanzas on spiritual love, however, the picture is complicated by grief:

Lo loch on jau la dolor gran que passe  
no és del tot fora de mes naturales,  
ne del tot és for a de lurs clausures;  
lo movement creu que per elles passé.  
Aquell voler qu'en mi no troba terme  
és lo mijà per on dolor m'agreuja;  
l'estrem d'aquest fora natur·alleuja,  
ffort e punyent, mas encansable verme.  
Oppinió falssa per tots és dita,  
Que fora nós e dintre nós habita. (71-80)

The place where lies the great suffering I experience is not entirely beyond my own natures, nor is it entirely beyond their confines; I believe that the motive (for my suffering) passes through them. That (other) desire which in me has no limit is the means

by which my suffering is increased: its opposite lies outside nature, a strong and piercing, but relentless, worm. A wrong opinion is voiced by people in general, since it dwells both outside and inside us. (89)

This is March's most explicit statement of grief's ability to pierce not only through his own body, but through the structures of thought according to which he understands his own embodiment. The endless desire ("Aquell voler qu'en mi no troba terme") that provokes the poet's grief is both inner and outer, its outer extreme figured as a tireless worm (77-8). In poem XIII, two worms attacked the poet's body and spirit; here, the poet realizes that the worm is one and that it exceeds poem XIII's hylemorphic scheme. This, then, is the "false opinion" expressed by others.

March turns here to pity's role in grief and cognition:

De pietat de sa mort ve que·m dolga,  
e só forçat que mon mal haj·a plànyer;  
tant he perdut, que bé no·m pot atànyer,  
Ffortuna ja no té què pus me tolga.  
Quant ymagín les voluntats hunides  
y ell converssar, separats per a sempre,  
penssar no pusch ma dolor haja tempre,  
mes passions no trob gens aflaquides;  
e si per tempts ells passer havien,  
vengut és temps que començar devien. (111-20)

Out of pity I come to grieve for her death and I am compelled to lament my misfortune; I have lost so much that no good can reach me: Fortune has no more to take away from me. When I imagine our united wills and our conversation, now separated for ever, I cannot think my grief will ever know moderation: I do not find my sufferings have decreased at all; and if some day they were to pass, the time for this to begin has now arrived. (91)

Having rejected the received doctrine on ethical love in the preceding stanzas, March declares himself subject to the passions that should have faded with the death of his beloved's body. The poet's imagination (related, again, to memory and affect through the concept of *intentio*) is in league with grief, as the poet laments the loss of a unity of will and communication (15-6). His grief remains intemperate and his passions strong; they, and thus his grief, are not going to fade,

not going to give way to the spiritual love that should emerge victorious in the battle between “honest” reason and the passions.

It was not, then, during the time of earthly love that March’s will was disordered; rather, disorder and confusion have emerged in the wake of his lady’s earthly demise. As Virginia Burrus and Karmen MacKendrick have argued, in examining Augustine’s view of the resurrection of the body, Augustine’s ideal resurrected will would not be bereft of the body: “The will thus reintegrated would harmonize not only with itself and with God’s will but with the flesh as well” (84-5). We should not be surprised, then, when March’s final plea for divine mercy is resolutely carnal:

O Déu, mercé! Mas no sé de què·t pregue,  
sinó que mi en lo seu loch aculles;  
no·m tardes molt que dellà mi no vulles,  
puy s l’esperit on és lo seu aplegue;  
e lo meu cors, ans que la vida fine,  
sobre lo seu abraçat vull que jaga.  
Fferí’ls Amor de no curable plaga;  
separà’ls Mort: dret és qu·ella·ls vehine.  
Lo jorn del Juhy, quant pendrem carn e ossos,  
mescladament partirem nostres cossos. (241-50)

O mercy, God! But I do not know what to beg of you, except that you (should) gather me to her place; do not delay long in wishing me in the next world, (and) therefore take my spirit where her own resides; and, before my life ends, I wish my body to lie with its arms around hers. Love dealt them an incurable wound; Death separated them: it is right that she should bring them together. On the Day of Judgement, when we take on flesh and bone, we shall share out our bodies without distinction. (99)

The poem’s final image undoubtedly recalls Matthew 19:4-5, in which Christ reminds the Pharisees that man and wife become one flesh, but it recontextualizes the biblical verse, reimagining it literally on the Day of Judgment. The courtly lover’s plea for mercy is also placed into the context of Christian salvation, becoming a prayer. Arthur Terry has argued that in this final image of the Resurrection, the poem’s tensions between body and soul are resolved (“Per

la mort” 240). They are not resolved by removing or even purifying the body, however, but by sharing it. March has not subjected his own will to the divine; rather, he recalls it in his wish to embrace his lover’s corpse before dying himself. In this final image, the *department* of death has inspired March’s conception of a future, eternal sharing: *partirem*, “we will share.”

