A Chorus of Laughing People: Bakhtin's Subversive Voices

in *Tirant lo Blanch*

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Abstract

This thesis argues that *Tirant lo Blanch* is a subversive text that undermines various forms of authority. Subversion is understood to be that which transgresses or restructures an accepted centre, or official discourse, and forces the reader to reconsider new perspectives, recalibrating the old and challenging the new. In my reading of *Tirant*, I contend that the use of multiple social voices in the text creates a divergent perspective to the unitary view that was prevalent in society during the fifteenth century. I read *Tirant* in its fifteenth-century context to draw out the subversiveness of these divergent literary techniques. This kind of approach takes up Giambattista Vico's suggestion that context is indispensable to criticism, because a set of universal ideas pertain to groups of people at certain times in history.

These universal ideas must be taken into account so that we can read the text both with new eyes and in its context. To draw out how certain thematic antagonisms in *Tirant* destabilise an authoritative, canonical view of the world, I read *Tirant* through Bakhtin's theories of the novel: unraveling a fifteenth-century chivalric novel through twentieth-century literary theory. The reasoning behind this is that Bakhtin's theories allow us a better understanding of the function of subversion in the text.

In Chapter One, I contend that the intertextuality in *Tirant* undermines canonic texts. This contention is undertaken through Bakhtin's dialogic and polyphonic theories. Here I discuss the use in *Tirant* of Enric de Villena's *Los dotze treballs d'Hèrcules* and Ramon Llull's the *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria*. The intertextual subversion that occurs is a function of simultaneous convergence and divergence between different literary voices. In Chapter Two, I show how eroticism undermines existing hierarchies in the text. Bakhtin's carnivalesque and grotesque provide models through which to interrogate this, especially in relation to the challenge to power and the creation of a new reality. The four main subversions discussed are the challenge to political authority, religious hierarchy, the sexual/gender order in society, and against the institution of chivalry.
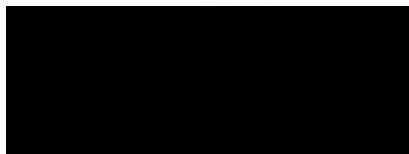
Therefore, the main finding of the thesis is that subversion is a driving force in *Tirant*. While Rafael Alemany Ferrer and Josep Lluís Martos Sánchez previously hinted at a possible subversive

intent in the use of Ramon Llull in *Tirant*, this point was never elaborated upon in great detail. This thesis breaks new ground and contends that subversion occurs throughout the whole text. The subversive voice should be read as a major factor, especially in relation to hierarchy and power structures, which are almost always undermined. Hierarchies are treated ironically in *Tirant*, as literary tools that can be used to attenuate existing structures. This extends to the authority of the text and the author-function, which are also threatened by the constant intrusion of multiple social languages. In this way, *Tirant* is like the *ouroboros*, devouring its own tail. The subversive voice is an undermining of both the external world and the text itself. The lawless, razed space that remains, where free behaviour and polyphonic language reign, is a space where the traditional centre cannot hold, due to the constantly changing nature of polyphony.

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Signature:

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Acknowledgements

This thesis is dedicated to my wife Lídia – *sine qua non*. Thank you for your unconditional love, honesty and patience. Your constant support has been invaluable and I hope that this work justifies the many hours sacrificed. Dante said it better than I: your heart is "l'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle." This thesis is also dedicated to my daughter Meritxell, who is proof that humanity improves, that Kerouac's ragged and ecstatic joy of pure being is not in some far-off land, but is within each of us.

An enormous debt of gratitude goes to Dr. Stewart King for his constant support during and prior to beginning this undertaking. Stewart provided inspiration, redrafting, and offered rich, new ideas especially in relation to the role of the hero as historically significant and in refining the argument towards the discussion of subversion. His deep expertise in all matters relating to Catalan studies has been indispensable. Dr. Paul Bowker also assisted significantly throughout, offering insightful advice and particularly helped in directing my thoughts towards the body, the grotesque and the theoretical concepts of Mary Douglas, as seen in Chapter Two. He also offered some useful ideas regarding the Other, which have been developed here. Both Stewart and Paul never ceased to surprise me with their hard work and challenging ideas. Dr. Sarah McDonald also assisted in the early stages of the thesis and offered useful advice about the language of violence.

Special thanks is due to the Matheson Library at Monash University for its assistance in finding difficult-to-attain books, to the many websites where old texts have been digitalised, without which a study of a Catalan text from Australia would have been impossible. A thank you to the State Library of Victoria for the use of the Dome Room, where I passed many a late night amongst the ancient republic of letters. Finally, thank you to the people who laid the foundations that led to this road – my parents Dominic and Michèle, who have been my mentors throughout the formative years and who ensured that I received the best possible classical education. I can only hope that this goes some way to paying back their constant love, generosity and belief.

Table of Contents

Introduction

i.   A Chorus of Laughing People.

"All the acts of the drama of world history were performed before a chorus of the laughing people"

(Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World* 474).

In *Tirant lo Blanch* (1460-90), the chorus of the laughing people reverberates through the text as a constant echo of ebullient freedom. The *vox populi* constantly intrudes, juxtaposed against official literary discourses. The absurdity of human existence is set against a chivalric backdrop, alerting us to the ambivalence that developed during the Renaissance between life and structure, between the constant margins of human, language and text. In *Tirant*, various discourses and registers are employed to present marginal voices, creating a multi-voiced text. The drama of history is presented as multiple perspectives inherent in language and, in this way, official discourses cannot dominate the site of address. While this is mostly achieved through dialogue and humour, this laughter is a serious literary device, a continuation of Dicaepolis' contention in Aristophanes' *Acharnians* (425BCE) that "comedy too can sometimes discern what is right. I shall not please, but I will say what is true" (ln.500-1). As will be seen in this thesis, not only are external hegemonies transgressed in *Tirant*, but also the areas of silence. The flow of contradictory ideas challenges the coherence of any structure or ideology that would attempt to simplify ideas like the human, the world and the text. Language is the only form of truth insofar as every story is seen as a valid view of the world: there can never be "the truth," only many truths, or many non-truths. In *Tirant* the book is this site of multiplicity, a space where the world can be reimagined over and over again.

This thesis contends that this reimagining in *Tirant* takes the form of multiple social voices that subvert hegemonic ideas and structures. This subversion is read through Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogic and his other theories of the novel such as polyphony, carnivalesque and the grotesque. The multiple voices

in the text present a conversation between differing perspectives, and when I use the term conversation it is in reference to the Latin term *conversationem*, which is an ideal leitmotif for the dialogue between discourses that occurs in all texts. *Conversationem* derives from the stem *com/cum* and the infinitive *vertere,* which, when combined, literally means to turn around with. The discourses in *Tirant* do indeed move around each other, creating meaning by the way they complement or oppose the other. In its etymologic extension, *conversationem* really means living together with others and keeping company with them (Harper): a combination or working with each other (com) and against each other (versus). In this sense, the ideas in *Tirant* are in a constant conversation, in the most human state of communicative flux where they cannot agree but are also mutually supportive. This is discourse and it occurs on several levels.[1] Bakhtin argues that language does not consist of mere words, but contains worlds and is a verbal-ideological and social belief system (*Dialogic Imagination* 288). The way that these beliefs interact is the subversive *conversationem* in the text, a strong reason for using a dialogic model to read this multiplicity.

Further to this, I will show that the multiple voices/discourses in *Tirant* can be read as subversive because they undermine hegemonic models. Within this is the question of how a Bakhtinian reading enhances our understanding of transgression in general, which ties in to what is new about this thesis. Through my reading of Bakhtinian theory, this thesis offers the first in-depth examination of how subversion functions in *Tirant*, notably through the dialogic, polyphonic, carnivalesque and grotesque.

This thesis is divided into an introduction and two chapters. In the Introduction I present the critical background to *Tirant* and establish some of the reasons for a Bakhtinian reading. The plot and socio-historic context will then be traced out. From there I outline my theoretical argument: that *Tirant* can be read as a dialogic text in the context of subversion. From there, in Chapter One I investigate how the intertextual voice subverts the literary canon. This is read through Bakhtin's polyphony and

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[1] For example, through register, literary styles, colloquial phrases, textual structures, symbolism, character opinions and use of language.

Foucault's discourse, focusing on reading *Tirant* against Enric de Villena's *Els dotze treballs d'Hèrcules* (1417) and Ramon Llull's the *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria* (1274-76). In Chapter Two, the erotic voice, read through Bakhtin's carnivalesque and grotesque, is shown to be dissident because it reimagines binary pairs like high and low, male and female, the beautiful and the ugly, self and Other. Speech and space are also considered to be disruptive forces that push against hegemonic interpretation. This aims to re-position *Tirant* within the plethora of current criticism and to draw attention to the importance of subversion in the text. Reading through the lens of Bakhtin's theory of the novel, I demonstrate that *Tirant* was a "modern" text in the context of fifteenth-century society.

ii. Critical Reception.

Written by Joanot Martorell (1413-68) and Martí Joan de Galba (1440s-90), *Tirant* was published in Valencia in 1490 by the German publisher Nicolau Spindeler.[2] While the full history of the text is unknown, it is believed that Martorell's original manuscript was probably sold to Galba to settle a debt (Chiner Gimeno 157-158; Rubio Vela 72), and later completed by Galba after Martorell's death. It was then published in 1490 after both authors had died. The plot follows the adventures of Tirant, an imaginary Breton knight, and is written in the Valencian language. It is based upon the chivalric model, but in many regards it obliterates the traditional chivalric system in favour of one that celebrates the individual human being as flawed and constantly speaking, unafraid to voice his opinions. This allows for a great number of differing ideas in the text. The geographical world is also vast, shifting from England to France, Sicily, Rhodes, Constantinople and North Africa, recreating important sites of historic consciousness for Valencian readers.

However, there are complexities surrounding the text that prevent easy conclusions. Firstly, a large proportion of the criticism about *Tirant* does not derive from the original Valencian text but comes from two versions: the Catalan translation of 1497 and the Castilian of 1511, both printed by

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[2] The original Valencian text shows the authors' names as Johanot Martorell and Martí Johan de Galba, but in order to follow common usage I will use the normalised Catalan versions of Joanot and Joan throughout this thesis.

Diego de Gumiel and both slightly different from the original text (there were several grammatical and vowel changes from the original). There were also popular versions in Italian and French which informed criticism in those countries. Much previous criticism has tended to avoid discussing the Valencian nature of the text or the role of register.

The second concern is the probability that there were two authors. The best linguistic evidence of two authors in *Tirant* is provided by Joan Coromines' proof of stylistic change ("Sobre l'estil," 370-371) and Alexander Riba Civil's stylometrical analysis of a change of style in *Tirant* between chapters 345-371 (55, 59, 95). There is also ample biographic and textual evidence of the presence of two authors, already extensively documented.[3] Most critics agree that there are differences in language and content, but there is little agreement about which parts were written by Martorell and which by Galba. The majority of critics believe that most chapters were written by separate authors.[4] This is a dilemma in itself and opens up a whole discourse about narrativity, as there may have been sections partly written by both writers.

A cause of constant investigation in *Tirant* studies is the difficulty of establishing why there are internal inconsistencies in the text. It is easier for critics to assume that sections were written separately, as this allows for a coherent analysis with relevant conclusions. However, admitting the presence of two or more authors in the same chapter can open up the possibility that the whole text may be composed of fragments. As Alemany Ferrer observes, whenever a complex element of the text is encountered, critics tend to employ the dual-author theory as a convenient explanation for linguistic or thematic inconsistencies (20). Yet these inconsistencies exist and something more than biographic explanations are required to account for them. The possibility of two coetaneous authors is an element that lends dialogicality to the text. It also means that we need to consider the possibility that the text has more than one centre. This thesis aims to avoid easy answers and to examine the incongruences inside the text for

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[3] See, for example, the following studies: Martí de Riquer gives two authors for the 1947 edition of *Tirant lo Blanc*; Xavier Renau's "Martí Joan de Galba."; Gili i Gaya's "Noves recerques"; *El viure novel·lesc* by Jaume Chiner Gimeno; Coromines; Rafael Bosch's article "Dos llenguatges"; Antoni Ferrando's "Del Tirant"; Hauf, *Tirant* 48.
[4] Exceptions are Cormines, Bosch and Ferrando, who all consider that certain sections were written by two authors. In 1990, Riquer changed his 1947 position, and decided that there was only one author.

their subversive function. This follows on from Alemany Ferrer's argument that *Tirant* presents a diversity of perspectives aimed at the destruction of a historic and literary universe that had reached its zenith ("De la lògica" 247).

While some of the contradictions in *Tirant* can be explained through the dual author phenomenon, to apply the argument roundly would be a mendacious use of the text, a mere avoidance of discussing the reasons for the text's internal contradiction about social issues like faith, chivalry, morality, monarchy, history and sexuality. While it is generally accepted that there were two authors, a comparative analysis of their language and style will always be speculative. For this reason, I will not separate different voices as if they could be explained away. Rather, I see this multi-voicedness as part of the dialogic nature of *Tirant*, because differing forms of address are always intruding on a single interpretation. This cannot be entirely explained by the presence of two authors, because many of the sections believed to have been written by only one author also display high levels of register variation and alternating of discourses. Therefore, to demonstrate the relevance of a dialogic reading, this thesis does not treat the divergent elements of *Tirant* as exceptions, but as factors that were deliberate and subversive.

Reading *Tirant* in this way offers a new approach to understanding the novel, as the majority of criticism has tended to emphasise the text in a Valencian/Catalan tradition. Instead, this thesis argues that it can also be understood through a Bakhtinian dialogic view of the world. There is no one *Tirant* and each generation reinterprets the text to suit its own purposes. The original sits alongside the multifarious new interpretations in popular culture, which are in constant dialogue with the past. Hence, we have not only the text-itself but also the external text-in-the-world, and these two texts are always in discourse. In this way the text can be understood as a physical text and a social text. The universality of *Tirant* for each new generation can be seen in the way it comes to fill the unique space prepared for it by each era.

Tirant is world literature in that it addresses universal issues and presents a collection of micro-stories within a macro-narrative. Yet it also breaks new literary ground and has been considered

stylistically to be a modern novel (Alonso; Vargas Llosa 42, 44), having influenced *Don Quixote* (Chammas Cassar 4), *La Celestina* (Beltrán, "Las bodas" 98), *Orlando Furioso* (Dunlop 402; Rajna 149; Anyó i Oliver 224) and *Much Ado About Nothing* (Dunlop 402). Critics have disagreed about the historiography and biography of *Tirant*, but relatively few have discussed the tools the text uses to invert the existing order. Based on this gap in our knowledge, this thesis will pick up Foucault's observation that what matters is the not the question of how but of "with what," because, in this way, we see the nature of the relationship to power. Within Bakhtin's sociolinguistic approach, I investigate two of these devices in this thesis in particular: intertextuality in Chapter One and eroticism in Chapter Two.

Most writing about *Tirant* has addressed Martorell's biography and the historic implications of the text. The historic approach has been exhaustively treated (Riquer *Aprox.*; Entwhistle "Tirant") and the influence of Martorell's unorthodox biography on the text is constantly investigated in new ways. For example, Chiner Gimeno shows how Martorell was heavily indebted and spent some time in prison because he kidnapped a group of Castilian merchants and held them hostage in Xiva in 1449 (274). Riquer discusses Martorell's *Cartas de batalla* and the royal order to capture him in 1440 (*Aprox.* 85), describing him as "un home bregós, altiu i agressiu i molt pagat de la seva dignitat i de la del seu llinatge i que manifestava el seu orgull cavalleresc de manera extremada i fins i tot una mica teatral" (*Aprox.* 84), as if this somehow altered or shone light on the text. Villalmanzo shows how Francesc Martorell disinherited his eldest son, Galceran, and left all to Joanot, who maintained his three sisters despite being a *segundón* (272). Since such extensive biographic and historical analysis has been undertaken previously, this thesis will avoid repeating what has already been said. These events no doubt add context to certain parts of the text, but the aim of this thesis is not to speculate about possible influences; instead, it seeks to focus on a gap in our knowledge: the way *Tirant* is subversive and dialogic and how different voices are used to undermine hierarchies.

This transgression is partly advanced through the text's relationship with language. The richness of the language in the text has been mentioned on a few occasions. Martí de Riquer notes that *Tirant*

employs "un català ric i variadíssim, adés familiar, adés altament retòric, unes vegades escrit amb seriosa i atenta cura i d'altres improvisant" (*Aprox.* 14). Recent criticism has approached the concept of the multiple social languages in *Tirant*. For example, Peruvian novelist Mario Vargas Llosa dedicated a book of essays to the text, titled *Carta de batalla por Tirant lo Blanc*, in which he refers to *Tirant* as a novel that presents many spoken "languages" typically portrayed in novels (109). Magdalena Llorca Serrano mentions the formulaic nature of register in *Tirant* but only elaborates on the use of *lletres d'amor* and *lletres de batalla* (59). This thesis will therefore expand upon what these possible "languages" mean, and will provide examples of the ways this is done and to what purpose. Having noted certain lagunas, I will continue in light of Erasmus' observation that his work existed merely to "construct a road for other persons of higher aims, so that they might be less impeded by pools and stumbling blocks in carrying home those fair and glorious treasures" (Ross and McLaughlin 82). What is presented in this thesis is a model that can be applied to the many discourses in *Tirant*. In the interpretation developed in this thesis, *Tirant* can be read as a dialogic text that presents various voices and texts: spoken, written, and in-the-world.

The prime work linking Bakhtin and romance literature is Cesare Segre's article "What Bakhtin left Unsaid: The Case of the Medieval Romance," wherein he argues that Bakhtin failed to investigate the importance of dialogism in narrative experimentation in medieval romance literature, which, according to Segre, leads to multiple points of view between author and other visions of the world – a plurality of languages in the medieval text (26). This plurality can be noted in *Tirant* and appears to support Segre's contention.

To date so far, *Tirant* has rarely been mentioned in relation to Bakhtinian studies and has never been studied through an indepth Bakhtinian analysis. This thesis aims to address this gap. Albert Hauf mentions in passing that the text is carnivalesque because of the humour and death of the characters but he does not elaborate upon its function ("No és" 313). Denise Toledo Chammas Cassar also noted the carnivalesque connection, but the limitations of her work did not allow for an explanation of how this worked ("Dom Quixote" 4). The main work in the field of Bakhtinian studies and *Tirant* is Caroline

Jewers' *Chivalric Fiction and the History of the Novel*, a study about how the romance genre should be included in the discussion of the history of the novel. Following on from Segre's position that Bakhtin overlooked romance literature and that the dialogic imagination is the locus for narrative experimentation (Segre 27), Jewers argues that many texts written between the tenth to the sixteenth century are inherently dialogic and can be understood through Bakhtin's theories of the novel: "there are many ways in which narrative dialogism makes itself manifest, and parodic intertextuality is one particular by-product of medieval textual dynamism that seems particularly successful in establishing a plurality of voices" (21). Chapter One of this thesis will test the relevance of Jewers' statement, as we see how subversion of the canon through intertextuality in *Tirant* does create polyphony. One of Jewer's most interesting observations is how certain romance texts, *Tirant* included, establish a formal base in the unitary language – whether that be chivalry, epic literature, sexual politics – and then destroy that base, often through humour (27). This destruction is actually creative: "The internal function for laughter and self-parody is as a generative force for transformation" (131-132). So a text can masquerade in the very form it aims to topple. She notes how this dialogic model simultaneously upholds and deviates from the norm in order to renew itself (138), a feature certainly present in *Tirant*.

In relation to *Tirant*, Jewers writes that the text "absorbs, parodies, and transforms the courtly romance, linking the ideal world of chivalry with the more realistic naturalistic setting of the modern novel" (130). In her chapter dedicated to *Tirant*, she focuses on the details in the text and notes the "newness" of *Tirant*, considering it to be more the "half-way house" to the novel than *Don Quijote* (132). If this is indeed the case, then an indepth Bakhtinian reading is all the more necessary. With this in mind, developing the theories of Segre and Jewers, I trace some of the specific forms of dialogism in *Tirant*, always remembering that social heteroglossia in the text is most transgressive when it is presented alongside the unitary.

In this way, I follow on from Jewers's general observations that the romance genre is characterised by a plurality of voices brought about by dialogism. I extend this and apply it to *Tirant*, by developing a Bakhtinian reading which highlights the ways in which dialogicality is manifested in the

text, notably through polyphonic intertextuality and carnivalistic and grotesque eroticism. These elements are subversive. The discussion of subversion draws upon the article "Llull en el Tirant lo Blanc: entre la reescriptura i la subversió" by Rafael Alemany Ferrer and Josep Lluís Martos Sánchez, where they show that the Llullian model is reimagined through the "refuncionalització absolutament original i innovadora, que contribueix a definir un producte alternatiu a l'arquetipus literari cavalleresc conegut fins aleshores" (139). They consider this to be possibly ironic and to approach something resembling subversion, but they do not defend this position with evidence. The transgressive nature of *Tirant* is also alluded to by Patricia Boehne, who states that it is a novel that presents the theme of social mobility and that the old pattern of the hero is broken (102, 105). Boehne, however, does not elaborate the tools and purpose of these phenomena. Considering this, I move on from the current state of criticism and argue that subversion does indeed occur and that its function is clearer when we apply a dialogic reading to the text.

The presence of dialogicality is supported by the linguistic diversity in the text. Linguistic change-points in *Tirant* have been identified in Riba Civil's *Homogeneïtat d'estil en El Tirant lo Blanch* (2002), which utilised stylometry and statistical mathematics to reveal linguistic variation. His study focuses on diversity of style, phrases, vocabulary, paragraph lengths and letters, and mathematically demonstrates language variation at critical points in the text. This evidence supports the theory I develop here, as it provides clear proof of linguistic changes throughout in the text.

Interpretations of *Tirant* have not been limited to academic endeavours. Indeed, *Tirant* forms an important part of Valencian and Catalan culture. The text is taught across the Catalan-speaking regions on university philology syllabuses and the name *Tirant* has inspired a publishing house and an academic journal. There are countless adapted versions to match all age groups. Testament to the continuation of the rich influence that *Tirant* has exerted since 1490, the text has had a lasting impact on popular culture: statues, websites, translations, plays, children's books, lithographs, paintings, comic books, boardgames, a set of stamps and a film. This shows the continued rereading of the text-in-the-world, something that occurs alongside the text itself.

Within decades of its publication, the text was translated into Catalan, Castilian, Italian and French. Catherine II of Russia called it her favourite bedtime reading and Mario Vargas Llosa notes its influence on his writing career (*Mémoires* 98; Vargas Llosa 9). Even Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, a pro-Castilian literary historian, praises the realistic poeticism and "obsesión de la vida común" in the text (401). Over time, *Tirant* has taken on different meanings depending on the circumstances, with multiple new readings and new interpretations. But probably the most famous mention of the text is by the priest in *Don Quijote* when he removes *Tirant* from the pile of chivalry books to be burned: "por su estilo, es éste el mejor libro del mundo: aquí comen los caballeros, y duermen, y mueren en sus camas, y hacen testamento antes de su muerte, con estas cosas de que todos los demás géneros carecen" (76-77). The realism and attention to detail in *Tirant* challenges the chivalric literary genre and through a humanist perspective the texts of the past are reimagined within the new text.

iii. Plot.

The story of *Tirant* begins in England through a retelling of the *Gui de Warewic* romance. *Gui* is used for the early plot structure, but the thematic content is significantly altered. *Gui* features many of the literary techniques and subplots that characterise the chivalric romance at its apogee and was influential in the chivalric literary tradition because it combines the epic and chivalric genres to recount the fortunes of a feudal family. The plot in *Tirant* is distinct because it recreates *Gui* within an entirely new context. In *Tirant*, renowned knight William of Warwick leaves his family and riches to undertake a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. This causes a rupture in his attachment to the world and he fakes his own death to become a nameless hermit who lives in the forest. At this time Muslims from the Canary Islands invade England and the young King of England hides out in Warwick. There, William the Hermit aids in the defence of Warwick. The king abdicates and crowns William as a symbolic hermit-king in his stead. William then defeats the invaders and defends England.

Following this rather simplistic re-imagining of *Gui de Warewic*, the text's protagonist, Tirant, arrives in England with a group of Breton knights to celebrate the King of England's wedding. Tirant

fights in tournaments of the English court, defeating all competitors, including four members of different European royal families in duels, and earns great honour. After the wedding celebrations, Tirant and his group of knights meet the hermit William of Warwick in the forest where they camp with him for some time, recounting tales of chivalry and receiving a symbolic apprenticeship in Llullian chivalry.

In the next section, Tirant and his men go to Breton and France, where Prince Phelip, *segundon* of the King of France, decides to travel with them. They arrive in Sicily, where Tirant, now transformed from noble knight to wily matchmaker, convinces the Princess of Sicily to marry Phelip, despite her prevarications. Tirant hatches a series of tricks so that she cannot discover Phelip's true nature. When Tirant hears of the problems of the Maester of Rhodes against the Egyptian invasion he sails immediately for Rhodes where he leads the defence of the island in what is emphasised as a victorious moment for Christendom. From here begins Tirant's ascent to the place of the gods – he joins the Emperor of Constantinople's court, falls in love with Princess Carmesina, is appointed General of the Byzantine army, defeats the Muslim armies, thus rewriting history by preventing the 1453 fall of Constantinople. Yet skill in war is juxtaposed against the flawed physical nature of human beings in the text: Tirant courts Carmesina without the emperor's permission, Stephania sleeps with Diaphebus outside of marriage, the Duke of Macedonia is the embodiment of jealousy, the Empress and Ypòlit pursue a secret quasi-incestuous affair in the palace. Tirant is soon tricked by Viuda Reposada into believing that the Princess has cuckolded him with Lauseta, the Moorish gardener. In revenge, Tirant murders Lauseta and flees Constantinople, only to be caught in a storm and stranded in North Africa, as if his crime has shipwrecked him in the land of the Other, converting him into Other as well.

Thus begins Tirant's odyssey and decline into the dark night of the soul. He is stranded and enslaved and must journey from *inferno* to *paradiso* through his own merit. Stranded in Africa, Tirant must pass through a series of tests as penitence for his abandonment of Carmesina before he can be reborn as a symbolic New Man as general of the army in North Africa, defeating King Escariano and converting the Muslims to the Christian faith. The Queen of Fez tries to marry him but he refuses

because of his love for Carmesina. Finally, Tirant encounters Plaerdemavida, who is also stranded in Africa, and is convinced to return to Constantinople. Tirant is able to resolve the conflict with Carmesina and fulfil his physical desire by raping Carmesina in the castle. The emperor, unaware of the crime that has occurred in his palace, offers Carmesina's hand to Tirant and they marry with great occasion. Despite Tirant's worldly success, his spiritual failures are evident and seem to prophesise his downfall. In an unusual ending for a chivalry novel, where the hero generally succeeds, Tirant dies of influenza in Thrace. Carmesina and the Emperor die too. In a turn of fortune, Ypòlit and the Empress marry immediately and Ypòlit's descendants become emperors. Their loyalty to each other is rewarded on the physical and spiritual plane and vindicates the text's earlier assertion of "hom deu amar als qui us amen" (579).

