

From Tristan to Don Juan: Romance and courtly love in the fiction of
three Spanish American authors.

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Abstract

This thesis is centred on Gabriel García Márquez's novel *El amor en los tiempos del cólera*, Álvaro Mutis' novella *La última escala del Tramp Steamer*, and Juan Rulfo's novel *Pedro Páramo*. Its aim is to analyse how the works of these Spanish American authors are inscribed within the traditions of Tristan, Don Juan and other related stories. Analysis is rooted in three aspects: 1) the study of the language and style conventions in the initial works of romance and courtly love that are developed in the studied works on fiction. 2) It was crucial to see how the authors in question developed paradigms of gender relations through the traditions they borrowed, and 3) how the medieval and renaissance traditions relate to Spanish American literary discourse through matters of similar religious and social contexts, specific traits of Spanish colonization and the presence of medievalisms in modernity. García Márquez's reinvention of the Don Juan through the alliance narrator-Florentino, Mutis' depiction of the steamer as a symbol of love and poetry, Rulfo's portrayal of the lover's spiritual failure and Susana San Juan's statements and redemption through her body, show the complexity with which medieval romances have been rewritten in twentieth century Latin America.

This thesis is dedicated to my children Bárbara and León; to my dear mother Sixta Díaz de Rincones, and to the memory of my father, Roberto Rincones.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The three Spanish American novels I am studying in this thesis develop the ideological stance of Romance shown in the Don Juan stories and *The Romance of Tristan*¹(Béroul). One of my aims is to show how these novels inscribe themselves into the tradition of such stories to express the ideological stances they represent. In this chapter, I will discuss how the stories of Don Juan, *The Romance of Tristan* and other related works are either supportive or critical of the patriarchal agenda and set up a view or paradigm on gender relationships. Another of my aims is to discuss what the Spanish American novel *El Amor en los Tiempos del Cólera* (García Márquez A.T.C), the novella *La última escala del Tramp Steamer* (Mutis U.E.T.S), and *Pedro Páramo* (Rulfo P.P) have to say on the ideologies of Romance within the Spanish American milieu. Since such developments correspond to a different cultural context, a nuanced reading is necessary to recognize the ideological postures and their variations regarding gender relations.

1.1 The ideological trends in the Tristan and the Don Juan stories.

The traditions of Don Juan in *El Burlador de Sevilla* (Molina), Tristan in *The Romance of Tristan*, and other related works, have been acknowledged as setting up a style of language, of plot, and a portrayal of Romance known as courtly love, as it was seen particularly in Europe from the 12th century to the Renaissance. The courtly love tradition has been

¹ Tristan is the spelling of the hero in Béroul's version. Tristan corresponds to Von Stassbourg's version and to the more common spelling of the name.

recognized as being of paramount importance since “the most momentous and the most revolutionary elements in it have provided the background of European literature for eight hundred years” (Lewis 4). In regard to the Spanish American context, it has also been said that:

Toda la poesía europea, y por ende Americana, nació de la poesía de los trovadores del siglo XII, que no es sino la exaltación del amor desgraciado – único amor que Occidente concibe como tal. Su primer ejemplo histórico es en aquel mismo siglo la relación entre Abelardo y Eloísa. (Pacheco 138)

They also are, to a greater or lesser extent, subordinated to ideological trends within gender relations. The Don Juan story has been debated in terms of male identity, individuality, and sexuality in his challenging of rules within the patriarchal system. Discussion of *The Romance of Tristan* takes place within the wider context, which discusses the nature of courtly love, a concept so far reaching and varied that it still continues on being debated.² Both stories have been defined as essential myths of love in the West.³ In addition, there are matters of style and language that point to this tradition as one that showcases the importance of women in society. The ennobling of human love and the humanizing of the flesh and the woman’s body combine to create an important trend of criticism of the patriarchal and church ideology prominent within gender relations in medieval times.

The Tristan story

I will now give a summary of *The Romance of Tristan* and other related works within the theory of courtly romance, in terms of genre. In my discussion, I will focus on language and style conventions in those works which correspond to specific ideological trends in gender relations. This reading will enable me to relate these works to parallel conventions and

² On some difficulties of defining courtly love, see: (Benton 44-5), (Karnein 216) and (O'Donoghue 7-8)

³ Both stories are essential themes in *Love in the western world* (Rougemont *Love in the Western World*).

settings in the three Spanish American novels I study in this thesis, so as to interpret how they were developed within the Latin American milieu.

There are several versions of the Tristan and Isolde story in the Middle Ages (Campbell *Transformations* 234). They were stories that had some central elements which made them well recognized in their time. I am going to refer to Bérout's *The Romance of Tristran* and Von Strassbourg's *Tristan*.

The traditional story of Tristan is a young man who was born in Brittany. Tristan's parents die, and he is later to be placed under the guardianship of his uncle King Mark. King Mark, who rules Cornwall, is challenged by the Irish King. Tristan decides to go and defend his uncle, and accepts an invitation to fight in a jousting tournament where he gets hurt by Morold, his Irish opponent. Since he was mistakenly injected with a love potion through Morold's sword, Tristan falls in love with Isolde, the Irish princess who will soon marry his uncle. The conflict is set up to carry the lovers into a madness of love that will turn Isolde into an adulterous wife and Tristan into a traitor. Their love will make them liars and outcasts, and their passion will outlast the potion once it is no longer effective. Their love is genuine and makes them defy death.

The Tristan legend presents a version of love that has been understood as a criticism of patriarchy and its impositions of marriage and gender relations. Love is not only outside the marriage vows; it is a madness that brings the lovers to the wilderness, to a state of

enchantment close to a sacred ritual. Love, thus, has little to do with the practicalities of marriage contracts. Nevertheless, though people understand Tristan and Isolde's passion as genuine, their detachment from rules will make them behave as an "infernal couple" (Markale 37), since their complicity will make them lie and put them at the margin of lawful society. But what is it that they find in their sexual encounter, that makes them challenge death? If Iseut dies by fire, Tristran too will die, and it is fire that he fears could kill her, the element that symbolizes passion:

Master, God had mercy on me!

I have escaped, and now here I am.

But what good is that? Alas! Woe is me!

...

Since I do not have Iseut, nothing matters to me.

I escaped in vain: They are burning her

On my account, and I will die because of her! (979-81, 86-8)

Tristan and Isolde's passionate love can be understood within the tradition of the courtly love, which saw the *Unio Mystica* (*hieros gamos*) as a source of knowledge of the divine⁴ (Dronke *Medieval Latin And...* 65). Von Strassbourg's *Tristan* also enables us to see how divine language is fundamental for the courtly tradition. Here is the concept of the union of body and spirit in his description of Isolde's movements:

She had brought her right hand farther down, you know, to where one closes the mantle, and held it decorously together with two of her fingers...One saw it inside

⁴ Dronke states the love-poets of Medieval times were greatly preoccupied by the relation between human and divine love (75), and were "concerned not with a concept, but with an image of the beloved" (87). The search for knowledge through the *Unio Mystica* had several interpretations from the Mystic marriage to the Neoplatonic union of the Nous and Anima Mundi (89). Mystic marriage was also common in Islam and Medieval Jewish commentaries (89). See: (Dronke *Medieval Latin And...*)

and out, and – hidden away within – the image that Love had shaped so rarely in body and spirit! (185)

Hatto emphasizes that the mystical language is recurrent in this version (17). The theme of love–unions is an aspiration that dates from the beginning of Christianity.⁵ The story presents passion as a strong force, a madness that enables the lovers to challenge their opponents. This matter which belonged to the imagery of the medieval love lyrics also mirrored a long persisting perception of madness as a source of divine knowledge. In this regard, Dodds linked the madness of Eros to what Plato considered a possible source of knowledge and enlightenment, a concept that came close to modern psychoanalysis’s concept of libido (218)⁶ and curiously moved away from the widely used concept of platonic love.⁷

The *unio mystica* implicitly means that both lovers are one both spiritually and physically. This presents a possible equality in gender relations that unavoidably would be interpreted as a defiance of the patriarchal order. Here I want to stress that Isolde’s characterization in this story means that women’s sexuality is acknowledged, for she, too, is a passionate lover. Isolde’s freedom to challenge the establishment behind matrimony and to lie on behalf of her passion is not a usual or expected matter; it is unusual for a woman – indeed transgressive.

But Isolde is not alone in this; there are two heroines in romance narratives that are outspoken

⁵ Dronke suggests that some meanings of the images of love-unions were passed on by way of the texts most widely known in the Middle Ages like *In Timaeum*. On the love-union images, he states: “at the beginnings of Christianity, Gnosticism was full of such fantasies of love-unions, of cosmic syzygies: Patêr-Phronêsis, Nous-Sophia, Logos-Dynamis. The human aspiration towards a ‘Mystic marriage’ (hieros-gamos) was seen as an imitation of, and participation in, the divine love-union. By such participation the human soul received the ‘inaccessible light’” (*Medieval Latin And...* 89).

⁶ Dodds analyses Plato’s work on the “divine madness” of Eros, and states: “Plato recognized the operation of divine grace, and used the old religious language to express that recognition.... Eros is frankly rooted in what man shares with animals, the physiological impulse of sex (a fact which is unfortunately obscured by the persistent modern misuse of the term Platonic love); yet Eros also supplies the dynamic impulse which drives the soul forward in its quest of a satisfaction transcending earthly experience. It thus spans the whole compass of human personality, and makes the one empirical bridge between man as he is and man as he might be. Plato in fact comes close to the Freudian concept of *libido* and sublimation” (218).

⁷ Note: The adjective platonic appears in the Oxford Dictionary 1. Associated with the Greek philosopher Plato, and 2. (of love) intimate and affectionate but not sexual. I will use the conventional meaning, and will note when the term is used more accurately.

in defending their sexuality. Héloïse, in *The Letters of Abelard and Héloïse*, praises her love for Abelard while discussing the biblical sources and theological interpretations that have considered the female body as a source of sin (Abelard 132). Dante's character in *Inferno*, Francesca, also defends her desire for Paolo. Though not repentant, she prays to God for forgiveness and understanding. Like Héloïse, Francesca's initiative to speak to Dante points to the importance of women's voice.⁸ Like Isolde and Héloïse, Francesca is open and proud of her desire for Paolo. So it seems to be in the best tradition of the courtly love romance that the heroine's intention is to ennoble her love before, and despite, the religious establishment. The voice of women is pivotal for understanding the subversive stance of the romance narratives in regard to gender relations and a vision of carnal love as part of a quest for the inner human condition.

As we have noticed, the Tristan and Isolde story is written within the ideological trend that is critical of patriarchy, but it also provides an interpretation of passion. Courtly love, "the greatest intellectual adventure of the Middle Ages", might not be fully understood as it was during 11th and 12th centuries⁹ (Markale 25), it still has the power to drive audiences towards the archetype of the passionate lovers. Rougemont's explanation of the success of *Dr. Zhivago*, for example, relies on his view of the current appeal of the passion of Tristan, regardless of the limitations of love in modern society.¹⁰

⁸ Blumenfeld-Kosinsky observes the possibility for women to gain voice through visionary activities that were highly regarded: "Visions and revelations were a powerful means for women to gain a political voice in the Middle Ages" (Blumenfeld - Kosinsky 173).

⁹ Markale states that the codes of courtly love were no longer understood by the 14th century (25).

¹⁰ See: (Rougemont *Passion*).

Don Juan

I will now discuss the most important features of the Don Juan stories that will enable me to set out parallels within the novels in question. There are aspects that make Don Juan the patriarchal ideal of romance. It is important to understand Don Juan's poetry of love as false and ironic. Even the possible double meaning of Don Juan's cheating is different to Tristan and Isolde's. Whereas Tristan and Isolde's deceit has the aim of keeping their love a secret, Don Juan's intention is to deceive women, who are considered weak and susceptible to his falsehoods.

His cheating mocks the ideals of courtly love, while showing how he uses romantic language as a means of fraud. His laughter is cynical, for he proves that the idea of love as a force that overcomes social differences is false. The following are his words to Tisbea:

DON JUAN. (To Tisbea) Amor es Rey
 Que iguala con justa ley
 La seda con el sayal. (Molina 1:932-4)

Here he mocks the idea of a man being the servant of his beloved:

Y mientras Dios me dé vida
 Yo vuestro esclavo seré,
 Esta es mi mano, y mi fe. (1:947-50)

Don Juan plays show seduction as a sexual game that could only be honoured or legitimized

through marriage. Unlike the aim of the courtly love romance which was to disregard marriage in favour of true love, in *Don Juan*, the institution becomes the ultimate proof of love and recognition of a woman.

DON JUAN. Vite, adoréte, abraséme,
 Tanto que tu amor me anima
 A que contigo me case. (3:2044-6)

Don Juan's verses present marriage as more than just a symbol of wealth and recognition. The following images of jewels make clear that the marriage proposal is being related to economic well-being.

DON JUAN. !Ay Aminta de mis ojos,
 Mañana sobre virillas
 De tersa plata, estrellada
 Con clavos de oro de Tíbar,
 Pondrás los hermosos pies
 y en prisión de gargantillas
 La alabastrina garganta,
 Y los dedos en sortijas. (3:2085-92)

Don Juan pictures women as eager to obtain his favours. That fits in with his aim to have power over them through offering them marriage and social status. Thus women are portrayed only as according to their role in patriarchy. Good women save men from their misbehaviour; and this appeals to the Christian ideals of Marianism, and by the same token, it underlines

their innocence and vulnerability. In Zorrilla's version, one that was written according to Romantic ideals, Don Juan worships Inés as a saviour, because she is the one who will guide him to heaven:

DON JUAN. Comendador,
 Yo idolatro a Doña Inés.
 Persuadido de que el cielo
 Me la quiso conceder
 Para enderezar mis pasos
 Por el sendero del bien. (4:9:585-90)

Despite the confirmation of patriarchal values in the play, Don Juan also presents a view on sexuality that subverts the social order. He sees himself as a saviour, since he frees Inés from the convent when he writes: "Luz de donde el sol la toma / hermosísima paloma / privada de libertad" (1:3:216-8). This feature of a liberating sexuality echoes Don Juan in García Márquez's Florentino Ariza.

However, Don Juan mainly expresses the ironic element of this tradition. For instance, the courtly emblem of the love potion is not understood as some kind of divine magic coming from destiny. The potion is not an error or accident, nor an avoidable fate, but rather stems from his seducing words, a tool for Don Juan's purposes:

INÉS. [a Don Juan] ¡Ah! Callad, por compasión;
 Que, oyéndoos, me parece
 Que mi cerebro enloquece

Y se arde mi corazón.
 ¡Ah! Me habéis dado a beber
 Un filtro infernal, sin duda,
 Que a rendiros os ayuda
 La virtud de la mujer. (4:3)

The potion, or rather, his words, are linked to fire and passion “Y se arde mi corazón”; to madness or the fall of reason “mi cerebro enloquece”. Through Inés’s words, Zorrilla criticizes Don Juan’s ironic reading of the courtly love ideals from his romantic idealism.

At the same time, the paradigms of masculinity and leadership among men are set up. For instance, Don Juan measures his power by trying to seduce their wives. In fact, he derives pleasure from imagining bets on the likelihood of his success: “Solo una mujer como esta / me falta para mi apuesta” (Zorrilla and Nieva 1:12:748-9), or by speaking out loud on his skilfulness for deceiving, conquering women and challenging men’s honour:

DON JUAN.
 pedir más no se me antoja
 y pues sí que vais a casaros
 mañana pienso quitaros
 a doña Ana de Pantoja! (1:12:691-4)

As a response to Don Juan’s boasting, in Zorrilla’s version Pascal represents consciousness “Todos esos lenguaraces/espadaquines de oficio/no son más que frontispicio/y de poca alma capaces/Para infamar a las mujeres/tienen lengua, y tienen manos/para osar a los ancianos/o

apalearse a los mercaderes” (2:2). Don Juan is also a threat, a serious menace to the legitimacy of patriarchy. He oversteps the line that lies between the need to control women, and patriarchy’s interests in protecting motherhood and the family. Thus, it is through Don Juan that patriarchy reinvents its freedom and sets up its limits.

1.2 The stories of Tristan and Don Juan in relation to patriarchy: Critical background.

So far I have focused on matters of style and language that reflect different ideological positions in gender relations. From now on I will explore how scholars have viewed the ideological trends of these works. Literary conventions of romance have been relevant to most of European literature from the medieval times to the present. Their impact in literature also has reflected the transference of patriarchal ideology to post-colonial Latin America, an aspect that will be discussed later. For the purpose of this discussion, I will explore the different ideological tendencies of many of these conventions. The worship of women, the courtly idea of delicacy in language and a servile attitude towards women, the importance of marriage as a proof of love, the importance of secrecy in adulterous relationships, the ennobling of the flesh as a response to Christian Church orthodoxy, the sensuality and religiosity of the language of love, the representations of women as being either whores or saints are some of the textual images and ideals I will focus in this analysis. In a similar manner, masculinity as a posture of power and hegemony over women, the importance of men’s lack of identity or incapability of loving, the idea of love as a journey of self-knowledge are all elements of two main ideological trends within the courtly love and romance. In the following pages, I will

endeavour to bring together these conventions and their corresponding ideological interpretations.

The courtly love trend.

One of the main theoretical discussions on the courtly love tradition has focused on whether it gives importance to women in society, and hence, implies the importance of gender relations in understanding the poetry and romance of such tradition.¹¹

The definition of courtly love has kindled a controversy that is centred on issues of gender relations. The main tension is rooted in the question of whether this tradition truly represents an appraisal of women and an ennobling of human love. For instance, the satire of the “Lais” and the tendency of the fabliau to bawdiness and grotesque language are interpreted as sceptical of the values underscoring the courtly love romance, such as the ennobling of women and carnal love. On the other hand, the narrator of the Tristan story encourages the reader to admire the adulterous lovers’ passion which can be understood as a challenge to the patriarchal ethos. There have also been interpretations that see intermediate points between satire and genuine romance.¹² Hence, it can be concluded that a nuanced reading is necessary to analyse the ideological trend that corresponds to a work of romance. Such an analysis should be supported by what Dronke calls the author’s emotional identification with a character as a posture, and by matters of context and language, as I will analyse further on.

¹¹ On the influence of the courtly love tradition in developing gender roles see: (Miller)

¹² In regard to satire and genuine love in the courtly tradition, also see: (Bolduc)

Robertson has argued that the understanding of courtly love were confusing due to 19th-century criticism that does not relate to the context of the medieval texts (17). The critic's main argument stems from his view that people of the Middle Ages were "practical"(1). Their view of romance, he says, was not comparable to that "idolatrous passion"(3) that was "glorified with rebellious individualism by the romantics, and thoroughly sentimentalized by the Victorians" (4). However, his argument against the inconsistency of these writings as being "courtly" is related to aspects of gender relations, even though Robertson does not identify it as such in his paper. For instance, he disregards courtly love conventions such as the taste for adultery, the concept of "purity" in women, and the "worship of the lady", and he appeals to medieval history to remind us that female adultery was severely punished during that period. Instead, he suggests exploring the humorous and hypocritical features of the texts: "I doubt that many medieval noblemen could be persuaded to go so far as to become 'courtly lovers'"(2). The critic stresses an ironic perspective and disregards spiritual and mystic meanings of courtly language.

But multiple readings are possible. For instance, Dronke as well as Nelli¹³ see a duality of view in gender relations when analysing the troubadour Guillaume IX's poetry as being multifaceted:

[He] is neither the founder nor even an exponent of the *amour courtois*, that he was conscious of it around him, exasperated, beguiled and amused by it, and that at times he used it as a point of departure for saying something that was entirely his own. It is not a question of rejection or cynicism, but rather of emotional subtlety and many-sidedness. (Dronke *The Medieval Poet* 247)

¹³ On Guillaume IX's dual roles as courtly lover and hunter also see: (Nelli 79)

Having said this, it seems that Guillaume points out the possibility of the medieval poet occupying a space between the womanizing Don Juan and the troubadour. Therefore, such a possibility validates my emphasis on a nuanced reading for romance as essential to this matter, since it is rich and diverse:

Medieval love poetry is extremely varied. There are poems expressing sexual desire, although these are not usually “lyrical” in the modern sense; poems sung in praise of great ladies; crypto-religious poems, written, like the Song of Songs, in terms of physical love. (Robertson 4)

Dronke has commented on the same matter that Robertson sees as humour and parody, and states that indeed, the difference between romance and fabliau could be very vague, and that a parody and praise were interchangeable. However, he solves the matter of irony/sincerity of the love appeal by focusing on what he calls the emotional identification brought by the author:

Then the episodes [Tristan and Yseult and the husband Mark] are fraught with all the connotations, intense both in despair and joy, of the central Tristan story, and this at once draws them away from the fabliau realm. Instead the narratives seem to invite us to identify emotionally with the lovers, to feel their love as beautiful, they invite us to become for the moment one of that courteous élite who affirm the values of such love in the face of the disapproval, or the mocking laughter, of the rest of the world. Yet, the stories of such episodes could equally well be told another way, a fabliau way, entertaining us for emotional involvement. (*The Medieval Poet* 162)¹⁴

The critic differentiates between two trends: on one hand he links “the value of such love” of the courtly romance to an élite, and thus to one of the values propounded in the medieval context. On the other hand, he sees the trend linked to the fabliau as aiming to entertain, a humorous and mocking way of looking at carnal love. Both the ideology of patriarchy and its

¹⁴ Lacy also states the importance of the narrator in favouring the lovers and appealing for understanding: “Yet, Bérout makes the lovers sympathetic by praising their beauty and devotion” (Lacy xv).

emerging counterpart occurred simultaneously within the romance narratives. In this regard, Simone de Beauvoir links the fables to “malignancy” against women:

The court poets, to be sure, exalted love; in the *Roman de la Rose* young men were urged to devote themselves to the service of the ladies. But opposed to this literature (inspired by that of the troubadours) were the writings of bourgeois inspiration, which attacked women with malignancy: fables, comedies, and lays charged them with laziness, coquetry, and lewdness. (136)

According to these two scholars, love was a matter that was particularly associated with the courtly romance, and to the troubadours’ lyrics. So, what was meant by courtly love in the medieval context? It seems there was a preoccupation with the meaning of love. Lacy states that those were times of exploration of the human spirit (xvi) that meant a challenging response to the establishment. Dronke has discussed some beliefs about courtly love such as the taste for adultery in stories, and has stated that it had to do with the importance of conflict for the dramatic development of narrative (*Medieval Latin And...* 47). Yet both secrecy and adultery militate against patriarchal impositions on women. On the common view of courtly love as ‘platonic’, one which favours Christian ideals, the critic also states that such poetry which is “richly varied cannot be explained deterministically” (*Medieval Latin And...* 55). However, the matter of women’s freedom seems to be at the core of this tradition.

Discussions on love and the ethics of marriage persisted up to the 14th century. A comparative study of the works of Boccaccio and Chaucer was carried out and found their works reflected the concerns of their age on the possibility of individual action and choice in marriage (Thompson 228). According to the critic, both authors went beyond the formal appearance of marriage as the final and true end of love, and ventured to look inside a legally

locked institution. The critic says that “It is not the institution that receives criticism, but the individual motives with regard to it” (228).

The exploration on marriage and choice and thus, adultery that preoccupied Chaucer’s or Boccaccio’s audiences should not be mistaken for what Lewis calls the 19th-century domestication behind matrimony: “A nineteenth-century Englishman felt that the same passion – romantic love [as the one of medieval times] could be either virtuous or vicious according as it was directed towards marriage or not” (13-4). In a more contemporary context, Weeks speaks of the idea of romantic love as having led women to subjection and that is far from being egalitarian (62). Therefore, the 19th-century idea of romantic love could be considered a patriarchal strategy for establishing order within heterosexual relationships, a trend that differs profoundly from the medieval use of adultery in narratives. On the contrary, the subversive undertones of the Tristan stories favoured a position on women’s freedom, and a challenge to patriarchy¹⁵ that corresponded to a current in people’s thought during the Middle Ages: “By the Twelfth century medieval society had settled into the main lines along which it was to develop through the fifteenth century. The period saw many intellectual and social changes, and inevitably, the position of women reflected the wider currents of society (Labarge xi).