Pere Ram3rez i Molas has called this last image “rhetorical” in the sense that it must be an exaggeration meant to stoke the audience’s emotion (*La poesia* 278). March’s preferred rhetorical approach, however, is the ethical appeal, and here, his introspection has left him, and his audience, beyond the hylemorphic doctrine that dominated erotic and moral thought in fifteenth-century Iberia. He is able to imagine the innermost activities of his soul subjected to the will of another, and in this poem, he imagines a lover’s salvation in which divine mercy allows the shared will to inhabit a shared body. Compassion is not just a possibility added to moral reasoning within hylemorphic structures; it explodes those structures as March’s lyric exhausts them through *kataphasis*. If this ethical appeal succeeds in stirring the audience’s compassion, they – and we – might imagine an ethical paradigm in which affective unity constitutes a new form of communitarian subjectivity. Neither literature nor philosophy would take this course as the fifteenth century gave way to the sixteenth, but perhaps now, when the thought of affect and community seeks to consolidate itself beyond modern notions of subjectivity, we can seek to take up the promise of this earlier articulation of compassionate participation.

## CONCLUSION

### OBLIGATION, GRIEF, COMPASSION

Loss has made a tenuous “we” of us all.  
– Judith Butler, *Prearious Life*

I began this project with the goal of finding a way to read the expressions of emotion in the courtly literature of fifteenth-century Iberia without reducing them to tropic instantiations or glimpses of an emergent psychological realism. To this end, I developed the concept of the affective community, drawing on a genealogy of the concepts of affect, rhetoric, and community as they came down to writers in the particular courtly tradition of this particular time. The predominance of Stoic and monastic ideas in this inheritance made it clear, as I have argued, that the affective rhetoric of the period’s historiographic romance, sentimental fiction, and courtly poetry constituted a method of intervening in the ethical and political debates surrounding developing notions of community throughout the Iberian Peninsula. The preceding chapters are devoted to a detailed articulation of particular manifestations of this method – although they are certainly not the only ones that could be adduced and analyzed.

As I developed my particular account of affective communities in medieval Iberian literature, I became interested in its implications for broader contemporary debates about affect and community. In this conclusion, I want to outline some ways in which the discussions of the preceding chapters are relevant to these debates. I am certainly not the first to suggest that medieval Iberia makes an interesting reference point for ongoing political debates and theoretical



discussions, particularly around culture and conflict.<sup>1</sup> Of course, the unique historical circumstances of interconfessional coexistence that obtained throughout the Iberian Middle Ages have evoked the most contemporary research; the fact that Iberia was home to three proto-national communities whose paths would diverge widely in the centuries to come has also been of interest. Through an examination of the intellectual and literary history that accompanied these circumstances, I have tried to show that Iberian authors approached questions of affect and community in ways that were not circumscribed by events but rather sought to forge new possibilities.

The contemporary critical debates about affect and community both pose themselves the same challenge: how to define and articulate their core concepts after the so-called death of the subject. Who or what does the feeling once the subject is no more (Terada 1-3)? On what basis can a postsubjective community be constituted (Esposito 2; Nancy 6-7)? With particular regard to the communitarian debate, to the conceptual problem of the death of the subject one must add the historical problems of (the end of) communism and twentieth-century totalitarianism (Nancy 1-3; Blanchot 1-3). The melancholy provoked by the first problem and the lingering trauma of the second have led to conceptual projects that seek to avoid the politics of shared affect or shared effort (hence Nancy's "inoperative" community).