The narrative structure of *Tirant* can be separated into a series of novellas which form the novel as a symbolic whole: in England, Tirant is symbolically born into the institution of knighthood; in Sicily he tests his mettle as a social subject in the court; the defence of Rhodes is a kind of crusade and test of Tirant's chivalry; the court of Constantinople is the dialogic centre of the novel where Tirant must battle with love and intrigue in the field of language, which, for him, is a new field of conquest; North Africa can be read as the text's forty days in the desert, where Tirant is tested and proves his worth; finally, the eternal return to Constantinople is a symbolic renewal of order through the death of Tirant, the errant knight. These sections are framed by a formal introduction in the Dedication and Prologue and a closure to the text in the Postscript of the final chapter. In his way, *Tirant* is loosely held together by many small stories, a common late medieval literary device, also seen in *The Thousand and One Nights* (eighth century), *Calila e Dimna* (c.1251)[5], Giovanni Boccaccio's *Il Decameron* (1350-53) and Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* (late fourteenth century).

The convergence of stories (and different narrative voices) means that many of these texts are also dialogic. They occur against tragic backdrops to highlight the power of stories and language to create peace: *Il Decameron* against the black plague that afflicted Florence; *The Canterbury Tales*

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[5] The collection of stories commissioned by Alfonso X.

against the 100 Years War; *The Thousand and One Nights* against Shayryar's desire to execute Scheherazade and *Tirant* against the fall of Constantinople and the Catalan-Aragonese empire. Valencian society at the time was rapidly changing against a European backdrop of constant warfare, the growth of nation states, the rise of banking and increasing internationalisation. This created a dualised society, where multiplicity thrived on the one hand, while tighter restrictions were imposed in the name of the monarchy. In a world that seemed to be at war with itself, where progress and tyranny simultaneously battled for ground, a new kind of polyphonic language was needed to account for the way this society facilitated a strange convergence between subversive dialogicality and official narratives. The question seemed to be how to account for the simultaneous forces of dogmatism and pluralism which existed side by side. The convergence of disparate voices in *Tirant* speaks back to this reality in human societies.

iv. Social and Historic Context.

Before discussing the theoretic framework of this thesis, it is important to briefly discuss the historic and social context surrounding the text. Bakhtin emphasises that to see through to the heart of any text we need to understand its socio-historic conditions (*Dialogic Imagination* 367). This kind of approach takes up Giambattista Vico's suggestion that context is indispensable to any criticism because a set of universal ideas pertain to groups of people at certain times in history. He terms this a *sensus communis*, or "conceptual dictionary," through which contextual criticism can be given meaning (*New Science* 80). In psychological terms, Jung sees this as an overall collective unconscious, which is represented in archetypal language, not necessarily specific to one era or another. Yet, if we accept that the subject is socially constructed by internal and external forces, then the subject's text can be understood through the lens of the *sensus communis*, as this gives us a language to read the text. To this end, I will trace out some of the relevant factors in Medieval and Renaissance history so that we can see *Tirant* through the contextual lens of these two eras.

One of the novel features of medieval society was the development of norms of conduct and behaviour. The demographic and urban expansion during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries greatly increased population density and hence, exerted new pressure on resources. This necessitated a greater level of social control to ensure the status quo. For this reason, we see an increase in texts that attempt to impose order, like the educational rules encoded in John of Garland's, *How the Student Should Behave* (13th C).[6] While the attempt to structure society was by no means limited to the medieval period, *Tirant* is a response to the overall concept that human communication and behaviour can be controlled by appealing to authorities.

The relative disorder of the social languages in *Tirant* can be read as a response to this unitary attempt to structure human life. Society was generally founded on dualistic moral structures such as the dichotomy between good/evil, purity/corruption or high/low (Bayless 66-67). These binary structures are challenged in *Tirant*, as they were by many writers even in the Middle Ages. The dualised moral view was being increasingly eroded by structural changes in medieval society that made it impossible to blindly accept the authority of King and Pope. Historians have, hence, tended to characterise the era around the 1400s as one of immense change. Johan Huizinga notes that the era is still medieval at heart even though medievalism is declining and new social trends are emerging: "the tide is turning, the tone of life is about to change" (318). But Paul Kristeller argues that the Renaissance began in 1300 if we think of it in terms of a history of ideas where classicism emerges from the Christian matrix (3). By the time of *Tirant*, medieval societal structure was in decline. There was a general crisis of wealth in the nobility and the ideology of knighthood was in decline throughout Western Europe. This was furthered by the growth of the merchant class and the merging of classes through marriage, which eroded the old world and increased the power of *nous homes*.

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[6] For further examples of attempts to impose order on society, see Ordericus Vitalis on archbishop Gregory's attempt to enforce clerical celibacy (1119), Robert de Sorbonne's *Statutes for a College* (13th C). Diaz de Gomez's *Il Victorial* (15th C) offers an idea of the requirements of "un buen cavaller", while the expectations of a good wife can be found in *Le Ménagier de Paris* (1393). Modern translations of these texts are provided in Ross and McLaughlin's *The Medieval Reader*.

The historic shift from Medieval to Renaissance worlds led to more open societies where hierarchical thought was no longer the centre. Divergent voices would be increasingly heard in the cities. New unitary languages still developed, like the assumptions that humanism was a good thing and that change was actually taking place. Yet in the interconnected, newly developing urban space it was not possible to simply dismiss contrary opinions as they can be expressed and easily repeated. This was the age of dialogue and discourse and an era that favoured subversive texts.

The fifteenth century was a period of unrest and change, of transition between world views. This was by no means a neat transition in all places. Kristeller has noted the blurry line between Medieval and Renaissance thought (102-06) and the concept of a coherent Middle Ages and Renaissance has been contested on several occasions (Hannam 9; Haskins 61). What today would be considered Renaissance perspectives were already present in medieval writings.[7] Medieval thought also continued well into the Renaissance. François Villon (1431-63) is one example who continued to write in the medieval style. This is a dilemma that history cannot resolve and the writing of history about history only complicates matters. Voltaire's letter to Pierre Robert le Cornier de Cideville nicely captures the situation, describing history as "qu'un ramas de tracasseries qu'on fait aux morts" (Besterman 67). With this inevitable delusion in mind, I will continue to use the loaded historic terms "Medieval" and "Renaissance" as they are as adequate terms as any others, despite being collective markers charged with all the power of humanity's stories. For this reason, I discuss *Tirant* from the context of both the Medieval world and the Renaissance world, since both world views are found in *Tirant* and fifteenth-century Valencia was traversing both eras. As *Don Quijote* bestrode the Renaissance and the Baroque, *Tirant* has one foot in the Middle Ages and another in the Renaissance.

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[7] In science, the most noteworthy were Adelard of Bath (1080-1160) and William of Conches (1085-1154). The Italian writers Dante (1265-1321), Petrarch (1304-1374) and Boccaccio (1313-1375) also present some characteristics of the Renaissance sensibility.

v. Bakhtin: Structure as Dialogic.

As mentioned earlier, in this thesis the subversive role of the multiple different voices in *Tirant* is analysed from the perspective of Bakhtin's dialogic. Within this dialogicality, I will demonstrate how we can read: 1) the transgression inherent in polyphony through intertextuality, and 2) the subversive nature of eroticism when read through the carnivalesque and grotesque. In *Tirant*, multiple points of view are presented as alternative visions of the world. These perspectives are socio-ideological languages that converge to create what Bakhtin termed social heteroglossia. This convergence transgresses the pre-existing norms of social communication by undermining the unitary language, and the erosion of this hegemony is subversive. Due to this constant mixing of genres, the text is a live social event of many perspectives. Bakhtin maintained that due to its inherent social element, language contains worlds. It does not consist of mere words, but contains a verbal-ideological and social belief system (*Dialogic Imagination* 288). This thesis will discuss the ways these multiple social systems converge in *Tirant* to subvert the unitary vision of the world.

This unitary vision is challenged through a dialogic perspective of multiple languages, which supports the possibility of reading *Tirant* through Bakhtin's theories of the novel. Many sociolects are present, such as the language of war/battle, of the upper and lower classes, as well as ornamental narrative, ritualistic official language, and the language of specific spaces (taverns, the court, the field, the sea). Moreover, there are many literary voices and traces layered over each other: the history of the Vikings equated with North African pirates, the Matter of Britain/Brittany, Roman chivalry, Martorell's own *lletres de batalla* and *Tirant's* metatexts (chapter segmentation, chapter summaries, changes in font size, battle letters, the Germanic font, etc). No particular sociolect prevails and *Tirant* can be best described as a panoply of "texts" that echo within the endlessly signifying space of the novel. Due to the many texts within the text, Bakhtin's theories offer an effective way of reading this heterogeneity.

The transgressive role of dialogism in *Tirant* can be seen through several salient characteristics. Firstly, due to the presence of two authors and multiple editors, in the physical text and in its language

there are many internal inconsistencies. The text bounds the narrative and these inconsistencies lead to a multivoiced text. I will discuss some of the devices that facilitate this practice. Secondly, contradictory language registers are used in *Tirant* to heighten the literary effect of discordant opinions. These opinions come from the characters, the narrator and within the discourses. Such discourses are world views or ideologies that interact and create social heteroglossia. Some of these discourses are non-textual, as in the use of space, objects and bodies, and they also form a constantly referring/deferring language that permeates the text. The state of multiplicity through multiple language registers is augmented by the changeability in the characters, as they shift roles – an example of the internal incongruence of the characters, representative of the contradictory nature of the text.

To understand the subversive function of these devices, I will begin by discussing Bakhtin's theory of the dialogic and the role of social heteroglossia in transgression. When the devices and their function are established this will highlight the ideology of change that drives *Tirant*. It is a change founded upon voices. We might think of this as a realistic and non-idealised version of the world in that no hierarchical voice is allowed to overrule the others. The voice of the powerless is allowed to speak back. *Tirant* could be thought of as a text of many different perceptions of the truth.

In *Tirant*, the characters and the authors tell their version of the truth, which often contradicts the prevailing power system. This has a subversive result. My reasoning for reading this transgression through Bakhtin's dialogic is drawn from his *God and the State*, where Bakhtin writes "I recognize no infallible authority, even in special questions" as this would enslave him to external interests (32). For Bakhtin, these authorities and interests are diverse and can include the State, religion and all authoritative ideas. Peter Stallybrass and Allon White further emphasise the importance of reading Bakhtin's theories in the context of transgression and in light of the social struggle (7, 15), linking Bakhtin to social reform. Bakhtin's novelistic theories – dialogism, heteroglossia, polyphony, the carnivalesque and the grotesque – all have the power to redress social and class inequalities and reimagine the social event of language by presenting multiplicity alongside the hegemonic. In the

chaotic convergence that results no voice can support its hierarchical status, and a symphony of voices sings out on the page.

Before delving into the dialogic nature of *Tirant* it is necessary to define the link between dialogism and social heteroglossia and how this destabilises the unitary language, as this destabilisation provides the foundation for the subversive function in *Tirant*. Bakhtin argues on various occasions that language and discourse in general have an internal dialogism that cannot be separated from its social situation. The dialogic in language can be envisaged as an internal conversation: a live event that is a struggle among socio-linguistic points of view about the world (*Dialogic Imagination* 273). For Bakhtin, "languages" are therefore the uses of language within language. This can include register, opinions, discourse, symbolism and any other communicable factor. Due to their inherent subjectivity, languages always intersect; they create discourse about discourse (*Problems* 63). This discursivity is due to the inevitable reply of the other, what Bakhtin terms the utterance, a multi-voicedness or social heteroglossia inherent in communication – interrelated and interrelating discourses that make each language a world with its own verbal-ideological and social belief system (*Dialogic Imagination* 288).

The subversive effect of this dialogic loop appears in its relation to the "unitary language." Bakhtin conceives of the unitary as a single world view, a force that struggles to overcome heteroglossia through centralisation and unification (*Dialogic Imagination* 270). The unitary language can take many forms, from linguistic to sociopolitical and cultural, among others: language formalisation, the nation state, chivalric literature, Christian morals, the role of the sexes and the sacred text. The dialogic, however, by mixing multiple different discourses creates a multi-languagedness that attacks the unitary, whether it takes the form of custom, traditions, myths, nationalism or formal language (*Dialogic Imagination* 369). This is the subversive effect of dialogism.

This effect can be seen in *Problems of Dostoesvky's Poetics* (1929), where Bakhtin compares the multivoicedness of Dostoevsky's novels with Tolstoy's monologic approach. Bakhtin considers Tolstoy's novels to be monologic because the voice of the characters is suppressed beneath the overall novelistic thesis (of narrator and text), whereas he regards Dostoevsky's fiction as dialogic because

characters express varying viewpoints that do not necessarily support the author's opinions. From this perspective, Dostoevsky's characters are dialogic, presenting points of view and independent consciousnesses rather than mere words (*Problems* 32). These multiple languages make the dialogic text a space where utterances between intelligent phenomena interact (*Problems* 184), which I understand here to include all the discourses pertaining to a text, explicitly presented in language or implied. This includes whole utterances, parts of utterances, juxtaposition, language style, symbolisation, social dialects, world views, the narrator's voice, the characters' voices, the text viewed as a whole and other "languages" that are inscribed upon by the text, such as space and objects. This interrelationship between ideas creates the double-directed discourse where words are directed dually towards the referential object of speech and towards another's discourse (*Problems* 185), always undermining the forces of centralisation.

The unitary language in the context of *Tirant* refers to several hegemonic sociocultural features of the society at the time. These are unitary languages in the Bakhtinian sense because they carry a unique vision of the world. In relation to the socio-ideological languages of the dialogic, the most influential unitary languages in *Tirant* are the official narratives of Christianity, chivalry, historic chronicles, the monarchic system and the role of the sexes, but there are many more. In relation to language, the dialogic/unitary distinction also relates to registers and the correct use of the formalised version of Catalan, typified by the language of the Cancelleria reial (Riquer, *Història* 337). It is also all those official textual sources that exclude contradictory opinions, such as documents of state, legal documents, chronicles, oration and courtly language that tend to exclude the voice of the people.

Language can also be physical and its unitary function can relate to the way the body is imagined and governed through manners, norms and civilité – imposed upon the populace as a form of bodily control by the social elite who seek to possess and control what they consider to be their property (80). In Bakhtin's model, one language equals one system (*Rabelais* 472). For this reason, the forces that drive centralisation also drive language normalisation. The unitary aims to create one view whereas the dialogic allows for endless perspectives. If we think of language, then, as a point of view about the

world, it becomes apparent that two forces are at work: one which centralises and one which decentralises. Decentralisation can be seen in *Tirant* because statements are allowed to exist side by side as autochthonous ideas and through them we can observe the multi-voicedness of the text. This has political implications, as it forces the reader to reconsider the canonicity of hegemonic ideas because their opposites are given equal standing. This is transgressive as it decentres and favours plurality over dogmatism. The pluralistic position is *always-already* the enemy of those who would define and demarcate the physical and psychological world, namely the State, Church and any other world-definers.

Dialogism is an old concept in the history of human thought and does not begin or end with Bakhtin. The use of speech to obtain knowledge in the dialogic sense was the central idea of the Socratic Method, which rejected simple recitation of information and envisioned good pedagogy as skilful questioning. A question elicits a response, making the listener the true source of knowledge. Therefore, the question is not just that which is expressed by the speaking subject, but leads to a deferral in the Derridean sense; that is, the word cannot stop resignifying and recreating the world/word. This connection between speaker and listener is a live event, where multiple discourses keep on occurring. In *Tirant*, the majority of the text is dialogue and this is no coincidence. It allows for a wider diversity of opinions and discourses that endlessly resignify. This dialogic world can be opposed to any unitary model, which is almost always based upon a master-slave dialectic, wherein a thesis and its antithesis confront each other. Even though Bakhtin recognised the dialogic nature of language as a struggle among socio-linguistic points of view (*Dialogic Imagination* 273), there is no negation of the other and no intention to elide the other in *Tirant*. Instead, a new world order emerges where the heterogeneous multiplicity of voices can coexist. This implies the acceptance of thesis and antithesis in a *complexio oppositorum*.

Bakhtin's dialogic has had far reaching implications regarding how we use language to form meaning. Lev Vygotsky argues that inside each language is a culture's construction of reality, and the relationship between the individual and the world through language (46, 171). This follows on from

Bakhtin's dialogic discursivity by suggesting that languages and meaning are tools in a never-ending conversation. The coexistence of these categories – points of view for Bakhtin – means that the multiple voices in a text form new discourses from their interaction. In this sense they form new social languages that supplant monologism.

Stallybrass and White contend that the "history of political struggle has been the history of the attempts made to control significant sites of assembly and spaces of discourse" (80). These sites of assembly and spaces of discourse are the true battlefields where representation and history are determined. In this context, analysing *Tirant* – an old text – through Bakhtin's theories aims to bring forth another layer to the site of assembly and the space of discourse.

I argue that when the site of assembly is dialogic a reordering of discourse through multiple languages occurs. In the context of intertextuality this presents as polyphony, and in eroticism as carnivalesque and grotesque. Bakhtin noted the power of multilingualism as that which exists on the edges of linguistic confines and borders, being a breeding ground for radicalism, liberalism, multiplicity, a universal humour and the interweaving of cultures (*Rabelais* 472). The creation of this tapestry is achieved in *Tirant* through multiple social discourses: dialogue, religious register, chivalric language, the language of violence, human emotions and non-textual languages like the body, objects, space, geography and even history. Although Chapter One will only discuss two sections, a dialogic reading can be undertaken for most sections of *Tirant* with similar results. This is not only because of the text, but also due to certain characteristics in the existing *Tirant* manuscripts which indicate the relevance of a dialogic reading.[8] Before discussing the two examples of dialogic elements in Chapter One (as intertextuality) and Chapter Two (as carnivalesque and grotesque), it is important to discuss the original manuscripts since this contributes to the reading of heteroglossia in *Tirant*.

The unique textual factors of *Tirant* enhance the text's dialogism: the presence of two authors; possibly multiple editors; the separation into titled chapters; and orthographic variation, are all factors

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[8] The three surviving original incunables are available at the University of Valencia, the Hispanic Society of New York and the British Library. The scanned version of the first version of *Tirant* can be found online at the website of la Universitat de València (http://digitheka.uv.es) and Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes (www.lluisvives.cervantesvirtual.com).
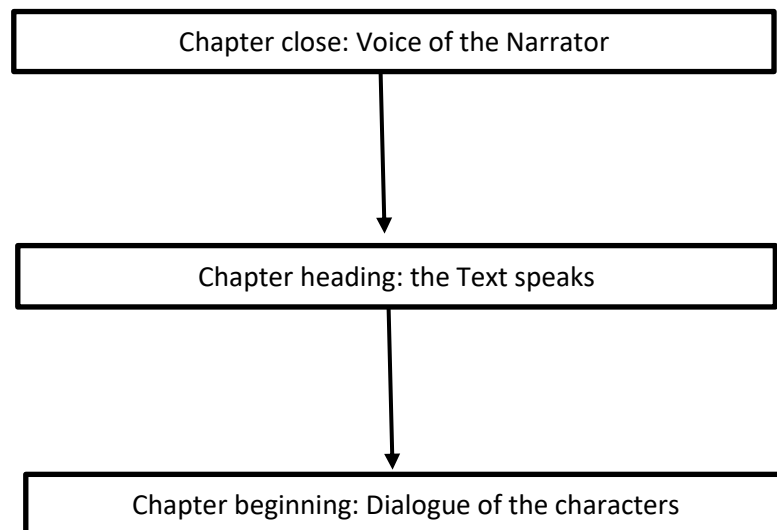
that contribute to a dialogic imagining, an underlying discourse between text, narrative and reader. While it is arguable that some of these features may have been accidental, they nonetheless contribute to a dialogic reading of the text. Since the intent of the writers cannot be ascertained, I will treat the text as integral and whole.

In relation to language, the edited and reworked nature of *Tirant* means that there are many spelling and grammar variations, indicating a text where language is in flux. It is important to add the caveat that this may not have been a deliberate strategy by the authors, but it certainly enhances the realism of the text and presents the Valencian dialect in a pre-normalised state, as was the case in the fifteenth century. For example, Jesus, Mohammed and Constantinople are spelled in various ways.[9] This may have been a result of the different authorship, editing and typesetting, but it is also possible that the authors deliberately use variations of the same word to create a state of multi-languagedness. This language diversity is not limited to proper nouns. The word "and" takes three different forms as "e," "y" and "i" – certainly the result of an intermixing of Valencian, Catalan and Castilian – and there are variations in word endings as "abaixar" also appears as "abaxar" and "correcció" as "correctió." During the fifteenth century, there was a high degree of language variation in Valencian and Catalan. The language had not yet been formalised and its orthography was evolving. This was due to the mixture of peoples in Valencia: Valencians, Arabs, Aragonese, Catalans, Navarrese, Italians, Germans, Occitans, Jews, Murcians and Castilians. This mix of different cultures developed Valencia into a cosmopolitan city of international trade that rivalled Genoa and Venice for control of the Mediterranean. The changeability of language in *Tirant* can give the impression of undermining the canonicity of a term – at least for the modern reader – whose language has been normalised. This was probably unintentional; however, in our modern world of categorisation it creates an inevitable utterance.

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[9] Jesus is spelled Jesucrist, Jesuchrist, Jhesuchrist, Jhesucrist, Jesús and Jhesús. Mohammed is spelled Mafoma, Mafomet, Mafomets, Mahomet, Maphomet, Mofomet. Constantinople is spelled as Constantinoble, Constentinoble, Contestinoble and Costantinoble.

Another indication that the text hails the reader is in the chapter structure: each chapter flows on to the next and chapter headings announce the forthcoming action. The technique of creating a narrative loop through connected chapter endings and headings is an effective way of creating a discourse between reader, narrator and text. This was a common literary device in chivalric literature and was used to increase engagement with the reader and to bind the text through the narrator's voice. The use of chapter headings can also been seen in *El Conde Lucanor* (1335) by Don Juan Manuel, *Tristán de Leonís* (1501) and Garci Rodríguez de Montalvo's *Amadís de Gaula* (1533). In *Tirant*, formulaic chapter endings and headings allow the narrator to become the mediator between text and reader. Chapters tend to close with linguistic formulas reproduced throughout the text: typified by "parlà lo comte en la següent forma" (83), "féu principi a tal parlar" (877) and "forma de semblants paraules" (1290). These formulas generally lead to dialogue at the beginning of the next chapter, as if the authors' literary style were connected to the characters' speech. Linguistic formulas are significant because the text becomes regulated within a certain socio-linguistic context – the authors' style. The narrator's voice is then superimposed again on the text through the chapter number and the chapter title, which generally describes the outcome of each chapter, but not in whole – similar to *Il Decameron*. In this way the narrator intrudes on the text, creating a discourse and a dialogue with the reader, always mediating the reader's anticipation of the scene to follow. A large number of the chapters begin with speech, as if all narrative were a combination of factors: the narrator in the form of the linguistic formula, text through the chapter headings, and dialogue through the start of each chapter.

The technique in *Tirant* therefore merges narrator, text and dialogue into a constant heteroglossia where they comment upon each other:

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│      Chapter close: Voice of the Narrator     │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                       │
                       ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│        Chapter heading: the Text speaks       │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                       │
                       ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Chapter beginning: Dialogue of the characters │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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This is how the physical text is organised and results in social heteroglossia, bounding the narrative. The combination of narrator-text-dialogue allows for multiple perspectives and authorial statements. While *Tirant* is bounded by the physical elements of the chapters there are many other "texts" within the text: the Dedication and the Prologue at the beginning of *Tirant* comment upon the narrative proper; the whole text is concluded through three meta-texts in the last "testaments" (1488, 1511); the inscriptions on the tombs (1535, 1536); and the Postscript (1540). There are many other texts within the text, which can indeed be analysed as meta-texts: letters, speeches, quotations, banners and insignias. Structurally, there is a high level of multi-textedness which adds to the social heteroglossia also present in the narrative. These multiple forms of language, within the text as narrative and atop the text as structure, combine in a multi-voiced space which is self-supporting, each enhanced by the other. The points discussed in Chapters One and Two typify this structural-narrative connection in *Tirant* where social heteroglossia erupts due to the presence of multiple registers.

Given this diversity, applying Bakhtin's theory of the modern novel to *Tirant* seems fitting. As previously stated, Jewers has already noted how *Tirant* is an ideal halfway house between romance and the modern novel (132). While I would not claim that it is the only crossing-point, by reading the work as dialogic this thesis shows how Bakhtin's theories are applicable to texts of any period if the dialogic

elements are present. Applying Bakhtin's theories to Tirant is not intended to be reductionist. Rather, my discussion of the dialogicality, polyphony and carnivalesque aims to show how old texts should not be excluded from discussions about the modern novel, nor should we stop investigating their relevance to people today.

In the following two chapters, I investigate how dialogic theory opens up a reading of the transgressive nature of intertextuality and eroticism in *Tirant*. Chapter One focuses on the theme of intertextuality in the novel, a literary device that juxtaposes different texts and creates a space where many texts speak simultaneously. In Bakhtinian terms, the narrator's voice is a convergence of literary utterances and of layered intertextual influences that necessarily creates discourse. The transgressive element is the way this undermines the canon. Because the texts form discourse against each other, polyphony emerges. The hegemonic text as a canonic space is intruded upon by the divergent strains of multiple intertextual voices, creating a new social event where discourse occurs. I analyse the use of Enric de Villena's *El dotze treballs d'Hèrcules* and Ramon Llull's the *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria* as an example of how this intertextuality is subversive.

In Chapter Two I investigate instances of the erotic voice, focusing on the juxtaposition of masculinity and femininity, love and violence, and beauty and grotesque. The carnivalesque and the grotesque play a significant role in erotic representations in *Tirant*, causing the destruction of the existing order and the recreation of a new order. Humour and the spoken word are also a major part of this dialogism and its eruption. We will see how the language of eroticism in *Tirant* is designed to undermine the existing order of things.

The multiple languages in *Tirant* are but one way in which the text subverts the existing order. The work's dialogic nature is important because within this we see polyphony, carnivalesque and grotesque elements that derive from the multiple social languages. We will now demonstrate how this state of multiple voices is achieved through intertextuality.

Chapter One:

New Voices, Old Voices: Subverting the Canon in *Tirant lo Blanch*

One of the defining features of *Tirant lo Blanch* is an abundance of intertextuality. This features some of the seminal works from the European literary canon: Seneca's *Troades* (54CE); Ovid's *Heroides* (25-16 BCE); the Breton myth *Gui de Warewic* (circa 1200); and Boccaccio's *Il Decameron*. In the Catalan tradition, the authors also recreate equally canonic texts such as Ramon Llull's the *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria*; Bernat Metge's *Lo Somni* (1399); Enric de Villena's *Los dotze treballs d'Hèrcules*; and *Història de Leànder i Hero* by Roís de Corella (1486), amongst many others.

In this first chapter, the function of the well-documented intertextuality in *Tirant* will be explored using Bakhtin's theory of literary polyphony. While *Tirant* has previously been read using Bakhtin's theories of the dialogic and heteroglossia (Jewers), this chapter innovates by examining intertextuality through polyphony and explores in depth the role of transgression in *Tirant*. The contention of this chapter is that in *Tirant* intertextual polyphony subverts canonic texts through recreation, undermining their hierarchical position and challenging the system of thought that characterised fifteenth-century Valencia and Western Europe. This undermining is achieved by the presence of competing discourses in the text.