¹⁵ There is still debate on the reach of women’s influence in the Middle Ages since it is said to have been limited to the upper classes. C. S. Lewis states “Nothing could mark more plainly the negative side of this courtly tradition than the short chapter in that Andreas explains that if you are so unfortunate as to fall in love with a peasant woman, you may, *si locum inveneris opportunum*, make use of *modica coactio*” (35), yet, women’s influence went beyond those limitations.

This tells us that the concept of courtly love not only varies according to the hegemonic values of any given period in time, but also that attitudes on that literary style depend on how restricted sensuality is in a particular context. The so called platonic love, the worship of the lady, the views of women as saints, mothers or active lovers, can be read in relation to a given patriarchal ethos. For Lewis, the tensions between both the religious establishment and the emerging value of sexual love resulted in literary variations between parody and a genuine exploration, such as Dante's "noble fusion of sexual and religious experience" (21). The critic states: "We must be prepared to find authors dotted about in every sort of intermediate position between these two extremes" (21).

Scholars seem to agree on the nature of courtly love as being divine and profane, sensual and religious. Dronke explains the importance of what he calls "the language of mystics" in understanding the transcendence of courtly love:

My point of departure will be the language of mystics, the language in which theologians had, over the centuries, tried to write of divine love. It is easy to see at once to how great an extent such language is simply a transference of that used by human lovers. How could it be otherwise?... Implicitly then, through the very need of communication, human and divine love are in a sense reconciled. (*Medieval Latin And...* 58)

But this reconciliation pointed out by the critic was in itself the point of conflict. According to orthodox Christianity, human love had been considered imperfect and evil while applying the very same adjectives to women. In this sense, Dronke speaks on how this reconciliation contradicts, not Christianity as a whole, but Christian orthodoxy:

The orthodox Christian scheme of values could not envisage such an identity between divine and human love: the one was an absolute value, the other a relative one, at best imperfect, at worst evil... Even if the Church saw marriage as a sacrament, and thus saw human love as in some measure sanctified, human love was always in the last resort bidden to make the way for the love of God.

(*Medieval Latin And... 59*)

As a critical response to the teachings of the Church, the courtly love language reflected the growing concern for human feelings and sexuality within the religious sphere. “That kind of love-language which is most consonant with the *amour courtois*, had accumulated over the centuries over the mystical and theological tradition itself” (*Medieval Latin And... 62*).

Courtly love, as a reconciliation of divine love and carnal love (Lewis 2) was at the core of language conventions and style. Guinizelli’s verse “Love always shelters in the gentle heart” points to the gentleness and nobility of the love-lyrics (Dronke *The Medieval Poet* 371). This idea is analogous to what C. S. Lewis calls love as a service, and is meant for those “in the old sense of the word, polite” (2). His statement is a key to understanding the language code of delicacy, an element I referred at the beginning of this section, as opposed to that of a “vilein”: “It thus becomes from one point of view the flower, from another the seed, of all those noble usages which distinguish the gentle from the vilein: only the courteous can love, but it is love that makes them courteous” (2). The difference between courtly and bawdy language is expressly stated by Guillaume de Lorris when advising men to honour women in *The romance of the rose* (60).¹⁶ Parker writes concerning the matter and states that “The Courtly love phenomenon may be interpreted as an attempt (which I have called a ‘confused’ attempt) to ennoble human love” (35). The words used by Lewis, Parker and Dronke such as “reconciliation” and “ennobling” seem to be an attempt to humanize, to bring transcendent value to the flesh.

¹⁶ “Take care not to utter dirty words or anything bawdy. You should never open your mouth to name anything base ...Honor all women and exert yourself to serve them. If you hear any slanderer who goes around detracting women, take him to task and tell him to keep quiet. If you can, do something that is pleasing to ladies and girls, so that they will hear good reports told and retold about you” (Guillaume 60).

This humanizing aim can be seen in the rebellious as well as religious language in which H  lo  se and Francesca spoke of their desires. Dronke has established the literary linkage between both heroines: “But although Dante’s acquaintance with the *Roman* is generally admitted, the parallels between Jean’s H  lo  se and Dante’s Francesca have not, to my knowledge, been recognized” (*The Medieval Poet* 380). The compelling force both heroines demonstrate in debating their religious beliefs and defence of their love is, in my view, the quintessence of this trend: to give voice and meaning to women, to their existence as lovers as well as thinkers. In this regard, the critic elevates the significance of Francesca:

No woman in the world of the *dolce stil nuovo* alludes to her own beauty, or speaks openly of being sexually attracted to the man she loves. In courtly lyric, only the Provençal poet B  atrice de Die speaks with a sensual openness comparable to Francesca’s. (*The Medieval Poet* 372-3)

The critic states that Dante’s highlighting of the tragedy of Paolo and Francesca shares a similar aim to Jean de Meun’s treatment of what he calls “love’s victims”, especially in that they do not repent of their love (*The Medieval Poet* 380). He refers to H  lo  se’s freedom of speech while challenging God:

There the modern lovers are Abelard and H  lo  se; there too it is the woman in the pair who is given a speech in which she defends the love that she knew was culpable in heaven’s eyes and had lost her the friendship of God. (*The Medieval Poet* 379)

Both Francesca and H  lo  se are “non-repentant”, and yet, they appeal to God’s mercy and justice. Their appeal occurs within the context of the theological questions in regard to Christianity as the religion of love.¹⁷ There was a conviction that God would understand

¹⁷ See also *The Myths of Love*. (Rougemont *The Myths*)

human love, and this is a direct challenge to topics or values that (de)legitimated carnal love.¹⁸ In *The Romance of Tristan*, the hermit prays for the lovers to be forgiven, for their love was genuine. Francesca and Héloïse too believe God should listen to their plea.

This questioning of the nature of Christianity and its view of flesh connected to women in medieval times is explained by Bloch's commentary on the Yawist version of Genesis (22). The critic states: "Man is associated with intelligence--*mens, ratio*, the rational soul--and woman, with *sensus*, the body, the animal faculties, appetite. According to Philo, she is allied with the serpent, which symbolizes pleasure" (29). This parallelism between the flesh and women's body is a response to men's fear of the feminine as a threat to their rationality: "In other words, it is the fear of the woman in every man's body" (31). Bloch's perspective raises issues as to whether courtly love was actually praising women. For this author the idea of women as an embodiment of salvation is related to the Church's notions on how they it could redeem themselves from the original sin. The critic argues that the "Bride of Christ" as simultaneously seducer and redeemer, was impossible for any real woman to accomplish. The contradictory abstractions imposed on them could not be solved in reality: "women are idealized, subtilized, frozen into a passivity that cannot be resolved" (90).

But there are other possible readings of women as saints and saviours, and it points to the importance of context in the possible nuances. From a different perspective, Simone de Beauvoir finds plausible social and economic grounds to explain the importance of women in

¹⁸ On legitimation and delegitimation of ideological discourse, see: (van Dijk 260-2)

medieval times beyond the literary debate¹⁹ (136). Bloch and de Beauvoir different approaches shows that variations in meaning depending on particular contexts. I will point out the fundamentals of both trends when analysing the novels in question. As Parker recalls: “[Courtly love] may become sympathetically intelligible in the light of the special tensions produced on traditional religions by the rise of humanism.” (5). The so called “attempts” to ennoble love, a word that implicitly speaks of an effort that does not necessarily have a positive outcome, speaks of the humanizing aim that is at the core of courtly tradition.

The Don Juan trend:

Up to this point I have gone over the nature of the courtly romance in regard to its literary conventions that enhance the divinization of the body, and the humanization of the divine. I have also stressed that such conventions and language correspond to an ideal of gender relations that contests the dictates of patriarchy. From now on, I will discuss the fundamentals of the Don Juan tradition in the same terms of language and gender ideology.

There are aspects in the novels I am studying, especially in García Márquez’s *El Amor en los Tiempos del Cólera*, that tell us it is inscribed within the Don Juan tradition. Once the novel follows the theme of Don Juan, as opposed to say, the courtly romance, it can readily be said that the novel favours a corresponding patriarchal perspective. But, since the Don Juan theme changes according to its particular reality, “don Juan reveals himself to be subject to changes in ideas. His discourse is a very modern one” (Davies 3), I will explore its parallels within the needs of male identity and patriarchy according to the context of the novels to be studied. I

¹⁹ De Beauvoir states it was the social attitudes more than the literary “war” that affected women’s situation. Yet, she states that women’s situation did not change. Therefore, it is correct to use the word “attempt” when referring to the humanizing aim.

will focus on the circumstances of rewriting which allow us to see the changes in ideas²⁰ in regard to Don Juan, for my aim is to reveal the relationship between the character and the patriarchal context in which the character is placed.

The links between Don Juan and patriarchal ideology have been recognized by several authors. Mandrell states that Don Juan's seduction is a tool for setting the place of women in the patriarchal order:

My point, then, in the various readings of the critical and literary texts treating Don Juan is that seduction serves the aims of patriarchal society, and that it does so quite by means of the appropriation and elaboration of the *burlador* and his story [...] The imaginative power of Don Juan, beginning with *El burlador de Sevilla*, is such that he is used to embody in a surprisingly consistent manner both the principles of difference and exclusion and the validity of the status quo. (279)

For Mandrell, seduction is “a domesticating force” (227) a principle of order which derives, paradoxically, from Don Juan's disregard for sexual rules. Mandrell argues that Don Juan is a scapegoat whose misdeeds too, are structured within society, and states:

Even though Don Juan is not and cannot be mistaken for the innocent victim of sacrificial ritual, neither is he the only character in the *comedia* deserving of punishment; he is not merely a perpetrator of evil, but also a victim insofar as he pays for the sins and transgressions of others as well as for his own misdeeds. In this way, his actions serve to unify society against him, and his death restores unity to society itself. (81)

His anarchy and breaking of rules and codes of honor are punished since patriarchy cannot tolerate them. The critic explains that the “the main problem in *El burlador de Sevilla* is the

²⁰Mandrell states it is not an error to call Don Juan a myth, and yet he argues: “He is a character in a story that has been written and rewritten; and he is the product of a set of discursive practices common to the modern world” (40). In this thesis, I am interested in the language and paradigms on gender relations that Don Juan portrays.

social containment of Don Juan's anarchy" (60), one that even calls for the intervention of the king of Spain. Nonetheless, Don Juan establishes an order for the regulation of desire (256) and the promotion of marriage: "Don Juan thereby serves a patriarchal function in two senses. First, he unifies society against him and assumes a collective burden of guilt. Second, he engenders the conditions by which desire is directed toward matrimony in socially productive ways" (82). For Cascardi, Don Juan's punishment allows a re-foundation of society in marriage so that the "traditional" society is restored (156).

Don Juan is unmistakably a powerful individual, despite the overall efforts to constrain his anarchy and his breaking of sexual codes. Paradoxically, that anarchy is the result of men's privileges in society. Men too have a leading role in offering marriage. Therefore, Don Juan's marriage offers are helped by the social leadership that enables him to negotiate in marketing terms.²¹ Apostolidès says in this regard "he [don Juan] gives them a price and thus enables their general exchange, under a "perverse" system in which the market economy imposes its model on the libidinal economy" (489). Davies refers to the unevenness that results from his privileges as "double standard": "[don Juan] Personifies some of the worst traits of male heterosexuality, including lack of responsibility for his own actions and an exploitation of the double standard that has granted men sexual license while denying the same to women" (9). His success as a seducer bestows on him prestige among men in terms of domesticating women: he imposes a price over them, he is cleverer: if Isolde is an artful liar that deceives everyone, now Don Juan also cheats and becomes the "devil". He is able to enjoy women's

²¹ Blau's work explains how the value of people rises or falls depending on how they negotiate attraction (76-87) and concludes: "Social approval and personal attraction are basic sources of support for an individual's opinions and judgments, for his values and self conception" (85).

loving while maintaining his power over them. Don Juan becomes indeed a fantasy, a dream for that masculinity which, despite all transgressions, is the perhaps unwanted result²² of patriarchy's model of the successful male.

Davies's work on Don Juan traces historical change in gender relations "as found in different literary works devoted to don Juan" (1). Her study explores the different patriarchal contexts the works were conceived in, and studies the aspects of gender relations that they relate to. She suggests it is possible to trace Don Juan's shifts in his search of identity: "By studying some female characters in don Juan's works, I believe we can pinpoint some of these underlying insecurities, and the shifts in depiction of donjuanian women over the centuries should indicate that these insecurities became increasingly critical" (12). The mobility of gender roles, therefore, will give us a notion of the extent of Don Juan's need for identity.

The matter of identity is paramount for the critic, for the works "reflect a growing recognition of man (but not woman) as an individual" (38). Don Juan establishes his individual self at the cost of women's identity. They are perceived "as an undifferentiated mass" (38). On imposing roles on the female, there is a crossing point between the courtly romance ideology and that of the Don Juan stories in regard to the image of the woman as a saviour. Historically speaking, the varied representations of women in medieval times as either evil, artful liars, dumb and lazy, started to coexist with quite a different image, the ideal woman, a saviour. As an ideal of perfection, that feature may also diminish female individuality. In Zorrilla's work, Don Juan loves Doña Ana as a woman who could save him. His aim of salvation is consistent with the

²² Juliet Mitchell has revised Otto Rank's study on Don Juan and Freud's silence on the matter and has concluded Don Juan's hysteria has been normalized by conventions to the extent of making them invisible. (246)

ideal of Marianism²³ in Counter Reformation times as exemplified in Santa Teresa (T. Mitchell 131), and with the interpretation that the aim of perfection in women is “a double fold misogyny” (Bloch 90).

The historical context of gender relations proves necessary for assessing the figure of Don Juan as a humanistic response to the patriarchal and religious ideology dating from medieval times. The medieval exempla have been seen as an example of this order since they give testimony of medieval misogyny, and the extent of gender competition. They were a set of didactic texts that were intended for men to read (Navas Ocaña 197). The critic says the exempla texts in general were intended to: “ampliar los conocimientos de varones que desempeñan tareas de gobierno, hacerlos más sabios y avisarlos de los engaños femeninos, sobre todo del adulterio y de sus nefastas consecuencias (inversión de jerarquía entre los sexos, deshonor pública, etc)” (197). According to Navas, these *exempla* promoted the image of the good woman from men’s standards (206).

There was an obvious intention to guide men in power and to shape women’s passivity and subordination to men’s decisions. The matter did not change much in times of the Counter Reformation, being that the Church allowed its theologians the authority to speak of “carnal love”, and attempted to avoid love in the intimate sphere of the “legalized couples” (Flor 393). He comments that texts of the Church had the intention to undermine the value of women, and to strengthen men’s hegemony over them in marriage.

²³ The cult of Mary dates back to the early years of Christianity (Cameron-Mowat 296). Marianism in literature begins in the 12th -century along with the courtly ideal. In this regard, Dronke comments that Hildegard Von Bingen, as a love-poet, “is of course influenced by the theological role of the Virgin Mary as mediatrix” (*Medieval Latin And...* 69). Timothy Mitchell states that Marianism in Spain “found support among the medieval theologians who were intent on deifying Mary” (132), and that it is a “prime element of the Romance Catholicism that has held sway in Spain in general and Andalusia in particular” (132).

Pues sucede que es hacia la pareja legalizada por la *benedictio* hacia donde se dirigen, no por casualidad, las estrategias más sofisticadas de los aparatos ideológicos del poder eclesiástico en la época. Pareja en cuya intimidad hemos ya dicho que se penetra para censurar en ella incluso las muestras más puras y sentimentales de lo que es el amor humano [...] Esta desvalorización activa del valor de la sexualidad dentro del propio matrimonio en el seno del dispositivo contrarreformista se muestra, leída desde nuestra contemporaneidad, como propiamente, un *antihumanismo*. (389-91)

De la Flor points to “antihumanismo” when speaking of that impediment on human feelings, even in married couples. Politically speaking, I believe, it attempted to destroy sexuality as a mediator, for it was paramount in maintaining a power relationship that could subordinate women. The theological discourse went as far as to advise men to avoid using any loving language towards their wives (Arias and Mey 27; cited by Flor 393).

Medieval misogyny had retained the concept of women as being a temptation and they were still warned against in the times of the Counter Reformation, but the humanistic trend that sought to ennoble carnal love was also present in the 16th-century. In this respect Parker states the following:

The humanism of the Renaissance was not only a revival of classical languages and literatures; it was an attempt to rectify the balance of priorities by giving back to the sphere of the human much of what, it was then felt, had been unjustly arrogated to the sphere of the divine. No speedy revaluation of sex could be attempted; a beginning had to be made by placing between man and woman only a little above animal instinct. The language whereby woman was ‘deified’, and man gave their total submission in ‘faith’ was a metaphorical expression of this ennoblement. (22)

The critic refers here to the Spanish love poetry of 16th-century Spain in the language that brought transcendence to the human sphere. Referring to the mystical poetry, Parker sees the emphasis on the human as expressing this aim: “St. John holds firm to the Christian tradition

of the West: in his use of the concept and language of human love to express divine love” (86). Saint John’s *Cantico Espiritual* and Teresa de Ávila’s *Moradas*, endeavored to enhance divine love through the knowledge of the flesh, which mystics understood as the union with God (75).

Therefore that was the context of the love poetry that coexisted with Don Juan’s discourse in *El Burlador de Sevilla*. While the mystics regarded the flesh as the true source of experience, and Teresa de Ávila was an emblematic icon of virginity in Spanish Catholicism (T. Mitchell 131), courtly language was on the other hand used for other more practical purposes. However, people’s views and reality during the turn of 15th-century Spain were remarkably different: “people here fall ill in love, the use of religious language and imagery is grotesque, wife-swapping and homosexuality are supposedly widespread” (Macpherson and MacKay 141).

Don Juan’s response to his historical context was expressed in ironic language. His view of the flesh was underlined by disbelief. His rebelliousness is different, in that he does not seek either God’s understanding or people’s support, for he is not too concerned about the possibility of going to hell as a result of his unrestrained sexuality. He deceives, but not for the notions of love Tristan and Isolde defend. He is pleased to dishonor not only women but his friends. He sees sexuality as a pleasure he wishes to repeat continuously, not a matter that could be spiritually transcendent, as perhaps it was envisaged by the troubadours.²⁴ Despite the misogyny that can be implied in his treatment of women as passive and naïve, Don Juan’s need for women, his rebellious sexuality, was, nonetheless, a response to the Church

²⁴ René Nelli, for instance, states that Provençal eroticism was the result of an aim, that of giving transcendence to the sexual instinct. See (Nelli 12)

orthodoxy, though he did not respond precisely with the same language as the courtly romance and poetry.

Don Juan has been compared to Tristran and has been linked to the Muslim and Semitic past of Medieval Spain, for they are parallel responses to the religious paradigms on human love. Deyermond and other authors have pointed out²⁵ that Spanish love poetry was influenced by the Arab culture: “Medieval culture, like any other, is a blend of elements [...] Medieval Spanish Literature was a frontier zone and a bridge between Islam and Christianity”(Deyermond 21). According to Muñoz, this concept differs from the Provençal idealization of the courtly love. She considers Don Juan to be nevertheless defeated, for he enters into the game of loving, and is also subject to fatality (Muñoz 133-4), and considers his erotic rebellion as heroic: “Que el prototipo [de don Juan] naciese en España se explica por su rebeldía frente a la ortodoxia social y religiosa que era más heroica en nuestro país donde estos poderes tenían más fuerza” (132).

For another Spanish critic like Becerra, Don Juan’s actions should be considered beyond his condition as a transgressor. Like Muñoz, Becerra emphasizes that Don Juan also rebels against the corrupt society of the age:

[para que apareciese Don Juan se] Necesitaba la mentalidad de la Contrarreforma, la corrupción de la vida de la corte, el discutido poder del rey sobre la nobleza y los valores sobre los que se asienta la sociedad española desde el último tercio del XVI hasta la mitad del XVII: el sentido el honor, el concepto del amor, el papel de la mujer, el principio de la justicia poética, la concepción del tiempo y la vida como fugacidad. (81)

²⁵ On the theory of the Arab origins of courtly love, see: (Menocal)

Becerra is again pointing to the moral dilemma that preoccupied Tirso and his contemporaries. According to Parker, courtly love was seen as idealistic and platonic during the Counter Reformation and the Church was devoted to bringing the matter of romance to more realistic grounds so as to avoid “escape”.²⁶ There was an aim to bring a Christian view of life and a sense of moral responsibility (Parker 110-1). As a result of this, marriage is enhanced with a corresponding view of the good woman. Parker interprets the spirit of this aim of reality in Luis de León’s depiction of the woman to be loved. The view of woman’s domestic role, in my opinion, could be interpreted in capitalistic terms.²⁷ Women are responsible for “the art of living”:

[Luis de León insists] All the time in that it is in a busy domestic life and not in idle luxury that women find their fulfilment. Yet this does not mean that he considers women to be inferior drudges. A good woman, he says, is something finer than a good man because ultimately it is upon her that human society depends. The goodness of a woman is creative, and communicated to others: it is not in her nature to attain to a self-centred perfection, but to give. For this reason, the love she inspires in man is, or should be, the love of reverence, based upon the realisation of her unique worth in the task and art of living. (Parker 111)

The discourse on why women are “better” than men, shows the role that is expected of them. Such an idea is still prevalent in modern writing, as I will show in the chapter on García Marquez’s novel, where the model of the married “realistic” woman is expressed. Besides, the Counter Reformation was establishing its sense of responsibility in matters of love, and thus instituting and favouring marriage. It did so as a response to the degradation of the courtly love language and the corrupt social life mentioned earlier by Becerra and Muñoz.

²⁶ In Parker’s interpretation, “escape” should be read as equivalent to the idealism of courtly love.

²⁷ On the economic implications of women’s work see: (Ehrenreich 140-7)

Although Mandrell believes that Tirso's plays "are hardly amoral or unethical, particularly when viewed in terms of the Counter-Reformation and the emphasis on religious orthodoxy"(Mandrell 51), yet he explains that Tirso was "banished from Madrid and forbidden to write" as result of issues on theatre that had moral implications (51). Though Tirso's burlador was an unwelcomed transgressor, he reinvents patriarchy. Don Juan could be seen as a mediator: while he supports the value of marriage as a regulating institution, he succeeds in bringing force to unrestrained sexuality.

Moreover, some critics see Tirso as a feminist. Muñoz points out that women characters in *El Burlador de Sevilla* did not love Don Juan; they were more concerned with recovering their honour (Muñoz 138). Davies says that El Burlador's women are the most demanding and active of all versions of Don Juan, since parity was possible for them to negotiate "[Women] compensate by their ability to act for what they lack in terms of power, thus attaining a sort of parity" (Davies 82).

1.3 The trends of romance and courtly love in Spanish America.

Up to this point, I have stressed several aspects of romance as they are embodied in *The Romance of Tristran* and the Don Juan stories in their original European variants. One of the earliest appearances in Spanish America can be seen in Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz's approach to matters of gender differences and love in her poetry. The critic Pilar Gonzalbo states that the understanding of love in New Spain was akin to the Spanish baroque poets' taste for contradictions and oppositions in their love songs, "el artificio retórico de enlazar amor y muerte" (Gonzalbo Aizupuru 1). The link between love and death and the mystical approach

to divine love was also transferred and transplanted into the literary taste of that society. Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz wrote her love poetry in the era when Góngora and Quevedo were highly esteemed. Paz comments on Sor Juana Inés's inscription into the Petrarchan tradition:

[Los poemas de Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz] se ajustan a la tradición de la poesía erótica desde el Canzoniere de Petrarca: son una especie de cuenta y canta las vicisitudes de una pasión.[...] Desde Petrarca la poesía erótica ha sido, tanto o más que la expresión del deseo, el movimiento introspectivo de la reflexión. Examen interior: el poeta, al ver a su amada, se ve también a sí mismo viéndola. Al verse, ve en su interior grabada en su pecho, la imagen de su dama: el amor es fantasmal. (*Sor Juana* 280)

However, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz's contribution to the European tradition of Don Juan derives more from her critical response to the matter of men's identity in gender relations. The naiveté and passivity socially expected in women's behavior commented on by Gonzalbo (2), and that I will discuss further, can be seen in Sor Juana Inés' verses.²⁸ The poet discusses issues of male identity and social rules, and sees the duplicity and hypocrisy in men's attitude to women.²⁹ In that regard, Sor Juana Inés responds to the problems of identity she acknowledged in men of her times as well as stating in *Redondilla III* that a woman in "opinión, ninguna gana" (29) in any quarrel, thus pointing our attention to the rules of patriarchy.