The *Crónica sarracina*, the *Sátira de felice e infelice vida*, and Ausiàs March's poetry thus have the purely historical advantage of having been conceived and composed during a period that predates, on the whole, modern notions of subjectivity. As I have shown, each work elaborates concepts of political and personal communitarian ethics that are not the exclusive domain of self-conscious monads. The fact that these literary projects were not immediately successful – even March, widely admired by his contemporaries and into the sixteenth century as

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<sup>1</sup> See Martín and Pinet 4.

both a poet and a philosopher, had few poetic epigones – constitutes their promise as spurs to contemporary thought:

If forgetting often preserves, if negligence sometimes becomes a superior form of memory, then it is absolutely necessary to recognize that some ideas return before they happen: these ideas never found their center of resonance, not so much in the time of their birth as in that time in which we believe we have caused their rebirth. These ideas were simply never well understood. What's more, they are as new now, no more or less, as when they existed five centuries ago. They have their own currency and govern their own permanence, that of the mental space in which they were formed and which, in this case, neither was nor is contemporary to any other. These thoughts are still waiting to be shared, waiting for an audience. It would therefore be vain to evoke for them the notion of a "return," even a violent one. It is we who should answer their call, we who should make the journey, we who should enter into their time. (Libera 71-2)

Corral, the Constable, and March elaborated notions of community that are still "new" in this sense, and it is for us to answer their call. Their development of ideas of mutual obligation, political grief, shared suffering, and the relationality of compassion are of particular relevance.

Some of the best known contemporary theoretical approaches to community have eschewed traditional political philosophy in favor of what Robert Esposito calls "that more radical terrain of ontology," where it becomes clear that "the community isn't joined to an addition but to a subtraction of subjectivity" (158). Esposito's approach fuses ontology and etymology, and his exploration of the etymology of *communitas* (3-6) reveals, through its constituent *munus* ("duty," "office," "gift"), the term's conceptual grounding in obligation: "What predominates in the *munus* is, in other words, reciprocity or 'mutuality' (*munus-mutuus*) of giving that assigns the one to the other in an obligation" (5). As we saw in chapters one and three, the different kingdoms of medieval Iberia shaped Stoic ideas about duties and favors to fit their own communitarian circumstances. In Portugal, the Infante Pedro reenvisioned Seneca's *De Beneficiis* in terms of feudal *bemquerença*; the apparently archaic social model featured in his *Livro da Virtuosa Bemfeitoria* was nonetheless the product of a young political dynasty

articulating the principles of its own exercise of power. The treatises discussed in chapter one also advanced theories of communal obligation grounded in friendship and communication. The very distance between these conceptualizations of political life and what we know of its historical reality is grounds for reflection on the obligation that, for Esposito, is not a communitarian ideal but rather the “radical” definition of community itself.

Other ontological approaches to community have identified death and grief as its defining features. Thus, Nancy has written that community presents its members with their “mortal truth,” a truth that reveals their fundamental self-difference:

Community is revealed in the death of others; hence it is always revealed to others. Community is what takes place always through others and for others. It is not the space of the *egos* – subjects and substances that are at bottom immortal – but of the *I*'s, who are always *others* (or else are nothing). If community is revealed in the death of others it is because death itself is the true community of *I*'s that are not *egos*. It is not a communion that fuses the *egos* into an *Ego* or a higher *We*. It is the community of *others*. The genuine community of mortal beings, or death as community, establishes their impossible communion. Community therefore occupies a singular place: it assumes the impossibility of its own immanence, the impossibility of a communitarian being in the form of a subject. (15)

For Nancy, this portrait of community's being supplants mythical accounts of the recuperation of lost communities (9). In the *Crónica sarracina*, however, we have an example of a revelation of community through death that is nonetheless deeply tied to mythic loss. Through a reappropriation of historical narrative, a political community is exposed to the mythic deaths – Rodrigo's the most mythic of all – that constitute their future communal possibilities. The representation of death is here carried out in the service of a project of political self-realization.

The *Crónica sarracina* is, as I have read it, a call for collective mourning, and this call finds a contemporary echo in Judith Butler's description of political grief:

Many people think that grief is privatizing, that it returns us to a solitary situation and is, in that sense, depoliticizing. But I think it furnishes a sense of political community of a

complex order, and it does this first of all by bringing to the fore the relational ties that have implications for theorizing fundamental dependency and ethical responsibility. (22)

This is part of a broader argument – described by Butler as “an insurrection at the level of ontology” (33) – that seeks to ground a broad political community in our physical dependence and physical vulnerability as human beings (31). Here, the ontological approach finds a strange reflection in pragmatism, as Richard Rorty grounds his own appeal for broad human solidarity not in the “recognition of a core self, the human essence,” but rather in a similar capacity for “pain and humiliation” (192). These appeals to shared vulnerability or shared suffering raise the question of compassion as a political force. As we have seen, this question was approached in fifteenth-century Iberia through the Stoic opposition of reason and the passions, according to which one could give an account of merciful action that did not imply the emotional response of compassion. In a contemporary defense of political compassion, Martha Nussbaum has eloquently restated the terms of this debate:

The debate over compassion constructs, in effect, two visions of political community and of the good citizen and judge within it. One vision is based upon the emotions; the other urges their removal. One sees the human being as both aspiring and vulnerable, both worthy and insecure; the other focuses on dignity alone, seeing in reason a boundless and indestructible worth. One sees the central task of community as the provision of support for basic needs; bring human beings together through the thought of their common weakness and risk, it constructs a moral emotion that is suited to supporting efforts to aid the worst off. The other sees a community as a kingdom of free responsible beings, held together by the awe that they feel for the worth of reason in one another; the function of their association will be to assist the moral development of each by judgments purified of passion. (367-8)

Here, the erotic pessimism of the courtly tradition pushed the Constable and March away from an account of humans as “free responsible beings.” They were not motivated by pessimism alone, however; rather, their recognition of affect’s potency led them to seek a positive role for compassion in the constitution of political communities. The public aspects of their thought were expressed in largely, or even exclusively, private terms. However, the private world they

approached through allegory was not identical to the psychological self-certainty of the modern subject. March in particular, as I showed in chapter four, combined an awareness of death's centrality in community with a rethinking of compassion that suggests that what is most private in us, the soul, is in fact shared. For Nancy, the figure of the "lovers" reveals "the exposition of singular beings to one another and the pulse of this exposition: the compearance, the passage, and the divide of sharing" (38). In March, this sharing – which transcends grief – is the surprising answer to death's anguish within an economy of salvation, and at the same time a way to escape from the very opposition of reason and the passions that characterized the political and ethical debate about compassion.

Indeed, probably the best known twentieth-century challenge to ontology characterized its central proposition as "religion":

The relation with the other (*autrui*) is not therefore ontology. This tie to the other (*autrui*), which does not reduce itself to the representation of the Other (*autrui*) but rather to his invocation, where invocation is not preceded by comprehension, we call *religion*. The essence of discourse is prayer. What distinguishes thought aiming at an object from the tie with a person is that the latter is articulated in the vocative: what is named is at the same time that which is called. (Levinas 7-8)

Curiously, Levinas's prayerful discourse finds an echo in Habermas's discourse ethics, whose ethical productivity depends on a conception of cognition itself as inherently intersubjective and dialogical (9 and 68). These notions of a fundamentally intersubjective ethics can be problematized through a close examination of the workings of allegory in courtly ethical deliberation. The authors I have studied were not satisfied by the content of the ethical discourse they inherited, but its allegorical modality was central to their literary exploration and advocacy of moral innovation. This literary approach is indeed dialogical, through its invocation of shared tropes and a shared vocabulary (and sometimes literally, in poetic debates), but it also portrays self-difference (and not a relation to the Other) as an adequate basis for communitarian ethics.

March finally discovered that this self-difference was not a basis for exclusion from both carnal and spiritual participation, through compassion, in the being of another. As I have mentioned, this participation takes place within a Christian framework, and the explorations of epistemological and ethical participation I have described in Corral and the Constable are also informed by the monastic tradition. This tradition forms the unspoken basis for some contemporary Christian approaches to community. For example, Enrique Dussel grounds his conception of community in the double commandment to love God and neighbor: “The essence of Christian life is community, being together with others; and it is also the essence of the Kingdom: ‘being with God,’ face to face with him in community” (15). This conception of community, in turn, gives rise to a definition of personhood in which *praxis*, “human action oriented toward another human person” (16), is fundamental; in Dussel’s communitarian ethics, we “in a way” cease to be people when we are alone (17).

Ultimately, the connection of practical wisdom to community through affect, which survives in Dussel’s communitarian ethics, was central to the vast majority of courtly literature in fifteenth-century Iberia. And, as in Dussel’s model, this literature found its highest ethical expression in conceptions of interiority that were essentially intersubjective. These conceptions, in turn, gave rise to a thought of community founded on shared affect and passionate participation. Corral, the Constable, and March went further in their literary articulations of these forms of community than the political and moral theorists of their period. Indeed, it was only in combining courtly poetics with Stoic and monastic thought that these writers were able to transcend all three in their various visions of compassionate community.

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