The co-existence of multiple texts within *Tirant* creates an explosion of simultaneous literary convergences and divergences. When these are read alongside each other, the ensuing tension of their interaction leads to polyphony, which, by its nature, undermines the monologic. The destabilising function of this technique will be traced through two important intertextual sources in *Tirant*: Enric de Villena's *Los dotze treballs d'Hèrcules,* a popular Catalan version of the Hercules myth, and Ramon Llull's the *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria*, which reimagines the Roman concept of knighthood within a Christian model. These two texts have been chosen because their subversion is representative of a generalised condemnation of power structures that is apparent throughout *Tirant*.

The transgressiveness of this intertextuality is achieved through juxtaposition between textual convergence and divergence. *Los dotze* is plagiarised in the Dedicatòria and Hercules' works provide a loose heroic model. Yet *Los dotze* is actually subverted through politicisation and alteration of the role of author, text and the hero. Llull's the *Libre*, while ostensibly forming the chivalric model of the Britain section (Chapters 1-97), is also challenged throughout, as its thematic model of chivalry, society and sexual relations is undermined repeatedly, particularly in the scenes set in Constantinople (Chapters 115-269, 408-487). Rather than being treated as sacred founts of knowledge, in *Tirant* intertextual sources are misused intentionally with revisionary effect. Through a clash of discourses the original context/meaning breaks down and a new text emerges.

The Prologue of *Tirant* indicates the importance of other texts to the novel by referring to Horace, Homer, Livy, Virgil, Ovid, Dante and the Bible (*Tirant* 69). Yet the ambivalent use of literary sources in *Tirant* has led to a plethora of different critical perspectives. William Entwhistle terms this the "originality of the imitator" (162) while Lola Badia calls it a creative activity aimed at revisioning other works (54). In discussing the use in *Tirant* of Petrarch's *Lettera ad Nicolaum Azarolum* (circa 1352), Guia and Conca conclude that the modernisation of the translation from Latin implies a revisionary intent by the authors (87). Altered language and context have also been noted in relation to the use of Roís de Corella's texts (Riquer; Miralles; Badia, "Panorama" 96),[1] the *Thousand and One Nights* (Bosch), Bernat Metge's *Lo Somni* (Butinyà i Jiménez "La influencia de Metge") and Boccaccio's *La Fiametta* and *Il Decameron* (Boehne 49; Pujol "'Micer Johan Bocaci'" 65). Still other intertexts have been discovered: Joan Perujo Melgar traces the debt to Guido delle Colonne's *Destructionae Troiae* (462); Rafael Beltrán establishes *Tirant's* possible influence on *La Celestina* ("*Las 'bodas sordas'*" 98); and Alberto Várvaro reveals the debt to French and Provencal literature (155-65). The influence of chivalric literature in *Tirant* can also be noted in *Perceval, or the story of the Grail*, *Tristan and Isolt*, *The Youth of Alexander the Great* and *Aucassin and Nicolette* – particularly in

[1] The unresolved dilema of whether Corella or Martorell plagiarised is raised by Joan Coromines in "Sobre l'estil" (373-74) and in Hauf's article "*Tirant lo Blanc*."

the subversive and sacrilegious elements related to violence and love, but also in the role of an omniscient narrator. The way that intertextuality functions in *Tirant* is still being uncovered, as are reasons why the authors went to such pains to alter the texts they used.

Critical discussion about the role of the two sources discussed in this section – *Los dotze* and the *Libre* – has been characterised by two positions. It has been argued that intertextual plagiarism in *Tirant* is equivalent to intellectual theft (Hauf, *Tirant* 54; Riquer, *Aprox* 178, 275-278; Badia, "El Tirant" 83). This theory, however, does not address the social context and function behind plagiarism. There can be a didactic intent in plagiarism. The authors of *Tirant* must have known that most readers would not necessarily have access to the range of classic texts referred to in *Tirant*. This was partly due to availability, but also due to the fact that many of the texts were written in languages the average person would not have read. By rewriting them in vernacular, the writers provide this wealth of knowledge to the Valencian reader. Further to this, Eric Winter and Rafael Alemany Ferrer argue that the use of other texts in *Tirant* is actually innovative and creative ("Tradició" 294; "A propósito" 15-16). Such a view is supported by the aforementioned studies that explore divergence from the multiple source texts. In another article, Alemany Ferrer and Josep Lluís Martos Sánchez maintain that Martorell views Llull's and Jaume I's construction of empire with a mixture of nostalgia and irony. They argue that this is manifested in *Tirant* through something resembling subversion of Llull's vision and of the literary chivalric trope of the hero ("Llull en el Tirant" 413). However, neither of these two positions delves deeply into the mechanism or the function of that subversion. I follow on from where Alemany Ferrer and Martos Sánchez concluded their study and go on to offer concrete conclusions about the function of subversive intertextuality. In my interpretation, intertextuality creates a polyphonic space where discourses collide and an event of shared knowledge emerges. This constant movement of different perspectives undermines any crystalised system, as in *Tirant*, there can be no truth, only many subjective truths. Before discussing examples of this new state in relation to intertextuality, I will briefly lay out some of the theoretical and philosophical concerns that inform this section.

1.1. Theoretic Framework.

The question is this: with what tools does intertextual subversion occur in *Tirant*? The site that will emerge is a polyphonic and discursive space where the text itself and the text-in-the-world are written over the top of the old text. This is a site of contest. Just as the Cathedral of Valencia sits atop the mosque of Valencia, which in turn sat atop the old Visigothic Seu, intertextuality reclaims the space of the past to reconstruct the present. Julia Kristeva argues in *Desire in Language* that intertextuality occurs when meanings from one kind of discourse are overlaid with meanings from another kind. This creates a "new articulation" which is a conversation with the books of the past (69). The new articulation is the new work that emerges from the layers of other texts or discourses within *Tirant*. Reworking a canonic text inherently challenges the authority of the canon as a structure and can be read as literary subversion. Jacques Derrida notes that reconsidering the matrix of structure disrupts its monolithic position due to repetition:

> The event I called a rupture, the disruption […] would have to come about when the structurality of structure had to begin to be thought, that is to say, repeated, and this is why I said that this disruption was repetition in every sense of the word. Henceforth, it became necessary to think both the law which somehow governed the desire for a centre in the constitution of structure and the process of signification which orders the displacements and substitutions for this law of central presence – but a presence that has never been itself, has always already been exiled from itself into its own substitute. (280)

Applying Derrida to the context of *Tirant*, the repetition of the canonic text through intertextuality is the rupture, the disruption that challenges the canon and exiles the original text to a new space. Once this is done, the law that supposedly governed the need for a centre has already been presented as vulnerable and must fall because its canonicity is built on the supposition of its centrality. Intertextuality is repetition, but it is repetition rethought. Rethinking the canonicity of the canon opens up a rupture in the defences of that structure. Intertextuality then occurs as in a dialogue, where there is change and exchange, opening up a whole host of polyphonic opportunities. These voices are a spectrum of

possibilities, such as convergence, divergence, dissent, resonance. In this state of repetition with a difference, the canon cannot hold its old centre and the structure is recrafted within the subject, ending the state of hierarchy. The source text then becomes something other than itself. In turn, this repetition will also be repeated and the new text will be exiled to a state other than itself. This exile, however, is not a rejection of the previous text, but rather, a close reading, which presents new repetitions and interpretations, new communicative possibilities. The dialogue that is opened up by this practice informs the polyphonic intertextuality that I have identified in *Tirant*.

The intertextuality in *Tirant* is subversive because it challenges the preeminence of the canon. This leads to discourse between texts and provides an ideal space in which to examine polyphony. Because polyphony is always discursive and intertextuality by its very nature is polyphonous, these ideas should be approached together.[2] Before analysing the two texts in this first chapter, I will briefly provide theoretical definitions of polyphony and discourse to highlight the contextual interrelation between the two concepts and how they complement any discussion of intertextuality.

Bakhtin describes polyphony in the novel as "a plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses" (*Problems* 6). He also notes that polyphony is dialogic (40) and inherently heterogeneous: "[I]t is constructed not as the whole of a single consciousness absorbing other consciousnesses as objects into itself, but as a whole formed by the interaction of several consciousnesses" (18). These consciousnesses include different voices in a text, such as the author's opinions, character dialogue, character's actions, but also other subtler "voices," such as literary styles, history, intertextuality, symbolism, converging discourses and the languages of a text. We can think of polyphony, then, as the textual eruption of multiple voices. These mind-spaces interact, creating an eternal utterance that replies to other utterances/discourses. The utterance as reply can include linguistic and social echoes but can also include other communicable factors.

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[2] A contention also maintained in relation to medieval literature and music by Giulano Di Bacco and Yolanda Plumley (*Citation* 34*).

If we think of the work as all that can be encoded in language, anything that can be *languaged*, then polyphony encapsulates this multi-textedness; that is, the ways in which a text is multidimensional and speaks to and about other books, about itself, but also how it interacts with the outside world. By extension, polyphony need not necessarily be written, as that which can be spoken or thought is also "text" in the Bakhtinian sense and is certainly discourse. As Graham Pechey notes, Bakhtin forces us to rethink sociality and subjectivity in the modern era (62) and this must be applied to the possibility that, once language has been acquired, everything is thought through language, therefore everything is "text" and subject to polyphony and discourse.

Bakhtin's definition of polyphony can be applied to multiple elements in *Tirant*. However, here I limit the study of polyphony to its intertextual characteristics so as to reveal its dissident function. If the original text represents power, then the resultant intertextual framework represents counterpower, a disruptive force that can undermine the original structure.[3] In the Bakhtinian and Derridean context, this counterforce can be extended to include resistance to the ideational or cultural discourses that mediate the exercise of power. Once these models of thinking are questioned, they begin to collapse. We can think of the text not just as a physical artefact of edited and reedited parts, but as a living thing in the world, as a free-flowing resistance, because its dissident function is reread – repeated into the world – by each new generation in ways that are reflected onto the social body. In Bakhtin's reading of the polyphonic novel, he maintained that the novel always speaks about other texts and is *always-already* discourse about discourse (*Problems* 63). The text is discursive because it bears the weight of other stories within it. Like a palimpsest, the underlayer of old vellum is rubbed away and the new text is inscribed atop it.

In my polyphonic intertextual understanding of *Tirant*, subversion is achieved through discourse in that multiple discourses undermine the authoritative structure and establish a power relationship between the new text and its literary sources. Foucault described this kind of discourse

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[3] Manuel Castells, the leading proponent of network power and counterpower in our global society, argues that counterpower is resistance to the programs of specific networks, and their switches that regulate the flow of power (773).

upon discourse as the relations between statements (*The Archaeology* 31) – in this case, between texts. Nevertheless, for Foucault, discourse also implies the way language, style and all forms of communication bequest yet another reply/discourse (*The Order* 45). This notion of discourse will also be extended in this section to include the way ideas interact. Through intertextuality a new text reads and criticises the old text, and not only do they both speak, but a new space emerges: the discursive result of their genesis, the exegetic creation. In relation to the inherent discursivity in intertextuality, Kristeva noted that "any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another" (Moi 37). The reimagining of the source texts in *Tirant* can be seen as this absorption and transformation that Kristeva recognises as central to all texts. The source text is taken in and transubstantiated into the new text.

This process can be imagined as circular, as the original text is both destroyed and reborn. Once the subversion is achieved another text/utterance will use *Tirant* intertextually and the process will begin again, as all literature is a rewriting of what came before. No part of the circle exists without the other parts and, as such, the process can move in any direction along the circle:
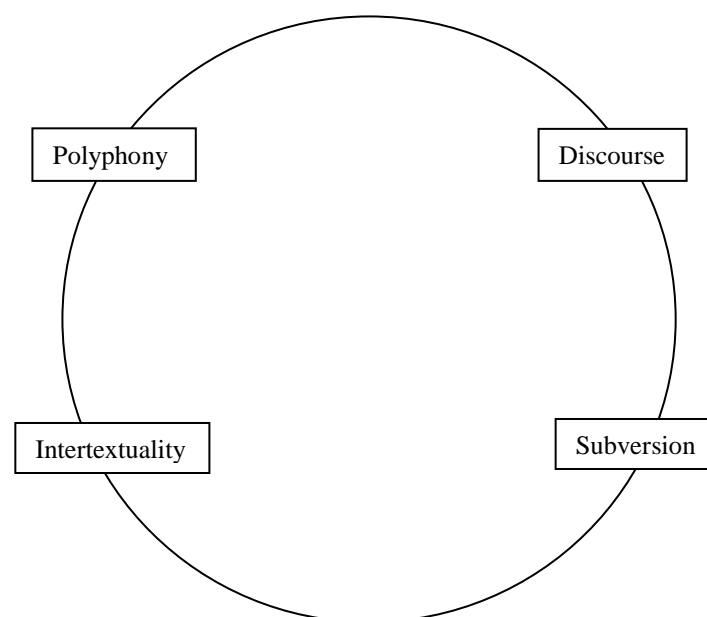
This textual womb-tomb, where beginnings and endings are merged, alludes to Derrida's observation that the act of writing resignifies and reimagines that which has been written before,

creating an extra layer atop the work of the past (6). This is the destiny of all language. In this sense the intertextual and the polyphonic are mutually self-sustaining. The linguistic side of intertextuality and polyphony is balanced by the socio-political elements of subversion and discourse. While the literary instances occur in the text itself they should not be separated from the related external world-as-text, nor from the text-in-the-world. The text as a circle is therefore the epitome of revolution in its etymologic sense, as it returns to its beginnings in an endless repetition: it reimagines the past through recreation of history and texts, alters the present through subversion of hierarchy, and creates a new text. In *Tirant* this hints at the coming new world of the Renaissance.

As a result of this revolution, polyphonic intertextuality provides an ideal point of departure for a discussion of discourse in *Tirant* because the existence of multiple embedded texts and texts-in-the-world implies multiple intersecting perspectives that engage with each other, creating utterance-narratives. Bakhtin argues that the utterance is always influenced by that which came before and by the future response it presupposes (*Speech Genres* 77). For the writer, this means that other texts are both a tool and a burden. Indeed, as Harold Bloom contends, great writers, compelled to challenge the texts of the past in their dream to attain the status of canonicity, may suffer from an "anxiety of influence." (25-26) While Bloom's claims to universality can be questioned, in light of the combative treatment of canonic texts in *Tirant*, it is paramount to interrogate how intertextuality is discursive and to what purpose.

The way intertextuality can decenter hierarchies has been observed in a different context in relation to Antonio Enríquez Gómez's *El siglo pitagórico* y *la vida de don Gregorio Guadaña* (1644):

> [L]a intertextualidad se entiende como estrategia para des-centralizar aún más cada concepto preestablecido de autor y autoría. Como el alma transmigrante, la autoría – y con ella el "autor" – está en movimiento constante. Tal movilidad y tales maniobras de elusión y de escapatorias forman un fuerte contraste con el "poder" y la "autoridad", que se presentan como entidades firmes e inalterables. (Bauer-Funke 36)

In a similar fashion, intertextual polyphony in *Tirant* causes a breakdown of the systems of power (canon and textual authority) because there is a newfound fluidity between author, text and world. The centrality of an "autoridad" is then shifted by multiple voices, the "movimiento constante" of interdiscourse. As multiple voices entwine, the "text" is also threatened and breaks down. It can no longer be situated but is constantly moving. It only materialises once it is observed, yet in so doing it loses its original state. It becomes a space of literary echoes through which the reader must traverse. Yet in order to maintain my contention that intertextuality causes the polyphonic, we must trace the social and historic context surrounding *Tirant*. Doing so will reveal the disruptive effect of polyphony in the fifteenth-century context of the novel.

1.2. Social and Historic Context.

Plagiarism and emulation of classical texts was widely practiced in both the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The kind of interterxtuality in *Tirant* can be read as typical of the way texts at the time reimagined the existing state of knowledge against their physical world, creating new visions and revisions. During the medieval era this predominantly occurred within a Christian vision of the world, setting out from the premise that the Christian cosmos was a fact and that Christian hegemony had a right to govern society. Some small ideological divergences were allowed as literature was often set against a mixture of chivalric, fantastic, pagan and classical tropes, but this was almost always within a Christian concept of the world.[4] Typical of the monastic faith in the era is *Proslogion* by Anselm of Bec (or Canterbury, 1033-1109): "I desire to understand in some measure thy truth, which my heart already believes […]. And indeed I do believe it, for unless I believe, I shall not understand" (Luscombe 44). Thus, in order to know God, one must set out from a pre-established belief.

By the time of Tirant (1460-1490) European universities were already several hundred years old and logic and reason were being widely practiced as philosophic disciplines. The role of faith and texts

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[4] Examples of this stylistic diversity based within a Christian cosmological belief can be seen in *La Chanson de Roland* (c.1040-1115), Dante's *Commedia* (1308-20) and *Le Morte d'Arthur* by Thomas Malory (1469).

was being intensely questioned. Christianity still bound Europe together ideologically, but scholars were beginning to analyse the texts of the Church, a process of rethinking the canon that partly led to the Reformation of 1517. Yet the seeds of this intellectual revolution were sown long before. While religious sources were increasingly criticised through logic and reason during the Renaissance, this followed on from the application of Aristotelian reason to faith, generally attributed to Thomas Aquinas and Albertus Magnus (Johnson 10), but an extension of older philosophic arguments that had their roots in the twelfth century. In this way, there was no clear demarcation between the old and the new, as much of the best of the Renaissance was recycled and rediscovered from the past. Boethius' Neo-Platonist logic in *De Consolatiae Philosophiae* (523) continued to be of influence for the way it unified pagan and Christian philosophy, even though it was almost a thousand years old.

The work of Lorenzo Valla (1407-1457) was a seminal example of the way humanist texts could be simultaneously transformative and reliant on the texts of the past. His demonstration that the Donation of Constantine was a forgery toppled the unquestioned right of the Papacy to rule, and his famous comparison of St. Jerome's Latin Vulgate to the Greek New Testament exposed translation errors that brought the veracity of the Latin version under scrutiny (Johnson 56). The impact of these destructions led to a veritable eclosion of new ideas. As a result, scepticism and rationality began to gain acceptance as much of the accepted European Christian tradition was reimagined within a classical context.

In light of an anachronistic Church, the literary trend in the 1400s was increasingly towards emulation of antiquity (Kristeller 7, 21), but from a perspective that was deemed to be modern. This presented the unique situation of a Christian Europe which began to apply the ideas of the Romans and the Greeks to their world, recreating the old in new ways. This intertextuality was characterised by a revival of interest in classic texts throughout Europe, particularly those of Aristotle, Euclid and Ptolemy (Haskins 9), greatly altering philosophy, mathematics and science. Other writers were emulated for the way they had reworked canonic texts: Aquinas for his daring use of Aristotle; Petrarch's attempt to revive classic poetry; Boccaccio's use of the *ottava rima* of the minstrels, and Dante's reimagining of

the Christian cosmos in *Commedia*, which was one of the seminal texts that set the scene for the Renaissance literary outlook.

The concept of the book itself was also changing drastically. This is important because *Tirant* is a work that undermines other texts. Prior to movable type, books were expensive objects only available to the wealthy elite (Newman 150). However, with the emergence of printing, introduced to Valencia by German typographers after Gutenberg's printing press in c.1440 (Furió 160), references to classic texts became a form of cultural currency that marked a text as sophisticated and modern. A wider cross-section of society read in private, as books became more affordable. Yet the measure of the humanists was whether a book referred to the Greek and Latin classics. This led to an increasing dispersion and democratisation of knowledge, as books once reserved for the elite proliferated amongst nobles and merchants.[5] This was a gradual process that had been developing in Europe since the 1100s, which Haskins terms the twelfth-century Renaissance (6, 12). Translation centres in Toledo and Palermo provided more new texts, which opened up new discourses within society about the canoncity of the canon. Such texts and the newly acquired knowledge coincided with the growth of the vernacular languages, capitalism and the emergence of national identities (Anderson, *Imagined* 39).

With increasing interaction between different regions, the role of "text" as an aesthetic object was influenced by the proliferation of the visual arts from Italy. Printing exposed writers to Renaissance art and architecture, meaning that ideas like perspective, foreshortening, and *bella figura* were applied to literature. Piece by the piece the mind of old feudal Europe was dismantled and a new world of ideas built on aesthetics and the individual began to emerge. These changes in perspective affected the idea of how to treat the once-sacred Text. Since there was no clear concept of intellectual property rights during medieval times, other texts were copied but rarely referenced, as if they were held in common.

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[5] Of particular impact were the translations of the Bible into other languages, such as Erasmus' translation of the Vulgate Bible into Greek (1516), Luther's German Bible (N.T. 1522; O.T. 1534) and Lefèvre d'Etaples' French translation of the Bible (1530). These texts wrested exegetic control of the text from the Latin-literate elite and made it available to the populace. The ownership of Books of Hours during the Middle Ages was pivotal in the evolution of individual textual interpretation, as personalised knowledge through text became possible rather than being collectively imparted by authoritative figures. Translation of Euclid, Averroes, Plato and Aristotle during the fifteenth century also opened up Greek and Arabic rationalistic thought to a medieval European consciousness (Hannam 69-73).

This plagiarism could possibly be explained by the fact that libraries at the time were rarely larger than 100 books and the average reader did not have access to the classics. Intertextuality ensured that, for readers, new ideas could be accessible. Yet in *Tirant*, as will be seen, the texts of the past are not only reused, but are also undermined and decontextualised to such an extent that the intertextuality takes on a subversive function.

In the content of *Tirant*, fifteenth-century Valencia was a place of massive social change, as trade and empire transformed the region. This changeability is captured in *Tirant* through a reimagining of the social order. During times of social upheaval, the relationship between text, author and world often comes into question. What were these upheavals in the context of *Tirant*? Constantinople had fallen and many believed that the very foundation of Christianity was now threatened. The Catalan expansion into the Mediterranean was in decline and the heady days of Jaume el Conqueridor (1208-1276) and Alfons el Magànim (1396-1458) had passed. The traditional hero on his horse was becoming redundant in the face of an increasingly mechanised and expanding known world, which was quickly favouring a meritocratic capitalist society. The old order of chivalry was becoming outdated. Within this context, *Tirant* bestrides the Medieval and Renaissance worlds. In this social and historic context, Tirant's death at the novel's conclusion is a necessary symbol of the demise of the medieval world and the birth of a New Age.

While this New Age appeared to transform the old obligations of feudalism, new forms of social regulation were imagined, such as monarchism and centrally controlled fiat economies. For the everyday person, however, the ancient dance between the powerful and the poor did not change. Only in the minds of the humanists was this change real. The new kind of text that emerged can be viewed as new in the sense that the palimpsest will be written over anew, but society continued to reflect the class distinctions of the past. The intertextual discourse in *Tirant* is complicated because the source texts themselves are also intertextual, meaning that we read an interpretation of an interpretation. This heightens the level of polyphonic conversation and signification because our textual reference must be

traced back even further into the past.[6] The use of these texts in *Tirant* is subversive, as intertextuality is inherently a process of undermining the original through reimagining, a polyphonic and discursive conversation with the other text. Each facet forms a part of the whole. There is also a dual process of textual convergence and divergence, although divergence is favoured by the authors because it creates the space for discourse, which brings forth the subversive voice. This is a powerful tool when used in conjunction with intertextual convergence as the discrepancies are then doubly obvious, juxtaposed against the similarities. It is therefore important to show some of the convergences between *Tirant* and the texts discussed here, as we will see below, in order to contextualise and heighten the subversive effect of the divergences.

1.3. Textual Convergences.

For the purposes of this analysis, convergence is defined as the ways in which texts intersect or are similar. The term convergence derives from the Latin *convergens*, which means to come towards a common point. In this sense, two texts can be said to converge when they meet or coincide. Discourse occurs in the space where the texts meet. Generally, this process entails intertextuality. The old text and the new text seem to commentate on each other due to this connection. Despite using the old text to create the new, it can be said that a Third State emerges through synthesis, a state which is neither new nor old, but which is a site of conversation between the multiple literary voices, thus creating a polyphonic space that is inherently discursive. The concept of a Third State derives from Georg Wilhelm Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, wherein he argues that the dialectic confrontation of any thesis with its antithesis is a clash between master (*Herr*) and slave (*Knecht*), resulting in synthesis through overcoming (*aufgehoben*) (321). In *Tirant*, that which emerges through *aufgehoben* is no

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[6] For example, the Guillem de Veroych section of *Tirant* is inspired by *Gui*, which in turn was modelled on *Waldef* (Weiss 15), one of the earliest British romances to be transcribed (c.1200-10). The thematic basis of the Guillem de Veroych section derives from Ramon Llull's the *Libre*, itself thematically inspired by Roman knightly concepts of the *equites*. The dedication in *Tirant* is a plagiarism of Enric de Villena's *Los dotze*, which in turn reworked Guido de Pisa's *Istoria fiorita* (1321-37), which is a reinterpretation of the Hercules myth (Cátedra 108). Other important texts in *Tirant* include Guido del Colonne's *Historia Destructionis Troiae* (1287), a modern retelling of the *Iliad* (Perujo Melgar 462) and Ovid's *Heroides*, a reimagining of the myths of antiquity.

longer *Herr* nor *Knecht*, but something else: a Third State, a space of pure potentiality where the eternal conversation can become. Intertextuality is so discursive because it is a multi-directional conversation, of convergence and divergence, between the texts across all points of time (past, present and future imagined as one).

The first notable convergence with Villena's *Los dotze treballs d'Hèrcules* occurs in *Tirant's* Dedicatòria in which large sections are copied directly from the dedication to Villena's text (López Estrada 75; Riquer *Aproximació* 178; Hauf *Tirant* 64). In particular, the authors of *Tirant* plagiarise Villena's allusions to the author-function. Both texts suggest the unreliability of the narrator. In *Los dotze* it states "considerando mis insufiçiença e discreçión, siquiera la poquedat de istorias por mí vistas […] los fallesçimientos, así en estilo como en orden, en el presente por mí puestos tractado por inadvertençia e más verdaderamente ignorançia" (*Los doce* 15). Then in *Tirant* we read an almost identical plagiarism: "[C]onsiderada ma insufficiència [...] comportarà los defalliments axí en stil com en orde, en lo present tractat per mi posats per inadvertència e pus verdaderament ignorància" (*Tirant* 61). Both writers therefore claim to be incapable of recounting accurately and ask that their shortcomings be excused. These plagiarisms in the Dedicatòria establish a discursive relationship of inclusion/omission. An example in relation to the role of the author is the removal in *Tirant* of Villena's self-reflexive "discreçión, siquiera la poquedat de istorias por mí vistas" (*Los doce* 15). The unreliability trope continues in *Tirant* in the final chapter in reference to Galba's translation: "E si defalt hi serà trobat, vol sia atribuït a la sua ignorància" (1539). These acknowledgements in *Tirant* of the authors' "insufficiència" and "ignorància" are most likely modesty topoi through which the authors ask us to excuse their shortcomings. This technique, however, also allows the authors to distance themselves from the historic import and potential verisimilitude of *Tirant*. In this way, the name of the author is not necessarily associated with the subversive nature of the text.