Romance and courtly love stories are closely linked to the ideological, religious and cultural values that were prevalent in medieval Europe. However, though Medievalism is a

²⁸ "Opinión ninguna gana / pues la que más se recata / si no os admite es ingrata / y si os admite, es liviana" (Redondilla III 25-28).

²⁹ "Queréis con presunción necia / hallar a la que buscáis / para pretendida, Tais / y en la posesión, Lucrecia" (Redondilla III 13-16) ... "¿Pues de qué os espantáis / de la culpa que tenéis? / Queredlas cual las hacéis / o hacedlas cual las buscáis" (Redondilla III 53-56).

spatiotemporal concept which might be only related to geographical, cultural and historical circumstances in Western Europe, it nonetheless carries an ideological stance on gender, values and the human condition that has made it surpass that initial boundaries. Medievalism has gone beyond its original settings, and its influence has reached to the colonial and postcolonial contexts. As Davis and Altschul have pointed out, the influence of its narratives cannot only be assessed in a linear timeline, for the narratives have been encountered in non-European spaces in the contemporary world and mostly related to colonialism (1-5). According to these authors, this revision on aspects of timeline “would also relieve the Spanish colonies of the stigma of the medieval” (10),³⁰ and enables a discussion of the presence of these narratives from a more open perspective on modernity (10).³¹ In a similar line of thought, Rabasa states that what scholars have defined as medieval “have coexisted with modernity even when the modern has defined them as incompatible” (39). Thus, any analogies between the romance stories and the writings of contemporary Spanish American novels must encompass questions on context, on how this appeal to the romance narratives responds to the historical aims and tensions of the societies they narrate. If I hypothesize and say that the Spanish American authors are inscribed within these traditions as a way to raise, explore and negotiate with issues on gender relations, what are the contextual circumstances that justify that choice in their novels? What aspects of post-colonial Spanish America give us evidence that the novels actually develop the romance and courtly love stories? Related to the question of what justifies the borrowing or developing of the medieval narratives, Davis and Altschul state:

³⁰ Davies and Altschul refer to “medieval” as a “pejorative term in latin American studies today”(10), and consider that Rabasa innovates when he insists, “that desiring modernity and shunning the medieval are both repetitions of colonizing teleology and narratives”(10).

³¹ On the presence of the medieval in modern times, also see: (Huizinga)

This is the case not only because colonies could appropriate the elements of medieval origin narratives as a means of either challenging or mimicking European colonizers but because the racial, ethnic and territorial roots of medievalism—which, it cannot be stressed enough, took shape in the context of colonization and conquest—were also key to intracolonial tensions and aspirations. (21)

In this sense, the romance and courtly narratives too prevailed as a way of understanding the mind of the colonizers as well as for setting their own perspective on tensions occurring in a particular context. Therefore, it is important to look at elements like the Christian concept of erotic love during the colonial times in order to explore the tensions that were created.

In the context of New Spain, Fernando de la Flor explains how the values of the Catholic Church in times of the Counter Reformation were transferred through colonization. The author cites the *mestizo* chronicler Poma de Ayala, who was relentless in denouncing the vices of the colonization process (Flor 388). He states that the demonic values attached to sexuality were imposed on the indigenous peoples:³²

El cuerpo de gozo y de placer del indígena es, así, drásticamente moralizado y reconvertido, en virtud de este mismo “vaciado libidinal” que sobre él se practica, en protomodelo de otro cuerpo que se le propondrá como nuevo horizonte ejemplar: el del esclavo, el del cuerpo nacido sólo para la carga, la servidumbre y el trabajo. (389)

According to this scholar, the influence of the Church as an institution established a new religious and moral order of love in Spanish America, while attempting to restrain their sexual life by denying the value of the flesh, “el cuerpo”. In a similar manner, Pilar Gonzalbo

³² Current investigations on matriarchy in prehispanic America confirm the importance of these statements. See: (Vallbona)

explains how the concepts of “good” love and “bad” love were understood in 18th-century New Spain. She states that since the 16th-century, love, represented by literary drama and common life, was characterized by religious discourse as “desordenado” or chaotic. There was an emphasis on the body as a threat to salvation, since the body should only be meant for God’s service (1-2). She argues that the moral values brought by the Counter Reformation paved the way for a Don Juan attitude to appear and flourish. For instance, she argues that feminine indifference to sexuality was socially expected and highly regarded as “pure” of thought: “Se presumía que el discurso amoroso estaba a cargo del varón y que la inocencia de las mujeres debía llegar a tal grado que ni siquiera comprendieran el atrevido lenguaje de sus pretendientes”(2). This idealized innocence made women even more vulnerable: “El seductor disponía así de todas las ventajas, al contar con su capacidad de persuasión y con la ignorancia de sus posibles víctimas” (2). As has been said in regard to Don Juan stories, the establishment was to blame for promoting women’s vulnerability: “las demandas presentadas por las jóvenes seducidas, dicen poco de los sentimientos y mucho de los prejuicios y de los recursos legales. A semejanza del burlador de Sevilla, los donjuanes novohispanos conseguían sus fines a cambio de promesas de matrimonio”(3).

The religious and social establishment that continues the colonizers’ scheme of values also prevails in postcolonial Latin America. Carlos Monsiváis analyses the postcolonial language and set of values in Agustín Yáñez’s *Al filo del Agua*, and states that the colonizer’s discourse is constituted by: “Un lenguaje imperial durante casi cuatro siglos, persiste porque es simultáneamente la voz de la autoridad, la cosmovisión que no admite heréticos y el espacio de salvación” (375). Related to the prevailing of the European discourse, Doris Sommer also recognizes its presence within the romance stories. The critic insists that romance in Latin

America, as a genre, favoured the foundation of nations that would promote a social program, through reconciliations and the setting of hierarchies (Sommer 20) that were especially achieved through the importance of marriages of convenience (6). The transference of the romance was mainly based upon European values:

The peak of liberal reform and optimism is in the mid-century novels that were daring to realize the romantic and the utilitarian dreams of the European genre. The Latin American elite wrote romances for zealous readers, privileged by definition (since mass education was still one of the dreams) and likely to be flattered by the personal portraits that were all the rage in bourgeois painting and in narrative local color.(13-4)

The critic stresses the importance of the European dreams through romance, and thus it concurs with my perspective that the romances portray the evolution and reception of the ideologies that were transferred to Latin America. However, it is important to keep in mind the dual condition of these ideologies, for they can be used either to support or challenge their more orthodox and reactionary trends.

The question is, how do García Márquez, Mutis and Rulfo's fictional portrayals of romance respond to European traditions? Doris Sommer argues in relation to the writers of the Boom that:

The more they protested indifference to tradition, the more they would send me back to the persistent attractions that caused so much resistance. What was it, I would ask, about the notoriously obsolete programmatic brand of Latin American fiction that haunted the Boom?...It is the erotic rhetoric that organizes patriotic novels. (2)

According to Sommer, this occurred as the result of questioning the establishment transferred by the colonizers, and the positivist tradition of national projects. The critic concludes that denial itself turns into resemblance.

The Spanish American writers have been discussed in terms of tradition. Michell Bell says García Márquez and Octavio Paz belong to a transition that came after the modernist view that explored and questioned traditions and nationalisms (54-5). He emphasizes the fact that Márquez is a writer who “illuminates the point of tension between the earlier modern universalism and a later spirit: deconstructive, relativistic and localised” (55). On the other hand, he says that Paz acknowledged the transitional moment and “reversed the terms to suggest that the Mexican, in his very peculiarity, had become the potential, or indeed inevitable, focus of universal interests”(55). Paz’s statement is also akin to Fuentes’, who speaks of a mythical centre between Europe and America when referring to *Cien años de Soledad*: “This is the world of Thomas More in Europe and of Vasco de Quiroga in America. Discovered because invented because imagined because desired because named. America became the utopia of Europe” (4).

Julio Ortega reflects on the conflict raised by the European values in *Del Amor y otros demonios* (García Márquez *D.A.O.D*) and stresses the difference between the two worlds and describes them as follows:

El breve derroche de una vida transculturada, el arabesco de un amor de convento, el auto sacramental caribeño y colonial de ambos mundos; y, en fin, el canto del amor gentil y recobrado...para contar la fábula de una muchacha que contradice todos los códigos del saber colonial, de la sociedad cerrada. (407)

But above all, the critic sets the conflictive context of this romance by pointing on one side to the Cartagena de Indias of the 18th century, its political, religious and academic power, and opposing it to the story of the abandoned girl who moves to: “al amor libre de los esclavos, al amor petrarquista”(408). Thus, it is clear to me that the most humanistic and dream-like trends of romance that can be seen in “el canto del amor gentil”, “al amor libre” of the slaves and the Petrarchan style, are also present as a counterbalance to the colonial impositions on gender and social relations. According to the critic, the so called division between the soul and the body is at the heart of the repression: “Esta división entre cuerpo y alma reproduce la serie de antagonismos que extravía el texto de lo real, violentándolo con su reduccionismo. La sentencia del Obispo es ya una condena a muerte: ‘Déjala en nuestras manos’, concluyó, ‘Dios hará el resto’” (417). The Church, as any hegemonic power, seeks to control people’s lives in their most intimate sphere. Ortega’s reading recognizes the presence of courtly language as a way to defend the human realm, and to resist the colonizers’ view of the social and racial order.

Monsiváis also refers to this religious matter of the flesh and the soul when recalling the rebellious feature of Yáñez’s *Al Filo del agua* in the understanding of desire and its transcendence to a greater sphere:

A Yáñez, en lo ideológico y lo narrativo, le importa ubicar al deseo (fundamental pero no únicamente sexual), entre las causas de la revolución. No sólo hay que librarse del Señor Gobierno, de los presidentes municipales y de los hacendados, también de quienes reprimen desde el confesionario, el púlpito y el manejo del ‘qué dirán’. (376)

Here government, the Church and the *status quo* represent the forces that are challenged by desire, and thus romance coexists in the same space as the revolution. Yáñez's novel, like others of the Mexican revolution, sought to subvert the inherited colonizers' ideals in a country that was striving towards modernity. In regard to desire as a force, Monsiváis explains the erotic subversion in the novel:

Allí, en las penumbras, en la combinación de oído culpabilizador y boca que vierte la memoria del pecado, se manifiesta retorcidamente la libido...Las figuras sagradas se disuelven y en el insomnio ceden el paso a caderas, senos, modos de andar y de mover los labios.(377)

These perspectives on romance reflect the tendencies that either support or critique the inherited European discourse. There is a special emphasis on undermining notions of racial and social hierarchies in the script of marriage or defying some moral values that threaten the intimate sphere of love. According to Sommer, this could be explained through the possibility of romance to negotiate and shape a “national project” (7,14) while building peaceful foundations for society. From this perspective, the novels studied in this thesis can be read in terms of how they ironize, embrace or contest the different trends of courtly love. Compared to the romances that preceded them, they might not be interested in “founding” (7) a society, but they are interested in denouncing inequalities and in embracing the noblest aspects of romance. García Márquez, Mutis and Rulfo's narrative on gender relations, language and on those inherited social programmes that correspond to Patriarchal order, point to their particular vision on romance.

García Márquez's *El Amor en los Tiempos del Cólera*: Love and modernization as a postcolonial fantasy.

In the novel *El amor en los tiempos del cólera*, García Márquez sets up European discourses on romance and modernization as being prestigious paradigms that validate elite class values. Such discourses are masks Dr. Juvenal Urbino and his wife use to confirm their class power as promoters of modernization. In regard to the role of such narratives within the postcolonial world, it is important to recall Davis and Altschul's comments: "To want to separate oneself from "the medieval," to want to eradicate contacts that "the medieval" might have with/in "us" in "modernity" is to start the discussion on the very basis of the colonizer's distinctions" (9). Thus, their supremacy as an elite relies on their command of the colonizer's discourse, regardless of how degraded it is in terms of action.

The romance discourse brought by Florentino is used as a means of giving him a spiritual heroism that has been acknowledged within the European "bourgeois" romantic tradition. Yet, as a Don Juan character, Florentino belongs to a "marginal space", he is perhaps as rich as the Spanish or other European Don Juan character must be, being a middle-class character. According to this postcolonial context he is seen as a mestizo outcast with indian hair. Florentino is also one of those "bastards" that cannot belong to the social club, who are the elite class personified by the Urbinos. García Márquez shows how exclusion is rooted in racial considerations. Taboada speaks of the tendency of the Criollos to insist that they are descendants of the conquistadors (126) and to a reactionary mood that has the illusion that there is no racial discrimination (132). For instance, Fermina's racist attitudes in the novel correspond to what Taboada calls a strongly racist 19th-century which caused an "effort by

historians and sociologists to extol the mixed character of Latin American societies, considered in the preceding centuries as its original sin” (132). The novel indeed responds to what has been recognized as García Márquez’s stance against “the grotesque arbitrariness of colonial rule in Latin America” (Hart 138).

García Márquez has pointed out that he is not consciously choosing an ideological position in his novels (Williams 139), but his view on the city of Cartagena’s aristocracy tells us his consciousness of social issues in *El amor en los tiempos del cólera* (137). Therefore, the social framework of the story is marked by the colonizers’ values and hierarchies, for the novel is placed in Cartagena, that is “a reactionary colonial city” (Martin *Gabriel García Márquez: A Life* 455). Critics have acknowledged the double standard of traditions like romanticism and modernization in *El amor en los tiempos del cólera*, and see characters as being attached to values in a contradictory manner. Such duality within them has been described as either gullible reading (Booker 113), marginality as response to modernization (Moraña 89), or frivolousness as the lack of commitment to others (Columbus 91, 96). Florentino’s forging his love story in this novel despite others’ well-being would be an example either of duality or misreading. According to Booker, Florentino’s gullible reading of romanticism is compared to Dr. Urbino’s also uncritical reading of modernization, and stresses how damaging their faithfulness is to their reading: “Yet the poet Ariza is just as domineering and manipulative as the scientist Urbino, and in many ways the two are not opposites but merely two sides of the same coin” (Booker 123). With regard to how modernization is understood, Mabel Moraña states that Florentino represents an alternative to modernization:

Florentino Ariza a coherent and conscious alternative to modernization as, on the one hand, a vitality that escapes the control of instrumental reason and, on the other hand, a neo-romanticism that marks the persistence of tradition. As a synthesis of both these aspects, he actualizes the values of national culture as European-style modernization which imposes its model without respecting national identity. (89)

Florentino's condition as a marginal figure is the "alternative" that escapes "reason". For the critic, it is a space that coexists with "a social medium dominated by the ideology of progress" (89). Martin also sees that Florentino counterbalances the initial hegemony of European values (Martin *Gabriel García Márquez: A Life* 456). Yet, even from the marginal model Florentino develops, which I will discuss later, he also avoids responsibility through his fashioning of romantic love through the forged love story with Fermina. This version of Don Juan in a marginal condition does not bring the character to social commitment and change, nor to a possibility of modernization. Far from changing the establishment, Florentino seeks to belong to it, and above all, to continue the patriarchal aim of upholding men's hegemony over women.

Whether or not there is an uncritical reading of European traditions such as romanticism or modernization, it is clear that both are satirized within the context of the novel, especially through Florentino and Dr. Juvenal Urbino. In this regard, Columbus, who has achieved a coherent theory on the overall satire of the novel, states that traditions are taken frivolously since the characters are not willing to withstand their vision of themselves (96-7). They turn their backs to history and thus, social change is not possible. Compared to Keith Booker and Moraña, I think Columbus is more likely to address the characters' inconsistency with their comfortable distance from reality, and their lack of human value (Columbus 97). For instance, Dr. Urbino's inaction, Fermina's immaturity in her ambivalent attitude to privileges and social change, Florentino's shaping of his love story and his self-indulgence in regard to his

own actions point to selfishness. The critic concludes: “What is missing from their lives is a real context or even those dreams through which history shapes networks that knit the individual to other people” (97). García Márquez’s satire of romantic love and the creation of a marginal Don Juan version through Florentino, speak of traditions that are used as masks to disguise the character’s evasion of reality.

Mutis and *La última Escala del Tramp steamer*: Searching for spiritual legacy and identity in the midst of exile.

In the case of Álvaro Mutis’s work, linkage to postcolonial issues is clearly laid out by the author. He does so through the cultural discussions that address the Muslim and European background as it occurs between the lovers Warda and Jon in *La Última Escala del Tramp Steamer*, and through his reflections on the Caribbean steamer in Nordic waters. I believe Mutis is so conscious of the cultural implications in the creation of his love story, that he turns the lovers’ journey into an exile, and sets up a cultural and spiritual exploration.

The question in regard to Mutis is not only whether he follows a European tradition of love, and on what matters of regional context are linked to either the traditions of Tristan or Don Juan in his novella. Since I understand romance in Mutis as a quest for an inner spiritual world, the question that arises is: what aspects of his national context drive him to such literary exploration? I will begin answering the question by discussing the author’s concept of Europe and human history and its transcendence in his quest:

Although his protagonists create a stage where European and Western influences contend with the hybridization and metamorphosis they undergo upon arriving in the New World, Mutis's work is never a simple essay about identity. It is a literary journey in which the reader discovers and confronts his- or herself.(Cobo Borda "Nominating Statement" 6)

Mutis brings his reflections on Europe, the Middle East and the Caribbean as three regions that have major historical, cultural as well as political concerns for him. It is a search for history that relates to what Warren sees as a concern in the Americas “the importation of the European Middle Ages offered one path to integrating “‘new’ nations into global history” (Warren 288). As a result of a need to open to several legacies and cultures, Mutis has been seen as a (de)territorialized writer, for the settings of his novel seem to be out of the Latin American context. Moreno sees him as a universal Colombian (Moreno Zerpa and Mutis 61).

According to Taboada’s post-colonial theory, for instance, the author’s posture may be placed within the criollos or even the late Arab or Lebanese immigrants’ (Taboada 129) effort to gain identity through their connection to the so called “Three religion Spain” of the medieval times (Altshul 125). Mutis’ praising of the Spanish heritage within the novella can be read as an effort to recover its values, that which has been severely stigmatized as non-modern (Davis and Altschul 5) and (Rabasa 27). Mutis can be compared to what Atschul considers as Andrés Bello’s aim: “Bello attempts to integrate Latin America into European history and participates in a series of interrelated disavowals” (Altshul 17).

I believe Mutis’ travelling geography can be explained through his condition as an “exile”. Cobo Borda interprets Mutis’ exile anguish in *Summa de Maqroll el gaviero* where the poet speaks about the “painful realities” of his country Colombia in order to create a “unique world”:

Mutis always penetrates beyond those tragedies in an unambiguous attempt to pose vital questions that force his protagonists to confront their own transcendental existence. From his exile in Mexico he has succeeded in crafting tangible and compelling images of his homeland and of Latin American reality in general. Mutis uses these images as a foundation for the construction of a unique world that manages to subsist due to its internal consistency and its faithfulness to the obsessions that have haunted the author since 1948. (Cobo Borda "Nominating Statement" 6)

This creation of the “unique world” occurs in a literary dimension, and is encompassed within his quest for a poetic space in the novella. Mutis’ quest is shaped by his discussions of Western and Arab legacy, and is related to his embracing of cultural ideas as a choice.³³ His defence of the Spanish colonization is a way of coming into terms with heritage, with those religious and spiritual values that, in his view, also correspond to the Spanish American identity.³⁴ Mutis appeals to the European and Middle Eastern legacy to see it as wider than strictly European. However, this occurs in a very different political and intellectual situation to those of either the nineteenth or the early twentieth century’s elites. On this shift of posture, I will appeal to Taboada’s view of (re)evaluation:

We observe in particular a shift in the Criollo elites, who moved from rejecting Iberian heritage during the nineteenth century to recuperating this heritage as a safe haven that allowed the elites to reject the leftist political leanings of a new European proletarian/socialist/anarchist immigration. (Taboada 125)

Mutis may well be interpreted as responding to these events, for he opposes the denial of the Spanish legacy, sharing the view that the Spanish conquest was intentionally harmed by the

³³ This topic of cultural dialogue is developed in Chapter 3.

³⁴ Mutis refers to the 12th of October: “ Ha habido una distorsión inmensa, no conozco una fecha de la historia alrededor de la cual se hayan acumulado mayores adefesios históricos, y mayor mala fe... Esta noción de la conquista de América es una noción evidentemente nacida del concepto anglosajón de ver la historia de España...España vino aquí a una labor pobladora, civilizadora...Es el encuentro de una cultura, por lo menos milenaria, la cultura occidental católica española, heredera de la cultura romana y de la cultura griega...que se encuentra con civilizaciones en franca decadencia, basadas todas en una sujeción a un mundo mágico...que no les permitió ver un horizonte de una gran amplitud...se quedan en un pasado al servicio de un mundo mítico” (“Entrevista. El Descubrimiento De América”).

Protestants (Lawrance 23).³⁵ Such a posture could also be a critical response to the leftist ideals behind the still current political violence³⁶ in Colombia. Mutis' emphasis on his main character Maqroll's condition as an exile is a response to Colombia's social unrest.³⁷ Mutis always introduces himself as a "monárquico" and "Gibelino" (Solanes),³⁸ and outspokenly chooses to be politically incorrect. His interviewers try to explore his views and he responds with the same historical dates on the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Critics might find his answers extravagant, yet, it is my opinion his ideological choice is perhaps a mask, a political provocation. I think his statements are part of his devotion for different spiritual legacies.

The lovers Warda and Jon engage in journeys by the steamer as a way of being in the territory of poetry. It is not difficult to see the steamer has a parallel to Mutis' longings for that "unique world" that Cobo Borda considers he is relentlessly creating through his literary work. The steamer is a place where lovers are haunted by desire and fear, love and death, and by those same outcast situations that make lovers and exiles look for a safe haven. Mutis' inscribing his novella in the courtly tradition is inspired, I believe, by its mysticism and spirituality. Mutis' work is obsessed with this exploration can be seen in his poetry of the "sacred" cities. In the poem Cádiz, for instance, he says it is the city that he has long been looking for: "Y digo Cádiz para poner en regla mi vigilia / para que nada ni nadie intente en

³⁵ Jeremy Lawrence states that it is ironic that "a colonial enterprise characterized by certain unique manifestations of concern for lawfulness – of which *Brief Relation* was an index – should as direct result of Las Casas' efforts have ended up in the popular conception is the most inhumane empire of all time. In fact every edition... was explicitly intended to harm Spain" (23).

³⁶ On Mutis' opinion on violence in Colombia see: (Cobo Borda "Dos Poetas.." 93-4)

³⁷ See: (Mutis *Mutis, Escritor.*)

³⁸ Mutis "Se define a sí mismo como devoto de la monarquía y suele asegurar que no se ve como un hombre de esta época, sino que preferiría haber vivido en Bizancio o en los tiempos del Siglo de Oro español, y que en último caso le hubiera gustado tomar partido por Lope de Vega y Góngora en sus disputas con Cervantes, participar en la intriga que llevó a Fray Luis de León a la cárcel y patrocinar el montaje de Los Autos Sacramentales de Calderón de la Barca en los escenarios de la corte" (Solanes 119).

vano / desheredarme una vez más de lo que ha sido / ‘el reino que estaba para mí’” (Los Emisarios "Summa" 153). In the poem Caravansary he suggests his idea of the good city: “Si te empeñas en tu necedad, nunca te será dado entrar por las puertas de la ciudad de Tashkent, la ciudad donde reina la abundancia y predominan los hombres sabios y diligentes” (Caravansary "Summa" 125), or the holiness of Novgorod “En Novgorod la grande/la muy santa/la tres veces bendita capital de Rúrik” (Los Emisarios "Summa" 167). Mutis’ search for the unique place of dreams in the midst of his exile corresponds to a notion of poetry as the space of romance.