Further to this, phrases from *Los dotze* which imply the author's inability to capture reality are reproduced in *Tirant*: "[A]fecçión […] la ruditat de la ordinaçión […] la comuniquedes […] fructo" (*Los doce* 15-16; *Tirant* 63). The selection of these particular words and communicative and creative

symbols implies that the text itself is a temporary thing, mediated by the use of fleeting terms like "fructo" and "afecçión." We saw above how both authors emphasise the impossibility of accurate representation, a philosophic dilemma that can be traced back to Plato's concerns about mimesis and his assertion that poets only ever create a poor version of reality (*Ion* 532c; *Republic* 392e, 393a). It also highlights the rhetorical tradition from which both texts come: both firmly rooted in a Humanist idealisation of the importance of language and classical sources. The retention of these terms in *Tirant* indicates that the authors engage in an intertextual conversation and that the concept of an unreliable author in *Los dotze* has been at least partly reproduced in *Tirant*.

A further similarity between the two dedications can be found in the treatment of chivalry: both texts espouse its role as a didactic model and in improving society (*Los doce* 16; *Tirant* 63). The moral importance of chivalry is also mentioned in reference to "la cavallería moral" and is perceived to contribute to the common good, to prevent sins and "monstruosos actos" (*Los doce* 3; *Tirant* 63). This aligns both texts with chivalric literature where the importance of chivalry is commonly presented.[7] Recent criticism has noted the coincidence in the two texts of mythic superhuman heroes (Limorti i Payà 154) and the presentation of a new model of chivalry (Gonzàlvez i Escolano 45). As will be seen, the difference is that, whereas in *Los dotze* Hercules is successful and idealised, in *Tirant* the ostensible early idealisation of chivalry is collapsed with disillusionment and the destruction of the heroic model.

While the two texts appear to espouse chivalrous values on the surface, the fictional and satiric nature of both texts could also be seen as an element that undermines the monologic model. The strongest indication of textual self-contradiction in *Los dotze* is in the statement that the text "más es satírica que trágica" (*Los doce* 16). In *Tirant*, satire can also be implied through the capitulation of the Herculean model in the bathetic death of Tirant, the deliberate misuse of intertextual sources, and the transgression of the existing order through eroticism. This intertextual layering in *Tirant* opens up the possibility of a doubled reading: the text supports chivalry but also expresses disillusionment with the

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[7] For example, see *Perceval, or the story of the Grail* by Chrétien de Troyes for the value of chivalric honour towards ladies (Loomis 17) and *El libro del caballero Zifar* (c.1300) for the ethos of the Christian knight (Prólogo).

chivalric Christian ethos. As the ideas of nation and empire evolved and were supported by chivalric revival in the fifteenth century, writers – like Martorell and Galba – continued to test the code of chivalry and to find that it provided a fertile space for exploring the contradictions inherent in combining knighthood and a moral code.

Convergence is also evident in the way the authors address their readers, as *Tirant* and *Los dotze* use first-person verbs at the beginning and end of the text (*Los doce* 19, 88; *Tirant* 61-70, 1539-1540) and also tend to use the third-person form during the narrative. Moreover, in both texts the reader is often directly addressed and the narrator is embedded as an opinionated observer who alters the context of the scene through his interventions, creating another layer of discourse atop the narrative (*Los doce* 24, 64, 87; *Tirant* 361, 897, 1048). Bakhtin noted, in relation to Dostoevsky, how the author's own discourse and the narrator's narration are part of the double-directed discourse of polyphony (*Problems* 187, 190). As the voices discourse with each other, their plurality in the polyphonic text creates a diversity of opinions and consciousnesses (28). The relations between the voices of author, narrator, characters and intertextuality are part of that constant discourse. The plagiarised Dedication acts as a stepping stone for the following Britain section (chapters 1-43), which relies on two texts: Llull's the *Libre* and *Gui de Warewic*.

Llull's the *Libre* was one of the most respected chivalry manuals during the Middle Ages, a text that espouses the values expected of a knight, such as Christian faith, generosity, justice, prudence, strength and self-control (*Libre* 540). By the fifteenth century, Llull was the most canonic of Catalan writers and his literary corpus of 265 works exerted influence as much on philosophic and theological thought as towards the normalisation of the Catalan language. The concept of knightliness and behavioural regulation was not limited to Llull. John of Salisbury writes in *Policraticus* (twelfth century) how knights should be honourable and brave in battle and willing to die to protect the Church and its institutions (116). In the fifteenth century Gutierre Díaz de Games's *El Victorial* (1436) argues that a "buen cavallero" should protect Church, King and realm and also be honourable and brave (55).

The concept of the good knight was a constant chivalric trope throughout the era. The influence of the *Libre* on *Tirant* is well documented (Riquer, *Aprox* 96; Boehne 4; Alemany Ferrer "A propósito" 18).

The convergences between the two plots are explicit. In both texts a hermit leaves his family to live in the forest and be with God (*Libre* 527; *Tirant* 151) and a young knight arrives at the hermit's retreat asleep on his horse. In both texts the hermit instructs the knight in the art of chivalry in a forest surrounded by aesthetic beauty (*Libre* 527; *Tirant* 154). Medieval social conventions are also observed in both texts, as when the young apprentice waits for the eldest man to speak first as a symbol of respect (*Libre* 528; *Tirant* 154). Moreover, the two books share theological and cosmological perspectives in relation to the number seven. In an allusion to the seven days of creation in the Book of Genesis and to the pervasiveness of scientific thought in the fifteenth century, we read that the texts will be divided into seven parts and that existence is governed by the seven planets (*Libre* 527; *Tirant* 75).

The convergences between *Tirant* and these two texts are not disputed by critics, although undoubtedly there are more connections to find. Rather than thinking of this intertextuality as mere plagiarism, I contend that chapters 1-54 of *Tirant* are a reimagining of the source texts, in the exegetic tradition of the Humanists.[8] The use of classicism and rhetoric in *Tirant* situates the novel as a new kind of text, engaging with diverse texts from the literary to the philosophic to the theological. The intertextual elements align it with the humanist tradition. While relying on the original sources, intertexuality here is really reinterpretation, which departs from the original to create something new. When the texts converge we can see the intertextual and polyphonic being played out. However, I argue that it is through differentiation of the intertextual voices that discourse flourishes and subversion occurs.

1.4. Textual Divergences.

Textual divergence is intertextual discourse because moving away from another text leads to an interpretive relationship between conflicting perspectives. The text is therefore brought closer to the

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[8] The predominant source texts from these chapters are Villena's *Los dotze*, Llull's the *Libre* and *Gui de Warewic*.

original text by the commentary inherent in the act of contradiction. Indeed, in *Tirant*, this variance between divergence and convergence increases the dialogicality. By diverging from the source texts *Tirant* positions itself as something *more-than* the original. While there is an element of homage in reusing a text, intertextuality also has the effect of creating a new version. This is a trend observable in all disciplines of the mind: simultaneous convergence/divergence leads to a *more-than* state which relies on the original but also overrides it. This simultaneous state of being like the original but also surpassing the original is what allows for the subversive function to take its full effect. Beginning with *Los dotze*, we will see the ways in which divergence has a subversive function in *Tirant*, in that it reworks the original text and attempts to surpass that which came before.

1.4.1. *Los dotze treballs d'Hèrcules.*

The use of Villena's *Los dotze* in *Tirant* is ambivalent, revisionary and transgressive. While *Los dotze* has been considered a medieval humanist text by López Estrada (75), a mix of the medieval chronicle and humanist classicism, *Tirant* leans more towards using a wide array of sources and to politicisation of a realistic hero and his movement through sociality and speech. *Tirant* not only traverses the traditional regions of geographic, political and historic space, but also psychological space for the hero as a self-aware individual. His odyssey is as much physical as across language. In Bakthinian terms, dialogicality erupts in this environment because language is a live event that takes place in the world, between minds, an inter-subjective plurality of voices and responses (*Problems* 6, 88). Speech offers the transformative power to reimagine the world outside the confines of narrator and text. *Los dotze* relies almost entirely on the narrator, whereas *Tirant* uses other forms of communication that increase dialogicality, such as speech, monologue, official speeches, the letter, tombstones, mosaics, heraldic banners, and tapestries, all of which are representative of the diverse forms of documentation in the early Renaissance.

As a function of these techniques, rhetoric, dialogue and language erupt from *Tirant* unlike in *Los dotze*, where the story is recounted by the narrator. Riquer argues that *Tirant* is a realistic text

(153). While this is not always the case – there are narrative and artistic elements that intrude on realism (Stegmann, "Aspectes" 32) – the hero and the characters are presented as everyday people within a realistic context. Their conversations appear to be the conversations of normal people in exceptional circumstances, rather than the exceptional people in *Los dotze*. To the extent that a novel can ever be realistic within the author's mimetic attempt, *Tirant* appears to aim for realism whereas *Los dotze* does not. The most powerful element in fulfilling this in *Tirant* is the spoken word and its dialogism. The opinions of the characters are, as argued earlier, distinct visions of the world seen from different points of view, where the collective forms a unified, harmonic whole – the text as world.

The first significant divergence can be found in an increased politicisation of the dedication in *Tirant*. The first line of Villena's dedication titled "Carta a Mosén Pere Pardo," is addressed to the knight and lord of Albaida and Corbera, counsellor of the King of Aragon: "Muy honorable e virtuoso cavallero" (*Los Doce* 13). Villena's epistolary opening is removed in *Tirant* and a capitalised chapter heading is used instead, bounding the dedication within the structural conventions of the chapter format. The dedication is also addressed to Prince Ferrando of Portugal, thus providing an international political outlook rather than the regional point of view of Villena's text: "Al Sereníssimo Príncep Don Ferrando de Portugal. Molt excel·lent, virtuòs e gloriòs príncep, rey spectant" (61). To understand this phrase more deeply, we need to delve into the political context of the time. The use of the term "rey spectant" in the Dedication seems incongruous because Prince Ferrando was not the heir to any throne in Europe. Hence, he was not a "rey spectant" as the dedication suggests. The phrase, read in its historic context appears to subvert the existing monarchic structure. In light of this, a discussion of the historic context surrounding the phrase is needed. Bakhtin alludes to the importance of historical context in *Speech Genres*, when he mentions that words are meaningless without the utterance of context and history (85).

The revisionary intent behind rewriting historic events in *Tirant* has been noted by William Entwhistle (149). The constancy of this practice in the text indicates a possible subversive intent behind the phrase "rey spectant." The Catalan crown had suffered a massive crisis after Martí l'Humà died without an heir in 1410, fifty years prior to the the beginning of the writing of *Tirant*. This drew into

question who would become the new king. The dispute for the throne during the ensuing Compromís de Casp (1410-16) was a long process where the Generalitat decided on a new king. This resulted in the emergence of several new contenders: Ferran d'Antequera, Jaume II d'Ugell, Lluís d'Anjou, Alfons de Gandia, Frederic de Luna.

Given the explosive social landscape surrounding the writing of *Tirant*, the use of the phrase "rey spectant" may have been interpreted as a challenge to monarchic authority by those who were familiar with the royal line. *Tirant* was begun in 1460, the year of Carles de Viana's arrest, and much of the text was written during the decade-long civil war, indicating that the possible political subversiveness of the phrase should not be ignored. Critics like Butinyà i Jiménez mention the possible political intentionality of the statement ("En torno" 473), noting how Don Ferrando left the Portuguese court to crusade in North Africa, a link to the evangelism in the Africa section of *Tirant* (chapters 299-329). Furthermore, "rey spectant" has also been connected to Prince Ferran,[9] the cousin of Pere IV who opposed Joan II of Aragon during the Catalan Civil War (Riquer, *Aprox.* 178; *Tirant* 66). Despite having no claim to the throne, he was proclaimed King of Aragon and Count of Barcelona (1464-66). This reference to Don Ferrando could therefore connect *Tirant* to an illegitimate royal line, possibly aligning the text with the constitutional movement. The subversive function of the historical revisionism in the Dedication is borne out throughout *Tirant* by a constant disillusionment with traditional power structures and the construction of empire. The success of Ypòlit, as opposed to Tirant or the Emperor, also indicates this, as will be discussed in more detail on pages 65 and 112 of this thesis. This example of diversion from Villena's text reveals the subversive tendency and politicisation of the intertextuality in *Tirant*.

It is often the subtle rhetorical thrust of a phrase that gives the transgressive power to the intertextual moment in *Tirant*. This impetus can be observed in the differences between the description of Pere Pardo and Prince Ferrando. Narrative subtlety is achieved in *Tirant* by changing Villena's "he avido cognosçimento" (*Los doce* 15), in which Villena is certain about the knight's virtues, to a more

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[9] Note the similarity between the names Ferran and Ferrando.

unreliable "he hagut notícia" (*Tirant* 61), suggesting that Ferrando's virtues have been merely overheard but are not necessarily acknowledged by the author. In another change of register, whereas Villena refers to Pardo's virtues as "vuestras amistança e bondat" (*Los doce* 15), Martorell reserves a more formal and less personable "vostra senyoria, qui per sa virtut" (*Tirant* 61), correcting the register to match the formal language expected when addressing a Prince. Yet the removal of the terms "amícia y bonesa" may have a transgressive function, as it removes the oral element from the dedication and formalises the language. Riquer noted that from the 1300s onwards courtly language became the official standard (*Història* 337). Indeed, throughout *Tirant* we can observe the constant use of rhetorical courtly language through irony and satire. The effect of this divergence is subversive when compared to *Los dotze* because the humanity of the Prince is diminished through formalised language.

Intentional alterations are also present in relation to the author-function and the role of the writer/narrator in the texts. The narrator of *Tirant* is direct and often addresses the reader, whereas Villena tends to use a chronicler narrative style. For example, Villena does not identify himself in the dedication to Pardo. The only reference to the author is in the prelude, made in the third person: "Comiença el tractado de los Doze trabajos de Ércules, ordenado por el muy alto señor don Enrique de Villena" (13), but it is unclear whether this was added by the editors. This more distant style is typical, and is maintained throughout the work. However, in *Tirant* the narrator often speaks in the first person and we read "yo, Johanot Martorell, cavaller" (63), a discursive moment in which the author takes ownership of the text through the use of the nominative personal pronoun "yo," echoing Mandeville's *The Travels* (1357) in which it states "I, John Mandeville, knight" (44). This phrase is not present at all in *Los dotze*.

The authors of *Tirant* use parts of *Los dotze* but remove other sections. Since the original 1417 Catalan version has not been available (Colon Domènech), analysis must proceed from Villena's own Castilian translation of 1482. This is not necessarily problematic as the text was translated by Villena, so we are working from the existing "original text." The purpose of the vacillatory use and removal of sections of *Los dotze* in *Tirant* is to reimagine entirely the oeuvre of the text and apply only the sections

that are useful to *Tirant*. For example, Villena's "atrevíme en buscar, coger e ordenar los dichos trabajos" (15) is simplified in *Tirant* to "me atreviré expondre" (61). Firstly, this shows a qualitative difference, as the word "buscar" implies a search, a process of coming towards knowledge through discovery whereas "expondre" indicates that the author will reveal that which he already knows, showing traits of an omniscient narrator.

The Dedicatòria in *Tirant* further diverges from *Los dotze* in its imagining of the purpose of a text. *Los dotze* states that it was partly formulated for a didactic moral purpose, to be imitated so as to glorify chivalry: "[E] la comuniquedes en lugar que faga fructo e de que tomen enxemplo, a crescimiento de virtudes e purgamiento de viçios. Así será espejo actual a los gloriosos cavalleros en armada caballería" (*Los doce* 16). In *Tirant*, this section is copied but an explosive new phrase is added, stating that the text was also translated into "vulgar valenciana, per ço que la nació d'on yo só natural se'n puxa alegrar e molt ajudar" (63).[10] In *Tirant*, this trinity of nació-llengua-alegrar perforates Villena's traditional model of epic heroism and alludes to a new world where these three factors emerge from the body-politic like the three heads of the Chimera. The new Valencia was one of vernacular entertainment (alegrar), the emergence of texts printed in vulgate (llengua) and the rise of a consciousness of nationalism (nació). Benedict Anderson argues that the emergence of printing in vernacular languages laid the basis for national consciousness and nationalism (*Imagined* 39, 44). While he is careful to state that there was no systematic attempt to conflate language with nation, once vernacular texts were in place the results were often detonative, resulting in "the elevation of these vernaculars to the status of languages-of-power, where, in one sense, they were competitors with Latin" (42). In this way, *Tirant* revealed the linguistic diversity and potential within the Valencian language.

Reimagining language in *Tirant*, thus, has a subversive function as it superimposes Valencian over other languages. Villena's reference to the language of his text as "original catalán" (*Los doce* 13) is changed to "vulgar valenciana" (*Tirant* 63), a polemical alteration owing to the use of "nació" and

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[10] A similar sentiment appears in the anonymous Picard text *The Youth of Alexander* (c.1270) where it states that the text was written "in French so that "I may be of some profit to lay folk" (235).

"alegrar." This may be a result of the translation, but since Villena was the translator, and the translation is the only version available, such an interpretation remains valid based on the current documentary evidence.

The fact that the Catalan origin of *Los dotze* is emphasised in the translation indicates that the author considered it to be important. As Bakhtin noted, when there is one language there is but one system. Nevertheless, on the edges of linguistic borders and therefore on the frontier of multilingualism we find the breeding ground of universal humour, radicalism, multiplicity and the interweaving of cultures (*Rabelais* 472). This transformation of language in *Tirant* belies a transculturality that seeks to revise and re-vision Catalan stories within a Valencian perspective. This seemingly minor alteration subverts the hierarchical position of the formalised, academic Catalan of the *Cancelleria reial* and presents Valencian as a language worthy of canonic literature. In light of the rich literature that flourished in Valencia during the *Segle d'Or*,[11] this reference to a Valencian linguistic and political identity demonstrates a revisionary approach to *Los dotze*, opening up a sociocultural discourse between the two texts where the Valencian language is considered a worthy alternative to Catalan.[12]

To continue tracing the stylistic differences, we will see how the divergences serve to differentiate narrator and text in *Tirant* from their treatment in *Los dotze*. As mentioned previously, Villena states that his style "más es satírica que trágica" (*Los doce* 16), whereas *Tirant* makes no mention of style, leaving it to the reader to interpret the stylistic conditions at work. There are a considerable number of literary styles used in *Tirant* (Vargas Llosa 97; Riquer *Història* 716-17), but no one style is given precedence. While there is an apparent unwillingness by the authors to influence the reader's interpretation, at other times the narrators are dominant and direct the narrative. This can be seen when the narrator addresses the reader with "[q]uè féu més aquest mariner?" (381) and "[e] podeu creure que per lo bon regiment e per la bona e virtuosa vida són col·locats en la glòria de paradís"

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[11] The most linguistically innovative of which were Sant Vicent Ferrer, Roís de Corella, Joanot Martorell, Ausiàs March, Sor Isabel de Villena and Jaume Roig.

[12] The tendency by the authors in *Tirant* to standardise the language and grammar of the source texts into Valencian goes beyond *Los dotze*, and has also been observed in reference to the linguistic changes to Petrarch's *Lettera ad Nicolaum Azarolum* in chapter 143 of *Tirant* (Guia & Conca 87, 93).

(1539). Bakhtin understands the polyphonic novel as simultaneously multi-styled and styleless, contradictory in its values (*Problems* 15) and this provides us with the means of interpreting this ambivalence towards text and representation in *Tirant*. In *Los dotze*, the reader is directed by a chronicle-style narrator, whereas in *Tirant* the narrator is generally omniscient and unreliable. Even though the chronicle style is used for structure and irony, it is juxtaposed against multiple other styles, such that no one technique dominates. Boehne offers some insight into this textual dissolution, observing that it is what is left unsaid that makes *Tirant* a classic text (107). The omission in *Tirant* of Villena's reference to satire, and of any clues on how to read the text for that matter, shows that in *Tirant* a revisionary intent is at work, which creates a polyphonic space that alludes to *Los dotze*, but also where the source text is rewritten through the reader's new interpretation.

We can also identify significant differences between the two texts in the imagination of heroism and the function of the hero. Whereas in *Los dotze* Hercules is a God-like Leviathan among men, Tirant is flawed and is unable to maintain his heroic status in the face of Lady Fortune. The works of Hercules in *Los dotze* include such feats as killing the Nemean lion (25) and the Hydra (50) and capturing the Cretan bull (53). In contrast, Tirant fulfils more humanly possible deeds, such as defeating four royal knights (288-98) and defending Constantinople against the Turks (550-58). In Tirant, we have a fallen Hercules, and in this sense he is rather typical of the imperfect heroes of chivalric literature.[13] The main difference, however, is in the outcome. Hercules emerges triumphant from his feats (86), unlike Tirant, whose earthly achievements only result in the destruction of his relationship with Carmesina and his own death (1493). One could also draw the conclusion that this may be the result of the political nature of his deeds, of his being a disruption to the social order, as will be discussed in Chapter Two. For Villena, there is the assumption that heroism is worth emulating. In contrast, in *Tirant* heroism is presented as a social construct that leads to failure. This can be read in terms of Bakhtin's observation of the importance of the downgoing in humorous literature, as will be discussed in Chapter Two – the

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[13] For example, Perceval is a simpleton in *Perceval, or the Story of the Grail* (1135-1190) by Chrétien de Troyes and Tristan is afflicted by the basest emotions in Gottfried von Strassburg's *Tristan and Isolt* (c.1210)."

individual dies but a new, meritorious order is established as mankind improves (*Rabelais* 404), presumably through the comic renewal implied in the collapse of the old order, which opens up space for the new. Rather than being born under a star as happens in *Los dotze*, in *Tirant* characters succeed through their own actions, as is the case of Ypòlit, who begins the text as Tirant's soldier-in-arms but eventually becomes Emperor.

These constant alterations to Villena's text are signs of the subversive function of reimagining Villena's prose. As we have seen here, *Tirant* adopts and adapts *Los dotze* to fit its own message of social reform. This extends to the representations of monarchs, the narrator, literary style, text and presentation of the hero. The original context is then reworked into a more subversive political discourse rather than the reinterpretation of Hercules in *Los dotze*. In the second example to be discussed in this chapter, the authors of *Tirant* proceed from Villena to Ramon Llull's the *Libre*. The divergence from the *Libre* challenges not only the most canonic writer in the Catalan language, but also the *sensus communis* of the thirteenth century.

1.4.2. The Libre de l'orde de cavalleria.

Llull's the *Libre* plays an important role in *Tirant*, providing the thematic structure of the Britain section. Nevertheless, like the treatment of *Los dotze*, Llull's the *Libre* is challenged through divergence as the later sections of *Tirant* proceed to obliterate the Llullian chivalric model through the hero's fall, especially the Africa section and the final chapters in Constantinople (chapters 408-487). The result is the replacement of the hegemonic model of thirteenth-century society – built upon honour and chivalry – with tragicomic heterogeneity. The adversarial treatment of the *Libre* has the effect of undermining the canonicity of the source text and, in particular, Llull's chivalresque Arcadia in which the knight searches for religious and moral perfection through discipline and observance of rules. In this sense, *Tirant* is a transitional text that mediates between the thirteenth-century view of chivalry – typified by the *Libre* – and a Renaissance world centred on the excellence and dignity of the human.

This shift is evident in the divergences between the two texts. Both texts begin with a religious dedication, which reflects the use of religious register.[14] The mimicry of different language registers occurs throughout *Tirant* and is more a sign of encyclopaedic rhetoricism than observance of the tenets of Llull's evangelism. Taking a literary approach to the encyclopaedic texts of the era, like Francesc Eiximenis' *Lo Chrestià* (1379-92) and Joan Lluís Vives' *De disciplinis* (1531), different language registers are presented in *Tirant* as part of a dialogic multiplicity that actually undermines the canonic state of the source texts by intruding on authority through differing perspectives. In fifteenth-century chivalric literature the religious dedication was only occasionally used, indicating the Christian ethos that pervades *Tirant*.[15] I mention this because the Llullian "honor" and "glòria" − features of Christian chivalry − are treated ironically throughout *Tirant*, inviting speculation that the religious dedication may be merely a social convention and a way of introducing yet another literary style into the mix. Rather than upholding honour and glory in the eyes of God, the bathetic denouement of the text actually indicates disillusionment with these ideals.

This disillusionment is evidenced in the divergence between the depiction of chivalry in *Tirant* and the *Libre*. While Llull's chivalry requires that a knight be God-fearing and pursue noble deeds, the type of chivalry practiced by knights in *Tirant* aligns them with the detrimental vices listed in Llull's the *Libre*: those of greed, lust, pride, sloth, envy and rage (*Libre* 541-542). Hence, there is a clear difference in message. As the *Prólech* to *Tirant* makes clear, knights worthy of respect should attain honour, glory and fame (69). Such attributes, for Llull, signify vaulting pride and dishonour (536). Furthermore, the *Libre* stipulates that all knights must defend their native lord and master (531). Yet Tirant leaves Brittany and undertakes his own personal odyssey to gain honour and renown in a distant part of the world. We can see throughout the Britain section that the *Libre* is used diachronically, being copied on the one hand and then, on the other, challenged at the contextual level and reworked into a

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[14] Llull's the *Libre* states "Déus honrat, gloriós, qui sóts compliment de tots béns, ab gràcia e ab benedicció, vostra comença aquest libre qui és de l'Orde de Cavalleria" (527). *Tirant* mimics this style with "A honor, lahor e glòria de nostre senyor Déu Jesuchrist e de la glorisiosa sacratíssima Verge Maria, mare sua, senyora nostra" (61).

[15] The religious dedication is not present in *Amadís de Gaula* (1508) or in Don Juan Manuel's *El Conde Lucanor* (1330-35). It was, however, used in *Lo Chrestià* and in Jaume Roig's *Espill o Libre de les dones* (c. 1460) (Riquer, *Història* 165) and *El libro del caballero Zifar* begins with a religious prologue.

new paradigm where the senses rule. Alemany Ferrer and Martos Sánchez consider irony to be the structural key to *Tirant*, highlighting that Llull's project is treated with a mixture of nostalgia and cynicism as the chivalric ideology of the 1200s had become redundant ("Llull en el Tirant lo Blanc" 16). This subversion creates a new discourse, layered atop the discourse of the past.

Approaching this distinction, the *Libre* states that in the art of chivalry the son of a knight must train as a squire in order to learn humility (529). However, in *Tirant* Guillem's son is given no preliminary theory and is a boy when he serves as a soldier in the defence of Warwick (140). This is most notable when he is symbolically baptised by his father in the blood of a Moorish soldier. This brutal introduction to the realities of war implies that he becomes a "true" knight only after exposure to violence. The evangelistic argument of the *Libre* is undermined in *Tirant* by the prevalence of these kinds of violent descriptions. They indicate the realities of chivalry, the vulnerability of the human body, and the possibility of death over minor matters of "honor." There is a disjuncture, then, between training in the theory of knightly humility, espoused in the *Libre* (140), and real world practice in *Tirant*, where brutality intrudes on theory.

As an extension of the role of chivalry, there is a disparity between how the two texts imagine the role of the human in the world. The irreverence towards hierarchy in *Tirant* is a subversion of the respect towards the authority of the institution of chivalry seen in Llull's text. Llull's well-ordered world is treated as an illusion in *Tirant*. In the *Libre* an individual's role is institutionalised and regulated by the structure of chivalry, which Llull views as a system applicable to society in general. The subject is also governed by the overarching authority of Llull as narrator of the text. However, in *Tirant* the characters are freer agents and personality is in a state of flux. Bakhtin states that in the polyphonic text "the man in man" is brought forth (*Problems* 59); that is, the unique point of view of each character is often contradictory to the text itself.

The dual nature of the characters, then, makes them "unfinalisable" (*Problems* 59). Bakhtin's polyphonic model sees characters as Janus-like autonomous subjects (*Problems* 7), often acting outside

the predominant themes of the text.[16] These autonomous characters can also be seen in *Tirant*, a characteristic that is not present in the *Libre*, where knights are tropes for moral evangelisation. There is a fundamental shift from the mentality of Llull's moral book of rules to the new novelistic order of the senses and the spoken word in *Tirant*, where the perspective of each different character is given as speech. The shift in perspective can be read in light of Bakhtin's contention that a novel is "a radical revolution in the destinies of human discourse: the fundamental liberation of cultural-semantic and emotional intentions from the hegemony of a single and unitary language" (*Dialogic Imagination* 367). This revolution posits the characters as human beings that cannot be arrogated upon by any system that would attempt to govern them.

There are many examples of the human nature of the knights in *Tirant*. For example, the Emperor praises Tirant as "fill meu" and promotes him to lead his army. Tirant repays this trust by secretly seducing the Emperor's daughter and then raping her. In contrast, Llull states that only a bad knight would sleep with his master's wife (*Libre* 533). Extending Llull's quote exegetically to include the respect owed to the Emperor's family while living in his palace, the secret relationships between Tirant and Carmesina, and Ypòlit and the Empress, are in opposition to the values of a knight outlined in the *Libre*. We see the power structure subverted in *Tirant*, as two *almogàvers* (Tirant and Ypòlit) become more powerful than the Emperor himself after winning both his his daughter and wife. A comparative reading of the *Libre* and *Tirant* indicates that, by Llull's standards, Tirant and Ypòlit are bad knights, making *Tirant* an anti-chivalric novel that poses a shift in world view, divulging a new world order where the noble of spirit do not necessarily succeed and the vicissitudes of Lady Fortune are prone to chance.

This new order is similar to Bakhtin's model of intertextual polyphony as an aggressive reimagining of the other's discourse:

> [T]he author makes use precisely of other people's words [...] it [another's discourse] acts
> upon, influences, and in one way or another determines the author's discourse [...]. In a

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[16] Bakhtin's interpretation of the polyphonic nature of the novels of Dostoevsky is outlined in page 25 of this thesis.

hidden polemic, on the other hand, the other's words are treated antagonistically, and this antagonism, no less than the very topic being discussed, is what determines the authors discourse. This radically changes the semantics of the discourse involved […] there appears a second meaning – an intentional orientation toward someone else's words […] indirectly striking a blow at the other's discourse, clashing with it, as it were, within the object itself. As a result the other person's discourse begins to influence authorial discourse from within. (*Problems* 195-96)

In the hidden polemic, this battle against the other's discourse is never directly stated by the author, but the antagonism towards the source texts demonstrates a revisionary intent which manifests as an interdiscourse between the past and the new utterance (Bakhtin, *Problems* 195). This has a subversive function because the authority of the original is eroded. Bakhtin calls this a second meaning, but I contend that it goes even further than that – the new text and the old text merge to form a Third State, mentioned earlier, which is the synthesis of their genesis, the polyphonic space where discourses collide.

The shifting of orientation between *Tirant* and the *Libre* reveals the way that a power relationship is established in the decontextualised application of the *Libre*. We can see this in the juxtaposition of how knowledge of chivalry is imparted in the two books. In the *Libre*, when the hermit sees the squire coming towards him he pretends to read an unnamed book which he then uses to teach the squire about chivalry. Neither Llull nor the hermit reveals the name of the text. In *Tirant*, when the protagonist arrives Guillem is reading Honoré Bouvet's *Arbre des Batailles*, a juridical chivalry guide that has little in common with *Tirant* and even less in common with Llull's the *Libre* (154). Yet the use of Bouvet's legal text is significant because it demonstrates the shift in relations that occurs between the *Libre* and *Tirant*. Bouvet's *Arbre des batailles* is written in the form of a didactic dialogue where metaphysics, the chivalric code and politics are mixed. This merging of disciplines is also present in *Tirant* and may account for the importance given to the text. Here we see a move away from a world where priests and *dictadores* impart knowledge from secret sources unavailable to the masses and

towards a world where the written word – the book itself – is increasingly a source of knowledge. This new world was a legal world where the authority of priests and leaders was questioned and where textual evidence was increasingly demanded. In Valencia, this coincided with the concretisation of power within legal systems and networks of trade and led to the proliferation of texts of all sorts. Social contracts were established in law and the monarchic state was increasingly the intermediary for relations between individuals, eating away at the old liberties enshrined in the *Furs* (Furió 179-80). The new order was an era of documents, of social institutions exercising power through the written word: salient examples were the royal State, the Church, the legal system, international banking, the courts, government institutions and trade. It was a world where several factors combined to increase the importance of documents: commercialisation, nation-building, centralisation of the state and the increase in the use of credit (Furió 161). In this way, the new hero must traverse not only the physical world but also the written word in order to arrive at knowledge. Moreover, the written word is volatile because of its inherent intertextuality. The fact that this textual knowledge, symbolised by Bouvet's book, bears little relevance to *Tirant* is perhaps one further indictment of the preponderance of documents in this new world.

As each document must be reborn through the reader, the act of reinterpretation is also discursive. An example can be observed in *Tirant* in the way the use of the number seven diverges from the *Libre*. In the introductions to both *Tirant* and the *Libre* we read that each work has been divided into seven parts because of the influence of the seven planets on the world (*Libre* 527; *Tirant* 77). Ostensibly, *Tirant* appears to follow the *Libre*, but upon closer inspection we find that it is actually divided into six parts, a clear divergence from Llull. This incongruence indicates that discourse is present regardless of how we interpret the intention of the authors. The number seven has religious importance in the Judeo-Christian tradition, as in the Book of Genesis the world is created in six days with the final day set aside for rest. In medieval numerology, seven frequently recurs: the number of perfection, of the universe, of the seven deadly sins, the seven virtues, and of the seven seals of the

Apocalypse. Seven is also the classic epic number, and its use in *Tirant* may challenge the chivalric model.[17]

In *Tirant*, the use of the number seven can be read as a symbol of intertextual disobedience and a form of humour. While diverging from Llull's seven, it could be argued that *Tirant* is indeed loyal to the Book of Genesis, as the unwritten seventh section may be Tirant's death, the day of rest. This can be contrasted against the symbology of the number seven used later in the text when a tournament is divided into seven days of revelry, where each day arrives anew in a carnivalistic celebration of entertainment, food and fighting (*Tirant* 211-21). The creation of the world and the artificial celebration of sensory pleasure (the tournament) are juxtaposed. In the same way that Llull's irrelevance is alluded to through elision of the seven parts, the seven-day tournament subverts the canonicity of Genesis. While the writers do not openly state that Llull's text has been attacked or that Genesis has been mocked, one can imply this by comparing the intent of the original sources and the outcome of the new comic text. In light of the continuing importance of Christianity during the Renaissance (Kristeller 74), the seven-day tournament can be read as an exegetic commentary on how high society valued spectacle over faith. Foucault noted the importance of omission and silence as a form of discourse across all sciences:

> Silence itself − the things one declines to say, or is forbidden to name, the discretion that is required between different speakers − is less the absolute limit of discourse, the other side from which it is separated by a strict boundary, than an element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within overall strategies. ("The Incitement" 495).

Tirant's strategy of misuse and non-use of crucial elements of the source texts is a form of silence. Due to the Inquisition certain things could not be written, but elision is an effective way of alluding to the humanist author's newfound power to reshape religious materials within comic discourse. Through strategies of silence the text is able to breach the boundaries of accepted discourse. By traversing the

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[17] At the start of *Chanson de Roland*, Charlemagne has been in Spain for seven years.

frontiers of acceptability, the authors create a sense that other texts have been appropriated and recreated into a *more-than* state, something entirely other to the original but also incorporating the original. This ritual is but the endless dualistic dance of human thought, subversive in its very nature, always resulting in the synthesis of discourses into the One.

The subversive discourse between *Tirant* and the *Libre* can be seen in the way *Tirant* inaccurately reflects the content and context of the *Libre*. The presentation of the powerful is inconsistent between the two texts, indicating a discursive shift in perspective towards a world where the social system is fluid. We have not yet reached the rise of humanity against the system of monarchy, but *Tirant* does break away from the traditional perspective of the *Libre* and presents the beginnings of a meritocratic, individualist philosophy. In relation to social hierarchy, Llull describes the king as "un gran rei molt noble" (527), whereas in *Tirant* the vulnerability of the monarchy is constantly repeated, replaced with a meritocratic world where the fittest triumph and social structures are prone to constant change. Examples of this dichotomy occur when the English king is incapable of defending his kingdom and abdicates in favour of William the Hermit (115); Tirant defeats two European kings in battle (291-98), an inversion of the social order where champions fought for monarchs rather than against them; Tirant captures the Gran Caramany and the King of India (728); Tirant becomes Cèsar (1451); and Ypòlit successfully seduces the Empress and later becomes Emperor (947-994).

Despite this honour seeking, the heroism of knights is actually undermined through bathetic irony when Tirant, who has breached the rules of chivalry by raping Carmesina, dies unexpectedly. The final nail in the coffin of the old order comes when Ypòlit, an unworthy knight by Llull's measure, becomes Emperor and his descendants reign after him (1531). This is the death of the epic heroic order, of the chivalric hero, and the beginning of a Humanist imagining of the man in man, a path that leads over a century later to the great wanderings of Don Quijote. By the end of the text all that remains is the rule of Ypòlit and the Empress, a world where the senses and love rule. The traditional epic model of Homer and Virgil, where man conquers the external world and then returns home to the woman, has been toppled, which is symbolic of the death of the medieval world. In its place Ypòlit and the Empress

rule, thus symbolising the liberality of the Renaissance that upheld the importance of the body and the excellence of the human.

This human dignity is emphasised in the difference between the treatment of the sexes in the two texts. In the *Libre*, women are barely mentioned but when they are, men are considered to be stronger, more intelligent and more sensible than women: "Home, en quant ha més de seny e l'enteniment, e és de pus forts natura que fembra, pot ésser millor que fembra" (529). On the other hand, in *Tirant*, despite social conventions where men dominate in public spaces, the sexes approach a degree of equality. The social order of the *Libre* is transgressed and even ignored. There are many examples of empowered women in *Tirant*: twenty young women enter the Order of the Garter (354); Agnès takes on the role of her husband at Warwick (88); the Empress outsmarts her husband through a secret affair with Ypòlit (947-994); the Queen of Fez propositions Tirant with a "requestsa de amor" (1167); la Viuda Reposada tries to seduce Tirant (1165, 1055); Plaerdemavida calls Tirant "en beneit!" (787); and la Viuda Reposada easily deceives Tirant (1047-1055). Women become protagonists and agents, rather than objects of the male gaze. They depart from their social role as receivers and become transgressors. These self-made women do not appear in the *Libre*. Yet it would be simplistic to argue that *Tirant* is entirely new. Rather, chivalric conventions are flipped on their head, and the strong female characters of medieval romance are amplified and exaggerated in order to subvert the very chivalric tradition from which they derive. The number of what today would be considered feminist scenes in *Tirant* demonstrates that women are as powerful as men in the text.

The discourse between the unheard woman in the *Libre* and the emerging Renaissance woman in *Tirant* is discursive and asks the reader to consider a polyphonic world in comparison to the old chivalric order. The Renaissance perspective of the importance of the individual led to many changes in society, particularly the rise of influential women.[18] I am not suggesting that women enjoyed sexual equality during the Renaissance. While the pro-feminine position became more common in print and

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[18] Sor Isabel de Villena and Christine de Pizan were strident defenders of women, respected for their proto-feminist arguments. This is not to say that women were not still presented as stylised objects of appreciation for the male gaze and the blazon, but rather that Tirant presents a world where the voice of the woman takes on increasing importance.

theatre, it was filtered through a structural misogyny based upon the Church's position that woman was fallen and derived from man (Blamires 234). This meant that real change on the level of access to power was limited. Yet in *Tirant* the female characters, despite being imprisoned within the linguistic confines of the male author's language, are not powerless. They have the ability to change the world and to govern societies. While this was not in itself unique at the time, it is subversive that female characters have a voice when compared to the entirely masculine world of the *Libre*. In the new world of *Tirant*, the voice of the woman has an equal status to that of the male.

Bakhtin outlines how this kind of discursivity is important: "Within the arena of almost every utterance an intense interaction and struggle between one's own and another's word is being waged, a process in which they oppose" (*Dialogic* 354). The divergence is combative because an utterance is always intertextual, occurring in the context of previous utterances (*Dialogic* 91). The previous utterance that is struggled against is the voice of the medieval male. Prior to the fifteenth century, men wrote the majority of records about women, often presenting them as heretics, witches, hysterical or a temptation to men. Women were also almost always marginalised in these texts.[19] By the fifteenth century this was starting to change. According to Bakhtin, the author manifests his individuality through the relationship with the works of predecessors (*Dialogic* 75). This can be seen in *Tirant*. To give women a powerful voice is to create a discourse with the medieval world. Indeed, these divergences indicate a powerful reaction to the source text and its *Zeitgeist* of male hegemony. This reaction is polyphonic because we have multiple literary voices: the previous text, the new text, and the conversation that occurs between the two.

Although *Tirant* does not yet posit the idea of the rights of women, there is a clear shift towards a humanist perspective where all individuals are both powerful and vulnerable. As previously mentioned, women now have a voice and have access to the systems of power, and this was somewhat socially subversive for the era. For example, traditional male/female relations are inverted when Queen

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[19] For example, the records from the Albigensian trials of Arnauda da Lamotha of Montauban (1244) and Beatrice of Planisolles (1320) are typical of the way male scribes controlled written discourse about women (Goodich 198-215).

Maragdina of Tlemcen requests marriage to Tirant (1165). In the 'Bodes Sordes' episode, Stephania is also empowered. She leads Tirant and Diafebus to the bedroom and her power over their fate is alluded to when it states "staven esperant ab més devoció que no fan los juheus al Messies" (704). In the scene between Spèricus and the daughter of Ypocràs, the woman wields as much power as the man, seducing him and offering him riches after Spèricus is brave enough to conquer her when she is a dragon (1371). The scene presents the female and male components as equally important, as the daughter of Ypocràs transforms from *drach* to *donzella* and Spèricus receives wealth and good luck as a result of conquering both the male and female components of her personality. The daughter of Ypocràs has a mystical access to a power that Spèricus lacks, but seeks: she is the provider, physically superior and is capable of harnessing the material world through transmogrification. Something approaching equality of the sexes can also be observed in the love-dialogues between Ypòlit and the Empress (947-994), where it is unclear who wields the power in their relationship, but where an alchemical fusion between the opposite charges of the male and female poles occurs and results in their victory over the external world. In the external world of class relations, the Empress is above Ypòlit, but in the bed chamber they are equals.

Bakhtin noted that in a text, language genres and languages do not exclude each other, but intersect, mutually struggling inside social heteroglossia (*Dialogic Imagination* 291). The language of women in *Tirant* is also the language of resistance and struggle, of reimagining the centre from the periphery and recreating it with a new language. This must be extended to discourses and to the very dialogic nature of language itself as a struggle between socio-linguistic points of view (273). The Law can only remain the Law as long as the voices on the margin are not allowed to intrude upon the site of address. The instant they do, the sacral hegemony of the Law is disrupted. From the perspective of intertextuality analysed here, these emerging points of view are the texts within the text, the languages within language. They intersect and struggle with each other, leading to heteroglossia and multi-textedness.

1.5. Conclusion.

The constant struggle with the canonic Word of other texts in *Tirant* is really a push for literary synthesis through overcoming. In terms of Hegel's *aufgehoben* there is a dialectic confrontation between thesis and antithesis which results in the emergence of a Third State where intertextual discourses interact, and this leads to polyphony. The polyphony is inherent when intertextuality occurs because there is a discursive relationship, a conversation that triggers off a process of resignification and rereading. In this environment, the different texts act as distinct literary voices that interact. Canonic texts are relied upon to create the new text, in the same way that Hegel's dialectic determines that the master's access to selfhood relies upon, and is mediated by, the slave (627). Without the texts of the past, there is no *Tirant*. Yet the work innovates by diverging from its sources. In this sense *Tirant* is knowingly at odds with itself and is constructed in such a way that the only logical conclusion is the death of the hero – Tirant must die because the order of chivalry and epic heroism which he symbolises must be razed. The carnivalistic, destructive impetus of this falling, which will be discussed in the next chapter in relation to eroticism, can only have meaning through the end of the old order and of the text itself. This is tied to intertextual divergence, as it distances *Tirant* from that which came before. The fact that *Tirant* upholds the chivalric model while at the same time toppling it is part of the text's design: the internal inconsistencies actually drive discursivity by creating tension between the differing parts.

Bakhtin notes in *The Dialogic Imagination* (1940) that the novel always includes coming to know another's word (353). In relation to intertextuality this means interacting intensely with another text and reusing it, in some sense also refuting it. In the combination of convergence and divergence *Tirant* becomes *more-than* the original. The changes and retention of certain sections presents an unspoken commentary – a judgement of the relevance of these texts. We have seen here that the number of divergences outweighs the convergences.

In light of the considerable number of divergences, the subversive function of intertextuality can be deduced. By simultaneously moving towards, and away from, the original texts the canonic status of

the source texts is challenged. In this context, evidence of convergence can be found mostly as a consequence of plagiarism. Nevertheless, as shown above, divergence is subversive and undermines the source texts. We have seen in this section that the authors go further than merely recording histories – they are reimagined – although exactly which history (or which text) we are discussing in any given section of *Tirant* is a complex question, as new histories, often contradictory, emerge in the voices of the characters and an omnipotent narrator who plagiarises and diverges from other texts with vigour.

We have seen that this multi-textedness is deliberate and leads to intertextual polyphony, which is always discursive. These simultaneous histories are a polyphonic range of stories that occur one on top of the other, some textual, some implied. The narrators of *Tirant* have created a multi-voiced space, envisaged as a live social event. The divergences from other texts create a new state in the Hegelian sense. This event is polyphonic on the intertextual level because multiple texts contest the site of discourse within the new text: what is left is a multi-voiced space that both incorporates and challenges. This position of simultaneous reverence and distance against canonic texts characterises the intertextual subversion in *Tirant*. As I will show in Chapter Two, this subversive recreation is done in ever-more transgressive ways, not only upon other texts, but also upon physical texts-in-the-world, through the imaginary of desire and the human body.

Chapter Two:

Dissident Erotics:

Transgressing Hegemonies through Humour and the Abject

As we saw in the first chapter, *Tirant* subverts textual authority through ambivalent intertextuality. This chapter further develops the subversive challenge to authority in *Tirant* by exploring how hierarchies are undermined through the transformative space of eroticism. To do so, I read *Tirant* through Bakhtin's theories of the carnivalesque and the grotesque and trace their connections to hierarchy and abjection. In this chapter I argue that the imagining of the erotic in *Tirant* is transgressive because traditional hegemonies are decentred. In my analysis I focus on two scenes in particular: chapters 231-233 (895-920) and chapters 284-286 (1047-1055). These scenes have been chosen because, coming as they do towards the latter half of the novel, they herald the final challenge to various forms of political, religious, sexual and social authority in the novel.

While in Chapter One I argued that *Tirant* subverts medieval textual authorities in order to highlight the emergence of new Renaissance subjectivities, here in Chapter Two I will show how, through eroticism, the novel subverts four pillars of authority: 1) political authority and the institution of the monarchy; 2) religious authority; 3) sexual authority; 4) social and textual authority through the institution of chivalry and its deconstruction of chivalric literature. However, before exploring the subversion in any depth, we first need to understand how the carnivalesque and the grotesque have been defined by Bakhtin and later theorists so as to better understand the contextual reasons for applying Bakhtinian theory to an analysis of the erotic in *Tirant*.

2.1. The Carnivalesque.

Bakhtin develops his theory of the carnivalesque over a number of studies, from *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* to *Dialogic Imagination* to *Rabelais and his World* (1965). He conceives of

the carnivalesque as a space for acting out "a new mode of interrelationship between individuals" (*Problems* 123). This is a space where the old order is transformed and structures are often turned upside down. Bakhtin imagined it as the life-creating, transforming power inherent in carnival's fierce fluctuation between crowning and decrowning (*Problems* 107). The old order is toppled, but the old genres are renewed again through joyful destruction, that is, "joyful hell" (*Problems* 133). Its circular nature ensures that the hell and heaven are mutually dependent, and, indeed, nourished by each other.

As its name suggests, carnivalesque has its origins in Bakhtin's reading of the role of carnivals in medieval Europe. Carnivals were public celebrations, generally Christian, but linked to ancient seasonal rituals like the solstices. For Bakhtin, carnivals were a space in which social and political tensions were able to be released through the inversion of established hierarchies. For example, during the Feast of Fools scholastics and lower clerics indulged in gluttony, orgies, and disrobing on the church altar, while during the Feast of the Ass the protagonist masqueraded as an ass and mass was brayed by the celebrants. The Feast of Kings was equally jolly, inverting the social order by proclaiming a jester as king or appointing a mock pontiff (*Rabelais* 81). These folk carnivals are considered by Bakhtin to be regeneration/renewal rituals through acts of negation (*Rabelais* 75), in that the old order is temporarily inverted. Such festivals negate the hegemonic through humour and disorder. A similar situation occurs with the grotesque, which threatens the existing order and the boundaries of the subject in relation to the Other and the outer world and is often connected to the lawlessness of carnival.

Bakhtin describes the carnivalesque as the ensuing disorder that results from the carnival atmosphere in a text – a polyphonic, multi-voiced convergence of opinions, which, in turn, subverts accepted hierarchies of official culture through the edification of the low/abject (*Rabelais* 246). The carnivalesque describes the use of humour and role reversal in the transgression of an established order. Bakhtin recognised that the carnivalesque novels of Dostoevsky are a convergence of voices that interact in the lawless space of carnival. Characters become fully valid worlds that further the overall thesis of heterogeneity (*Problems* 63).

Carnivalesque also entails a destruction of the old order with the birth of the new (*Rabelais* 410). According to Bakhtin, these hierarchies are deliberately travestied in the carnivalesque novel by the joyful outpouring of multiple literary voices in the form of humour. The destabilisation of the hegemonic is comical and reveals the inherent weakness of the existing structure, especially its vulnerability when confronted by taboo, the abject and the Other. Bakhtin notes the seriousness of humour in the Middle Ages, asserting that medieval parodists were often sincerely didactic and that the carnivalesque hides a deep realism and social criticism. It is a means for grasping reality as opposed to understanding life through the narratives of the elite (*Rabelais* 95, 210). Indeed, humour became an art form during the Middle Ages, imitating the type of scathing social commentary found in Martial's *Epigrams*. Subversion of power, then, was a common literary device in the fifteenth century and late Middle Ages.[1]

The ironic nature of the carnivalesque is that it relies upon the unitary as the very basis for its criticism, but then aims to destroy that which nourished it. In light of Terry Eagleton's observation that carnival simultaneously repristinates and destroys ("Bakhtin" 236), I interpret carnivalesque as a vision of multiplicity that shows the anachronistic nature of hegemonic structures when confronted with subversion, but also bear in mind how subversion is reliant upon hierarchy, as without it there would be nothing to subvert. My reasoning for understanding Bakhtin's carnivalesque in this way derives from his perspective in *God and the State*, where he opposes religion and the State, arguing that these two institutions were designed to enslave humanity (152). In this way, Bakhtin's carnivalesque should be understood as directed against the discourses that would bind the natural freedom of humanity.

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[1] We see the powerful being mocked through humour in the satiric Canto 28 of Dante's *Commedia* where Dante's enemy, the Ghibeline Mosca dei Lamberti, is relegated to the eighth circle of hell for spreading discord (*Inferno*, XXVIII, ln. 106-110). We also see the monarchy being mocked in Giraut de Bornelh's poem *Lo reis d'Aragó*, a typical trope also found in Ramon Muntaner's unflattering depiction of *Pere el Catòlic* being tricked into sleeping with his wife Maria of Montpellier in *Lo Crònica* (1325-28). In the Catalan tradition also see Anselm Turmeda's *La disputa de l'Ase* (1417), which targets human self-importance. From the second half of the fourteenth century, *Planys del cavaller Mataró* for an irreverent representation of the conflict between knights and clerics and *Discussió d'en Buch ab son cavall* for satiric discussions between a thief and his horse. From an older example see Cerveri de Girona's *Viadeyra* (late thirteenth century) for a satiric mockery of the hierarchical social order of the time.

My approach to the carnivalesque and grotesque in *Tirant* is further informed by Stallybrass and White's argument that carnival should be understood in terms of inversion and transgression (18). Yet I also acknowledge Eisenbichler's observation that carnival is too often reduced to inversion (45) as well as Eagleton's reading of carnival as simultaneously revolutionary and law abiding (*Walter* 148), existing within the established systems of power and as a kind of controlled outlet that does not result in real change.[2]

2.2. *Hierarchy.*

To understand how hierarchy is subverted in the two selected scenes, it is necessary to define what is meant by hierarchy in the context of fifteenth-century Valencia and carnival. The *Diccionari general de la llengua Valenciana* defines *jerarquia* as "Ranc o orde dels cors dels àngels / Orde dels diversos graus ecclesiastics / Orde dels diferents rancs una organisació, entitat... / Orde de valors, títols, honors...", indicating the religious, social and classificatory nature of hierarchy in relation to the social body. A similar definition is given in the *Diccionari català-valencià-balear*. *Jerarquia* stems from the Latin *hierarchia*, which derives from the Ancient Greek *ἱεραρχία*, both meaning a rule or law set down by a person in a position of authority. The Valencian term, however, retains a strong link to the Christian past. Setting out from this definition, I also include terms such as "authority" and "the traditional order of things" within the general intent of the hierarchical, as they refer to the same tendency to rank and govern things into comprehensible units.

A brief discussion of the historic importance of some of the hegemonic systems of the fifteenth century is necessary, as this will clarify how *Tirant* disrupts structure by positioning eroticism as something that overturns and challenges the status quo. At the time of *Tirant*, the notable form of

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[2] This is also the case in *Tirant*, where subversion is an ongoing process of change and renewal, the epitome of the etymology of the word revolution. In Latin, *revolutio* means a turn around, and the transgressions we are discussing in *Tirant* are but turns of the wheel, which lead to a new structure. This all occurs on the surface level of the external world but the super-structure of power remains, dressed in new forms. In this sense, revolution can never be permanent; it is instead a brief victory in the ever-turning battle between dogmatism and pluralism. The inversion of the existing order in *Tirant* represents the view that if freedom of speech and dialogue are allowed to flow as dialogic elements, then dogmatism can never be victorious.

hierarchy in society was the monarchic and feudal social structure. Although there were gradations of feudal servitude within the medieval class system (Bloch 243, Astarita 85), those with an interest in maintaining the status quo understood the concept of class as something determined by God's will. Indeed, in line with St. Hildergard, the desire to change one's lot was viewed as a sin and a breach of the system (Bühler 96). There is little evidence of what the powerless thought, but judging by the large number of grass-roots revolts during the Middle Ages, it is probable that the average man's relation to power was characterised by a series of ever-growing victories and incursions against those who would govern individual freedom. The growth of modern cities and the merchant class during the era between the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance led to significantly increased class fluidity, which indirectly caused a dramatic undermining of the old feudal order of indentured servitude (Classen 132).