Rulfo and *Pedro Páramo*: Revisiting the discourse on love and death.

The fact that Juan Rulfo’s *Pedro Páramo* is centred on revolutionary México, already gives an indication of how its tensions relate to matters of Spanish colonization. The revolution sought to undermine the power of the Catholic religion, and to break with a feudal ownership of the land that had been established by Spanish colonization. Medieval institutions and ideas remain in Mexico up to the present day. In “Decolonizing Medieval Mexico”, José Rabasa speaks of the Mexican contribution to modernity in “a resistance to a medieval mentality, a need to understand the Spanish process of colonization and empire building, and a general tendency to speak in terms of alternative modernities” (27). Rabasa reflects on the need to differentiate the Spanish from other views of modernity and to assess medievalism from all “the positive, negative and folkloric values” (27). Therefore, the revolution’s aim to modernize México sought to criticize and reform the power of the Church in society, and such features clarify why Rulfo discusses the role of the Church, and explores questions of faith

through several characters in *Pedro Páramo*. The author has spoken of this concern when commenting that in his novel “simplemente se niegan unos valores que tradicionalmente se han considerado válidos. En la novela están satirizados. Para mí, en lo personal, estos valores no lo son. Por ejemplo, en la cuestión de la creencia, de la fe” (Sommers "Entrevista: Juan Rulfo" 20-1).

Pedro Páramo is highly indebted to the novel of the Mexican revolution. Sommers states that the genre achieved the “autoconocimiento” of the Mexican nation and highlights its commitment to critical views on the revolutionary process: “Paradójicamente, el proceso constructivo de afirmación se logró por medio de obras literarias que eran consistentemente denunciatorias...la novela Mexicana del siglo XX se sitúa como juez y crítico” (54-5).

Rulfo belonged to a further stage in the novel of the revolution. Sommers states that Rulfo “condensa una extrema amargura en su evaluación de la Revolución...La visión trágica de Rulfo implica la profunda inadecuación de la Cristiandad”(119-20). Rulfo’s preoccupation with the lack of faith and human solidarity creates the dark and hellish atmosphere in the novel. Having said this, it can be seen that Rulfo as well as the Mexican culture, was understandably attracted to a literary and philosophical ideology that sought death as a way of enlightenment of the human spirit. As a culture obsessed with death and akin to the baroque taste for oppositions, it had a fertile soil for the reception of the most radical and revolutionary elements of the courtly tradition: the concept of love and death; the religious concept of the flesh and the spirit.

Rulfo's comments on faith (quoted above) can explain why Susana San Juan not only raises theological questions on the matter of the soul and the erotic flesh; her straightforward expression is also relevant to the context of the novel. The opposition to the Church's orthodoxy and their teachings on human love is central to the conflict between lovers and the church, and underscores the spiritual realm of the courtly love tradition. Moreover, Susana's speech joins the humanistic trend that seeks to ennoble the human being in the midst of, or despite a theocratic medieval sphere. Like Héloïse and Francesca, Susana has her own views on theological issues regarding sin and death, and defies the most reactionary trends of the Catholic Church in another spatiotemporal context, that of revolutionary Mexico. The case of Susana San Juan in *Pedro Páramo* can be linked to the role of the medievalist discourse both in colonial and anticolonial politics according to particular aims. Taboada speaks of the several political uses of the medieval thought in Latin America: "The medieval period also gained new prestige as a national/traditional motif to counter the French Bourbon influence" (125), "Between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the elements – all the contradictory and parallel and opposing elements – for the vilification and the rehabilitation of the Spanish Middle Ages were always present"(131). Davis and Altshul conclude that such discourse had the means of either supporting or "critiquing empire" (21).

Juan Rulfo, for instance, has given a view of European literature in his work. In Joseph Sommers' interview with Rulfo, the author speaks of his early influences as a writer. He stresses the importance of perspective and has an appeal for readings that take him to different spaces or "planos". He looked for works that would enable him to gain some prerspective of his situation, like those which had "aspectos humanos coincidentes". He sees his readings of the Nordic authors like Knut Hamsun, Boyersen, Jens Peter Jacobsen, Selma Lagerlov and

Halldor Laxness as those that took him away from the enormous life of his country to a contrasting darkness: “[Sobre Hamsun] ...me impresionó mucho, llevándome a planos antes desconocidos. A un mundo brumoso, como es el mundo nórdico, ¿no? Pero que al mismo tiempo me sustrajo de esta situación tan luminosa donde vivimos nosotros” (Rulfo and Sommers 17). Also, he concludes, he took a sense of optimism and justice from those works: “Me daban una visión más justa, o mejor, más optimista que el mundo un poco áspero como era el nuestro” (18).

However, in overall terms, Rulfo’s writing is committed to this “autoconocimiento” of the Mexican nation, which can also be seen in his great knowledge of the Mexican geography and landscape (Jiménez de Báez "De La Escritura.." 938). Hence, his view on his early readings of the Nordic authors speaks of an aim to share common universal concerns, while he is seeking distance, contrast, a possible positive angle on the major context of his novels, that of revolutionary México. In my view, his approach to his European readings in this interview is consistent with his writing, as I will discuss in more detail in chapter four. While Rulfo’s *Pedro Páramo* and *El Llano en Llamas (El Llano..)* remain undoubtedly connected to the novel of the Mexican revolution, *Pedro Páramo* addresses religious and spiritual concerns that were also at the core of the humanizing aims of the courtly love tradition, such as the status and voice of women.

Octavio Paz, a contemporary of Rulfo, has widely reflected on his position in regard to European cultural influence. More specifically, he has worked on the theme of love like no other Spanish American author of his time. Paz has recognized the importance of the courtly

and romance narratives in his culture. He has gone a step further in considering a reflection on that topic as a spiritual matter that could bring different cultures together:

Si yo dirigiese una fundación cultural, o fuese un millonario filántropo, patrocinaría una reunión entre poetas, novelistas, filósofos, psicólogos y sexólogos, occidentales y orientales, para que hablasen sobre las nociones básicas del amor. El punto de partida serían los grandes mitos de nuestras civilizaciones: Paolo y Francesca, Don Juan, Gengi, Bao-yu y Dai-Yu, Romeo y Julieta, Eloísa...Sería el gran diálogo del Este y el Oeste: la confrontación entre dos nociones del amor, tan parecidas y al mismo tiempo tan distantes. Por desgracia esa reunión no se va a celebrar nunca. Hoy en día a las fundaciones culturales no les interesan esos temas. En el Renacimiento, algún Medici habría patrocinado este encuentro. O en el Japón algún gran señor, en el Kioto del período Muromachi. ("En El Filo.." 465)

Paz's vision of the theme is clearly a universal one. His pointing to Francesca and Héloïse in this commentary, among others like Don Juan, show that these important characters embody the idea of romance in present day Mexico, and could be extended to Spanish America. His statement on these major characters will support my aim to reflect on the presence of the romance and courtly love not only in Rulfo's *Susana San Juan*, but in the other Spanish American novels studied here.

García Márquez, Mutis and Rulfo trusted and still trust their imagination enough to read and satirize, localize and universalize traditions within their fictional work. They have coincided in their view on literary influences, and have managed to focus on those common and inextinguishable concerns that could hardly belong to any culture in particular. They know that literary borrowings are crucial for creation, and that literary borders are difficult to trace.

However, their concept on romance in the Latin American culture surely leaves an imprint. The patriarchal or rebellious order they have fictionalized develops a long existing European tradition in romance. García Márquez's novel parodies characters in the way they follow the dreams of the European traditions and their most conservative rhetoric, while directing our attention to an overall failure. Mutis, who has endeavoured to explore the universals of tradition, writes his love story while travelling and reflecting over the origins of romance beyond the European realm. His concept of love as a spiritual quest of the poetic mind, confirms his idea of himself as a wanderer, an exile. Mutis's understanding of the love journey is underlined by both faith and the certainty of failure. And finally, Rulfo shows us the deepest spirituality that is parallel to the medieval imagination of passion and death. But he makes the courtly scene return to tell us that love is even more an unattainable dream: not because of some Christian prejudice towards carnal love, but because the soil has been profaned and is no longer fertile. That is the symbolism of spiritual ruin. The lovers are thus caught in an unresolved solitude. *Pedro Páramo* succeeds in showing the world that Mutis more openly discusses and foresees in his novel: that though love and death have abandoned the human spirit, poetry will nonetheless remain to sing human solitude.

CHAPTER TWO

García Márquez's Florentino: A Reinvented Don Juan.

El Amor en los Tiempos del Cólera is a novel that explores the patriarchal version of love inscribed within the Don Juan story. The novel examines the ideas of love that were inherited from colonial times, and shows how they have permeated gender discourse and order. The love story of Fermina and Florentino, and of other couples in this novel are important to analyse inasmuch as they display the ideology and language that organizes gender relations. The author parodies the conventions of romance and courtly love, and yet, he gives us a development of the Don Juan story and its corresponding attachment to patriarchal ideology.

After a first reading, *El Amor en los tiempos del cólera (A.T.C)* seems to be a novel about Florentino's enduring love for Fermina. The entire story has a parallel setting: while Fermina is leading a very conventional and even prestigious married life with Juvenal Urbino, Florentino is filling his empty existence without her through meeting several women and having a free sexual life with them. The novel swings between the scenes that center upon Urbino and his aims of modernization of the community, and the parallel ones that focus on the discourse of romance, the love story between Fermina and Florentino. For the purpose of

analysing the development of romance in this novel, I will focus my attention on the scenes of the latter.

Wendy Faris has already described Florentino as one who “embodies the mixture of Tristan the faithful and Don Juan the profligate” (129), however, the critic did not develop the idea in her paper. Florentino is far from being a Tristan figure. Despite Florentino’s idealized love for Fermina and his seeming open mindedness in regard to all kinds of “love” during his career as a seducer, I will demonstrate that Florentino is not as unprejudiced as he appears. As a development of the Don Juan character, and beyond his unchallenged libertinage, he actually supports the values of a decadent patriarchal order that has been inherited from colonial times. Though this given order partially marginalizes him, he nonetheless supports it through his seduction of women.

Florentino, having been dismissed by Fermina, is eager to reassert his wounded masculinity through seducing all the women he can. Florentino does so in a patriarchal order that allows him to be not answerable to anyone. This stage in Florentino’s life is filled with passages that show affairs in which accepted and conventional ideas about human sexuality are not questioned. The novel’s exploration of many possibilities of sexual love and passion has made Millán see it as a “Tratado de amor” (483). But far from being a description of sexual openness, the novel follows very conservative and bourgeois stances on the model of women and of love according to the patriarchal establishment. There is no contradiction in his different views on love, women and sexual ethics. According to the narrator’s concept on

Florentino's way of cataloguing women, it can be inferred from the script that there are two kinds of women, the ones who are under man's protection and those who are not.

Women in the novel *El Amor en los tiempos del cólera* are likely to accept that they have no choice except to play within the allocated space for love that Florentino allows them to share, sometimes at the risk of despair and even death. Female characters in this novel have their way of seeking love as they need it. For instance, Sara Noriega, one of Florentino's women states that: "todo lo que hicieran desnudos era amor" (A.T.C 273). Sara is consistent in her view of love and her possibilities, however narrow they might be. She, like other female characters in this novel, also negotiates her own way through the narrow man-ruled concept of love.

However, Florentino's case is different; he falls into the trap of his prejudices and inconsistent notions of love and of himself that are linked to the aims of the establishment from its colonial origins. Despite his seeming advantages, he contradicts himself until the end of the novel. Like the Don Juan of Tirso and Zorrilla, he seduces women in order to dominate them and yet, his need for women's love ends up in emptiness and frustration. He chooses power despite himself, and he is the victim of his own game; his inconsistency in regard to love is more than just cheating. In this regard Millington speaks of Florentino's emotional selfishness and links it with masculinity; he states:

There is a strange masculine logic operating here, as if fifty years of solitude were a sufficient end in themselves. Florentino may have a satisfactory sex life and know intense love but he has very little experience of the fulfillment of sharing it: that experience may be beginning at the novel's end. ("The Novels of Love" 121)

The masculine logic that operates is in keeping with the Don Juan narrative on love and gender relations.

2.1 Parody of bad romantic language in favour of the reality of love (patriarchal version) and its parallel to the Don Juan stories.

The issue of romantic language and love ideals is essential in analysing the links of this novel to the Don Juan character, since the mythical Don Juan mocks romantic language as much as he does conventions and rules. In *El Amor en los tiempos de Cólera*, the author shows us his appreciation of Florentino's language from the start:

Florentino Ariza escribía todas las noches sin piedad para consigo mismo, envenenándose letra por letra con el humo de las lámparas de aceite de corozo en la trastienda de la mercería, y sus cartas iban haciéndose más extensas y lunáticas cuanto más se esforzaba por imitar a sus poetas preferidos de la Biblioteca popular, que ya para esa época llegaba a los ochenta volúmenes ... Later on his mother cries: "No hay mujer que merezca tanto" (A.T.C 98-9).

Romantic language undergoes a systematic parody throughout the novel: "Florentino Ariza pasó el resto de la tarde comiendo rosas y leyendo la carta, repasándola letra por letra una y otra vez y comiendo más rosas cuanto más leía."(A.T.C) (97) Indeed, this is one of the passages that could explain Florentino's name "one who eats roses or flowers" in a direct allusion to the colloquial nickname for poets in the Caribbean region as being "comeflores".

From now on I will focus on the nature of the romantic ideas García Márquez displays in this novel. I intend to discuss how the distance between ideals and reality in language remains an issue in *El amor en los tiempos del cólera*. The concept of romantic love as it was understood during the 19th-century is again called into question. Florentino leaves romantic writing as a way of coming into reality, an act of maturity and wisdom in love. But his romantic writing is never shown to the reader; it is only described and referred to from the narrator's critical perspective. In this regard, Moraña explains this issue from the perspective of Florentino's marginality: "His singularity and his marginality are a way of life and a style that he cultivates by appropriating all the apparatus of romanticism as a parodic reconstruction which combines the fin-de-siècle novel and woman's popular romances" (Moraña 91).

What does he understand by romantic ideals? What is this opposition about? How are his proposal of love and language linked to the traditions of love?

The novelist dedicates several pages to describing Ariza's style and the writing conventions he follows during his early pursuit of Fermina Daza's love. García Márquez describes, judges as an outsider, and does not cite any of those letters, for he is not interested in bringing Florentino's discourse into his own. These passages are a cue for understanding the author's perspective on the conventions of idealized love; the connections to handwriting, to an old-fashioned and backward style of dress "las levitas anacrónicas, el sombrero único" (*A.T.C* 306), and to a feverish delight in being in love for its own sake. The author's critical view continues as Florentino can no longer write to Fermina, and finds himself unable to write for

other purposes rather than love. Though he continues his rhetorical exercise by selling his letter-writing services to lovers in need, the main character's failure to meet the uncle's company's demands precipitates a turning point in his evolution as a man and a writer. Florentino is rejected and brought down inside the company he works for because he does not adjust to the commercial format. In other words, his uncle León tells him his craft has no meaning in the real world: "Si no eres capaz de escribir una carta commercial te vas a recoger la basura del muelle" (*A.T.C* 230).

Some parallels can be drawn from Florentino's evolution both as a writer and as a lover, and the author's concept of the way love letters should be written. As I said earlier, the narrator judges the handcraft, the skills and decisions of his writing. For instance, the main character's choice of using the typewriter at the second and last stage of his love for Fermina suggests that technology is a cultural device that has modernized writing: "[la máquina de escribir] más bien le parecía de un modernismo audaz" (*A.T.C* 399), will lead to an updating of both conventions and style. Besides technology, his reflections on love and eroticism, women, himself, and his overall struggle to fit into the community, will all contribute to transforming his art into rationality:

No tenía ni el tono, ni el estilo, ni el soplo retórico de los primeros años del amor, y su argumento era tan racional y bien medido, que el perfume de una gardenia hubiese sido un exabrupto. En cierto modo, fue la aproximación más acertada de las cartas mercantiles que nunca pudo hacer (*A.T.C* 399).

García Márquez here adopts a position that sees romantic language as not related to reality, a concept that is very akin to the Counter Reformation's view of it as illusory (Chapter 1). According to the narrator, Florentino switched from an idealized writing to a more direct, mature and realistic one. Hence we also know all Florentino's pains and excesses when waiting for Fermina's love and approval, are described in an exaggerated and humorous way that could even make us sympathetic to his innocence. The business letters parody Florentino's exaggerated romantic language. Inversely, far from the delicacy and dream-like expressions, García Márquez uses eschatological images of the body, and articulates both his style and his view of reality. In this regard, Luis Beltrán Almería states that:

Estos elementos de la risa callada se articulan en series de naturaleza grotesca: las aires del cuerpo, del olor, de la muerte, del sexo, de los debates, de la comida, de la imagen, el trabajo y los excrementos...los cuidados del cuerpo, las enfermedades y, en general, todo lo somático son temas predilectos en la obra de García Márquez, y el Amor en los Tiempos del Cólera no es una excepción. (288)

The importance of the grotesque as a style in García Márquez is undoubtedly related to his concept of reality. This aspect proves essential in understanding the author's choice of a tradition like Don Juan in its mockery of romantic love, but he also mocks the idea of the ladies' man, the seducer. For instance, the critic mentions Florentino's gastric difficulties during his first visit to the widow Fermina as an example of the grotesque writing in this novel (234). Aside from this, the narrator of *El amor en los Tiempos del cólera* speaks of "la enfermedad de amor" through grotesque language of the body as it is described earlier by Almería: "Cuando [Florentino] empezó a esperar la respuesta de su primera carta, la ansiedad se le complicó con cagantinas y vómitos verdes" (A.T.C 88).

But there are other issues concerning Florentino's language that are more related to his characterization, to what he represents within the national context I referred in chapter one. According to Booker, there is more to it than an ideal-reality issue. Florentino Ariza's own excessively romantic attitude toward life "derives largely from Ariza's gullible reading of bad literature, and the echo here of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* is surely more than accidental" (Booker 113). Hence, the issue here is not so much the matter of romantic love being an old fashioned and unrealistic ideal, as much as how Florentino interprets it in order to portray it in a decadent manner. According to this critic, Florentino's gullible reading of this genre is compared to Juvenal Urbino's equally uncritical concept of modernity and states that, despite their differences, they adjust reality to their own point of view:

Both Ariza and Urbino make the same mistake__ they accept the narratives that inform their lives without question, and this blind acceptance allows them to justify their lack of regard for others (...) Ariza so fully accepts the narrative of the romantic lovers that he cannot see the harm he is doing to others through his inveterate romancing.(123)

Booker sees the parallelisms of modernization and romantic love as discourses that are derived from the European heritage, and poses questions on how they are interpreted or questioned in the novel. The critic refers to this blindness as plain imitation that is not genuine, but rather intended for self-centeredness. This deviation from the intended ideals is also analysed by Mabel Moraña who describes how the author parodies the exaltation of

passion: “He (Florentino) eventually becomes “involved in a feverish correspondence with himself” (Moraña 172), sublimating his own sentimental energy by becoming an adviser to those in love (A.T.C 91) .

As far as the gullible reading is concerned, it seems Florentino has very little to say about reality except for his experience with his women (A.T.C 92). He seems to adjust his surroundings to his scheme of ideals, his concept of romantic love. Though Florentino’s language might be a self-centered perception which points to bad reading, some romantic ideals in this novel are consistent with the bourgeois and patriarchal ideology of women’s role in marriage. Baruch mentions that the ideals of love held by patriarchy made feminists see love as women’s weakness: “women saw emotional entrapment as more dangerous than physical indulgence” (2). Despite García Márquez’s novel’s echoes of *Madame Bovary*,³⁹ can Fermina be compared to how Emma Bovary is ironically portrayed in some passages of Flaubert’s novel? In a similar vein, Faris states that unlike Proust’s “Swann in love” in *Remembrance of things past*, courtly and eternal love succeeds in García Márquez’s novel, even despite the comic mode in which it was written (131). Yet, what are Fermina’s principles in regard to marriage and love? Can they be considered romantic? As I will discuss in later pages, Fermina is as practical as is expected of a good wife.

Baruch refers to romantic love as a concept that even though it was regarded by the feminist movement as a tool for oppressing them, she laments its loss as an ideal (25). This may partially explain why romantic language in this novel is looked at as an old-fashioned and a

³⁹ See: (Bloom).

retrograde way of speaking of love, women and reality. Florentino's shift as a writer shows a departure from his uncritical readings of popular literature, to a more realistic language.

Nonetheless, despite this critical distance from the tradition, Florentino's shaping of his story with Fermina against all odds tells us a romantic plot was forced by him into reality. His gullible reading was pushed to an extreme that puts Florentino's authenticity into question. Furthermore, his contrived story of faithfulness to Fermina poses important questions concerning his prejudices, misunderstandings and contradictions on the established discourse on love and women. As I argued in chapter one, it also tells us the romantic discourse might be a mask, a way of fitting into ideals like modernization, which are only useful to the main characters as an image they intend to show to others, and not as a reality of who they are.

Romantic poetry has been satirized since the very beginnings of the courtly love tradition. Dronke refers to Guillaume IX,⁴⁰ one of the emblematic troubadours, as one whose poetry can show the tiny division between courtly love and the fabliau, between love as a reality of lovers. But, perhaps more closely related to this story are Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and Cervantes's *Don Quijote*. Florentino and Fermina's youth, his singing and writing verses to his lady, bear a resemblance to the play of the Veronese lovers. More precisely, García Márquez's work has been linked to Cervantes' tendency to the grotesque and to subversion. According to Penuel's theory of carnivalized consciousness, García Márquez, like Cervantes, subverts the "the official culture":

⁴⁰ Referred in chapter one.

His magical realism in *Cien años* and other works provides him, along with other techniques, a framework within which to laugh at, mock, parody, exaggerate, and in general dramatize the follies of official culture, just as Cervantes challenged the official culture of his time within the framework of Don Quijote's madness. (81)

Both Shakespeare and Cervantes were skilful enough to weave between the traditions without falling into one perspective more than another. Shakespeare⁴¹ parodied the fake and predictable verses through Romeo's worship of Rosaline, a woman he fantasized about and who he did not even know. But the author's drawing the line between comedy and tragedy made the shift from mockery into reality. Romeo encounters real love, as is shown by Juliet's asking Romeo to speak from his own self. Shakespeare parodied bad love verses, but through tragedy, he brought a sense of love as a force that challenged the most dramatic consequences in the play. On the other hand, though Cervantes is well known for having satirized the chivalric literature and ideals in *Don Quijote*,⁴² he nonetheless admired and acknowledged the *Amadís de Gaula*.⁴³ Besides, the Quijote's final coming into reality is a sort of defeat, for Cervantes's notion of reality does not go as far as to agree with the world outside his dreams. It seems that Guillaume IX, Shakespeare and Cervantes, from their different historical and literary contexts, dealt with and considered both the symbolic and the ironic sides of the love tradition.

⁴¹ G. Blakemore Evans discusses the variety of tones in *Romeo and Juliet* (16), and explains that such language comes when Shakespeare is "breaking away from the conventional and rhetorically bound use of language and figure" (17).

⁴² (Cervantes Saavedra).

⁴³ The matter of Cervantes' posture on chivalric narrative is still not settled. Jorge Luis Borges has regarded his ideals as nostalgic: "El *Quijote* es menos un antídoto de esas ficciones (las de caballería) que una secreta despedida nostálgica" (29). Rougemont states that Cervantes only parodied "romances of secular adventure" and infers that "It tells me in favour of the theory that he was aware of the true meaning of courtly literature, and mocked his contemporaries with a sense of desperation for clinging to an illusion of which they had lost the key" (*Passion* 189). Martínez Mata nonetheless inscribes himself in the thought that Cervantes mocked and was against chivalric narratives (54). However, I recall Borges' statement on Cervantes' paradoxical features. Since this matter has not been settled, I am inclined to see Don Quijote's nostalgia and disillusionment as one that can explain his sadness when coming to grips with reality at the end of the novel.