Tirant traverses these visions of the human against hierarchy. In relation to hierarchy, Michel Foucault provides a powerful model to explain how thought is formed in human discourse, how sacrosanct discourse gains primacy and interlocks with canonical networks of self-supporting domination, eliminating contrary opinions. Foucault starts by imagining the causes of our systems of knowledge as "surfaces of emergence" (*The Archaeology* 41). These surfaces are composed of themes that remained largely uninterrogated in official textual sources, such as chivalric thought, the evangelistic/religious mind, the role of women, the concept of crusade and the emergence of Renaissance humanism (*The Archaeology* 41). In a sense they can be thought of as myths upon which thought is built. Yet in literature, as we will see, these "surfaces" were constantly challenged, bringing to mind Kristeva's suggestion that all literature may be a version of the apocalypse, eliding the subject's identity through the heterogenous and the abject (*Powers* 207). Foucault's surfaces then feed in to what are termed "authorities of delineation" (*The Archaeology* 41-2). These are physical structures that support the traditional model of the formation of knowledge, such as the class structure, religious authority, the monarchy, the sacred book, language itself (the battle between Latin and vulgar) and the epic literary tradition.

Foucault's layered hierarchies finally lead to his "grids of speculation," the profound questions about man's existence, such as the body/soul discussion, determinism, nature, the role of fortune and the importance of civilisation (*The Archaeology* 42). According to Foucault, all of these "systems of dispersion" are hierarchical and discursive because they negate other possible statements, thus forming the basis of the ordering of ideas. Most of the hierarchical discourses mentioned by Foucault are subverted in *Tirant*, and for this reason I consider *Tirant* to be a text that challenges many of the foundations of Western thought. This subversion, I argue, is achieved through erotic humour, which is carnivalesque, and through a celebration of the grotesue at the expense of the canonical. With this in mind, and in order to fully understand the transgression of hierarchy, we must also propose a working definition of what was considered profane or lowly in the fifteenth century and discuss how this is connected to the grotesque.

2.3. *The Grotesque and Abjection.*

Following Bakhtin, I understand the grotesque to be something that is simultaneously an aberration and desirable. Its power resides in its ability to interrupt order and the margins of systems. Bakhtin considered the grotesque to be the representation of the lowly as ambivalent, not necessarily negative, but resulting in abundance through humour and subversion (*Rabelais* 62). Bakhtin notes how the grotesque can be physical, typically manifested as parts of the body and its orifices and excretions (*Rabelais* 317). He also extends the grotesque into language and finds that it also occurs through speech in the form of mockery, exhortation, abuse and hyperbole (*Rabelais* 303, 319). These instances of the grotesque will be discussed in this chapter in light of Mary Douglas' contention that the body's margins are a site of danger and power because boundary pollution can corrupt the sacred inner with the outer (149, 155).

The carnivalesque and grotesque elements in *Tirant* are transgressive because they cause pollution. They tend to be presented in scenes involving lowly characters and this is a deliberate device that disrupts the existing class and political order. The "lowly" characters are the pollutants, but they

also create the razed space where the grotesque can easily have effect. For this reason, I see grotesque eroticism in conjunction with something that disturbs, distends and causes rupture. I refer to Kristeva's theory of the abject, which I understand to be something that threatens not only the existing order but our condition as a living being by toppling the distinction between self and Other, between the inner and outer borders of the subject, physically and psychologically (*Powers* 4, 18, 69). The abject then produces a crisis of meaning because it raises doubt about the subject's sense of self, which was based upon the demarcation between self and the things outside. In *Tirant* we can see this in the way the identity of the characters is constantly eroded in the erotic scenes due to the eruption of carnival and grotesque elements. This subversion is generally attached to the things we consider to be lowly or taboo in society, as they have the symbolic power to recalibrate systems and redefine boundaries.

The grotesque is so powerful because it is able to redefine the binary relation of high/low. As something abject, the grotesque draws us towards an in-between space where meaning collapses and the status quo cannot hold. This is so because it inherently threatens traditional thinking. As explored by Douglas, that which is abject is perceived as dangerous and poses a threat to the social order through its ability to reside on the margins and transgress borders (119). Kristeva believed that in this border space the subject is differentiated and autonomised through the abject (*Powers* 82). For Kristeva, this is coupled with a primal fantasy to devour the Other and to interiorise and spiritualise the abject (*Powers* 118). In *Tirant*, the Other is treated ambiguously, made into something abject and grotesque, but also capable of disturbing the system. The Other gains unique power in the observed space primarily because of this Otherness. As a result of confronting abjection (through the Other in the case of *Tirant*) one feels horror when the bounds of the subject-object reality are disrupted and the profane intrudes on the protected space of the Sacred. However, one also feels desire to experience that intrusion due to its exoticism. In this way, on the psychological level one tends to unconsciously desire the abject, even if the abject is derided through rhetoric. We will see in the two scenes discussed that the theme of Otherness is significant to erotic discourse in *Tirant*.

During the fifteenth century the abject was not only that which challenged a hierarchical system but also that which was rejected or Othered. Stallybrass and White thought of this as the thing on the margins of prevailing ideology (*Politics* 20). This Otherness was considered profane because the mere existence of the lowly on the edge of the Sacred challenges the exclusivity of the canonic. However, this binary ideation is ambivalent, as the low/Other in its abject status is actually desired (Kristeva, *Powers* 14; Stallybrass and White 191) and sacralised (Douglas 220).[3]

The concept of abjection in fifteenth-century Valencia must be discussed in relation to its politico-historic context. I will discuss this briefly and follow in the steps of Vico by exploring how the unravelment of the *sensus communis* enhances an understanding of a text. Certain groups were marginalised from the official narrative of the chronicles: particulary different ethnic and religious groups, and women. The abject subject included those targeted by the Inquisition in Valencia post-1478, which resulted in the subjugation of heretics and people with contrary opinions to those held at the centre of power (Haliczer 15). The Catalan-Aragonese Crown was crumbling and subjugation of minorities and minority opinions secured power temporarily. This hysteria against the abject Other blew out into a pogrom in the Call of Barcelona in 1391 and the burning of Lluís Alcanyís in 1506. Other groups that were discriminated against and socially marginalised were Muslims, lepers, the poor and the disabled (Pomés & Sanchéz 86). While these groups were visible they generally lived in demarcated sections of the cities, on the edges of the known. The existence of these groups simultaneously within and on the margins of the centre of power, threatened the concept of the Empire, prosperity, and a "golden age" by intruding on the notion of hegemonic order: the Moors were a reminder of the region's history and the disenfranchised masses a constant reminder of inequality and the potential for change if the have-nots were to unite against the ruling classes. At the same time, the Jews and the Moors were in a strange way central to Christian identity, having introduced the most important texts in Christian consciousness. They posed a counterpoint that was used to build an identity based on opposition. In

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[3] Some examples of abjection in *Tirant* are wounds, cut body parts, vaginal blood, dirty clothing, racial othering, transmogrification, verbal exclamations and the breaching of social taboos. Women's bodies are also dualised between abject and Sacred, and this dichotomy allows for significant juxtaposition throughout the text.

religion, that which did not conform to orthodox Christianity was considered heretical or heathen and, hence, abject. Yet, the most virulent punishment by the Inquisition was often not towards non-believers or those of other faiths but to Christians themselves, as was the case in the Inquisition into the riot in Bologna in 1299 (Caldwell Ames 51). The visibility and marginality of co-believers like the Cathars and the pervasiveness of Islam throughout North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean threatened the official narrative of the Church. There were many other examples. Islam was so threatening because it was a strong monotheistic faith, a possible replacement for Christianity, residing on the boundaries of Christendom. Douglas mentions how marginal entities that are similar to the centre of power are often considered the most dangerous (152). The logic would appear to be that that which is not "us" can be rejected as barbaric, whereas that which resides on the edges and forces us to recalibrate self and world must be crushed at all costs. The threat to social identity is too great. As will be seen, in *Tirant* the use of the Other in erotic scenes is a powerful social commentary about the weakness of hierarchy.

Finally, the abject in the fifteenth century, as today, was also often that which was considered Other. The Other is therefore considered to have a polluting influence due to its threat to the purity of the physical and social body (152). Bakhtin saw the irony of how the grotesque disrupts order, creating a "contradictory and doubled-faced fullness of life" (*Rabelais* 62). This link to renewal through transgression is one of the main themes of *Tirant*.

2.4. *The Erotic.*

In erotic scenes in *Tirant*, the transformative capacity of abjection is considered and the body is presented as a site of meaning and transmutation. This is transgressive, undermining the logocentric view of the world and presenting its comic opposite as regenerative. These scenes are also comic, which undermines hierarchies through humour. Historically, the position towards the body in *Tirant* is Renaissance in perspective. The text shares much in common with the erotic themes of Peninsula literature from the Siglo de Oro, where themes of transgression, abjection, and comic realism were

constantly employed.[4] In much Iberian literature from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries, the Other and the physical were the countervoice to an existing power structure based upon limitations. In philosophy, the body had long been considered subordinate to the soul, but Renaissance thought was moving towards the celebration of the physical bodily man (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 365). Augustine of Hippo's teachings that women were not made in the image of God went a long way toward making the woman's body abject and generally excluding discussion of women's desires.

At the time of *Tirant*, sexuality was undoubtedly a major site of abjection and a voluntary point of cultural blindness. The female orgasm was one such discourse that was generally not written about (Martos Rubio 143). Nevertheless, we must not ignore other erotic topics present in *Tirant* that were also taboo to fifteenth-century society, such as homoeroticism, lesbianism, incest, rape and allusions to transsexualism and bestiality.[5] The universal nature of the text is shown by the fact that many of these topics are still sensitive today. Some of these taboos are present in the two scenes discussed in this chapter. Humour is one of the main devices and, to paraphrase Bakhtin, the low challenges the hierarchical through its explosive positivity, resulting in abundance and increase (*Rabelais* 62). A world is created where anything is possible, what Stallybrass and White call "the world upside down" (183), also known as *mundus inversus*. This must have appeared humorous to readers, as, in this new world, the high are mocked by the low.[6] This lawlessness disrupts the network of power which is built on the accepted discourse. In this sense, counterpower is the empowerment of women and this liberation creates a wound in the system, subverting its claims to centrality. Having investigated the theory and context behind the argument in this chapter, I will now analyse the two scenes and discuss four forms of erotic subversion found in *Tirant*.

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[4] Two recent texts that investigate this erotic literature are *La poesía erótica de los Siglos de Oro* (2003) by José Igancio Díez Fernández and Adrienne Laskier Martín's *An Erotic Philology of Golden Age Spain* (2008).

[5] For allusions to homoeroticism and bestiality in *Tirant*, see Spèricus and the dragon (1365-1376, c.410-414); for transsexualism, see the same scene and also Lauseta's mask (1047-1055); for incest, see Ypòlit as the Empress' replacement son (947-994); for lesbianism, see chapters 231-233 (895-920) and 284-286 (1047-1055); for rape, see Tirant storming Carmesina's "castell" (1413-1424, c.434-439).

[6] It is worth noting that the majority of readers were women ("Joanot i Tirant"), and that they may have enjoyed the comic element that male characters (their superiors according to society) are so easily manipulated by female characters in the novel.

2.5. The Four Forms of Subversion in Tirant.

While I divide erotic subversion in the novel into four types, all four forms achieve the end of subverting authority. The four kinds discussed are therefore intertconnected. For example, religious and political authority is subverted through the inversion of sexual roles. Sexual authority is undermined through the use of satiric religious language. Religious and sexual hierarchies are also inverted by decentring class relations. The institution of chivalry is collapsed by the challenge to religious, political and sexual norms. Humour is the main literary device utilised in all four types and we will see how *Tirant's* reimagining of epic heroism introduces the Renaissance trope of realist individualism.

The first scene to be discussed occurs in chapters 231-233, where Plaerdemavida convinces Tirant to enter Carmesina's bed without her permission (895-920). In this scene Plaerdemavida helps Tirant to hide in a box with a hole, from which he observes and is aroused by an erotic ritual in which Plaerdemavida caresses Carmesina and Viuda Reposada undresses "tota nua" (895). Plaerdemavida then organises for Carmesina to sleep and convinces Tirant to enter her bed. A bisexual carnival of the senses follows, as Plaerdemavida is wedged in the bed between Tirant and a sleeping Carmesina, demonstrating the collective and subversive nature of eroticism in the novel, but also the often non-consenting nature of sex in *Tirant*. Plaerdemavida caresses Tirant's head while Tirant explores Carmesina's lower body. Finally, Carmesina discovers that the person caressing her is "més que dona" (904) and screams, waking the Emperor and the rest of the castle. Tirant escapes through the bathroom window and falls, breaking his leg.

The second scene to be discussed is between chapters 284-286, when Viuda Reposada, in an attempt to have Tirant for herself, convinces Plaerdemavida to wear Lauseta's mask and seduce Carmesina in the palace garden (1047-1055). Tirant is led to mistake the game for a real encounter and he murders Lauseta in jealousy. This scene presents a carnival atmosphere where hyperbole and theatrical equality between characters prevails. There is an element of jocund role-playing in this scene in which appearances do not correspond to reality. Identity is fluid due to the mask of Lauseta and the

theatrical-style staging of the scene in the palace garden. The actions are a game for Viuda Reposada, but they will have deleterious consequences: Tirant murders Lauseta, abandons Carmesina and is shipwrecked in Africa. The scene takes place in a shared space where social hierarchies and norms are undermined, as occurs in carnivalistic discourse. Viuda Reposada's sacrilegious monologues subvert religious hierarchy and sexual conservativism is challenged through a comic display of lesbianism between Plaerdemavida and Carmesina, which undermines the unitary perspective of heteronormative relations. At the time of *Tirant*, society was sexually conservative and male-dominated (Schaus 137). The traditional role of the sexes breaks down due to cross-dressing, a symbol of convergence between male and female. Grotesque elements are also important in the scene, linking to the way the Other and the abject are often simultaneously despised and desired in erotic discourse. Tirant's authority as the hero is destabilised and the psycho-sexual connection between desire and violence is established.

Several features of the carnivalesque will be identified in these two scenes, demonstrating how a Bakhtinian reading heightens our understanding of the role of subversion in *Tirant*. Firstly, in the two scenes one can trace a carnival atmosphere in a collective space where the existing social order dissolves and a new space for acting out human relations is imagined. This leads to freedom of speech and equality between characters, where orality, hyperbole and theatricality reign, allowing for a multiplicity of different opinions. The social effect of these voices is the subversion of existing hierarchies, disrupting traditional social models, particularly the role of the sexes, the class system, the imaginary of the body and heteronormative behaviour. Humour is a major factor, as women of lower social status manipulate Tirant, who appears to think with his "spada," and Carmesina and the Emperor are outwitted by their servants. Physical spaces are pivotal, as architectural orifices provide points of rupture and departure that separate the external world from the inner realms of the sex act. The actions and opinions of the characters flow through this space. On the physical level, the grotesque is also used to subvert traditional representations of beauty and aesthetic harmony, as in *Tirant* it is presented dualistically as dangerous and beautiful, execrable and desirable. All this contributes to an overall undermining of authority that promotes a sense of renewal.

2.5.1. Political Authority.

The carnivalesque often manifests this renewal as a challenge to authority, and this can be seen in the subversion of the existing social and political order in Scene One, particularly towards the political authority of the institution of monarchy. Bakhtin notes that within the carnival atmosphere the characters express their opinions freely (*Rabelais* 296) and we see this when Plaerdemavida inverts Christian ethics when she lambasts Tirant for not fulfilling his desire for Carmesina:

> Vòs sou major en cap dels vicis e primer en orde de les culpes mortals...O, cavaller de poch ànimo Temença de donzella vos spanta de acostar-vos a ella! O, malaventurat capità!...Feu lo que us dich e yo dar-vos he vida segura, e us faré portar la corona de l'Imperi Grech. (901)

The political subversion here is the suggestion that Plaerdemavida is capable of ensuring "la corona de l'Imperi Grech" for Tirant, despite being a handmaiden in the palace. Plaerdemavida wields significant power in the text, albeit through Carmesina, and is afforded the highest degree of freedom of speech of all the characters, a characteristic that leads to disruption of authority. Her statement suggests that her power is both linguisitc and physical. As a character she is noteworthy because her abject status comes with access to the margins and, hence, power: she is a servant but has raised Carmesina and has the most influence over her. She is also half-foreigner, described by Senyor d'Agramunt as "aquesta metzerina, de diables invocadora […] una mora enemiga de la sancta crestiana ley ab ses encantacions" (1269), positioning her as a racial Other and connecting her to the abject symbols of "diables" and "encantacions." Yet her position is ambivalent. She is half Christian, half Other, and constantly transcends norms of behaviour and breaches moral standards. Her duality means that she can freely express controversial opinions without suffering a breakdown of the self. The political order is challenged because a racially marginal character has the highest degree of freedom of speech and action, whereas the Emperor generally speaks in official discourse.

Douglas noted that people in a marginal state are often left outside of society's patterning and their marginality is often perceived as dangerous and powerful (121). Indeed, she goes on to affirm that "[w]here the social system requires people to hold dangerously ambiguous roles, these persons are credited with uncontrolled, unconscious, dangerous, disapproved powers" (124). This polemical, hidden power in Plaerdemavida can be seen in the way she traverses the roles of male and female and heterosexual and lesbian sexuality without consequences (895-904; 1048). She outsmarts characters of higher social rank (895-920) and is allowed unique freedom of speech not afforded to other characters – the emperor respects "lo parlar ubert de Plaerdemavida" (901). Her inverted approach to almost everything is an indication that she is a disruptive force, a character who actually causes the centre to be rethought and brings about renewal through negation. Her social marginality means that she can transgress the lines of power without consequences – she traverses the region between Other and Sacred and this unique liberty of expression subverts the hegemonic model of social behaviour.

The redistribution of power often occurs through speech and is most notable in the freedom of speech afforded to Plaerdemavida. Plaerdemavida's hyperbole shows that the mouth is an orifice that excretes subversive dialogue, often grotesque. This is typical of the liberated speech and hyperbole Bakhtin associated with the banquet in the carnivalesque (*Rabelais* 296). Moreover, it is also evidence of his argument that exaggerated hyperbolism and excess can be similarly grotesque (303). Examples of this abound, such as when Carmesina cries "Calla! Què est folla?" (897) and when Plaerdemavida exhorts "O, Tirant, senyor! E hon sou vòs ara? Com no sou ací prop perquè poguésseu veure e tocar la cosa que més amau en aquest mòn ni en l'altre?" (895). There are many other examples. The connection between the mouth's grotesque role in eating (*Rabelais* 321) can be juxtapposed against its creative role in speech. In this way the mouth is typical of grotesque features, as it draws the external in and pushes the internal out. A good example of how this dialogue is subversive is when Plaerdemavida explores the topography of Carmesina's body and names the body parts for Tirant's pleasure:

> Mira, senyor Tirant, vet ací los cabells de la senyora princessa: yo·ls bese en nom de tu, qui est dels cavallers del mòn lo millor. Vet ací los hulls, e la boca: yo la bese per tu. Vet ací

les sues cristal·lines mamelles, que tinch cascuna en sa mà: bese-les per tu. Mira com sòn poquetes, dures, blanques e lises. Mira, Tirant: vet ací lo seu ventre, les cuxes e lo secret. (897)

This itemization of the Carmesina's body emblazons her through speech. She is also crystalised into an objective image for Tirant, the spectator. Jonathan Sawday argues that literary blazons occur in the context of a culture that dissects, where male desire is the true subject of the blazon (*The Body* 193). In reference to Edmund Spencer's 'Epithalamion' in *Amoretti and Epithalamion* (1595), Sawday states: "The free-flow of language within the blazon form over the female body was not a celebration of 'beauty' (the ostensible subject), but of male competition. This competition was located both within and on the surface of the blazoned body of the queen" (199). On the contrary, in *Tirant*, the beauty of Carmesina's body is celebrated but she is objectified and passive. All exists for the pleasure of the male gaze and the colonising lips of the female kiss. When Plaerdemavida kisses the parts of the body, her mouth becomes an excreting machine and something that claims each part. Plaerdemavida's theatrical speech also appropriates through language. Hyperbolic speech is a kind of excretion that subjgates the Real to the logocentric and hence assigns a value to a certain part of the body. It alludes to the ambiguous role of the mouth: its grotesque role in devouring and destroying through eating (*Rabelais* 321), and its regenerative and positive influence through kissing and naming the orifices of "los hulls" and "lo secret," where the inner and outer merge and where excretions occur.

The use of language is also a symbolic devouring of the thing as it is. Slavoj Žižek writes that a "[w]ord is [the] murder of a thing, not only in the elementary sense of implying its absence – by naming a thing, we treat it as absent, as dead, although it is still present – but above all in the sense of its radical dissection: the word 'quarters' the thing, it tears it out of the embedment in its concrete context" (51). This symbolic murder removes the life from the thing and claims it as dead in speech. Hence, a blazon is also a claiming of right and property. When Plaerdemavida says "les sues cristal·lines mamelles" she can only ever really mean *les meves cristal·lines mamelles*, in the possesive and acquiring sense of a

language that quarters. The blazon is also the social body politic, the Byzantine throne. Once Carmesina's physical and symbolic identity is acquired through language, she loses all power.

The free use of language by Plaerdemavida occurs within the context of simultaneous arousal over the beauty of Carmesina and creation of a spectacle for Tirant, undermining the purity of the princess and the concept of courtly love, which was characterised by the man respectfully wooing the woman (Hopkins 115). The rhetorical and transformative aspects of eroticism are emphasised through hyperbole: "O, trista de mi, que si home fos, ací volria finir los meus darrers dies" (897). The sexualised nature of the scene can be implied because foreplay occurs twice in the text between Carmesina and Plaerdemavida (895-920, 1047-1055), and Viuda Reposada implies that Plaerdemavida's actions are ongoing when she refers to "ses acostumades plasenteries" (1048).

Even though lesbian eroticism was outside official sexual discourse, it was widely employed in late medieval literature as a way of trasngressing the boundaries of accepted behaviour. Sappho brought lesbian sexuality into the canon over two thousand years before *Tirant*, and examples of lesbianism can also be found in French and Arabic literature.[7] What differentiates *Tirant* from other texts of the era is the personal and sensual presentation of lesbian sexuality through speech. Thus, Plaerdeamvida's opinion is transgressive because she celebrates a bisexual perspective in the presence of other characters. The combination of lesbianism and dialogue is a powerful one, as there is the voyeuristic possibility of other characters overhearing the scene, incearsing the polyphonic discourse. Her celebratory display also contravenes the traditional order of male-female relations.

Sexuality plays such a prominent role in the scene we are discussing because it inverts the existing order. Sex has traditionally been associated with sin in European history (Foucault 16) and this association is inverted to some extent in *Tirant*. Sex also has the power to recreate power relations. Tirant's physical desire will overrule his sense of reason and the medieval chivalric order of physical

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[7] See Sahar Amer's *Crossing Borders: Love Between Women in Medieval French and Arabic Literatures* where she traces lesbian encounters in Ertienne de Fougère's poem *Livre des Manières* (1174-78), *Yde et Olive* (thirteenth century), the *One Thousand and One Nights*, Jena Renart's *Escoufle* (post 1245) and other Arab texts. In *Queer Love in the Middle Ages*, Anna Klosowska Roberts explores the many queer themes in French medieval literature and the essays in *Queering in the Middle Ages* clearly establish the constancy of homosexual themes throughout medieval literature.

restraint and respect for the damsel is ignored. While *Tirant* celebrates the sensuality of characters, their actions have consequences and the text condemns sexual freedom as much as it upholds it. In this topsy turvy world it is unclear whether sex or celibacy is sinful. The reader is left to decide upon this aporia. The most notable relation between the political order and sex is when Plaerdemavida says that Tirant would prefer to caress Carmesina than to gain political power: "A la fe, senyora, si Tirant fos ací, si us tocava ab les sues mans axí com yo faç, yo pens que ell ho stimaria més que si·l fahien senyor del realme de França" (895). The reference to the "realme" will be reinforced later by her offer of "la corona." Yet Tirant's physical desires will overrule his reason and ambition. Furthermore, the voyeuristic and performative aspect of this new-sex can be seen in the way she performs and speaks for Tirant's pleasure.

Carmesina symbolises the Byzantine Empire and to possess her is to possess the empire. Tirant's attempt to bed the Emperor's daughter in the royal palace is a clear inversion of the Emperor's power over his own private home. This can be extended to an empire which is under threat from Turkish invasion, just as the Palaiologan dynasty had been. Hence, the concept of the Byzantine Emperor as *Holy Roman Emperor* or *Imperator Caesar* is challenged by Tirant's intrusion in the private home. Plaerdemavida can promise Tirant "la corona grech" because the empire is weak at this critical point and is rotten from within. The Emperor is indulging his pleasures while his kingdom collapses around him. The fact that the Emperor is entertaining himself while erotic transgressions occur (895) alludes to the decadence of his lifestyle, a criticism that he enjoys himself at the expense of his realm. There is a momentary transformation in the scene as the Emperor is diminished, whereas Tirant is elevated momentarily, only to fall later. The subversion of political authority, however, is ironic because the triumphant knight will also be brought low in time by the Wheel of Fortune.

The emergence of the carnivalesque is also present in the connection between food and sex. Sexual relations are shown to be sensual and carnivalistic through the regularity of feasting prior to erotic scenes. This increases the sensory experience and draws the reader away from courtly depictions and more towards the physical. They symbolise a comic cuckolding of the Emperor, becasuse he is

often feasting, entertaining himself or sleeping while transgressive erotic encounters occur in his palace (703, 895). This lack of attention to the affairs of his realm, such as his daughter's rape or his wife cuckolding him, suggests a subversive political agenda in the text, where characters of lower social rank, such as Plaerdemavida and La Viuda Reposada, pull the strings. Tirant and Ypòlit, two symbolic *almogàvers*, also undermine the authority of the system through their actions.

Social mores were paramount in the Byzantine and Valencian worlds, particularly as they relate to the regulation of courtly interactions and class distinctions. The last form of subversion in the scene challenges the monarchic structure that had continued to persist into the Renaissance, by contravening the expectations of social comportment and status in the Byzantine State. The allusion to this sublevation against temporal powers can be seen when the Duke claims that Tirant would have readily murdered the Emperor to protect himself had he been caught entering Carmesina's chamber (906). Such a suggestion, while perhaps exaggerated, hides a truth in that Tirant is physically superior to the Emperor and may be willing to use his physical prowess against the symbol of monarchic authority. This juxtaposition of manly valour against sensory decadence was seen earlier in the text when the knights plan the war while the Emperor is in bed (508). Plaerdemavida mentions that the Emperor told her that were the Empress to die he would take her (Plaerdemavida) as his wife (893). This brings to the fore the Emperor's flawed human nature as opposed to his royal status as Basileus Emperor in Christ. This humanisation of the characters is a constant preoccupation in *Tirant*.