Having said this, it is my aim to show that Márquez's novel is a parody of romantic love. The grotesque and at times bawdy language of the body in his writing favours his version of love and reality in which the so called freedom to love is understood according to Florentino's anarchy and underlying machismo.

2.2 Florentino's strategies of seduction and the narrator's seduction of the reader.

So far we have referred to Florentino as a seducer; a pivotal aspect that enables us to establish important similarities between Don Juan and Florentino Ariza. Don Juan is a trickster, a cheater who deceives in order to possess women for its own sake. Does Florentino cheat?

Florentino is described as a hunter: "se recrudecieron sus noches de cazador solitario" (*A.T.C* 276), "en sus amaneceres de cazador furtivo" (*A.T.C* 278), through a symbolism that has for long been attached to men's seduction of women, and the boastfulness associated with this.⁴⁴ The mythical features of Don Juan are actualized and disguised within the social context well enough to remain hidden and not be easily recognized. But above all, the narrator is Florentino's key ally for this purpose. Booker suggests that narrative is an act of seduction in this novel, and that readers must be cautious:

⁴⁴ See chapter one.

The jarring disjunction between the early account of the soap incident and this later story of Urbino's affair with Bárbara Lynch brings the reader to a sudden realization that the narrator of Love may not be entirely reliable and that we should be cautious about accepting anything we are told in the book of face value. (119)

For it is through the narrator, and his supporting voice on behalf of Florentino, that ideological statements of patriarchy are made in this novel. Don Juan's boastfulness is parallel to the narrator's description of Florentino in *El amor en los tiempos del cólera*. Though Florentino is the Don Juan character as such, the act of establishing an order through language⁴⁵ occurs through the narrator. This is a logical consequence of the shift from a play version to a narrative one. The artfulness of enhancing Florentino's masculinity and seduction skills, of his success in controlling women, is foregrounded by the Florentino-narrator alliance, where the narrator is in control of the discourse. This can be seen as an example of what Maeztu described as the successful seduction stories men collectively build.

It is hard to tell at first the narrator's role in the building up of Florentino's prestige, for the narrator appears as a witness. Nonetheless, he stands by Florentino's side as if his support were unconditional. He almost convinces the readers that women absolutely agree with Florentino, and that there is no artificial seduction strategy, nor a plan to make promises that soon will be forgotten. These women all accept his terms from the beginning. It seems as Florentino has no need to cheat. They are grateful for his being a lover to the point that they seemingly agree not to expect any commitment from him (Brooksbank Jones 133). Prudencia Pitre, for example, says she knew he would ask to be loved and not to give anything in return, as he never did to anyone. His idea of women's unavoidable maternal instincts is clear when

⁴⁵ Seduction, as Mandrell has pointed out in regard to Don Juan, see chapter one, is an act of imposing patriarchal ideology through language.

he demands attention or acceptance from them. Prudencia is persuaded by his need for love (A.T.C 391), and Fermina does not know whether she feels love or compassion for him and justifies her emptiness on his behalf (A.T.C 463). Despite América's being barely a child, Florentino sees her as a grown up mother who can care for him. He almost appeals to her for relief during his anxiety crisis for Fermina: "Tuvo que hacer un grande esfuerzo para no incurrir en la locura de abuelo de llevársela (América) a las dos de la madrugada, tibia de sueño entre sus pañales, y todavía olorosa a berrenchin de cuna" (A.T.C 389). Regardless of age and condition, motherhood is common to these women; it is perhaps an "innate" instinct that exists in all of them. How does this ideology of motherhood fix women's roles and confirm patriarchy?

The concept that motherhood is the type of love that gives everything and receives nothing in return, explains Florentino's approach to seduction. His somewhat deliberate image of weakness appeals to women's sense of caring. During his first encounter of the Widow Nazaret, Florentino sets out his seduction strategies or methods from the start. The following passage is pivotal in this regard:

Florentino Ariza desarrolló métodos que parecían inverosímiles en un hombre como él, taciturno y escuálido, y además vestido como un anciano de otro tiempo. Sin embargo, tenía dos ventajas a su favor. Una era un ojo certero para conocer de inmediato a la mujer que lo esperaba, así fuera en medio de una muchedumbre, y aun así la cortejaba con cautela, pues sentía que nada causaba más vergüenza ni era más humillante que una negativa. La otra ventaja era que ellas lo identificaban de inmediato como un solitario necesitado de amor, un menesteroso de la calle con una humildad de perro apaleado que las rendía sin condiciones, sin pedir nada, sin esperar nada de él, aparte de la tranquilidad de conciencia de haberle hecho el favor. (A.T.C 210)

The narrator describes Florentino's success as unbelievable, since it is difficult to believe his careless and old fashioned image could correspond to that of a seducer, and I am inclined to think the narrator is pulling the reader's leg. Thus, Florentino's humorous appeal comes from this image which contrasts with a conventional seducer like Don Juan. Yet, it is clear that this odd image is his most manipulative device: to look weak in order to appeal to women's pity. Also, he carefully chooses the women to be seduced since he would never take a chance of a humiliating denial from them. He prefers those who would fit not only the social class he belongs to, but also to his seduction strategies. The narrator does not describe the details of the kind of women Florentino is looking for, yet, we can infer that he appeals to those who are not under men's protection such as widows and, according to his patriarchal categorization, the "abandoned brides". Essentially, he appeals to those that are caring, searching for someone to love. He is more likely to demand the kind of love children would ideally receive from mothers. Curiously, he refers to Rosalba, the woman he guessed could have been his "rapist", the one who "assaulted" him, as someone who gave so much love to her child that he would need just a bit of it: "a cualquier hombre le hubiera bastado con sólo las migajas de la ternura que ella le prodigaba a su hijo" (A.T.C 199).

The fact that he sees himself as a child, perhaps explains why he sees America as someone who is prepared to mother him just as any other woman would be. He is incapable of seeing himself as a guardian and protector in his dealings with América. He is not likely to be a mentor, but rather a man who conveniently sees her as a fully grown woman. For instance, the narrator focuses on Florentino's aim to the extent he omits any considerations that could drive

the readers against Florentino. Once América has grown up, neither Florentino, nor the narrator, has any thoughts on the kind of behaviour he induced her into while he had to act as a guardian. He conveniently behaves as a father figure only when he decides to break off his sexual encounters with América in order to marry Fermina. The narrator's account of Florentino's sudden reflection on his relation to her as a child is not reliable. The narrator uses the image of her eating the ice cream to fully portray her age as a child, and nevertheless, this description occurs in the scene where Florentino tells her he will no longer be her lover since he is marrying someone else. The contrast between América's image as a child and the cruelty of Florentino's dismissal of her is narrated while América's feelings are hardly taken into account or even mentioned by the narrator. Florentino never loses command of the situation:

Florentino Ariza tomó un café negro, mirando a la niña sin hablar, mientras ella se comía el helado con una cuchara de mango muy largo para alcanzar el fondo de la copa. Sin dejar de mirarla, él le dijo de pronto:

-Me voy a casar. (A.T.C 394)

By understimating the child's response in this scene, the narrator succeeds in softening the situation for the reader. Florentino's absolute unkindness is evident in this following passage when he assumes paternal attitudes for his own convenience. There are no second thoughts as to why he suddenly decides to look at América as the child she is:

Esa tarde la dejó en el internado al punto del Ángelus, bajo un aguacero obstinado, después de haber visto juntos los títeres del parque...de comprar en los mercados toda clase de dulces para llevar al internado, y de haber repasado la ciudad varias veces en el automóvil descubierta para que ella se fuera acostumbrando a la idea de que él era su tutor, y ya no su amante. El domingo le mandó el automóvil por si

quería pasear con sus amigas, pero no la quiso ver, porque desde la semana anterior había tomado conciencia plena de la edad de ambos. (A.T.C 394-5)

The narrator supports Florentino's excuse of having "conciencia plena de la edad de ambos", since it goes unquestioned, and that is what makes critics think about this novel as being about all the possibilities of love. Nevertheless, is it believable that he reflects on what he has done, and that driving the child around would be enough of compensation? Here there is a clear distinction between words and actions.⁴⁶ On his views on sexual love, perhaps there is nothing to find fault with, but his commentary on fully acknowledging "la edad de ambos" may be interpreted as hypocritical, not to say cynical. I think that, as readers, we should suspect the narrator's softening here. Florentino does not behave like the guardian he is supposed to be, a father figure, and could perhaps not have any kind of adult thought towards those under his care. His difficulty in behaving like a father is related to Don Juan's link with adolescence. Adult Don Juans have not grown out of that stage and still keep the "indeterminación juvenil" (Marañón 68). Their behavior is linked to the adolescent man: "En la adolescencia y en la primera juventud, gran número de hombres poseen una típica atracción donjuanesca que se desvanece después" (68). Don Juan prefers to view himself as a teenager, a son, and this aspect explains Florentino's son-mother seduction strategies which are far from being that of a caring adult man.

Florentino's appeal to women's sense of motherhood could also partially explain his relationship to Leona Cassiani, who becomes a very competent worker in his uncle's company as a result of her eagerness to improve her economic situation and to obtain

⁴⁶ In an analogous manner, the difference between what the narrator says and what is shown has been analysed by Aronne-Amstroy. Her reading is based upon the difference between "la palabra (decir) y la acción (mostrar)" (55), and comments on the discrepancies between each in García Márquez's story *Blacamán el bueno vendedor de Milagros*.

Florentino's trust. Leona is entrusted with major responsibilities in the company by León, Florentino's uncle. She is astute enough to protect him from his opponents inside the company, thus enabling him to keep his power and increase it. Leona becomes a helpful worker who does so for the profit of the company as well as for Florentino's well-being.

Strangely enough, he states that Leona is the only woman he loved besides Fermina: “[Leona Cassiani] Fue la verdadera mujer de su vida, aunque ni él ni ella lo supieron nunca, ni nunca hicieron el amor” (*A.T.C* 250). But the passages about Leona are often contradictory. In one of their initial scenes, the narrator says it was clear for Florentino he did not want any relation with Leona: “‘Si subes a esta hora tendrás que quedarte para siempre’. Él no subió” (*A.T.C* 352). Yet, at the end of the novel, Florentino reveals he was always tempted to tell Leona about Fermina, thus, it is clear he is faithful to his romantic vows to Fermina and that the remark of Leona being the true woman of his life is a falsehood. Florentino's love for Leona can be explained by the type of enduring friendship and non-sexual love that resembled his relation to Fermina. He thought he found out it was possible to love without having sexual relations when enjoying his long term friendship with Leona (*A.T.C* 258). And also, he helped her with some donations towards the refurbishing of her house. Yet, by the time he finally decides to seduce her towards the end of the novel, she denies his offer by saying he was not the man she was looking for: the one who raped her while she was still a virgin (*A.T.C* 353). In regard to Leona's Cassiani's life long search for the man who raped her and left her “tirada sobre las piedras, ella [Leona] hubiera querido que ese hombre se quedara para siempre” (*A.T.C* 353). Brooksbank states García Márquez redeems women very little in feminist terms. The critic argues that despite the claim that García Márquez increased the female characters'

complexity in this novel, the cliché encounters between men and women raise doubts on that claim:

When García Márquez confronts erotic fantasy with ‘indignidad’ and ‘terror’, there is a brief, jarring recognition of this incoherence. It is smoothed over instantly, however, when one of the women explains that ‘estas cosas ... sólo pueden hacerse por amor’. (130)

The incoherence can be related to the narrator’s account of the Florentino-Leona relationship, since she ended up preferring the rapist, and thus what Brooksbank calls “indignidad”. It is possible that Leona’s taste for her violent experience with her rapist is more likely to derive from the narrator’s view of the situation. Whether Leona’s sexuality could be regarded as mad and pathological, it seems to favour the idea that women naturally act against themselves when seeking love. Once again, the narrator creates a convenient script that makes all women the same. The contradictions between Leona’s loving and dismissing Florentino make the narrator’s account partially unreliable, especially since it seems “fixed” on behalf of Florentino’s supposed care for his women. On the issue of unreliability, Booker recalls García Márquez’s words: “you have to be careful not to fall in my trap” (113) . I take the critic’s statement in a more general sense, that the author should be read with reasonable distrust (Williams 136). The case of Leona is an illustration of how we must be careful when following the narrator. Though Leona tells Florentino “Ay, Florentino Ariza – le dije -, llevo diez años sentada aquí esperando a que me lo preguntes” (*A.T.C* 257), as I commented earlier, it is unbelievable that she should unexpectedly change her mind and not have any serious desire for Florentino any longer, but that she rather shared a taste for non-conventional sexual relationships. Even though she seemed to be waiting for Florentino up to this point, the

narrator solves the matter with this belated version of Leona's long and previously unspoken love for her rapist:

[Leona] Si alguna vez sabes de un tipo grande y fuerte que violó a una pobre negra de la calle en la Escollera de los Ahogados, un quince de octubre como a las once y media de la noche, dile dónde puede encontrarme.(*A.T.C* 354)

Leona's words resemble a newspaper's classified ad, and García Márquez may achieve a humorous effect through this surprising taste of Leona for her rapist. Thus we perceive the whole matter as not dramatic nor very important. If this novel is indeed a treatise on love (Millán 483), then Leona likes rape as one of "love" variations. But what matters to Florentino's, as his comment reflects is that, once again, his conscience is "clear", and his happiness suggests he feels free since he is perhaps no longer indebted to Leona for her faithfulness and hard work at the company: "Y él sabía en efecto, que no era el hombre que ella esperaba, y se alegró de saberlo" (*A.T.C* 354). He is happy, for he is relieved of the moral commitment he has to Leona as his business colleague at the company. The narrator interprets Leona's words literally, and Florentino is released from his uncomfortable gratitude to Leona.

Leona's ideas of rape as one possibility of love express the idea there are different types of sexual love which depend on the person's interpretation. The ethical polemics raised by Greek philosophers on the nature of choice are disregarded here⁴⁷ once we know that Leona and America have accepted their "love" relationships even though they were forced or induced into them. The rules or morals of love relationships are more based on the grounds of *Crónica*

⁴⁷ In this regard see: (Foucault 38)

de una Muerte Anunciada where matters of love only concern lovers, and are far from the authorities' consideration (*Crónica* 49, 103). In this regard, it differs from Tirso's *Burlador de Sevilla*, where Don Juan's cheating is challenged by the authorities.

The characterization of Leona is consistent with the idea that Florentino's women are free from sexual restraints which leaves him released of any responsibility in regard to them. Even though Leona's link to Florentino is not sexual but rather one of friendship and gratitude, she rewards him with power and professional success. Nonetheless, it is also valid to say her long friendship and faithfulness are due to her hoping for his love and that her final denial "you are not the man" can be more logically understood as an ironic response to her disappointment for his long silence or lack of action for ten years in which she remained "sentada" (*A.T.C* 257). The author's final version of Leona's love for the rapist is not very convincing. However, the narrator does not show any discontent on Leona's part, thus leaving Florentino's "clearness of conscience" intact. His appeal to Leona's generosity is also present within his seduction strategies here, though his purposes are different from the sexual encounter. As in the case with the other women, whatever he reciprocates is also for his benefit.

The narrator shares Florentino's view of sexual heroism and women's complete surrender to sex, like Leona Casani's search for the rapist she longs to see again. Women are placed in a very uniform and convenient cliché which is likely to occur in the abuser's thoughts.

He believes women share the same taste for sex as he does. And indeed, it is interesting to see there have been later versions of Don Juan that speak of a shy womanizer whose seduction relies on appealing to women's sense of motherhood while making them chase him (Becerra 186). Florentino relates to this description, but there are other features that tell us how he has reinvented patriarchy.

2.3 Patriarchal ideology in Florentino as a development of Don Juan: Man's identity and seduction over women.

As I stated earlier, parody paves the way to the reality patriarchy believes in through the Don Juan story. For instance, Don Juan's view of love is that of an open sexuality he uses at will, one that brings him recognition of his masculine seducing skills over women. According to critics who see Tirso's tendency to defend women,⁴⁸ Tirso de Molina's 16th-century society responded from its Christian morality and values, and it sought to settle the disputes against Don Juan's cheating through matrimony. Though it could be argued that such justice occurred to women of the upper class in Tirso's play, Davies stresses that there was still a possibility of parity for women in early Don Juan versions (82).

Unlike the society of Tirso's *Burlador de Sevilla*, Florentino is more related to the patriarchal crisis of later plays. In *El Amor en los Tiempos del Cólera*, as in *Crónica de una muerte anunciada*, society does not take part in matters of love, and the lovers' actions are not

⁴⁸ See chapter one on Muñoz and Davies's statements on Tirso's Don Juan and its context.

affected by moral or legal considerations⁴⁹ (*Crónica* 49, 103). Love matters only concern lovers: “los que pudieron hacer algo para impedir el crimen y sin embargo no lo hicieron, se consolaron con el pretexto de que los asuntos de honor son estancos sagrados a los cuales sólo tienen acceso los dueños del drama” (*Crónica* 101). The murder is not challenged by the society, nor the ghosts and the demands of authorities, for it is a matter of honour according to the novel’s fictional world.

Florentino shares with Don Juan his appeal for sexual love and his disregard for more commitment and further intimacy with his lovers. Florentino too, needs to seduce women in order to confirm his masculine identity as well as his hegemony over them, and this need is closely related to his aim to overcome Fermina’s rejection of him. Thus, he recovers his masculinity by seducing women, not letting them “tener la última palabra”(A.T.C 276), and putting them in the script of patriarchal order, as the narrator does. García Márquez’s Florentino probably responds to the known criticism of Don Juan. For instance, Florentino’s masculinity and sexual appeal survive old age, and thus he eludes the comments on Don Juan’s psychosexual flaws.

García Márquez’s womanizing character is paradoxically a postcolonial parody of Don Juan as well as being a new masculine hero. As a *mestizo*, he might be the victim of racial and class values brought by the Spanish colonizers,⁵⁰ but he is at the same time an updated and reinvented sexual legend.

⁴⁹ Both the lawyer (*Crónica* 49) and the judge (*Crónica* 103) see the murder as a case of honor.

⁵⁰ On the mestizos as being disdained by colonizers and criollos see: (Arias 27, 29)

In my view, Florentino overcomes the critical responses to the Don Juan of earlier versions that stemmed from current theories on sexual behavior. Becerra interprets Pérez de Ayala's version (Becerra 176) as being influenced by Marañón's theories on Don Juan. The critic states that the latest versions of this character have gone through transformations which have weakened the sexual appeal it had for the public:

Será a partir de la primera centuria, en autores que presentan a un don Juan Viejo, donde hallaremos la crítica más dura, la venganza más violenta por medio de la transformación total del carácter físico y psíquico de don Juan. Así, por ejemplo en la obra de Gustav LeVavasseur, *Don Juán Barbón* (1948), drama en verso, un don Juan, ya viejo, es víctima de otro don Juan joven, en este caso de su criado don Sancho, quien seduce a su mujer y a su hija y le mata en un duelo. (Becerra 165)

Though sexual activity could not have been represented in the theatre of the 17th century, there have been readings that point to doubts about Don Juan's ability to get satisfaction. His continuous search for several women has been taken as a need for the mother (Mandrell 235) or either a lack of self will (Cascardi 158) (Rougémont *The Myths* 103), or a lack of identity that is drawn from his encounter with women in times of crisis of masculinity: "It is not just that a sense of male sexuality is being undermined, but that this undermining gives rise to hostility and rage" (Davies 11). I shall discuss later how García Márquez avoids some of this psychoanalytical criticism on Florentino by showing us, for instance, that Florentino is able to manage longer term relationships. Though criticism of Don Juan's sexual performance should consider the limitations of the 17th-century stage, García Márquez could not have portrayed a convincing seducer unless he considered those current psychoanalytical theories. Thus, García

Márquez's character has a shielding device: after many years, his lovers still do not want ever to leave him. His skilfulness passes the test of time.

Yet, as it was commented in the first chapter, regardless of the psychological reading that underlies Don Juan, his transgressions are supported by the establishment. His freedom and openness rely on the power bestowed on men in a patriarchal society. The narrator lays out the patriarchal script of the novel. He is understanding and explains Florentino's activities and makes comments as if both were pals who share similar views as men. Besides the narrator's sympathy for him, there is nobody to confront Florentino's activities except for the narrator's commentaries on how people perceived him as promiscuous.

Unlike Florentino, the Don Juan of the classical versions was meant for theatre performance and therefore characters spoke for themselves. In Zorrilla's *Don Juan Tenorio*, Don Juan might be supported by other men of his kind who celebrate tricking women as a success. Yet, he is confronted either by the men who are likewise mocked by him, by the ghost stone, or by a second voice of consciousness as in Tirso's *El burlador de Sevilla*. This is an important difference between García Márquez' seducer story compared to the classical authors'.

The issue of rules is pivotal for understanding Don Juan's seduction as heroic. Rules of complex societies are violated by Don Juan's analogous cleverness with words: "Don Juan presupposes a society encumbered with exact rules which it prefers to infringe rather than throw off"(Rougemont *The Myths* 101). Don Juan has the kind of intelligence "that knows its

frontiers” (Camus 67). Whereas Don Juan uses words to challenge an order, Florentino does so through the narrator. His anarchy is only a private matter that does not relate to any wider moral or legal authority. Hence, he never responds to any ethical demands upon his actions. Unlawfulness is necessary in Don Juan in order to create order. According to Mandrell, Don Juan’s unlawfulness⁵¹ (59-60) is the energy that creates anarchy, and is one of his defining features.

Don Juan is restrained by the King of Spain, by the statue, by communal rules. But Florentino is not restrained by Christian beliefs, nor by the Church, which is only seen as a tool for the bourgeois order. The nuns helped Lorenzo Daza bring Fermina to a “good marriage” and though Fermina despises the Church on that account she consistently confirmed her decision throughout her life. Morally speaking, the Church is irrelevant and so are the authorities. Ethical values are left to lovers’ consideration, and it appears as if Florentino’s anarchy could only be restrained by himself. In any case, lack of ethical rules affects women’s possibilities to negotiate their well-being and aims.

Some critics suggest that women are treated reasonably well in this novel, since the author has given them possibility of openness in sexual matters and women characters are seen as

⁵¹ “Seduction, despite its primary importance in the action of the play, is therefore only a secondary aspect of the drama in toto, part and parcel of a general chaos stemming from one individual’s desires and actions. Indeed, the problem in the *Burlador de Sevilla* is the social containment of Don Juan’s anarchy, so much so that it is to this problem that Don Juan’s uncle, Don Pedro Tenorio, his father, Don Diego Tenorio, and even the King of Spain all devote their considerable energies.” (59-60)

equally free to choose their lovers (Bell-Villada 43).⁵² The same claim could also be made for Don Juan, as I explained earlier, since he too is eager to free women from sexual restraints, and it could plausibly be said that his women had some pre-marital sexual experience thanks to him. Don Juan sees himself saving women by bringing them pleasure, and so does Florentino who sees himself as freeing the widow of Nazareth from her former marriage. But similarly to Don Juan, Florentino's masculine hegemony gives us a suspicious illusion of equality with his lovers. He succeeds in imposing his will upon women. He gains identity by treating them as an undifferentiated mass, and the stereotypes "prove" to be effective in controlling them. For instance, he assumes they only need his sexual love and that, in return, their love is unconditional. In the Latin American context, reliance on stereotypes is "the source of the macho's self-assurance and control, sexual and psychological, and the envy of the Hispanic woman" (Stavans 230). This social matter relates to machismo as a patriarchal script on gender. Therefore, Davies's views that images of submissive women in Don Juan are not necessarily linked to reality, but to patriarchal order (Davies 39) can be paralleled to the narrator-Florentino's aim of fixing a masculine "superiority".