In Scene Two, this inversion of the existing order is achieved through the changeability of the characters. The grotesque and breaching of margins are used to create a topsy turvy world where concepts like sex, faith and race are interrogated. All this is linked to the danger of pollution to the body and the public space. Plaerdemavida, dressed up as Lauseta, puts her hand under Carmesina's skirt and pretends to bed her in the gardening shed. Finally, in a grotesque example of the breach of margins, a headcloth is put under the Princess' skirt, implying that the cloth was required to soak up the excretion of blood from a broken hymen:

E véu com lo negre ortolà se'n portava per la mà a la princessa en una cambra que dins l'ort havia, a hon tenia la sua artelleria per a conrear l'ort e per a son dormir. E Plaerdemavida posà-la dins la dita cambra, cercaren-li una caxa hon tenia la sua roba de vestir e tot quant tenia li regonegueren. Aprés hun poch spay ella ixqué e la Viuda, ab la una donzella, passejava prop de la cambra. Com la veren exir, la Viuda s'acostà a la donzella, donà-li hun drap de cap e dix-li, per fer lo joch que fos complit de rialles: -Posa-lo-y davall les faldes de la princessa. La donzella, axí com la Viuda la havia asinestrada, com fon davant sa altesa agenollà's en terra e posà-li lo drap davall les faldes... Havent vist Tirant hun cars tan nefandísim. (1048)

The grotesque elements are rather obvious through the use of the "caxa" as an orifice and the lowly references to "hun drap de cap" and "en terra." Yet the racial elements are particularly striking in this scene. Here, Lauseta is imagined as Other, and the use of the term "lo negre ortolà" is designed to make him an abjected character. The use of the mask defaces and disempowers him and also masks his identity. Plaerdemavida, as the masked gardener, intrudes into the sacred zone of Carmesina's body and male dominance. From Tirant's perspective, Carmesina's sanctity has been polluted by the religious and racial Other by what is described as "hun cars tan nefandísim." This is due to Lauseta's race and position as a slave. The breach of the margins and the excretion from the orifice occurs through the "drap de cap," which is supposed to soak up the vaginal blood. The seduction of the princess in the shed where Lauseta stores his *artelleria* is a reference to gardening tools, arms of war, and a euphemism for Lauseta's penis. In the first scene, Tirant's *spasa* and broken leg bone symbolised the phallus. Here, the lowly metaphor of the gardening tools is used. Yet the male element in this scene threatens the paradise of the *ort* far more than Tirant's *spasa* threatened *lo palau*. There is a power-discourse between Tirant's *spasa* and Lauseta's *artelleria*, and one can see that, as abject Other, the simple mask of Lauseta has unique power to change reality in a way that Tirant does not. Ironically, it is really Viuda Reposada who holds the power and poses the threat to peace even though she has no symbolic phallus. Similarly, despite Tirant's storming *el castell* with his *spasa* between chapters 434-439, he is manipulated into

action by Plaerdemavida and the Queen of Fez. Once Tirant repents, Carmesina gains the upper hand and demands his loyalty in marriage. Hence, Tirant is presented as a slave to his passions.

In the garden there has been a total inversion because there is also a threat to self, coming from without, through the imagined racial and political Other. However, in reality the threat actually comes from within the palace: from the fear of Otherness. Here is a reference to the danger posed by the Other, which is an imagined danger of the threat to borders and identity. When the margins of Carmesina's body are threatened this alludes to the invasion of class and racial boundaries that come with the fall of Constantinople to the Turks. Lauseta, as Moor, represents the threat to the bounded system of Christendom and of Tirant's chivalric order. Once the masked Lauseta crosses the boundary into the sacred space of Carmesina's body it is as if he has breached a sacred threshold and committed what Douglas referred to, in her study of the prohibitions and purification rituals of the Bemba people, as "sexual pollution" (176). There are several transgressions, as Tirant believes that the Other has penetrated the sacred body of Carmesina and, by extension, the empire. In this inversion, the class system has also been profaned and toppled. On a spatial-symbolic level, the lowly garden has merged with the palace, causing a transgression of the class structure and a mixing of profane and clean elements. Furthermore, there is a racial boundary crossing that Tirant cannot allow. He is unaware, however, of another transgression, a merging of the sexes where Plaerdemavida becomes a symbolic male. This is not all. Tirant also believes that the existing system has been transgressed with Carmesina's blood, and so he murders the real Lauseta. The spilling of Lauseta's blood is a kind of grotesque sacrifice, a blood-letting, which links back to the leather mask. The use of the verb *degollar* is possibly intentional, as Halal butchering involves the slitting of the throat. The murder-sacrifice of the Moor is Tirant's way of attempting to purify the space and restore order.

The danger that the Other is perceived is pose to Carmesina as the representative of the empire is also important in this scene. Tirant believes that he has lost Carmesina to the racialized and religious other (Plaerdemavida as Lauseta). This poses an inversion of political power relations and results in Tirant's fall into the underworld. That the disembodied mask is intended to be grotesquely political and

Othered in the scene can be implied from the way Lauseta is racialised when he is described as "lo negre ortolà" (1048) and denigrated by Tirant as "home de la més vil condiciò e natura que poguès ésser trobada, e enemich de la nostra santa cathólica fe" (1049). The Othering of Lauseta is deliberately grotesque. He is rarely directly referred to as a person in his own right, but is linguistically impersonalised by a noun suppressed by an appositive. For example, the narrator describes him as "lo Lauseta que·s nomena, sclau negre, comprat e venut, moro per sa natura, ortolà que l'ort acostuma de procurar" (1003). He is referred to euphemistically as "sclau negre" (1049), an indication that he resides on the margins of official discourse and access to power, able to be purchased and manipulated by the other characters. When Viuda Reposada has the mask and gloves made in the image of Lauseta, she calls him "lo Lauseta, ortolà del nostre ort" (1011), linking Lauseta's identity to his status as a labourer. As *ortolà*, he is connected to the earth and the need to work, and is therefore lowly in comparison to those of the court who enjoy leisure. The fact that the mask, as a mere copy of Lauseta, is capable of interrupting the world to such an extent is an indication of the underlying weakness of a society built upon class distinctions. The connection between Lauseta and the land is further alluded to when Carmesina sees Lauseta picking an orange tree (1011) and when Lauseta is described as "lo Lauseta dels tarongers e de les murteres" (1012). These examples demonstrate how Lauseta is connected to blackness and flora and fauna, to the fertility of the land and to the abundance of fruit. This links back to the contrast between the *ort* and the *palau*. One environment is sterile while the other is productive. The subversive element is that through the mask of a slave, Palerdemavida, a *mestiza*, conquers Carmesina in a public space for all to see. Tirant is also conquered by the machinations of Viuda Reposada. These forms of the Other intrude upon the traditional view of the world and give the Other access to power.

The use of the mask could be viewed as carnivalesque because of the common practice of wearing masks during carnival. It is grotesque because it symbolises the erasure of the human body, as a disembodied face is superimposed upon Plaerdemavida and a double of Lauseta is created (1048). Lauseta the human being is elided. The mask is an imitation of nature, a painted leather imitation of

Lauseta's face and a grotesque copy of the original body: "[L]a cara que li havien feta pròpiament com la del negre ortolà" (1048). It is also a protrusion on the real face. That it is made of animal hide is also a grotesque element, as cow hide was associated in the fifteenth century with the horrendous stench of tanning and the polluted sections of the cities that practiced tanning. The imposition of the skin of an animal carcass atop the human face is a grotesque blending, erasing the site of identity (the face). There is a clear hybridisation between animal and human, Muslim and Christian and male and female. In this way, the author links the grotesque break-down of the body to erotic practices.

There is a strong sense of racial appropriation of Lauseta's identity in the scene, perhaps an indication of the political threat posed by the Other. As mentioned previously, racial othering occurs in another erotic scene in *Tirant*, when the Senyor d'Agramunt describes Plaerdemavida pejoratively.[8] Yet the grotesque becomes the desired, as Senyor d'Agramunt will eventually marry Plaerdemavida, who is later transformed and dressed as a queen by Tirant (1309). That the non-Christian characters wield such power is subversive. The mask of Lauseta is also grotesque, but by wearing it, Plaerdemvida seduces Carmesina, so it also becomes desired. This doubling was predicted by Stallbrass and White in a different context, where they argue that the binary nature of the grotesque would address social classifications and lead to a rethinking of society (56). Indeed, representations of the Moor in Iberian literatures have often included Maurophilia: a desire for the exoticism of Moorish culture and a fascination with playing the role of Moor (Fuchs 89-90). This appropriation of the Other often formed a hybrid space where Christian and Muslim cultures could converge (Fuchs 89), thus establishing a site of discourse. This is really the true nature of carnival, a place where identities are elided and subjects can meet and take on different roles. The existing order is reversed, roles are inverted and renewal occurs. The era of the Other has arrived, as low and fallen characters claim power for themselves. Three Othered characters gain control over the social space: the "metzerina," "lo negre ortolà," and the widow as "diable," manipulating the characters of higher social status. Through the erotic, in the joyous atmosphere of carnival, the empire is reclaimed by the disempowered.

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[8] See page 82 of this thesis.

2.5.2. *Religious Authority.*

A further form of subversion of authority in the scenes is towards the religious order of the fifteenth century. Religious discourse is employed to profane ends. We can link this to carnivals, where religious feast days often devolved into wild celebration and orgies on the altars, quite contradictory to the tenets of the Church (*Rabelais* 74-5). As described in the introduction, religious authority was overarching and influential in Valencia and much of Western Europe. In Scene One, in her monologues, Plaerdemavida attacks social hegemony on several levels. The Church's law that sex before marriage was immoral is treated ironically when Plaerdemavida accuses Tirant of being a sinner − "major en cap dels vicis e primer en orde de les culpes mortals" − because he has not yet bedded Carmesina outside of marriage. This is an inversion of Christian ethics, which considered the passions to be profane. Lust is one of the seven deadly sins, opposite to the saintly virtue of chastity. Yet this is inverted by Plaerdemavida, as Tirant's failure to act upon his desire is considered by her to be a mortal sin. Her opinion subverts the religious-moral order.[9]

Plaerdemavida is an extraordinary literary character, polyphonic and comic, human in her passions. She disrupts any attempt to simplify matters. The comic use of religious register in Scene One undermines the authority of religious language and of the Church in matters of ethics. It also places the discourse of faith alongside erotic discourse, such as when she speaks of "vicis," "culpes mortals," "testimoni," "piadors enginy" and "misericórdia" in the same section as "acostar-vos a ella." Aside from the religious sentiment, eroticism is also linked to political and class subversion, as Plaerdemavida promises that she will give Tirant the crown of the Greek Empire − "us faré portar la corona de l'Imperi Grech" − if he sleeps with Carmesina, making herself a symbolic high priest who sanctions a royal appointment.

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[9] One notes that the editors of *Tirant* close the text stating that if anything non-Catholic is found within the text they would allow for it to be edited by the Church (1540). Yet elements that challenge the hierarchical mode of thought of the Catholic Church abound throughout *Tirant*. It is not surprising that the text was not published until after the deaths of the two authors.

The ironic use of religious language that we encounter in *Tirant* undermines the hierarchy of religious thought. When Plaerdemavida tries to convince Tirant to bed Carmesina she employs religious register but inverts Christian and chivalric morality, arguing that a knight would achieve glory, fame and honour if he were to sleep with Carmesina:

> O, Déu, quina cosa és tenir la donzella tendra en sos brasos, tota nua, de edat de XIIII anys O, Déu, quina glória és star en lo seu lit e besar-la sovint O, Déu, quina cosa és com és de sanch real O, Déu, quina cosa és tenir pare emperador O, Déu, quina cosa és tenir la enamorada rica e liberal, quítia de tota infàmia. (887)

The repetition of "O, Déu" in this erotic monologue creates a juxtapposition between spiritual authority and sexual arousal. The use of "O Déu" is parodic, as later in the same scene Plaerdemavida repeats "O" while carressing Carmesina, putting Tirant in the place of God: "O, Tirant, senyor... O... O, Tirant" (895-896). Plaerdeamvida's use of religious register is intended to undermine here as she implies that violence is to be expected in love. She elaborates on the connection between religious register, eroticism and violence, when she states that she would like Ypólit to force himself upon her, whether consenting or not: "[N]o·m desplauria que·m prengués per los cabells e, per força o per grat, rocegant-me per la cambra, me fes callar e fer tot lo que ell volgués" (903). In the fifteenth-century context this was not necessarily a rape fantasy, but a desire to be dominated by the man through any means. Tirant appears to believe the older woman, that force is a good thing, and states that she has shown him "més noticia de mos defalts que no ha fet jamés negun confessor, per gran mestre en theologia que fos" (903). As a symbolic confessor and theologian, Plaerdemavida takes on the mock tone and position of a member of the clergy, yet in this scene the holy site is Carmesina's vagina.

The liberality and explicitness of the eroticism in this scene is striking. In relation to lesbian foreplay, Carmesina is comfortable with Plaerdemavida touching her in any part of the body except between her legs. She says "[t]oca hon te vulles – dix la princessa – e no poses la mà tan avall com faç" (904), alluding to the double standard in medieval morality in that the hymen was sacred yet other sexual activities were tolerated. Later, when Plaerdemavida allows Tirant to enter Carmesina's bed,

Carmesina unknowingly let him caress her, believing him to be Plaerdemavida. This presents an interesting ethical situation because sex before marriage with a man was regarded as unethical according to the Church, yet in this scene a certain degree of lesbianism is seen as acceptable by Carmesina. The conflicting values of sexual morality and liberality are therefore presented as the two faces of Janus. Carmesina as Madonna is juxtaposed against the physical Carmesina, who can be mapped through touch and emblazoned through speech. This fits with the carnivalesque where everything tends to be inverted. Her virginal façade is forsaken when she allows Plaerdemavida to fondle her. Carmesina's register seems to imply that this may have occurred before or was so innocuous as not to be of concern. This suggests that Carmesina's moral rectitude is merely a social obligation about the purity of certain parts of the body. The vagina (Lat. scabbard) should not be breached by the penis as sword. The moral order is therefore something that is applied only sometimes, such as when Tirant directly propositions her.

In the context of the Church's official dictat that sex was reserved for procreation between married couples (McSheffrey 19), the erotic joy in *Tirant* has to be read as profane and subversive (from the Church's perspective). The erotic space as a voyeuristic event contradicts the religious medieval representation of sex as an activity that occurred in private between two people of different sexes (Schickendantz 130). Sex acts occur in public and are observed by others throughout *Tirant*. If they are not observed there is an architectural orifice through which the inner and outer can merge, undermining the idea of sex in private. Sex is a collective act that pleasures the participants but also the reader, alluding to the spectator world that was emerging in the Renaissance.

Another facet of the new sexuality in *Tirant* is its explicitness, which can be seen throughout in often subversive ways. For example, there are three people in the bed, as Tirant caresses Carmesina while she is asleep and Plaerdemavida caresses Tirant's head:

> E Tirant tenia la mà sobre lo ventre de la princessa. E Plaerdemavida tenia la sua mà sobre
>
> lo cap de Tirant e, com ella conexia que la princessa se adormia, fluixava la mà e lavors

Tirant tocava a son plaer, e com ella despertar-se volia, strenyia lo cap a Tirant hi ell stava

segur. En aquest deport stigueren per més spay de una hora, hi ell tostemps tocant-la. (904)

This was a relatively explicit description of sexuality in the European context in comparison to other

texts. In *Amadís de Gaula*, for example, the sex act is alluded to but not described when it states that

"aquella noche con gran vicio quedo" (19), and in Muntaner's *Crònica* sex between King Pere and

Maria of Montpellier is only hinted at: "E lo rei e la reina foren en llur deport, que lo senyor rei cuidava

tenir de prop la dona de què era enamorat" (27). While there were few texts that measure up to *Tirant*

for its liberalness, it is important to acknowledge the subversive nature of the eroticism in *Il

Decameron*, *El Libro del Buen Amor* and *La Celestina*, texts that challenged existing conventions about

sexual behaviour. Nonetheless, the kind of sensual descriptions found in *Tirant* were exceptional and

shocking, as the narrators describe the body aesthetically and aim to arouse the reader through erotic

description and scandal.

The transformative quality of the characters is emphasised in Scene One by the body which can

be both sacred and grotesque. Douglas observed how the blending of Sacred and Unclean causes a

system to be simultaneously shattered and renewed (196). In this sense, the grotesque erotic body in

Tirant has a political and social impact. It threatens order, in the way that orgies on the altars did during

the Feast of Fools. The most notable form of grotesque eroticism in the scene is in the description of

Viuda Reposada undressing, able to be interpreted as both condemnatory social commentary and as

ribald satire of the arousal of the reader:

La Viuda se despullà tota nua e restà ab calces vermelles e al cap un capell de lli. E encara

que ella tenia molt bella persona e ben disposta, emperó les calces vermelles e lo capell al

cap la desfavoria tant que paria que fos un diable. E certament, qualsevulla dona o donzella

qui en tal so la mireu, vos parrà molt leja per gentil que sia. (897)

The sexualisation of the "calces vermelles" is supposed to be comic-erotic, but it may also undermine

socio-political power due to the significance of the colour red in dynastic terms. Viuda Reposada's

naked body is dualised because of the red stockings being simultaneously diabolic and sacred. In the

late Middle Ages red was a colour associated with power and the sacred, worn by the Pope and the papal court because it symbolises the blood of Christ (Elliott 23; Netherton 47). Red is politically important in the Catalan context because many important symbols include the colour red.[10] Red was also the background colour of the Byzantine royal insignia and, for the Romans, red was associated with Mars, the god of war. Hence, red is closely related to victory and institutions of power.

Red was dualised in Renaissance paintings to emphasise both sacredness and sensuality.[11] Since the colour red in fifteenth-century consciousness was associated with a strange merging of power and sacredness, "les calces vermelles" interrupt official discourse and present the female body as marginal but also beautiful. The red stockings juxtaposed against the bath, symbol of cleanliness and purity, announces the threatening new order of the senses in *Tirant*, where dirtiness and cleanliness reside side by side. The use of the colour red for her "calces" is noteworthy because red was an expensive dye, reserved for the wealthy. The red stockings may allude to Carmesina's name which derives from carmesí, another red dye used in clothing. There is also a connection between "diable" and "vermelles," as in *Inferno* Dante refers to one of Satan's three faces as being red: "O quanto parve a me gran maraviglia, | quando vidi tre facce alla sua testa! | L'una dinanzi, e quella era vermiglia" (Canto 34, ln. 36-39). The use of the colour red also sexualises the description and, for the religiously minded, may have brought to mind "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow" (Isaiah 1:18). In this sense, red has a double meaning, hiding the sacred within, and harbouring the rejected but secretly desired abject. Red is also simultaneously the colour of the heart/love and of the Scarlet Whore of Babylon.

Douglas noted that "any structure of ideas is vulnerable at its margins" (150). Reality breaks down as a result of Viuda Reposada's *calces*, a kind of fetish that ruptures traditional representation of the female and, instead, presents woman as a transgressive force. This duality is literal, as she is both

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[10] The cross of St. Jordi, the Senyera, the coat of arms of Valencia.
[11] For red as related to the sacred see Van Eyck's *Madonna in the Church* (1425) and *The Virgin of Ivers* (1435), Van der Weyden's *Deposition* (1435), Leonardo's *Il Cenacolo* (1497), Raffaelo's *Sposalizio della Vergine* (1504) and Bosch's *The Last Judgement* (1505). For red as a colour linked to the sensual, a colour that interrupts, see Botticelli's *Allegoria della Primavera* (1478), Botticelli's *Nascita di Venere* (1485), Van Eyck's *Rinaldo e Armida* (1434), Bruegel's *The Battle Between Carnival and Lent* (1559) and *Dutch Proverbs* (1594).

"bella" and "diable," partly clothed and "tota nua." The erotic is imagined as shifting in *Tirant*, similar to Bakhtin's grotesque, which presents the contradictory double nature of life (*Rabelais* 62). La Viuda Reposada's cross-marginality can be traced in the difference between "paria que fos un diable" and "tenia molt bella persona e ben disposta," which are contradictory statements. While it is possible that *bella* may describe her nakedness and that it is her clothing that is diabolical, in the context of fifteenth-century morality and mores, the diabolical implication also alludes to the temptation of a curvaceous woman in red stockings and flax hat and the way male readers would have been likely to interpret the scene. Attractive women were often depicted as the Devil in the Middle Ages. Moreover, Russell points out that the word devil was grotesque (68). For this reason, it is not an innocent addition to the text but can be read as social commentary about the dangers of desire. The authors do not lose the opportunity for irony by stating that surely no one would find Viuda Reposada attractive. Yet the use of "ben disposta" undermines this warning and creates the image of a buxom and callipygian woman.

The link to the desired grotesque can be seen in the historic symbolism of the "calces vermelles" in the scene. The "calces" most likely refer to knee high stockings tied in place, commonly used by women in the late Middle Ages (Scott 17) and the *capell de lli* (flax hat) could either be a simple, flat hat used by peasants and soldiers, or, more likely, an ostentatious affair in the style of the famous *Arnolfini Portrait* by Jan van Eyck. The latter seems more likely, as it would be in line with Viuda Reposada's social status at the court and her Machiavellian personality. Nonetheless, the combination of *tota nua* and the *capell de lli* is symbolic. Other depictions of flax hats from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century were commonly accompanied by scenes of threshing wheat, a symbol of fertility and productivity.[12] The duality between sacred and profane is emphasised by the link between the "calces vermelles," as an abject erotic symbol of the blood of Christ and menstrual blood, and between the productive forces of the "capell de lli." While it may have been a hat for the wealthy, the flax hat triggers the image of the peasant hat or the soldier's flax hat.

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[12] See the *Tirant*-esque image of a country girl in a red dress and flax hat threshing wheat in *Kunz von Rosenheim* in the *Manesse Codex* (UBH Cod. Pal. germ. 848, fol. 394r, 1300-1330). Bruegel the Elder's famous *The Harvesters* (1565) also gives some idea of the naturalistic symbology of the flax hat and its relation to fertility and abundance.

In Scene Two, the religious order is further transgressed because the Christian tradition is treated ironically. Viuda Reposada convinces Carmesina to partake in a game, saying that she has clothes from the Corpus Christi carnival and that Plaerdemavida should dress up as Lauseta, the Moorish gardener (1048). Corpus Christi, inaugurated by Pope Urban IV in 1262, was a feast day to venerate the Eucharist that had become widespread in Europe throughout the late Middle Ages and was widely celebrated in Valencia. The celebration generally involved a mass and then a procession through the streets. Yet rather than celebrating the body of Christ, *Tirant* celebrates the female body of Carmesina and the cross-dressed male body of Plaerdemavida, thus undermining the authority of the official religious event and drawing attention to the permeability of the sexes. This creates an atmosphere reminiscent of the freedoms that took place in or near churches during medieval carnivals where participants wore costumes (*Rabelais* 74-75). In this scene, transgression occurs in the palace garden. In symbolic language, a garden is a space where nature has been temporarily subdued and put in order (Cirlot 115), and the hierarchical male element of the palace is juxtaposed against the feminine garden. The conjunction of palace and garden, as the human and natural elements in the scene, complements the merging of the male and female through role play. An ordered space can still be threatening, as seen in the examples of slum, sewer, theatre and coffee house in Stallybrass and White (142). The palace garden as a site of eroticism is similarly threatening to public order, as the natural, animalistic world has intruded on the enclosed *ort*. This can be read as a religious allegory, as existence in the garden is destroyed by Viuda Reposada playing the role of the tempter. She was previously compared to "un diable" and here she uses Tirant's lust to manipuate him. In a reshaping of the eating of the fruit of knowledge in the Book of Genesis, Tirant, who previously fantasised about Carmesina's "dues pomes de paradis" (469), now must watch the fruit being plucked by Plaerdemavida disguised as Lauseta. She, also, was previously described as "de diables invocadora." Indeed, these lowly female characters summon the worst in Tirant, conjuring his ire against Lauseta and his descent into the animal realm of the garden, where the murder occurs. The palace can be interpreted as a symbol of authority,

whereas the scene in the garden is the carnivalistic disobedience that leads to the downfall of the chivalric hero.

The changeable nature of the characters is especially notable in the character of Viuda Reposada, who, in an attempt to seduce Tirant, hatches a plan to deceive him. The discourse between author and text indicates the author's disapproval when her actions are described as a "crim que jamés tal no fon pensat" (1045). Bakhtin argued that the freedom of the character is an aspect of the author's design (*Problems* 65). This freedom is complicated in *Tirant* because the author writes over the top of the characters, becoming "un suplantador de Dios" (Vargas Llosa 44). In this way, Viuda Reposada breaches the confines of feminine discourse and is an empowered character, but within the author's design. She creates a mask of the face of Lauseta, acquiring the Other through her craftiness, but her language is in religious register, a clear juxtaposition against her deceptive behaviour. The order of things has been turned upside down: the woman conquers all and erotic discourse is veiled in religious terminology. While she undresses for Tirant she seduces him with religious register:

> [Q]uantes pregàries y ofertes he yo fetes als sants per la salut e restauració de la vostra vida, e quantes oracions, almoynes e dejunis he fets, lacerant la mia persona…la princessa pensava haver lo delit, car jamés fon vista dona ni donzella sinó yo ab tanta estrema amor de virtut...-Puix amar no·m voleu, consentiu tota nua puga hun poch star prop de vostra mercé. (1055)

The hierarchy of the Church is subverted when Viuda Reposada combines religious and erotic discourse. We know the religious register is ironic because it is juxtaposed against the erotic, as is the case when the author indicates her attempt to seduce Tirant through "e prestament fon despullada e vestí's una camisa perfumada, ab tots sos drets, com si hagués entrar en batalla, e gonella de vellut negre. E tota descordada, entrà en la cambra e posà's al costat de Tirant e, ab atreviment gran e poca vergonya, presomí fer-li present de una tal requesta" (1054). The subversive connection between faith and adultery is implicit in the use of words like "pregàries y ofertes [...] oracions, almoynes e dejunis" and references to other facets of Catholic practice, like "als sants" and "lacerant la mia persona," which

refers to the whipping of the flagellants. This religiosity, couched in sacred language but contradicted entirely by her actions, is undermined when she undresses in the following paragraph: "E depullà's prestament la genolla, que ja tenia tota descordada. Com Tirant la véu en camisa, sortí del lit donant hun gran salt en terra, obrí la porta de la cambra e anà-se'n a sa posada de molta dolor acompanyat" (1055). The *genolla* alludes to the act of kneeling in prayer which traditionally formed part of the Christian "pregàries y ofertes [...] oracions" that she mentions.

The subversion of religious authority is continued in Scene Two, where language is carnivalistic, and characters freely express dissident opinions. As Bakhtin mentions, points of view are worlds or consciousnesses that become a condition of society (*Problems* 27). These radically new fields of vision undermine the religious system because they intrude on its canonic status. In the following monologue Viuda Reposada turns the old order on its head:

> [H]avent pietat de vostra mercé, vos vull emparar e traure-us dels lims de perpetual dolor e
> infàmia. E per ço poreu dir que lo meu cors és clar e net, e no és tan scur com lo
> *Apoqualipsi*, si veure volreu vostra dolor o vostra salut, goig e alegria qui en l'esdevenidor
> temps venir-vos deu, car, en tots los temps millors de la vostra vida, tengut sou a Déu fer-li
> gràcies e pregar per mi, car tinch per foll qui en aquesta present vida se percassa la ira de
> Déu e de gents. Per què, senyor Tirant, si a les dues hores tocades volreu ésser en loch
> secret, poreu veure tot lo que dit vos he. (1047)

Religious authority is undermined, as Tirant is given the option to choose between the "goig e alegria" he will enjoy through Viuda Reposada's body, or Carmesina's, which will create "perpetual dolor e infàmia [...] tan scur com lo *Apoqualipsi*" (1047). The reference to *Apoqualipsi* can be read as a referent to Carmesina's body as the source of the impending fall of the hero and the end of his world vision. Viuda Reposada's body is "clar e net," whereas Carmesina's is imagined as "scur." This alludes to St. John's revelations regarding the end of the world. What is implied in the above monologue is that Viuda Reposada is a kind of saviour. In an inversion of Catholic morality, the same as Plaerdemavida in the previous scene, Viuda Reposada implies that by fulfilling his desire for Viuda Reposada Tirant will

reach paradise (*goig e alegria*) whereas her prophesy is that moral rectitude will cause his downfall (*lo Apoqualipsi*). The final indication that this monologue by Viuda Reposada is religiously subversive can be found in the references to God alongside the erotic, which is a notable occurrence in *Tirant* (705, 708, 949). The use of erotic discourse alongside religious register allows the profane to intrude on the Sacred, causing a breakdown of the old order.

2.5.3.   *Sexual Authority and Gender Relations.*

A major form of subversion in the two scenes is of traditional male/female sexual relations. In erotic scenes in *Tirant*, women are often empowered, challenging the gender norms of the fifteenth century. In order to contextualise the revolutionary nature of women being in charge in these erotic scenes, I will now provide a brief discussion of sexuality on the cusp of the Renaissance. From what we know from official sources, sexual conservativism was considered to be a moral obligation of women, who were perceived to safe-guard the honour of the family. Fray Luis de León's *La perfecta casada* (1583) captures the way women were considered to affect the status of the husband: "El marido de la mujer buena es dichoso, y vivirá doblados días, y la mujer de valor pone en su marido descanso" (20). Women were often imagined as obedient to men (Mitchell 101) and the trope of the sacred, virginal woman can be traced from Christian mythology through to the *donna sagrada* of Dante and Petrarch. Yet women's purity was linked to corruption in the medieval mind and the female body was also imagined as a site of temptation. The co-existence of the holy and the corrupt is mentioned by Douglas when she traces the correlation between Unclean and Sacred in most human societies (13). Some examples will demonstrate this. In Bernat Metge's *Lo Somni* (1399), women's souls are holy but their bodies are contaminated. Yet, in troubadour poetry the ideal love ethic was generally adulterous, involving a married woman who was no longer a virgin, thus contradicting Luis de León's idea that women were their husbands' property. Scientific theories between the twelfth and the fifteenth centuries maintained that women were intellectually inferior to men (Klapisch-Zuber 130), leading to a tendency to represent women in art as desired, inert objects. Yet the troubadour vision of courtly love has the *domna* in the position of

veneration and power, while the lover is reduced to pleading for her love, as an abject suppliant. This dualised symbol of the woman as simultaneously empowered and disempowered continues in *Tirant*, the significant factor being that women now have a voice. Empowered female characters like Stephania, Plaerdemavida, the Empress and Viuda Reposada think for themselves and create their own realities without relying on men. Their dialogues and actions lead to their empowerment. In this regard *Tirant* was a revolutionary book, written for women and about women. Indeed, this can be inferred from the fact that the majority of readers of *Tirant* in the fifteenth century were women ("Joanot i Tirant"), as discussed earlier.

In Scene One, the hierarchical position of Tirant is undermined by Plaerdemavida. He is manipulated by her inverted ethical argument and his position as the dominant male is toppled.[13] If men were considered dominant to women in the fifteenth century, then Tirant's humiliation is a symbolic moment of sexual subversion. His position as the hunter is demeaned in this scene when he is described as hiding in a *caxa* and secretly observing Carmesina in the bath. Plaerdemavida has all the control. He is transformed from a man of action to a voyeur, totally enthralled by the image.

Traditional male and female roles are inverted, thus subverting sexual norms. Plaerdemavida becomes the symbolic knight, full of action, while Tirant is easily manipulated due to his lower desires. This reading is supported by the way Plaerdemavida forces Tirant out of the chamber to save his life: "Plaerdemavida pres a Tirant per lo cabells a aparatà'l de lla hon volguera finar sa vida, e posà'l en lo retret e féu lo saltar en un tarrat" (905). Here, Plaerdemavida wields physical power over Tirant and the use of "pres […] per lo cabells" echoes her fantasy about Ypòlit in this same chapter: "[Q]ue·m prengués per los cabells" (903). Hence, the woman becomes the symbolic sword-wielder and the man is at her mercy. Dragging Tirant by the hair is symbolic of his loss of power, drawing a link to the cutting of Samson's hair, where all his power resided. The loss of his masculine power can be seen in that the fact that as soon as Plaerdemavida returns to the chamber and Tirant must fare for himself, he misjudges the fall from the window and breaks his leg, a symbolic breaking of his phallus/sword.

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[13] See pages 90-91 of this thesis for her use of inverted Christian ethics.

These subversive elements continue in Scene Two, where women dictate the terms of the sexual encounter, and trangress male hierarchy. Frank descriptions of lesbian sexuality and cross-dressing contradict the common stance on sexuality at the time, typified by Hilderberg of Bingen's (1098-1179) famous argument that it was devilish for a woman to play "a male role coupling with another woman" (Bardsley 101). Yet Plaerdemavida plays the role of "lo moro ortolà" and Carmesina knowingly plays along. This deviates from what the Church regarded as acceptable. In *Tirant* it states:

> Com Tirant lo véu entrar, verdaderament pensà que fos aquell lo moro ortolà, e portava al coll una axada e començà a cavar. A poch instant, ell se acostà envers la princessa e asigué's al seu costat, e pres-li les mans e besà-les-hi. Aprés li posà les mans als pits e tocà-li les mamelles, e feÿa-li requestes d'amor. E la princessa feÿa grans rialles, que tota la son li féu passar. Aprés, ell se acostà tant e posà-li les mans dejús les faldes, ab gran alegria que totes staven de les coses plasents que Plaerdemavida deÿa. (1048)

This kind of eroticism undermines a clear demarcation between the sexes. It is intended to be comic and is typical of subversive carnivalesque role changing. A cross-dressing Plaerdemavida (described as "ell") fondles Carmesina's breasts and puts her hand under her dress. This leads to a celebration of the senses through expressions such as "gran alegria," "coses plasents" and "grans rialles" (1048), a comic indication that sexuality between women is something to be enjoyed, both performative and voyeuristic, something that is not only physical but also emerges through language. In fact, it is very much *languaged* through the senses, as seen by the the important role of speech, vision and touch in the above quote. The shared nature of this kind of eroticism may be a realistic reflection of the opulence and decadence of courtly life in Valencia during the fifteenth century, but the inclusion of it in the text is subversive because it inverts officially accepted gender standards of the time. Sex was supposed to occur between men and women, behind closed doors in the private space of the residence. However, here it takes place in the public space of the *ort*.

Specific architectural features in this scene are used in a grotesque way to emphasise the loss of power of the male characters. The gardener's shed is a lowly building, juxtaposed against the castle

where Tirant later rapes Carmesina "per força d'armes" (1418). The shed and the castle are at opposite ends of the hierarchical structure. When Carmesina enters the shed she must go through an open door, a symbolic orifice into the erotic space, yet it is Tirant who must enter the castle by force (the symbolic physical defence of the Empire). The ease with which Carmesina is drawn into the shed is seen as a grave transgression by Tirant, who has not yet slept with Carmesina and will only acquire her virginity without her consent, and never in the garden.

While the *ort* is ostensibly organised and bounded, it represents the primal, sexual forces of nature and can be juxtaposed against the artificial *palau*. In this way, male and female elements are dualised. On the symbolic level, the nutritive, transformative *ort* is juxtapposed against the sterile construction of the palace. In *Aspects of the Feminine* Carl Jung describes how the enclosed garden had an erotic function in Song of Songs and how St. Ambrose interpreted the enclosed garden as a symbol of virginity (17). Historically, the *ort* has been read as both a site of virginity and a site of female eroticism. In *Tirant*, that female element is portrayed as fluid rather than virginal, because role-playing and cross-dressing come to define the gender transgression in the scene.

These architectural and spatial crossroads create a landscape that is promiscuous and able to be penetrated. The *ort* is a shared space where characters can participate or observe. It contains orifices that must be traversed in order to come to the erotic, but that seem only to be permeable to the female characters. The architectural humour here is at the expense of the male characters, destined to observe or be manipulated. This is an inversion of the order of things, as Tirant believes that Lauseta has crossed a threshold in the lowliest of locations, a garden shed. The irony is multilayered because the theatricality in the garden is supposed to be safe transgression, but it is not, as Tirant's belief that a gross transgression has occurred results in Lauseta's murder and causes the downfall of the hero and of the chivalric order.

2.5.4. Chivalric Authority.

The last form of subversion noted in the two scenes concerns the institution of chivalry and the heroism of knights. The epic qualities of the knights are undermined in Scene One and they are presented as mere victims of Fortune. Tirant is manipulated by Plaerdemavida, and, in the process, breaches the Llullian chivalric code by secretly entering Carmesina's bed. To escape discovery, he ignominiously leaps from the castle window and breaks his leg, in an anti-chivalric moment. A carnival atmosphere is also emphasised through comic theatricality in relation to space. Carmesina's chamber is a symbolic centre stage where the action occurs, while Tirant hides in the box offstage, awaiting permission from Plaerdemavida. The space is therefore observed by both Tirant and the reader, but Tirant's chivalric intentions are undermined by the comic nature of the *caxa*. Stallybrass and White discussed the promiscuity of the public space in relation to eighteenth-century London (136), but the idea remains relevant to an increasingly urban Valencia. Indeed, Carmesina's bath being observed through the hole in the box is symptomatic of the way chivalric ethics and the Llulian knightly model were constantly undermined by the actions of knights and ladies. The hole in the box is an architectural orifice, a border through which the male gaze must pass. Stallybrass and White discussed the importance of orifices in the home, such as windows and doors, in *The Merchant of Venice* (56), and these passing-points are also critical in *Tirant*: the bath scene passes through the architectural orifice in the box where it meets Tirant's eyes, which, themselves, constitute another orifice. Tirant's access to the erotic is almost entirely governed by grotesque orifices and thresholds which he cannot pass without the help of a woman. The trope of the voyeur can be seen in the many Renaissance paintings that depict the story of Diana and Actaeon, where Actaeon accidentally surprises Diana bathing, and is punished and transformed into a deer.[14] In these pieces of art, we have voyeurism and erotic sensuality presented in a mythological, acceptable package, much as Renaissance artists used religious symbolism to present the erotic. In *Tirant*, the filters of humour and bathos are applied to Carmesina's bath, but due to the way

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[14] The most renowned paintings of this scene were Titian's *Diana and Actaeon* (1556–1559) and *The Death of Actaeon* (1559 to 1575).

humour often reflects a deeper truth, the erotic realism of the scene is heightened by the comic technique. Due to the strict social mores of the times, these kinds of desperate moments between lovers were a reality that could lead to pleasure or tragedy, enhancing the tragic realism of the scene.

The window has importance as an orifice that mediates Tirant's access to sexual power because it separates the inner and outer worlds and provides the means for traversal into, or away from, the erotic. The knight must traverse a symbolic orifice to enter the sacred/profane space of the erotic. The use of thresholds can be observed through erotic scenes in *Tirant*: the curtain that divides the bed when Tirant first sees Carmesina (469); the balcony door that leads into the Empress' chamber (975); the cave which Spèricus must enter (1367). Indeed, Tirant's ultimate fall through the window, that which connects the outer world of nature with the inner *palau* (the natural and the artificial, the raw and the civilised), is also Tirant's descent from civility into animalistic desire. He falls from grace inside the civilised space of the *palau*, which ends in his descent into the garden, fulfilling, in Bakhtin's terms, the downward comic direction of grotesque movement (*Rabelais* 370). His disloyalty to the royal family can only result in a fall in the carnivalistic sense. The broken leg is not only a reference to the failure of Tirant's sword in this particular encounter, but also the failure of his moral chivalric code. There is no war wound of which to be proud; instead, his broken leg symbolises his impotence.

Douglas discusses how rules in sexual systems control entrances and exits (173) and we can think of the window in a similar way. Douglas notes that the system must never be attacked from the inside, as in the case of Tirant's intrusion, as this is perceived as posing a threat of sex pollution. Only through punishment can the sexual structure be reaffirmed (173). For this reason, Tirant must fall from the place of grace. Hence, these architectural orifices can be interpreted as points of access to power. The hero must pass through architectural points of disharmony in order to reach the power source where he can be renewed through sex. However, when he breaches the moral rules he is thrown out of the system (*lo palau*).

The voyeurism in the scene can be observed when Plaerdemavida organises the bath scene "per fer plaer a Tirant," (895) indicating that the performance is theatrical and designed to arouse the

knight's desire. The freedom and transformations of the characters creates a carnivalesque atmosphere of role-playing. The link between lesbian eroticism and role-playing is established when Plaerdemavida caresses Carmesina and fantasises that she is Tirant, the possessor of the princess' body: "E deixau-me toquar aquest cors que meu és -dix Plaerdemavida-, que yo sò ací en loch de Tirant" (904). Her ability to assume the identity of another brings to mind Bakhtin's carnivalesque, where performer and spectator are merged in a communal live event (*Problems* 122). Plaerdemavida is able to transform, symbolically at least, from male to female, traversing the margins of gender, race and class. This allows her to appropriate the princess' body, playing the roles of both a conquering male and a nutritive female. Tirant is consigned the role of disempowered observer until Plaerdemavida assists him.

Plaerdeamvida's power can be seen when she holds a candle over Carmesina's body to reveal it to Tirant (895). This subverts the structures of power, as it is the servant who reveals the nakedness of the Byzantine Princess without her permission. This is consistent with the carnivals and feasts of the medieval age where a mock Pontiff was de-robed (Bakhtin, *Rabelais* 74-75), being symbolically disempowered by the celebrants. Plaerdemavida lights the body of the gods for the pleasure of Tirant. She acquires the power that should have been Tirant's and, in so doing, becomes the flame bearer. The fire of the candle has the double symbology of being both subversive and sacred.

In ancient mythology, fire was widely associated with subversion of power. Prometheus stole fire from the gods for the benefit of humanity. In the Old Testament, the word for Christ (kristos) means fire. Fire also brings to mind the lighting of candles in the Christian tradition and the cremation of bodies. The effect of this appropriation of Carmesina's body through fire, just prior to her symbolic baptism in the bath, removes any semblance of authority the princess might have had and gives all power to Plaerdemavida. In the gnostic tradition, one proceeds from water to fire on the path to enlightenment, yet this is inverted in *Tirant*, and there is a regression from fire to water. The symbolic link between flames and hell also has the parallel function of renewal in the Bakthinian model, replacing the "old, receding world" with the "regenerating flames of carnival" (*Rabelais* 394).

In Scene One, Tirant partook in the performance and Carmesina was the unknowing victim. In contrast, in Scene Two, Tirant is the victim of powers outside his control, which enflame his own "gran ira" (1056). While the scene is comic there is a strong sense of tragicomedy, as the farcical events trigger the downfall of the love of Tirant and Carmesina, leading to Tirant's flight from Constantinople, his ultimate return and untimely death. The use of theatricality and voyeurism interrupts the traditional chivalric model. This is central to the performative aspects of carnivalesque, as the creation of Bakhtin's utopian order (*Rabelais* 267) can only have effect if it is observed. Here, the space is fluid and the hero is unable to find a centre of power from which to act because of the shared nature. The erotic spectacle occurs in the garden as a symbolic stage for the action, much as carnivals often occurred in fixed spaces like a church, a square or on a stage. Viuda Reposada leads Tirant to a house overlooking the garden where she positions two mirrors which reflect the garden through a partially closed window, which functions as an orifice. In this sense, Tirant is an off-stage observer. The scene in the garden appears to him through the mirrors. As Hauf has mentioned, mirrors present symbolic dilemmas in medieval texts, often representing the mimetic challenge of literature in its representation of reality (*Tirant* 1050). The two mirrors in this scene symbolise the impossibility of true mimesis and Tirant's inability to access sexual power. The written text is then twice removed from reality, alluding to the author's incapacity to represent the truth and to the way Tirant's looking distorts reality (like a mirror). One could potentially interpret the two mirrors as a symbol of the two authors, Martorell and Galba, and to the impossibility of giving a true account of events due to their different writing styles.

The mirrors also form a physical barrier to reality. The reflected scene is then conveyed, but only through the grotesque orifice of the window, another barrier which Tirant must pass through. Bakhtin noted how the grotesque affects the eyes because they are a border zone between world and body (*Rabelais* 317). Indeed, in this scene the eyes are linked to excretion when Tirant weeps so much that he leaves the pillow soaked with tears (1049). His previous power in battle is juxtaposed against his helplessness in this scene. Tears are not grotesque but the link to the orifice is important, as the hole is the site where margins are transgressed and the inner and outer worlds merge. For the carnivalesque to

encroach on the individual subject it needs to cross the threshold of the body, generally across a boundary. Hence, we have entrances and exits through which the erotic traverses, having the overall function of eroding margins. The window is permeable and the outer world passes through it; the eyes are excreting machines and the inner body of the subject goes out into the external world in the form of tears. Tirant is unable to contain the forces behind these orifices because he has abandoned the chivalric ethical code.

Moreover, Tirant's virtue is totally undermined in Scene Two and the subversive derision of his knighthood occurs on several levels. The murder of Lauseta is linked to the comical "calces vermelles" scene in Scene One, reestabilshing the link between eroticism, violence and the undermining of Tirant:

> Tot desfreçat anà-se'n a la porta de l'ort, tan secret com pogué. E trobà dins l'ort, que poch havia que era vengut, lo negre ortolà, e véu-lo a la porta de la cambra sua, que stava calsant-se unes calses vermelles. Tirant que·l véu, mirà a totes parts e no véu negú. Pres-lo per los cabells e posà'l dins la cambra e degollà'l. (1056)

The repetition of "calses vermelles", this time spelled differently, alludes to Scene One where Viuda Reposada was "tota nua," half *bella*, half *diable*. The use of "Pres-lo per los cabells" also echoes Plaerdemavida's fantasy about Ypòlit (903) and her dominance over Tirant (905). Tirant's actions are shown to be outside of chivalric expectations and more in line with the machinations of Plaerdemavida and Viuda Respoda.

In this carnival atmosphere the roles of the characters are transformative and the trope of the heroic knight is inverted, undermining the traditional chivalric model. During carnival, participants are able to change roles and switch from character to character, often between the sexes. Bakhtin considered that the carnivalesque would therefore create a space for acting out "a new mode of interrelationship between individuals" (*Problems* 123). This transformative quality is subversive because it destabilises the chivalric order. The use of masks and costumes, like Plaerdemavida does here, plays an important role in carnivals, as the existing order was recreated by the changing of roles. When she plays the role of a black slave, Plaerdemavida is performatively transformed, and traditional

class and racial relations are disrupted. As mentioned previously in relation to Carmesina, her marginality as *mestiza* allows her to cross between the two racial worlds without the threat of pollution to her identity. In this case, Tirant is conquered. Her ability to move between these two racial identities is what threatens and disturbs. Plaerdemavida is a subversive force, as she is able to traverse the margins of sex and class and switches roles from female subordinate to male seducer. Playing the role of Lauseta, she conquers Tirant and undermines the traditional model of chivalric love.

From Tirant's perspective, his role is also transformed by role-play as he witnesses the scene from another location, physically removed from access to power. Tirant changes from conquering hero to babbling cuckold to murderer (1048), a point made by the narrator when he asks the reader to consider how Tirant transformed from "tan pompós e tan content" (1048) to wallowing in "son plant e sa dolor" (1048). This points to a new social mobility and the decline of chivalry. The women are now the controllers and Tirant is manipulated and deceived, leading to his ruin. These transformations of Tirant question the verisimilitude of his knightly honour, a result seen in several other scenes throughout the text.[15]

Finally, it is important to note that the text does not imply that the Llullian chivalric model has been upheld merely because of Tirant's ultimate punishment. While the downfall of Tirant seems to suggest such a reading, the overall text treats the Llullian model ironically, as an outdated line of thought for the Renaissance mind. The divergence created between Llull and *Tirant* allows for irony and the subversive use of the chivralric model to undermine the code of chivalry. Ypòlit's success in achieving the crown shows that a Llullian reading would be a false one, as Ypòlit constantly breaches the ethical code articulated in the *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria*, but is rewarded at the end of the novel. Conversely, Tirant, Carmesina and the Emperor die at the end of the text because their ideological perspectives are considered by the narrators to be outdated in the new world of the fifteenth century. They claim to uphold the highest ideals, yet they merely honour themselves and inflate their own egos

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[15] For example, Tirant's honour as a knight is juxtaposed against his overvaulting pride when he demands the right of taking the crests of arms from the tombs of the dead knights in England (311) and when he barehandedly kills the crazed dog to demonstrate his prowess in battle (274).

through personal ideologies: Tirant's false humility masks his pride; the Emperor's ostensible dedication to the Empire is contradicted by his indulgence in riches on the sensory level; Carmesina's chastity is a form of self-agrandisement that gives her control over men. On the other hand, despite the obvious deceptions of Ypòlit and the Empress, there is no self-deception in their actions and their love appears to be genuine and nutritive, despite its Freudian nature. While Tirant and Carmesina seem to cause only distress for each other, Ypòlit and the Empress demonstrate love and dedication. The chivalric literary model, where ideas and actions often failed to correlate (as seen in the actions of Tirant, Carmesina and the Emperor), is toppled in *Tirant* in favour of a world where genuine human beings succeed. While Tirant and Carmesina enjoy the erotic through the assistance of other characters, in the case of Ypòlit and the Empress, they pursue their love through their own volition and are willing to bear the consequences of their actions. In the end, the institution and authority of chivalry is undermined through the death of those who most claim to uphold its tenets – Tirant, Carmesina and the Emperor. Instead, Ypòlit and the Empress survive, indicating that those who uphold the institutions symbolise death, whereas the life-princple is always victorous in the end. What emerges, through Ypòlit and the Empress, is the elevation of the flawed human being who is liberated from the attachment to systems and is willing to risk all for love.

2.6. *Conclusion.*

In this chapter, I have explored how eroticism in *Tirant* is presented as a subversive force capable of reformulating existing views of the world. Within this seed of rebellion is the regenerative, nutritive force of all that counters the canonic. By reading *Tirant* through Bakhtin's carnivalesque and grotesque, we can see the universal nature of the text. A Bakhtinian reading also emphasises how counterpower is used to redress inequalities in *Tirant*. The carnivalesque manifests during the erotic scenes as shared social events, Saturnalian in nature, where the existing world is challenged and toppled. The grotesque plays a similar disruptive role, intruding on traditional power relations, the sexes and the concept of beauty. In *Tirant*, the expression of desire has the power to transform the world. In this way, bodies are

transmogrified through the erotic — the social, political and physical bodies of the text are reorganised into something new, something that is falling apart and can no longer be controled. To restate Derrida, a rupture occurs and this causes the structurality of structure to be rethought (280). Once that process has begun, the centre cannot hold and must be endlessly reformulated.

Conclusion

Bakhtin noted that the carnivalesque is a radical reconstruction of the old order in favour of the new and that this entails the remaking of old hegemonies: the centre must be rethought and the old order collapses upon itself. This thesis has shown that the social pyramid, built upon structural hierarchies, had a powerful influence prior to the fifteenth century and, by attacking hierarchical models, *Tirant lo Blanch* posits subversion as a harbinger of social reform. The text therefore refers to a context of fluid social relations where hierarchy is simultaneously a tool for communication and something to be undermined. The subversive function of the erotic voice in the novel has been shown using Bakhtin's theories, to unlock how a carnivalesque-grotesque reading of eroticism in relation to hierarchy can heighten our understanding of the revisionary intent of *Tirant*.

The erotic voice in *Tirant* is subversive and undermines a range of hierarchies of fifteenth-century life. The existing structure of society, the class structure, the monarchy, and the Church are exposed to ridicule and contradiction, creating a carnivalesque space where multiple opinions exist simultaneously. Many of the hegemonic ideas of the time are presented alongside a carnivalesque atmosphere of role-playing and changeability, implying that the centre cannot hold when confronted with the eruption of erotic voices. I have used Bakhtin's carnivalesque to understand this subversion, also tracing some of the grotesque elements as they also serve the purpose of transgression. Eroticism in *Tirant* topples the chivalric trope of the victorious male hero, of ordered sex in private spaces and creates a dialogic situation where unitary models are not sustained in the face of multiple discourses. This points to a new social mobility which heralds a new era.

In exploring the role of subversion in *Tirant lo Blanch*, we have seen two of humanity's opposing forces: the desire to give meaning to existence and to deny other interpretations; and the opposing force in which language and communication are the site of human meaning. With this comes the realisation that all human endeavour is a story and any attempt to represent it through mere words is destined to fail. In political terms this can be expressed as the difference between dogmatism and

pluralism. For Bakhtin, it was the distinction between the unitary language and the dialogic. The way that these two voices interact and converge in *Tirant* has been the topic of this thesis.

We have seen that the subversive voice is one of the recurring voices in *Tirant*. The dissident function is achieved by undermining hierarchies and the text uses a variety of different techniques to achieve this goal. This thesis has only discussed two of these techniques – intertextuality and eroticism – but there are many more which could be elaborated in the future. Particularly relevant would be Bakhtinian studies of the subversive use of language register, metatexts, the treatment of religious themes, and of violence in *Tirant*. In this thesis I have understood the subversiveness of the text through the lens of Bakhtin's theories regarding the novel. The overall concept of a dialogic as opposed to a unitary language propels my argument and within that model, we have the intertextual polyphony seen in Chapter One and the erotic carnivalesque and grotesque, seen in Chapter Two. All elements work together to transgress official discourses and create a new order.

Despite reading the text in its fifteenth-century context I have also tried to do justice to what *Tirant* means to people today, as a text is never just that which appears on the page, but is also ever-increasingly a text-in-the-world. In applying Bakhtin's theory of the novel to *Tirant*, there is the implication that *Tirant* is an early example of the novel and should be read as a text that subverts the tradition. Written between 1460-1490, this makes *Tirant* an early example of the novel. The same opinion was maintained by Vargas Llosa (44) and Riquer (71). The importance of *Tirant* as a text that undermines structure and official discourses should not be underestimated. I hope that in the future, Bakhtin's theories of the novel will be more widely applied to *Tirant*, as this will allow us to delve into the discussion of power to a larger extent and to see how *Tirant* remains equally relevant today as it was in the fifteenth century.

In all endeavours, the subversion of power entails a certain degree of risk, as the forces of unitary consciousness have always attempted to survive in the face of change. For this reason, due to the threat he posed to the system, Tirant had to die. Yet in a sense, his death allowed for the symbolic rebirth of Ypòlit as the New Man. More than five hunded years after its publication, the Promethean

nature of *Tirant* is still relevant today and its subversiveness will continue to open new realms of enquiry for many years to come. As the authors state, *Tirant lo Blanch* was written "per ço que la nació d'on yo só natural se'n puxa alegrar e molt ajudar per los tants e tan insignes actes com hi són" (63). There is little doubt that the many forms of *alegria* in the text are indeed intended to *molt ajudar* in the creation of a new kind of world. But what that world is, the authors leave to the unbounded imagination of the reader.

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