Florentino succeeds in exercising his will over women in the story, since they unmistakably surrender to his seductive arts and skilfulness as a lover. His ability presupposes an important knowledge of women's desires and behavior, which are stereotyped. Hence, it can be said that Florentino's success depends on the understanding women are willing to give up any higher expectation they might have of him, for they are persuaded by his weakness and marginal appearance, in exchange for his great ability to make them happy in bed. Again, virility comes as the main center of the Don Juan character's success (Davies 133).

⁵² A similar view can be seen in: (Minta 126-43)

We know of Florentino's sexual success through the narrator's voice. As we said before, Florentino is a more perfected version of the boastful Don Juan character. But how is this skilfulness narrated to the reader?

Up until this point, I have argued that Florentino resembles Don Juan's notion of love. Florentino too has a view of himself and his lovers that seek to confirm his masculinity by fixing women's sexual role and thus achieving power over them. This reaffirmation can be also interpreted as an attempt to restore that which is considered a threatened masculine hegemony in times of patriarchal crisis.

In *The Metamorphoses of Don Juan's women*, Davies argues that women characters of late Don Juan versions had lost their capability to negotiate, to adjust and obtain a fair play from patriarchal laws. Even though women have gained political, social and economic rights in recent historical times, the crisis of patriarchy has made Don Juan to become an opponent of women, while patriarchy is less likely to guarantee moral compensation for women victims: "An increasingly negative portrayal of women in literature seems to go against the developments that have occurred to improve women's lot in life" (Davies 13).

Florentino manages to maintain patriarchal attitudes even in times when women are supposedly equal to men, by stressing that it is he, and not his women, who has the authority to choose and control any situation in love relationships. In short, he turns equality to his

advantage. Needless to say, the novel is under-pinned by the narrator's support of Florentino's masculine leadership.

It seems to be in Florentino's favour in that he does not resemble Don Juan, since he does not deceive most women and therefore treats them as if they were equals. It is enough for him to choose those who are as eager as he is for sexual love. In this sense, critics have argued, García Márquez's character suggests that women as well as men can have their share in the search for sexual satisfaction and emancipation (Fiddian 20), and that such freedom brings them to the level of men. But, does this freedom work in the same way for Florentino as well as for the women with whom he has sexual encounters?

There are several aspects to Florentino's egalitarianism: the main one, which he shares with Don Juan, is that he is opening up a space for unrestrained sexuality. The other one is associated with the marginal conditions that he as an individual shares with his women. Most of them are either widows or abandoned brides, adulterous women or mentally ill. They are "losers", so to speak, when compared to a prominent man like Dr. Juvenal Urbino, and his wife Fermina (*A.T.C* 281). For instance, this lower profile, so to speak, is one of the aspects Florentino shares with Sara Noriega, but there is a difference, Sara has no hope, and she is described as someone who was "used", which appeals to the material connotation of the word:

[Sara] Había tenido varios amantes de ocasión, pero ninguno con ilusiones matrimoniales, porque era difícil que un hombre de su medio y de su tiempo desposara a una mujer con quien se hubiera acostado. Tampoco ella volvió a

alimentar esa ilusión después que su primer novio formal, al que amó con la pasión casi demente de que era capaz a los dieciocho años, escapó a su compromiso una semana antes de la fecha prevista para la boda, y la dejó perdida en un limbo de novia burlada. O de soltera usada como se decía entonces. (A.T.C 270)

Florentino shares this marginal condition that enables his lovers to live a “free” sexual life and renounce any expectations. He and Sara were both abandoned by their beloved. His resemblance to her could explain Florentino’s love scene with Sara as being one of the most sensual and delicate in the novel, but nevertheless he always fosters doubts about her being a free woman. The following passage is pivotal in showing how deeply Florentino’s refusal to accept her equality of freedom runs:

Ariza no entendía cómo una soltera sin pasado podía ser tan sabia en asuntos de hombres, ni cómo podía manejar su dulce cuerpo de marsopa con tanta ligereza y tanta ternura como si se moviera por debajo del agua. Ella se defendía diciendo que el amor, antes que nada, era un talento natural: “O se nace sabiendo o no se sabe nunca”. Florentino Ariza se retorció de celos regresivos pensando que tal vez ella fuera más paseada de lo que fingía, pero tenía que tragárselos enteros, porque también él le decía, como le decía a todas, que ella había sido su única amante. (A.T.C 272)

The passage tells us they are hiding their past. The narrator says Florentino was suspicious of her skilfulness in bed, and could not take her answer that it all came naturally to her. On the contrary, such skill is not questioned by the narrator on Florentino’s first encounters with the widow. It is clear, for Florentino, skill is allowed for him, but would be suspicious or immoral

in the case of Sara. For instance, the narrator says “ella se defendía” when responding to an accusation on how she was skilful in the erotic art: “Ariza no entendía cómo una soltera sin pasado podía ser tan sabia en asuntos de hombres”. This contrasts with the notion of friendship among lovers that can be seen in Mutis’s novella. While Mutis has the view that a man can understand that a woman has had a sexual life, and thus, the woman feels free to be sincere with him, here we see Sara not admitting her past out of fear of her lover’s prejudices. Hence, Florentino, despite his seeming sense of equality, acts out of machismo and thus makes the comment “tal vez ella fuera más paseada de lo que fingía”. The word “paseada” in this case has a negative connotation of being promiscuous, and thus it is logical Sara chooses to lie, not to be sincere with him. Hence, while Mutis’s character understands his masculinity as one that fosters friendship and honesty with his lovers on the assumption of equality, Florentino’s case is different. Florentino’s sense of masculinity is more concerned with men’s hegemony and thus, could hardly encourage a sincere relationship with his lovers.

The classification of Sara as an abandoned bride is followed by a more general statement on women some pages afterwards. The following passage can be taken as one of the implicit rules of this “classification” of women:

Para las mujeres sólo había dos edades: la edad de casarse, que no iba más allá de los veintidós años, y la edad de ser solteras eternas: las quedadas. Las otras, las casadas, las madres, las viudas, las abuelas, eran una especie distinta que no llevaba la cuenta de su edad en relación con los años vividos, sino en relación con el tiempo que les faltaba para morir.(A.T.C 356)

The reaffirmation of men's power over women in this novel leaves little space for negotiation. The novel sets out the idea that its characters, especially women, have the possibility of freedom and choice. However, the seeming sexual freedom is only acknowledged for widows and single women who are not under men's "protection", it is a confirmation of prejudice and values. Such freedom does not mean they have a real possibility of choice, since the system fixes rules and roles that are difficult for women to overcome as love is conceived and represented in this novel. For instance, widows are seen by the narrator as those who are faithful to their "body" since they can choose their loving: "En el ocio reparador de la soledad, en cambio, las viudas descubrían que la forma honrada de vivir era a merced del cuerpo, comiendo solo por hambre, amando sin mentir" (A.T.C 278). Freedom to love may be the widows' only consolation once they may have nothing to lose. Mario Arango speaks of widows in García Márquez's novels as inscribed within the medievalist motifs inherited from the colonial times. According to the critic's reading of García Márquez's *La viuda de Montiel*, the model of women in the novel: "nos revela esa otra cara de la mujer en su consideración siempre pueril e indefensa, incapaz de valerse por sí misma o administrar su vida" (Arango 10). Despite sexual freedom, widows are weak "comiendo solo por hambre", since they are marginalised and not truly able to manage their lives.

The patriarchal categorization of women and its links to its colonial origins does not relate to the parity that was at least pursued in times of the early Don Juan plays (Davies 55). On the contrary, in terms of rules and compensations for the weak, the society of *El amor en los tiempos del cólera* falls into patriarchal crisis of late Don Juan versions which is not focused

on “protecting” women as much as keeping men’s control over them. According to Connell, “Hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women” (R. Connell 77). While women gain more economic and political rights that could enable them to work their equality within sexual negotiations, decay in the former essential aspects of patriarchy such as fatherhood and the obedience to laws militate against these obtained privileges.

However, there is an aspect that does bring Florentino level with his women: he is the product of an upbringing by a single mother, and that makes him share some of that marginal space. The patriarchal classification also affects him:

[La partida de bautismo] sólo decía que era un hijo natural de otra hija natural soltera que se llamaba Tránsito Ariza. No aparecía en ella el nombre del padre, que sin embargo atendió en secreto a las necesidades del hijo hasta el último día. Esta condición social le cerró a Florentino Ariza las puertas del seminario, pero también escapó al servicio militar. (*A.T.C* 234)

Florentino’s situation prevents him from being accepted in the seminary and the “Social club”; he is also skinny “escuálido” and dresses in an old fashioned way, and even Fermina says he is like nothing: “Es como si no fuera una persona sino una sombra” (*A.T.C* 280). We do not know if this non-identity has the meaning of being socially meaningless or whether she refers to the lack of identity as a person, which also makes Don Juan an outcast.

Yet, this equal sexual freedom casts Florentino as the “giver” and women “the receivers” who in turn have to be grateful to him. For instance, this equality relieves him of any responsibility: “Sin esperar nada de él, aparte de la tranquilidad de conciencia de haberles hecho el favor” (*A.T.C* 210).

Florentino’s peace of mind that he is “doing a favour” to the widow Nazaret, reaffirms the low value he gives her. As in the case of Sara and the widow, his other lovers are also victims of prejudice. Those who have failed to keep themselves in marriage and thus not under a man’s protection are far from being considered chaste and perhaps not worth marrying again. They share the lack of name and meaninglessness as he does, and thus he socially identifies with them. Florentino not only does not question this view of women, he also uses his place and privileges in a system that leaves sexual leadership to men. He “does the favour” to the outcast, he can spend several years (30 years with Prudencia Pitre) while taking very little responsibility if any towards the women with whom he is involved.

According to the narrator, and his account of the character’s thoughts, Florentino’s relationship with them is harmonious; therefore, it could not be taken as a transgression: the widow of Nazaret agrees not to demand anything from him: “ella [viuda de Nazareth] no pretendía casarse con él, pero se sentía ligada a su vida por la gratitud inmensa de que la hubiera pervertido” (*A.T.C* 209); Prudencia Pitre desired to marry him, but she is understanding enough not to demand it from him: “ella le habría vendido el alma al Diablo por casarse con él” (*A.T.C* 391), but then she respects the boundaries “de modo que el amor

no pasó de donde siempre llegaba con él: hasta donde no interfiriera su determinación de conservarse libre para Fermina Daza” (*A.T.C* 391). Nevertheless, Prudencia maintains a relationship with him as old good friends drinking Port wine and eating bread loaves (*A.T.C* 391). Leona and America both take care of him during his illness, in times when they already knew he did not love them (*A.T.C* 430). With regard to the widow Nazaret, and others, the narrator says these women could not expect anything from him, but his “clear conscience” (*A.T.C* 210). Like the women characters in *Don Juan*, Florentino’s lovers can be described within a very broad and uniform category, except for America Vicuña who is a child and ends up committing suicide. Yet, America’s death occurs and nothing happens. Like in the case of Olimpia Zuleta’s death, Florentino is only concerned with Fermina “pero no le temía tanto al navajazo en el cuello, ni al escándalo público, como a la mala suerte de que Fermina se enterara de su deslealtad” (*A.T.C* 297). Florentino’s thoughts after he acknowledges America’s suicide concern the possibility that she could have made their affair known through a suicide letter (*A.T.C* 457). What is important at this point is the fact that Florentino’s thoughts are solely directed only towards himself and his long desire to stay with Fermina. América ends up being one of so many, her death does not have any real meaning for Florentino, and the narrator does not show the slightest consideration for her age and vulnerability. Like Olimpia and many others, América does not exist for him as a person when she was alive, so her death makes little difference. Hence, Florentino’s trip with Fermina remains almost untouched for the sake of romantic love. An ending that is also one that could not seriously be taken as happy and real, and that shows the ending is ironic:

Readers who read with suspicion may suspect that the novel’s conclusion excoriates narcissist, immature and self-indulgent, near sighted happiness. The

lovers float safe and free under the duplicitous yellow flag of cholera they are flying as they ply a river with banks depleted of animal and forest life. (Columbus 96-7)

The unreality of the love story is consistent, in my view, with an overall effort to make women “fit” into categories. There is a tension between discourse and reality. Brooksbank discusses the role of stereotypes of women in *El Amor en los tiempos del cólera* (127, 39), and points out how most of his other women accept Florentino’s terms (132, 36). They all, according to the narrator, would do anything to make him happy or even marry him. This is the most recurrent stereotype of women in this novel of an unconditional generosity. According to the critic, women constructing their image after selfless service “is less objectionable, particularly when it is linked with a principal character who depends explicitly on women for his own sense of self” (134). However, she also recalls an exception when saying Ausencia Santander is arguably “the text’s only example of a self-seeking woman, and its only suggestion that there is ‘algo’, an ‘absoluta oscuridad’, in certain women at least, that is inaccessible to Florentino (137). As I said earlier, regardless of his supposed egalitarian trend between Florentino and his lovers, Florentino hardly overcomes prejudice about the role of women. None of his women, least of all América Vicuña, can demand any compensation in the so called love relationships.

The narrator presupposes that women agree with not expecting anything from Florentino, but at the same time, there are passages where they say they would have done anything to have married him. Their place in the social scheme makes them vulnerable and less able to obtain a

“good” marriage, thus, they renounce any expectations. And Florentino, as I shall later analyse when studying his seduction strategies, chooses women who would fit his purposes.

Now that I have explained the contradictions of the seemingly egalitarian aspect of these relationships, I will subsequently consider the role of women characters and their share of benefits in this novel. I have argued that although women seem to have as much sexual freedom as Florentino, they have to be cautious because of patriarchal prejudice against women, and are not free to choose as they would wish.

Unlike the parity of the earlier Don Juan versions, Davies states women of later plays fall into a pathological relationship with men (78), and argues that there is a more “hostile” depiction of women (76). Parallel to that opposition, she states that the female characters adapt to the present era in a way she finds positive:

By positive treatment, I have in mind the ability of female characters to act and think for themselves, to subvert and survive a patriarchy that seeks to control them, to retain their own identities despite the efforts of a male individual to deprive them of these, and eventually, either to achieve the object of their ambitions (usually marriage to the men they love) or a freedom beyond male control. (77)

Don Juan builds his identity and spiritual salvation or success on his lovers’ shoulders. If Don Juan builds his identity by creating a convenient categorization of women, can the relationship between Florentino and his women be interpreted as pathological? Does this adaptation contribute to this idea?

As readers we have a first obstacle: Florentino and the narrator's view of women, as I have pointed out, is not reliable. Leona may be more sarcastic in regard to her long wait for Florentino, and this can be also supported by what Columbus calls the "satirical doubleness" in the text (92). Yet, boastfulness is necessary to establish the ideology of men's hegemony and the narrator does this on behalf of Florentino. As readers we might think we are being teased about Leona, but the story is centered on Florentino and his eagerness to recover his masculine confidence through bedding many women.

García Márquez had to build the womanizer's prestige despite the current notions that psychoanalysis has shed on sexual behavior. Some nostalgia can be linked to what some critics see as Don Juan's diminishing charm, for he is now "un don Juan ínfimo, disminuido" (Andreu 390). Another critic, Carlos Feal concludes that there is a nostalgia for Don Juan in Pérez de Ayala's version "Herminia echa de menos el donjuanismo en Tigre Juan" (Feal 104). Becerra explains how Marañón's theories have influenced Pérez Ayala's version of Don Juan:

La conversación entre Tigre Juan y su sobrino, Colás, sobre la causa que origina el comportamiento donjuanesco, podría revelar la posición que tiene el narrador respecto a este tema. En el diálogo ambos personajes exponen diversos aspectos del carácter de Don Juan: "[Tigre Juan] No es que Don Juan se cansa en cinco minutos de cada mujer y al punto la abandone. Sale escapado, eso sí, por dos razones [...] que ha fracasado en no pocos casos y antes de que se le descubra se larga primero. (Becerra 176)

Becerra thinks this version's aim is to discredit Don Juan: "Evidentemente, del diálogo anterior se desprende que, aunque cada personaje abogue por una causa diferente para justificar el donjuanismo, ambas explicaciones son igualmente desvalorizadoras y degradantes" (176). The critic states there is a critical tendency to lower Don Juan's prestige: "Despojados de toda trascendencia, no sólo se les relega, en muchas ocasiones, a un papel secundario en la ficción literaria a la que pertenecen, sino que incluso nominalmente han perdido su conexión con el mito" (174).

Critics view Don Juan as someone who is overwhelmed by fear and the obsession with the mother. It has also been said that he can never be satisfied since he does not know himself: "he suffers from a secret anxiety bordering on impotence" (Rougemont *The Myths* 102). This suggests that he is a tormented man whose fear does not allow him to share with women and fulfill his love making, as it is also suggested by the Pérez Ayala version Becerra mentioned above. In this sense, his boastfulness and cheating is nothing but a sad disguise for his weaknesses. Thus, his former and original prestige as a seducer of several women is overshadowed by the view he might be hiding a psycho-sexual flaw or condition (Wright 56-7, 75).⁵³

Florentino's game has another accent or style, for these women accept the fact that these long relationships are solely limited to the sexual encounters and offer no further commitments or considerations of any kind. According to Brooksbank Jones, women agree due to a dubious arrangement based on his seeming absence of qualities: "At first glance this arrangement

⁵³ The critic explores the psychological studies on Don Juan as a case of male hysteria (56); on the social aspects pointed by Marañón (57) ; including suspicion on the character's homosexuality (75) .

looks satisfactory for all concerned: a certain absence of qualities means that Florentino has nothing women can demand of him” (133). Yet, I will try to show, that the possibility of his having these long relationships is also based on his power to manipulate women and deceive them.

Earlier I stated that Gabriel García Márquez seems to have improved the Don Juan character in Florentino by overcoming all the former psychoanalytic approaches that questioned his so called sexual success. Nonetheless, it could be argued that García Márquez did not necessarily mean to make Florentino a Don Juan, or to have deliberately improved this mythic character. However, it is clear that he endeavored to shape Florentino’s sexual prestige. Florentino is not only a “hunter” or seducer; he also controls women and stays out of trouble. The theme of the man who is a sexual hero, a seducer and deceiver is necessarily linked to Don Juan in regard to certain attitudes towards love and women (Becerra 46). Yet, it is my opinion that the author’s concept of Florentino’s sexual heroism, and his conservative views in regard to women’s place in society coincide with many aspects of the story in the versions of Tirso and Zorrilla. García Márquez’s innovations deal more with his more direct portrayal of the sexual encounters, and his concept of sexual success that were not even possible during the Romantic times. What is it about? What is its purpose?

At this point I will analyse Florentino’s very rapid sexual learning which I mentioned earlier, in order to look at the matter of identity and desired sexual superiority. This is linked to the idea that Florentino is desperate to confirm his masculinity after having been rejected by

Fermina.⁵⁴ We know as readers that the Nazaret widow is sexually clumsy, and that he taught her all the sexual positions he knew. He considers himself as better than her in sexual matters:

[Florentino] Se acordó de la viuda de Nazaret [...] A ella le consagró más comprensión que a otra ninguna, por ser la única que irradiaba ternura de sobra como para sustituir a Fermina Daza, aun siendo tan lerda en la cama. Pero su condición de gata errante, más indómita que la misma fuerza de su ternura, los mantuvo a ambos condenados a la infidelidad (A.T.C 369).

Since he had not had any previous experience in the matters of carnal love, the author is possibly telling us his skilfulness is innate and outstanding. His previous voyeuristic experience enabled him to be a good lover from his days of initiation with the widow. In that sense, the narrator creates an apology for Florentino, and supports his masculinity in the way men support each other. It can be compared to the joint boastfulness that occurs when Ciutti and Buttarelli admire and speak of Don Juan's success in the first act of the play *Don Juan Tenorio*(I, i). Thus, this is one of the aspects that points to the narrator as the one who shapes his story to Florentino's benefit. Yet, Florentino's excess of confidence and the oddness of his image points to a humorous Don Juan, and also to an unreliable narrator. The narrator seems to be a very "innocent" liar.

⁵⁴ Fermina's choice to marry Juvenal is not so much depicted as a love matter, but within the social and economic connotations that make him feel poor and ugly. "Sin embargo, lo que más le impresionó fue que ella y su marido [Fermina y Juvenal] formaban una pareja admirable, y ambos manejaban el mundo con tanta fluidez que parecían flotar por encima de los escollos de la realidad. Florentino Ariza no sintió celos ni rabia, sino un gran desprecio de sí mismo. Se sintió pobre, feo, inferior, y no sólo indigno de ella sino de cualquier otra mujer sobre la tierra" (A.T.C 211).

From these first passages with the widow we can see the identifying features of his relationships with women. He reaffirms his condition as a man. There are neither stains nor shadows for Florentino's virility, not even from the start. Florentino also sees himself as a savior, a man who came to liberate the widow from the prison of marriage she had been in: "Florentino Ariza la había despojado de la virginidad de un matrimonio convencional" (A.T.C 209). And while he curiously feels a non-carnal love for Fermina, he makes the widow of Nazaret a "puta", and she thanks him for having perverted her, "Te adoro porque me hiciste puta" (A.T.C 209). This contradiction between his understanding of "amor de la cama" and his love for Fermina somewhat follows the pattern of men recognized by Sor Juana Inés de La Cruz three hundred years earlier. In *Redondilla III*, the poet speaks of men's contradiction between the "ideal woman" they search for, compared with the woman they actually "train" or shape. He makes the widow perverted, but that is not the kind of woman he is waiting - or looking - for. "Queredlas cual las hacéis / o hacedlas cual las buscáis" (Redondilla III 55-56). Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz questioned matters in regard to masculinity which relate to Florentino, as I will analyse at the end of this chapter.

This image of a sexual liberator is also present in Don Juan's kidnapping of Doña Inés from the convent. By the same token, Florentino also "saves" Fermina after setting her free from her "condena sacramental" (A.T.C 210). His last encounter with his long beloved woman leaves his virility and physical beauty almost untouched while the depiction of Fermina's is of an aging nakedness: "Entonces él la miró, y la vio desnuda hasta la cintura, tal como la había imaginado. Tenía los hombros arrugados, los senos caídos y el costillar forrado de un pellejo pálido y frío como el de una rana"(A.T.C 461). But it is Fermina's depiction of Florentino that favours him even more; she refers to him in terms of youth rather than age: "Ella extendió

la mano en la oscuridad, le acarició el vientre, los flancos, el pubis casi lampiño. Dijo ‘Tienes una piel de nene’” (A.T.C 462). In regard to gender differences, this discourse follows patriarchal “party lines”. While Don Juan had been defeated by age in late versions, García Márquez’s version of Don Juan vindicates the character by making him conquer the decay of aging.

Booker discusses that the last scene where Fermina and Florentino’s apotheosis of romance occurs which could hardly be taken as a celebration of septuagenarian sexuality:

When Ariza finally does make love to Fermina, he does it so hastily and clumsily, completely without romance or regard for her feelings. She doesn’t even have time to undress as he practically assaults her in a scene in which his penis is significantly described as a “weapon” being displayed as a “war trophy”. Afterwards, we are told, Fermina “felt empty”. (124)

In regard to this citation, it is important to note that Fermina accepts this situation since she feels compassion for him, as she also felt in a previous encounter with him: “Sin saberlo, estaba amenazada por la misma trampa de compasión que había perdido a tantas víctimas desprevenidas de Florentino Ariza” (A.T.C 307).

With the exception of Ausencia, Florentino usually takes the lead upon sexual matters. There are very few descriptions of the ways in which he could admire his lovers’ abilities, and the skilfulness the narrator describes are more related to the very rapid undressing: “[La viuda de Nazareth] Por último se quitó los calzones de encaje, haciéndolos resbalar por las piernas con

un movimiento rápido de nadadora, y se quedó en carne viva” (A.T.C 206). Ausencia also is very eager to appear naked to him from the start. “[Ausencia] Le abría la puerta como su madre la crió hasta los siete años: desnuda por completo, pero con un lazo de organza en la cabeza. No lo dejaba dar un paso más antes de quitarle la ropa, porque siempre pensó que era de mala suerte tener un hombre vestido dentro de la casa” (A.T.C 243). On the contrary, women express their admiration for him as if enchanted. Sara Noriega, for instance, is willing to make him happy at any moment; she loves to be at his service. Despite the fact she was single and available for marriage, she nevertheless accepted to hold their relationship away from the public eye.

Sara has more in common with Florentino than any of the other women characters: she is a poet, an abandoned bride who has also had several lovers, and yet, she is cautious not to let Florentino know her secret life: she knows chastity is a sign of women’s value. She knows the known prejudice in Latin America that “sexual enjoyment is the preserve of men” (Craske 202-3). The taboo comes from that expected innocence in women, that draws the matter back to how revered virginity was in the Spain of the Counter Reformation (T. Mitchell 131), and how it was transported through the process of colonization. Under those circumstances, Sara does not have the power to negotiate, and like the other of Florentino’s women, she can demand little from him. The question which arises is, while these women agree to renounce any expectation from him, how do they build up his identity and success?

Brooksbank Jones states of Florentino’s lovers that “they give Florentino the self-confidence to aspire to her; they keep him fit and sexually active for her [Fermina]” (133), but there is

even more to that. They are his servants, who are ready to take care of him despite the fact he has never given anything to anyone:

[El narrador comenta sobre Prudencia Pitre] Florentino Ariza la encontró en una época en que habría recibido a cualquier hombre que quisiera acompañarla, aunque fuera alquilado por horas, y lograron establecer una relación más seria y prolongada de lo que sería posible.

Aunque nunca lo insinuó siquiera, ella le habría vendido el alma al Diablo por casarse con él en segundas nupcias. Sabía que no era fácil someterse a su mezquindad, a sus necedades de Viejo prematuro, a su orden maniático, a su ansiedad de pedirlo todo sin dar nada de nada, pero a cambio de eso no había un hombre que se dejara acompañar mejor que él, porque no podía haber otro en el mundo tan necesitado de amor (*A.T.C* 391).

This passage reveals something that could be applied to the rest of the women: they all capitulate. Their superlative descriptions of Florentino as being the best “Mejor” “No podía haber otro en el mundo tan necesitado de amor” gives a hint his lovers are entirely committed to serving him since he needs it all.

Though Florentino has no need to give a promise of marriage in order to seduce women as Don Juan does, his deception is of another kind: he persuades women not to demand any negotiation from him, and they accept the fact he has a “mania” and his selfishness is taken as helpless behavior, by a stereotyped motherly attitude as can be seen in Prudencia Pitre’s case.

Maeztu, who seems to be sympathetic with Don Juan states that his success occurs because "En batallas del amor el que más pierde es el que más pone, don Juan no pone nada" (Maeztu and Marrero 593). This aspect of Don Juan's giving nothing and receiving it all is pivotal for understanding his cheating and for measuring his power over women. Hence, the giving and counter giving variable enables us to approach Florentino's overall seduction strategies: his mask, and the dubious exchange that finally all turn in his favour.

The concept of love and sexuality suggested by Garcia Marquez through this novel leaves little doubt that women are not equal to men, and that love matters are understood through a patriarchal sense of reality. Hence, it is power, and not love, what shapes Don Juan's relationships with women. Florentino's most outstanding feature as a Don Juan version relies on his need to control women: "Lo había soportado todo por esa convicción, había pasado por encima de todo aun en los negocios más sucios del amor, con tal de no concederle a ninguna mujer nacida de mujer la oportunidad de tomar la decisión final" (*A.T.C* 276). Florentino's anxiety reflects how patriarchy relies on the seducer to reaffirm men's sexual leadership: "El Burlador gives us an initial concept of Don Juan who derives his essential nature from his relationship with women: in this case he uses them to gain notoriety as a seducer and trickster" (Davies 44).

Florentino's anxiety, as well as his women's, is a sign of how crucial the private sphere is to its other side of the coin, the public one. Sexuality and its negotiations become one of the key aspects of love for society. Octavio Paz uses a metaphor for the two dimensions, "La plaza y

la alcoba” (*La Llama* 152), and discusses how for several social and political orders in history there is a corresponding notion of human love. In a similar vein Jeffrey Weeks explains:

Sexuality is a fertile source of moral panic, arousing intimate questions about personal identity, and touching on crucial social boundaries. The erotic acts as a crossover point for a number of tensions whose origins are elsewhere: of class, gender, and racial location, of intergenerational conflict, moral acceptability and medical definition. This is what makes sex a particular site of ethical and political concern - and of fear and loathing. (Weeks 44)

The matter of the “crucial social boundaries” that are implied in sexual relationships are considered by Florentino on the basis of, for instance, women’s success or failure to attain man’s protection. The narrator’s categorization sets out women’s roles, and hence, confirms the patriarchal script. The tensions of the erotic act recalled by Weeks have a correspondence with those outside the boundaries of the bedchambers. Whether patriarchal (Don Juan) or critical of patriarchy (Tristan), the bedchamber could be considered, according to this view, a negotiation table.

Marriage: Patriarchal ideology and the bourgeois model of the good wife.

El Amor en los tiempos del cólera supports and confirms the patriarchal ideology that believe marriage essential to its ideology of love. In this regard, Florentino shares pivotal features with Don Juan. Some critics have agreed that even though Don Juan subverts order, the play

shows how the character's anarchy is surpassed by matrimony as an aim of the system: "Only at the end of the anarchical path stretching from Italy to Spain is matrimony resurrected as the symbol of social harmony" (Mandrell 81). Don Juan's opposition to rules, nevertheless, is interpreted by this critic in what he calls a double function: "First, he unifies society against him and assumes a collective burden of guilt. Second, he engenders the conditions by which desire is directed toward matrimony in socially productive ways"(82).

Cascardi explains that Tirso's modern tone in *El burlador de Sevilla* is conveyed through this acceptance of practical reality: "In Tirso's play, however, this reversal of history in turn permits the romantic-comic closure and the re-founding of society in the institution of marriage" (Cascardi 156). Again, Don Juan is interpreted as embracing patriarchal ideals that make marriage a respectable institution that is meant to organize the family and its economic basis. On the other hand, a Spanish author like Maeztu recalls Don Juan's disbelief of love since his drama consists in his disbelief for ideals (Maeztu and Marrero 592). Love is perhaps an unrealistic ideal that might not be taken seriously. Marriage is, however, another matter.

Neither Florentino nor Fermina can overcome the social obstacles before them: while Fermina's father intends her to marry a good catch⁵⁵ by paving the way for Urbino's courtship of Fermina, Florentino is rejected since he is not a suitable husband for her. He belongs to a lower social class, and shares some of the features of the marginalized. Thus, unlike youngsters like Romeo and Juliet, Florentino and Fermina are rapidly defeated by the establishment which is embodied by her father's commercial endeavors, and by the

⁵⁵ "Urbino había sido el soltero más apetecido a los veintiocho años" (A.T.C 147)

complicity of the nuns of her Catholic school. Fermina accepts her destiny, prefers to enjoy shopping and, curiously enough, she states after her return from the “Forgetting trip” she was no longer in love with Florentino. This cannot be seen as Platonism since it was not love to begin with. Despite her critical view of her married life, she dedicates herself to being a good wife to Juvenal. Her decision reflects some views on García Márquez’s women characters as being highly conservative (Winsboro 155) and the patriarchal model linked to the author’s female heroines (Deveny and Marcos 41).

In *El amor en los tiempos del cólera*, Fermina fulfills the role of the good wife according to the patriarchal system from classic times. On this concept de Beauvoir says: “[in ancient Greece] in general the wife was required to be a watchful mistress of the house, prudent, economical, industrious as a bee, a model stewardess. In spite of this modest status of woman, the Greeks were profoundly misogynous” (Beauvoir 122). Fermina stoically accepts marriage as it is, and this is one feature Fermina shares with the other women in García Márquez’s novels: they are confined to domesticity while they attain household powers (Vargas Llosa xxxvii).⁵⁶ As I suggested in the previous chapter, García Márquez’s heroines are akin to the model of woman in Counter Reformation times who has household powers and responsibilities. The author says in an interview:

⁵⁶ I think Vargas Llosa agrees more with Winsboro, and Deveny and Marcos, on the fact women have an inferior rank in García Márquez’s novels. However, he acknowledges women’s leadership only in household matters, but not to the extent of considering it a vindication of women, at least in *Cien años de Soledad*: “Como la sociedad ficticia, la familia está concebida a imagen y semejanza de una institución familiar primitiva y subdesarrollada; también en ellas identificamos ciertas características de un mundo preindustrial. El rasgo familiar dominante es la inferioridad de la mujer...la función de las mujeres es permanecer en el hogar y ocuparse de las tareas domésticas...El hombre es amo y señor del mundo, la mujer ama y señora del hogar en esta familia de corte feudal...Estas matronas sometidas a maridos y padres están investidas, sin embargo, de una autoridad ilimitada sobre los hijos” (xxxvii).

Es la idea que tengo de las mujeres, en verdad. Son ellas las guardianas que se encargan del orden, en cambio los hombres recorren el mundo tras sus locuras infinitas que, tal vez, hacen avanzar la historia, pero ¡si ellos se comportan así, es porque están seguros de encontrar a las mujeres cuando regresan a la casa! (García Márquez and Richard 37)

As it would be expected from this idea of women, Fermina also belongs to the home. She is faithful to her husband, takes care of him and prudently observes the appropriate mourning period before joining Florentino in love and marriage. Marriage is taken as a threat to love throughout the novel, like the widow of Nazaret's freedom to love (206) and Urbino and Daza's marriage as stability, not happiness (409).⁵⁷ In my view, this can be explained by Penuel's concept of defamiliarization in García Márquez (Penuel 108, 10).⁵⁸

Fermina is a soldier of the establishment; she bows to the expectations of good marriage for she is utterly concerned with public shame: "Estaba segura de que su honra andaba de boca en boca" (*A.T.C* 343). However, her most embarrassing concern has potent postcolonial implications. For instance, Fermina's degrading comments against Barbara Lynch is that she felt humiliated by the fact Juvenal preferred "una negra" instead of her: "Y el sentimiento de humillación que eso le causaba era mucho menos soportable que la vergüenza y la rabia y la injusticia de la infidelidad. Y lo peor de todo, carajo: con una negra!" (*A.T.C* 343). Humiliation comes from setting up a black woman as an equal to her. Fermina stresses her

⁵⁷ Justification of marriage as stability is pathetic in Fermina's acceptance of Urbino's words " 'Recuerda siempre que lo más importante de un buen matrimonio no es la felicidad sino la estabilidad' Desde sus primeras soledades de viuda ella entendió que aquella frase no escondía la amenaza mezquina que le había atribuido en su tiempo, sino la piedra lunar que les había proporcionado a ambos tantas horas felices" (*A.T.C* 403).

⁵⁸ Penuel shows García Márquez's skill to demythologize through the "correlative conjunction" (108) that occurs in his fiction. For instance, Fermina accepts stability as a form of happiness. This relates to what Penuel considers the author's "defamiliarization" which is "against stereotypical perceptions and ideas", and brings "freshness in perspective"(110).

superiority according to the postcolonial scheme of values. In regard to the city, the narrator says: “una ciudad que todavía seguía soñando con el regreso de los virreyes” (A.T.C 287). Racial references in García Márquez, show that racial beliefs keep the city’s former establishment within the novel:

En otros momentos de la obra de García Márquez se apunta este referente [El elemento étnico, la procedencia de sangre esclava] como uno de los elementos que tienen conexiones de tipo social. No se trata únicamente de ser negro o no, se trata, en realidad, de proceder del mundo de los esclavos traídos por los españoles o no. En definitiva, en una sociedad que todavía hoy añora la pureza de sangre y tiene como orgullo a los antecesores conquistadores suele ser común que la pertenencia a otras etnias que conforman la realidad colombiana se pueda plantear bajo una serie de prejuicios. (Paz Goldberg 278)

Like Úrsula Iguarán, Fermina is not only highly prejudiced and conservative. She can also be paralleled to Úrsula after what Deveny states as: “The problem is not that Ursula’s behaviour is worthy of repudiation...but rather that the narrator presents her as a pillar of virtue” (Deveny and Marcos 39). Unlike other heroines of romance, Fermina could hardly be admired under those premises. It seems some feverish urge to defy an abusive order and fight injustice is necessary to elicit sympathy and be an attractive “beloved”. However, that is not the case of Fermina. Her conservative image resembles more the patriarchal model of women embodied in Ursula Iguarán, which is described by Deveny and Marcos, as those defenders of the establishment, deeply rooted in their reality and with no aims of social change (41). According to Mario Alonso Arango, women in García Márquez’s works lie behind modern standards, for their image obeys the idea of the “Reina del hogar” which is a category inherited from the conquerors. The critic states that patriarchy was imposed from colonial

times “con aquella ambigüedad misógina respecto a la mujer (Eva y María) que tenía como herencia el colonizador” (Arango 2-3). If we judge García Márquez’s view of women by Fermina’s characterization, there is a clear parallelism to colonial standards for women.

Unlike Fermina and her devoted faithfulness, unfaithful women are portrayed in a different language. In the case of Olimpia Zuleta, infidelity is depicted in humorous and grotesque images which would present to Olimpia as a bad woman, someone who breaks order and suffers the consequences. Florentino paves the way for her death by writing over her genitals as if a sign of his property:

Florentino Ariza destapó un tarro de pintura roja que estaba al alcance de la litera, se mojó el índice, y pintó en el pubis de la bella palomera una flecha de sangre dirigida hacia el sur, y le escribió un letrero en el vientre: ‘*Esta cuca es mía*’.
(A.T.C 297)

Florentino deliberately provokes the husband’s jealousy and thus precipitates the act of murder. In the end, the event is somewhat “normalized”. It is taken as a humorous matter pertaining to men, as it can be inferred after Florentino seeing Olimpia’s husband’s fingerprints on her tomb: “pensó horrorizado que era una burla sangrienta de su esposo” (A.T.C 298).

Don Juan’s power to express his sexuality is questioned when marriage appears as a stronger institution, one that is stronger than his rebelling force. Don Juan deceives women, contests

other men's virility and transgresses some principles of marriage, but he is challenged by authority figures that keep marriage as a promise of social order. In *El Amor en los Tiempos del Cólera*, Fermina plays the role of the good wife that was highly regarded both in feudal society and in reformation times. She is the good wife who confirms the values of the patriarchal system that swings between the feudal society and the preindustrial one in García Márquez's fiction (Vargas Llosa xli). Fermina embodies the importance of the good wife for the family and the proprietorial properties of bourgeois society. In a corresponding way, Florentino takes into account her role and her sacramental vows when planning to possess her sometime in the future. For him, marriage is the promise he desires for Fermina and himself: He decided to search for a treasure under the sea, forces himself to work in the ship company, and build a house for Fermina and himself. The house is a recurrent image in Florentino's thoughts on his future with Fermina. It is also a symbol of status, the material form of love, and in that way embraces the discourse of the establishment, the inherited values within this postcolonial context. He is very conscious of the need to build the space for both of them; a different one from the one Fermina would inherit from her husband. There is no doubt that his intentions are to produce, to be generous with his beloved, to obtain the funds for their future marriage. Indeed he has the good intentions that would be appreciated by the establishment and the bourgeois ideals of romantic love, for he inscribes himself within the values inherited from the colonial past. But, as I commented earlier, Florentino's ideals of love with Fermina were somewhat platonic, the carnal love or *human love* was an issue he pursued with other women.

El Amor en los tiempos del cólera contains several passages where marriage is demonstrated as not suitable for love. This is especially the case when the narrator judges and describes

Fermina and Juvenal's marriage, or reveals Juvenal Urbino's thoughts on marriage as "una invención absurda" (A.T.C 286). Nevertheless, the character's decisions are underlined by an obedient attitude towards marriage. There is an accepted statement that love and marriage are different, and yet, it is at the same time the most valuable proof of love. Though Penuel states that García Márquez seeks to demythologize love in marriage, at the same time the author upholds stability as pivotal to happiness. Marriage is highly regarded, and despite the fact it may not shelter love, Florentino considers the rules when planning his final meeting with Fermina: it could only happen after Juvenal's death, and also after Fermina's mourning of her husband. On the other hand, Fermina does not dare think about or love Florentino, she behaves as is expected of the good wife. For instance, once she discovers her husband's infidelity, she discretely leaves her house and never thinks of letting anyone know about their separation. It could be argued that Fermina is not concerned with scandal in the soap scene: "No era una bravata: quería irse de veras, sin importarle el escándalo social" (A.T.C 45). But the childish and humoristic tone of this scene pales when compared to her issue with Urbino's infidelity. Contrary to the soap scene, she prudently leaves Urbino, keeps herself away from the public eye and avoids scandal. Fermina fully follows the rules, her two years of separation from Juvenal Urbino are carefully hidden, and she harbours no plans to encounter Florentino because she follows the dictates of marriage from the start. In a scene where she remembers speaking with a confessor, she could not even tolerate any thought of infidelity on her part: "En una época en que sus relaciones con la Iglesia estaban ya bastante lastimadas, el confesor le preguntó sin que viniera a cuento si alguna vez le había sido infiel a su esposo, y ella se levantó sin responder, sin terminar, sin despedirse, y nunca más volvió a confesarse con ese confesor ni con ningún otro" (A.T.C 462). She is the heroine of this story, unlike the adulteress Olimpia Zuleta who is killed by her husband. Fermina's ambivalence in regard to

her mask and actions (as well as Florentino's and Juvenal's), can be linked to García Aguilar's views of *El amor en los tiempos del cólera*, in that it “desnuda todas las trampas de la estructura anacrónica del país, deja al descubierto todo el andamiaje de su horror y la variedad de sus máscaras” (249), and to my arguments on the characters' inauthenticity in this novel.

On the other hand, we know of Florentino's love for Fermina not just by his firm determination to wait for her, but also because he works to obtain the necessary resources to make that marriage possible in the future, hence, he follows the economic grounds that support marriage according to the bourgeois standards. He foresees the house he would build for himself and Fermina, and while at a young age he wanted to fight for Fermina's love, he tried to obtain the treasure underneath the sea when attempting to raise the Spanish galleon (A.T.C 131). Nevertheless, he fails to do so, and soon he becomes aware that only through work can he get the money he needs to be worth being her husband, and thus he makes his way up in his uncle's company. According to the economics of desire, it is important to see that Florentino is a man who worked his entire life in order to obtain the resources to compete for Fermina: “[Florentino] tomó la determinación de ganar nombre y fortuna para merecerla” (A.T.C 227).

This situation is completely different from his seduction skills with the rest of the women. On the contrary, the fact his women consider Florentino is himself the prize they agree to have points to what is the centrality of the phallus in the Latin American culture (Stavans 230). However, it is important to keep in mind that this phallogocentric scheme is supported by a

“machista” discourse that is represented by the narrator in *El amor en los tiempos del cólera*. Thus, women are categorized between the marriageable and the others according to visions of the mother and the sexual woman in Latin America: “Men’s relationships with women are complicated, with the polar extremes of the veneration of the mother and the undervaluing of other women, especially casual partners” (Craske 208). This aspect also explains that the major differences between Fermina and the other Florentino’s women are set up by a very conservative patriarchal order. In my view, Florentino and the narrator resemble Don Juan in his establishing of a “machista” gender order and discourse that is historically related to the Spanish conquest (Stavans 229).

The narrator might not be trusted on his account on Florentino’s charm and women’s acceptance of Florentino’s terms, but we might, as readers, consider some prejudices behind this generalization. For most women he encounters are widows, and according to patriarchal standards, their price is lower since their sexual needs are not properly negotiated⁵⁹ (Blau 82). However, though Florentino thinks of himself as doing a favour, exchange or “favours” are reciprocal. According to Brooksbank, his women keep him sexually active: “[Florentino’s bed mates] keep him fit and sexually active for her; they help him accept the aging process...they bring him a certain status and wealth to pass on to her [Fermina] when the moment of union comes” (A.T.C 133).

⁵⁹ Blau’s work explains how the value of people rises or lowers depending on how they negotiate attraction (76-87), and concludes: “Social approval and personal attraction are basic sources of support for an individual’s opinions and judgments, for his values and self-conception” (85). I find Blau’s explanations of courtship as a market place negotiation where the demand-supply law underlies choice in social exchange. Blau’s choosing of words as I understand it, is partial and devoid of other aspects taken into account in my discussion on the love tradition. Nonetheless, García Márquez’s novel has many hints that point towards this economical view, and the fact it does, tells me his concept of reality in this novel has a very similar background, to the “patriarchal view of this type of exchange” referred by Mandrell in his study on Don Juan. (255)

But above all, the bourgeois script underscores marriage negotiations. While Florentino builds the necessary wealth for his future with Fermina, his women do not demand any kind of commitment from him. It is the price they pay for a very convenient *Don Juan* who offers a service to them. The patriarchal script works in this novel to reaffirm the duality of the Don Juan story. While there is a contesting sexual energy displayed by Florentino, he remarkably supports the conservative aims of class and the overall establishment: “tenía que ser una ilusión desatinada, capaz de darle el coraje que haría falta para tirar a la basura los prejuicios de una clase que no había sido la suya original, pero que había terminado por serlo más que de otra cualquiera” (A.T.C 400). The novelist gives a hint that Florentino and Fermina were more concerned with their status than with love:

Realmente a él [a Florentino] no le tengo afecto porque creo que es muy egoísta, como lo son todos los hombres. Y en cuanto a Fermina, creo que se volvió más burguesa de lo que ella misma pensaba. (García Márquez and Simons 52)

Marriage and its meaning in social negotiations in this novel, is above other considerations on love as a spiritual quest. For instance, Florentino represents a marginal individual, someone with Indian-like hair (Brooksbank Jones 131), and who is perceived by Fermina as having no name, as lacking identity. This “being nobody” is one of Don Juan’s pivotal features, but in Florentino’s case it has more connotations of a social order. Besides, Florentino’s ethnic “low value” according to the postcolonial discourse, the importance of “fitting” includes the so called “racial superiority” of the colonial fathers. This aspect, of course, plays against Florentino’s value in social negotiations. His bastard origins make him unworthy of a lady like Fermina whose father intends her for a good marriage so as to raise her social standing:

[Lorenzo Daza] liquidó tierra y animales, y se trasladó con ímpetus nuevos y setenta mil pesos en oro a esta ciudad en ruinas y con sus glorias apolilladas, pero donde una mujer bella y educada a la Antigua tenía aún la posibilidad de volver a nacer con un matrimonio de fortuna. (*A.T.C* 115)

The narrator lets us know Lorenzo's effort to obtain a good marriage for his daughter is consistent with his interest in Juvenal Urbino: "el factor principal contra el doctor Juvenal Urbino era su parecido más que sospechoso con el hombre ideal que Lorenzo Daza había deseado con tanta ansiedad para su hija" (*A.T.C* 281). In short, Florentino is powerless to tackle the competitive system embodied by a very conservative bourgeoisie. Yet, he seems to be compliant with that same patriarchal and capitalistic system that socially excludes him. Florentino's attitude can be explained through what Posada Carbo calls the "false images" of the Colombian society and what García Márquez sees as Colombians' "arrasadora determinación de ascenso personal" (Posada Carbó 86-7). Curiously enough, he ends up embracing the same values the Don Juan stories defend, such as marriage under those precepts. Once again, characters stay faithful to their mask, to that which they pretend to be. As a result of this, they fall into contradictions with themselves, and parody uncovers the characters' frivolous attachment to masks that cover nothing but a poor sense of otherness and reality.

Florentino as a libertine:

The narrator seems to introduce the concept of rape and pedophilia as somehow acceptable through his account of Leona Cassiani's rape and Florentino's own seduction of the child América Vicuña. The novel seems to put women at the same level in regard to sexual freedom. According to the narrator, América is very happy to be seduced by the skilful Florentino. His unlawfulness is comparable to Don Juan's seduction of a nun during the 19th - century in Zorrilla's version and to Nobokov's Lolita:

Ariza's relationship with this girl is not that unusual in the fictional world of García Márquez, as the autumnal patriarch's fascination with young school girls amply illustrates. But Ariza's *bovarysme* invites comparison with literary models, and this particular autumn-spring relationship inevitably recalls that between Nobokov's Humbert Humbert and Lolita. (Booker 121)

Florentino's sexual freedom is supported by the narrator's account of his relations with women and the tone that underlies the issue of sexuality throughout the novel: the idea that sexual ethics rely on people's own interpretation. Thus, Leona Cassiani's love for her rapist and América Vicuña's love for Florentino are judged on the grounds of the women's desires within a broad span of sexual behavior, rather than on the basis of sexual attachment as a result of abusive inducement. According to Thougout's view of unconditional love, the narrator sees each case as being love.

On seeing rape as another love possibility, Rubén Pelayo suggests that García Márquez "subverts the traditional way of looking at rape" (160). One could be tempted to read Pelayo's statement as a postmodernist feature like "anything goes" and interpret the word "traditional"

in terms of the feminist criticism he is discussing at that point. For as far as context is concerned, I believe the narrator's humorous approach to rape curiously resembles the sexism displayed within the context of the language of the media, for instance, in Colombia (Calvo Ocampo). García Márquez's approach to pedophilia and rape in the novel, this idea that there is no breaking of rules in sexual matters, does not correspond to any *avant garde* literary view. The narrator's treatment of both Leona and Florentino's taste for rape seems is more akin to the misogynist prejudices which are commonplace within a machista view of reality.⁶⁰

For instance, Pelayo does not give any textual reference on his opinion about García Márquez' angle on rape. Yet, it is worth comparing the two descriptions of Florentino's "asalto" and Leona's rape. In my opinion, the main difference relies on the way it is narrated. Whereas Leona is left alone "sobre las piedras" and having cuts all over her body, Florentino was "assaulted" in the midst of darkness, humidity and warmth: "Apenas si alcanzó a sentir el cuerpo sin edad de una mujer desnuda en las tinieblas, empapada en un sudor caliente y con la respiración desaforada" (A.T.C 197), and this "panther woman" is described as a "violadora maestra en cuyo instinto de pantera encontraría quizás el remedio para su desventura" (A.T.C 197). Once again, the narrator's words seem to be contradicted by the nature and meaning of the scenes.

This account of the unlawfulness of sexual behavior is pivotal in connecting Florentino and the narrator's point of view with the libertine features of the Don Juan theme. While Don Juan expresses his sexual energy fully thanks to the power men can hold in a patriarchal system, he

⁶⁰ Stories of women who like to be raped, and men who fantasize about a "panther woman", in my view, is part of some *machista* commonplaces.

nonetheless overrides rules to the extent of defying the codes of honor and the institution of marriage. Yet, in the first versions his rebelliousness is punished for the sake of order.

Order in *El Amor en los tiempos del cólera* relies on the narrator's set of values and his accounts of institutions like the Church and the media. In regard to the ethical consequences of actions, Florentino is shown to us as someone who does not consider legal or ethical issues concerning him and his women but only his own personal interests. I have argued that such schemes of values are analogous to the one in *Crónica*, where matters of love are not subject to outside intervention.

But beyond his concern for keeping his love discourse, however gullible and non-authentic, he displays another side, that of the libertine who is as naturally unscrupulous as the narrator. For characters like Don Juan and Florentino, though in different cultural and chronological settings, there are no limitations to sexual desire. Therefore, female characters are described by the narrator as if they completely agree with Florentino's demands on them, similar to Lotario Thaugaut's control over his women.

Nevertheless, Pelayo disregards violence against women in the novel, and suggests that there is a complexity which also allows for women's freedom:

Love in the times of cholera fares well under a feminist reading because it vindicates the possibilities of women triumphing over the prejudices of age, race,

and social class. There are instances of violence against women and women who are voiceless and weak, common traits of patriarchal writing, but those instances are not the focus of the novel; they are peripheral. (161)

He sees matters of violence and voiceless women as “common traits of patriarchal writing” which are “peripheral” in this novel. Yet, there is a weakness in this statement, since death is unmistakably one of the reference points that could allow us to see inside Florentino Ariza or any other character. His response to death and the set of values he displays about his own transgressions are pivotal aspects brought up by the Don Juan theme, and hence, it is necessary to explore it in this thesis.

With regard to his seduction of America Vicuña, the narrator tells us that Florentino was only worried about the possibility América could have left a suicide letter, and once he knew she had left none and that circumstances were unknown he felt “relief”. Hence, he not only gets away without any sort of punishment, his conscience also remains untouched. Unlike in the case of Olimpia, he could have faced charges or consequences for this death, but nevertheless, he is “fortunate” enough since América remains voiceless after her death. Thus, the end of his love story with Fermina fits in his romantic purposes against all odds, while reality is clearly another one. His love discourse masks an inverse practice. His self-made image of the faithful lover follows cultural conventions that are highly regarded by the postcolonial society. These fictional events occur within a Caribbean nation like Colombia, and both impositions of rules that are not enforced suggesting one of the signs of patriarchal crisis. But above all, Florentino’s anarchy is accepted within the convention that sexual freedom only pertains to lovers.

There are no opponents to this fictional order within the novel. Lotario Thoughtout speaks of love in a dubious situation that degrades women, and Florentino approves of this insight later on. Florentino and Leona Cassiani's acceptance of rape in their own separate experiences are described as natural. Olimpia Zuleta's murder ends up being a "humorous" scene on the note left written on her belly with the arrow heading her pubis; a note that could have threatened Florentino's invented platonic story. Humour is reasonable when it is meant against the strong, while the other way around is considered mockery. Florentino's only concern for the husband's revenge seems to acknowledge punishment for adulteresses: while Olimpia dies, Florentino never faces any real threat to his safety. Finally, Florentino's seemingly good will when seducing América Vicuña as a child has no witnesses to either disagree with or counterbalance the narrator, and her suicide goes unquestioned. Hence, the absence of rules; of a revealing suicide letter and the lack of voices to speak on her behalf, leave us with the narrator's set of values. The novel's fictional rules place women within the framework of patriarchal ideology as an undifferentiated mass whose purpose is to act as men's tools. Yet, since this order in the Don Juan theme punishes anarchy as a denial of its codes and institutions, where does *El Amor en los tiempos del cólera* stand on that?

Mark Millington recognizes there is a convenient confusion in regard to América, which points to the seduction alliance between Florentino and the narrator I discussed earlier. The "deft phrases and witty invention" the critic comments on are the signs of the narrator's softening of Florentino's unlawful actions.

The novel simply bypasses the full import of what is at stake here and aims to cover over the moral (even criminal) quagmire with deft phrases and witty invention.

This relation lasts for two years, and the narrator stresses the equality of their desires and enthusiasms. The logic seems to be that ‘shared emotions’ mean that America is not exploited. But the moral distortion of naturalizing their relationship is re-emphasized when Fermina is widowed and Florentino decides to focus on winning her for himself. ("The Novels of Love" 120)

The critic emphasizes the “naturalization” of the relationship. The normalization which he mentions here can be interpreted, I believe, in the way language is used as an ideological tool for patriarchal purposes in this case. Furthermore, the critic later points to Florentino’s solution to the problem as that stemming from “moral cowardice and manipulation of memory” (“The Novels of Love” 121), and a self-centeredness that “enables his survival and also, by implication, the possibility of enjoying the burgeoning relationship with Fermina” (“The Novels of Love” 121). In other words, he will achieve his aims regardless of others.

Florentino is not punished perhaps because he has not broken any rules according to the ethical values displayed within the novel. This aspect draws us back to *Crónica de la muerte anunciada* where people do not dare intervene in love crimes and, unlike *Amor en los Tiempos del Cólera*, communal rules are tested by characters who feel powerless before rules they do not agree with⁶¹ (*Crónica* 59). Mark Millington states that despite this novel not constituting “a fully-fledged feminist counterblast against the narrative of patriarchy, it does succeed in liberating from the margins of phallogocentric discourse the wholly positive energies of honesty, independence and female desire” (“The Unsung Heroine..” 161). Nonetheless,

⁶¹ “[Clotilde Armenta] Tenía la certidumbre de que los hermanos Vicario no estaban tan ansiosos por cumplir la sentencia como por encontrar a alguien que les hiciera el favor de impedirselo” (*Crónica* 59).

there is an ideology on male female relations and on love that is not contested in *Amor en los tiempos del cólera*, for the novel falls into the absurdity that comes as a result of the characters' inauthenticity. Inauthenticity is the price that must be paid for blindly following the dictates of ideology.

I should also discuss the seeming indifference to the theme on Florentino's seduction of characters like Olimpia Zuleta and the child América Vicuña by critics who support the view that García Márquez redeems women in this novel. Their explanations give hints as to how far the patriarchal normality (that which justifies the unlawful as a license to masculinity) can reach. Millán supports some views that this novel, like *Crónica*, is not feminist but that is "una celebración de la mujer sin abatir al hombre" (Bautista 242; cited by Millán 498), and that his "Tratado de amor" suggests some ethical stands related to Levina's "Resistencia sin Resistencia" (Millán 506). As I said, there is hardly any direct reference to the scenes, but rather some overall statements that can be linked to them: "El tratado enseña que el amor puede vivirse en la infancia, en la juventud, en la madurez, y aún en la eternidad" (507). In regard to the love that "puede vivirse en la infancia" there is no further commentary or explanation on Levina's Resistance that might help understand her point.

The name of América has been interpreted as a metaphor of colonization: "America Vicuña, carries much of the burden of the novel's reflections on America. She is an allegorical figure" (Fiddian 20). This view would fit some theories on neo baroque and indigenous resistance,

but the hypothesis is weak, since it disregards America's similarities with other of Florentino's women and the main focus of the novel.

Ruben Pelayo goes a little further and speaks of those cases as "peripheral" to the story. The critic tries to resolve the matter of América's suicide in few lines by comparing it to Saint Amour's, and by stating that: "their deaths seem to reaffirm the thirst for love of Fermina and Florentino" (161). On the grounds of Florentino and Fermina's love, the critic's equation seeks to diminish the personality and particularities of the former characters on behalf of the love script of the novel. It is important, I believe, to appeal to the satirical dimension of the story. Jeremiah is perhaps forcing his lie through, but América should not be seen as an artifice, but as the shadow of Florentino's honeymoon in the ship "Nueva Fidelidad" (*A.T.C* 458). For Pelayo, her death is perhaps a narrative artifice, and the moral issue is thus disregarded.

Thus, it seems that this issue of Florentino's unlawfulness and transgression as being "nice" and "natural" has been difficult for critics to develop without falling into contradiction. However, once we see Don Juan's seductive game in Florentino, and understand his unrestrained sexuality, the importance of libertinage in this novel becomes clear. Another explanation could be that a libertine challenges moral principles and that his triumph should be taken as an irony (Paz Sade 39-40), but the narrative tone of the novel is not of a philosophical exploration. As Lourdes Ortiz points out, Sade's aim is pleasure and a rational game while Don Juan's is seduction (31). All the goodness and "saving spirit" of Florentino's, his by passing of ethical issues is due to the narrator's seductive power. This power of writing has similarly been pointed out by Paz Goldberg in her analysis of *Memoria de las putas*

tristes. She states that García Márquez's writing in this novel "implica las lacras del discurso pederasta" (324) and that the language of sexual scenes is not vulgar. Mainly, she concludes that the narrator succeeds in hypnotizing the reader,⁶² "Ese es el 'poder de la palabra' escrita que el autor domina y logra con elocuente destreza" (324). As I have pointed out earlier, seduction is supported by the Florentino-narrator double act. The novel tries to persuade its reading to see its hero's behavior as acceptable and natural. Unlike the social counterpart in the Don Juan plays, or like in *Crónica*, there is nothing to judge in this fictional world.

The narrator, nevertheless, is not beyond being judgmental. For instance, he tells us that Florentino and his mother are victims of class differences and prejudices. They are hard workers and yet, they cannot enter the "Club Social". The fact that members of this club are exposed to scandal by the media is one of the ways in which he takes revenge in the story. There is concern for social and class differences which the narrator does not consider ethical issues in regard to love relationships. The issues of love, as it occurs in *Crónica*, are controlled by a helpless machismo that is deeply rooted in the Latin American culture (Lemaître 236).⁶³

El Amor en los tiempos del cólera is a novel that shows its own patriarchal contradictions. While Don Juan's jeopardizing the rules of honor ends in his punishment, Florentino escapes unscathed, for the novel handles these matters in a different fashion.

⁶² On the psychological basis of the narrator's seduction of the reader see: (Brooks)

⁶³ "El machismo nos es presentado como un eslabón más de la cadena de mitología popular que encadena al pueblo. Los personajes directamente afectados por la 'desgracia' de 'la prima boba' saben lo que la costumbre dicta que se haga en tales circunstancias y eventualmente lo hacen, pero en contra de sus más profundos instintos, casi por inercia" (Lemaître 236).

Conclusion: The failure of loving as lack of authenticity.

However, Florentino's case is different; he falls into the trap of his prejudices and his inconsistent ideas about love and of himself. Despite his seeming advantages, he is playing against himself until the end of the novel. Like the Don Juan of Tirso and Zorrilla, he plays to seduce women to place his sexual leadership over them and yet, his need for women's love ends in emptiness and frustration. He is the victim of his own game; but his inconsistency in regard to love is more than just cheating.

Elaine Baruch argues that feminist critics might be over-emphasizing men's power in their analysis and appeals to a psychoanalytical view of men's failure to successfully and coherently relate to women. She curiously redeems Freud as one of the latest romantics and brings up his views on men in that respect:

Freud is particularly illuminating on Romantic love, because he was himself among the last of the late romantics. Despite his using the male as the sexual model, Freud was quick to point out male fragility with regard to love, a corrective that is needed since some radical feminists act as if men are giant, godlike creatures, never subject to a moment's doubt when it comes to love. Rousseau is another figure in the long line of seeming misogynists who sees the great power that women exert because of men's need for love. (Baruch 19)

Florentino's idea of love shifts between the sexual freedom he displays with his several women, and making the most of his life while he has it: "venimos con los polvos contados" ,

and ultimately denies the idea of love after death held by the courtly love tradition. Convenient as the idea of seizing the day might be, his race against time is measured by the number of lovers he gathers. His game turns him into frivolousness and lack of authenticity in regard to his own choices.

For instance, one of his lovers, Sara Noriega, tells him that “todo lo que hicieran desnudos era amor” (*A.T.C* 272). The phrase can be read in terms of de Beauvoir’s understanding of love: “Love at a distance, however, is only a fantasy, not a real experience. The desire for love becomes a passionate love only when it is carnally realized. Inversely, love can arise as a result of physical intercourse” (654). Millán’s concept of the novel as a Treatise on Love is consistent with Florentino’s final decision to write more realistically on love from the standpoint of his overwhelming experience (*A.T.C* 355). Yet, this idea is denied when he says to Fermina: “me he conservado virgen para ti” (*A.T.C* 461). Though critics consider this a plain mockery as part of the double game, this denial may be true. The two sides of mask and truth come together: his so called late wisdom in love could be hardly convincing when he utterly denies the women that built his experience.

These two sides were depicted by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz when discussing issues of manhood in her verses. She could see that men find it extremely difficult to keep the power they are expected to have over women in order to keep not just their “honour”, but the political demands of a system that favours them.⁶⁴ As Baruch points out, Freud acknowledged

⁶⁴ Sor Juana asks about men’s contradiction that shifts between the establishment and their wishes. The issue of “Queredlas cual las hacéis/ o hacedlas cual las buscáis” (*Redondilla* III 59-60). Points to men’s desire to honour the scripts and demands society poses upon them while trying to attain their desire at the same time. The verses

men's difficulty with loving. Besides Connell,⁶⁵ Gilligan's statements on women's perspective as necessary in man's life cycle (Gilligan 21-3), point to such difficulties as being the price men pay within the established ideas of love and women. Men do not solve their need for love, for the fulfillment they seek can hardly be found within the patterns of patriarchal "love" they so jealously guard. Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz was clever enough to write this simple contradiction to show us one of men's dramatic flaws, their struggle between mask and inner self, being guardians of the prejudices they need to uphold. Juvenal Urbino acknowledges male beliefs of these prejudices:

Los hombres somos unos pobres siervos de los prejuicios--le había dicho él una vez [a Fermina]. En cambio, cuando una mujer decide acostarse con un hombre, no hay talanquera que no salte, ni fortaleza que no derribe, ni consideración moral alguna que no esté dispuesta a pasarse por el fundamento: no hay Dios que valga. (A.T.C 448)

Men's commitment to prejudices comes with a shallowness they must conceal in order to block reality. In a similar manner, Sor Juana Inés understood men were finally being victims of their own established games and asked questions that revealed their lack of authenticity. After all, men are as much followers or subjects of the patriarchal system as women are, and they either might or might not be conscious of it. In this regard, Don Juan, Florentino, or any similar characters are symbolic reminders of the power-love struggle that drives men into solitude, one that also affects women.

"Queréis con presunción necia/hallar a la que buscáis,/ para pretendida, Tais/ y en la posesión, Lucrecia." (Redondilla III 17-20) poses the good wife's prestige as different from the woman who is free to love and desire.

⁶⁵ Connell compared the different perspectives in both Abelard and Héloïse in their letters. The critic points to Abelard's greater motivation "with divine grace and justice rather than personal interaction" (25, 29) compared to Héloïse's intimate and more subversive tone (27), and he concurs with Gilligan's "failure of connection". (32)

Florentino's invented story of his eternal and faithful love for Fermina is an effort to fit into an inherited discourse. For instance, if we seriously and literally read Florentino's experience with several women other than Fermina, he expresses his feelings as "love" whatever it might mean to him. He spent his time "loving" them and "pleasing" them in a way they were delighted and ready to stay or marry him. Despite his discomfort with the Nazaret Widow, he learned to "love" her because of her tenderness; he loved Ángeles Alfaro with whom he shared nights looking at the moon (*A.T.C* 369) and the narrator tells us an on Florentino's long relationship with Sara Noriega with whom he identified himself, and with whom he wrote old fashioned poems that were never acknowledged. Each relationship gives us some account of that love in the midst of his loneliness. According to the novel, there was a sort of meaningfulness in many of these relationships. "[Florentino] tenía cincuenta y seis años, muy bien cumplidos, y pensaba también que eran los mejor vividos, porque fueron años de amor" (*A.T.C* 355). Nonetheless, he is so eager to prove his "romantic love" for Fermina, he disregards all the loving he presumably felt for his other women. Since he unnecessarily tells Fermina he was faithful to her, how may the most "valuable fifty-six years of his life" be interpreted?

Perhaps it is a bad joke, one that may be hilarious for a septuagenarian and pragmatic Fermina. However, this faithfulness stems from Florentino's keeping a certain distance from all his women. This is a passage on his relationship with Ausencia Santander:

A pesar de que se sintió tan bien desde el primer día en aquella casa que ya amaba como suya, no había permanecido nunca más de dos horas cada vez, ni nunca se quedó a dormir, y sólo una vez a comer, porque ella le había hecho una invitación formal. No iba en realidad sino a lo que iba, llevando siempre el regalo único de una rosa solitaria, y desaparecía hasta la siguiente ocasión imprevisible. (A.T.C 245)

This passage speaks of the quality of this “loving” or the “years of love”. It is pivotal because it shows he hardly ever fully enjoyed the possibilities of exploring and feeling in a house he “loved”. He strictly went there “a lo que iba”, to have sex, and except for the last scene where he spends a whole afternoon with Ausencia, it is clear he kept a distance and avoided any commitment or any profound meaning to the sexual act. In other words, his not sharing other aspects of her life gives a hint to a corresponding attitude in regard to the sexual act. Thus, his faithfulness to Fermina might be a true statement, but what did he gain? He denied himself the possibility of abiding intimacy,⁶⁶ of living or seeking any spiritual fulfillment because of his everlasting love for Fermina. He denied it for the sake of an invented love story and avoided the main substance of all those years. They represent the love experience he decided not to live to the full by jealously keeping the limits to all those relationships. Limitations that did not have anything to do with numbers, but to the possibilities of human experience that sexuality entails. He was more worried about having “todos los polvos contados” than actually, I would say, “vivididos”.

⁶⁶ Connell explains how attachments are ruled by patriarchy: “The patriarchal order prohibits forms of emotion, attachment and pleasure that patriarchal society itself produces. Tensions develop around sexual inequality and men’s rights in marriage, around the prohibition of homosexual affection (given that patriarchy constantly produces homo-social institutions) and around the threat to social order symbolized by sexual freedoms” (86).

This distance from intimacy relates to what Irigaray calls the male's sense of appropriation of the other in the sexual act:

I think that sexual love could become the most specific meeting for our humanity if we succeed in remaining two in such an act and in making it the most total sharing between us. According to the male philosophers just cited [Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Levinas], caressing happens through a subject-object relation; it aims to appropriate the other, in particular the feminine other, in a peer-related competitiveness; looking and touching then serve to dominate or possess in a relationship...in which consciousness falls asleep. (4-5)

The passage tells us that sharing in the sexual encounter only occurs when men succeed in overcoming the dictates of competitiveness and dominion over women. Thus, Florentino's fifty-six years of love are somehow caged because he, like Don Juan, is bound to his seduction scheme. He gave very little, says Prudencia, and the image of his bringing the lonely rose to Ausencia speaks of his limitations in loving and in giving so much it would be valid to suspect a kind of stinginess. Yet, García Márquez's womanizer character succeeded in following the script of his romantic love for Fermina, at least superficially. His ideas of love, as critics have pointed out, are due to bad reading of romantic novels, but nevertheless, it is conventional and consistent with the patriarchal approach to women and sexuality akin to the Don Juan stories. These are inherited patriarchal ideas of love that, aside from the national features of racial and social issues, have remained almost untouched from their inception.

CHAPTER THREE

Álvaro Mutis's *La Última Escala del Tramp Steamer* as a development of the courtly romance: The poetry of inner exploration.

Álvaro Mutis's concept of the love story is that is a self-seeking journey of two people which occurs within a poetic space. As a concept that is related to dreams, it belongs to the narrative trend that seeks to ennoble the human condition and contest reality. Through his novella *La Última Escala del Tramp Steamer (U.E.T.S)*, Mutis embraces the courtly love conventions linked to *The Romance of Tristan (Bérroul)*, the trend of love and gender relations that was critical of patriarchy. One of the aspects of courtly romance such as the humanization of the flesh and its corresponding language of the beloved is developed by Mutis through his skill as a poet. Mutis' poetic work has been described as "rico sin ostentación y sin despilfarro" (Paz "Los Hospitales" 10). From the perspective of gender ideology, he reflects on and unmasks conventions of marriage in the novel. His exploration of the courtly love tradition is framed within his concern for cultural and spiritual aspects of the West⁶⁷ that are no longer understood. His concern for language and the validity of "la experiencia poética" relates his writing to the aims of modern poetry (Barrera López 482). It is in this context that he

⁶⁷ He does so, for instance, through Jon and Warda's discussions on cultural and spiritual issues such as the forgotten Arab legacy.

expresses nostalgia through the steamer. The Alción, like poetry, is the true companion of the lovers' journey.

While García Márquez parodies what he considers Florentino's reading of "the bad poets... because you can only get to good poetry by means of bad poetry." (Williams 131); Mutis heads to the other axis of the love tradition, the one of Tristan and Isolde. The literary debate on love that, as I argued in chapter one, was centered on two main spiritual as well as socio-political trends, had profound implications for the language and gender ideology of romance narratives. It is remarkable that this debate, that started with Christine de Pizan's debate with Jean de Meun on the status of women in medieval times (Brownlee 100-1), is still subject of negotiation. The trends prevail despite radical changes in religious beliefs, on the understanding of death and the material view of the human being in the present day. It is the aim of this study to show how these traditions of Don Juan and the Tristan stories, and its corresponding gender issues, are interpreted and developed within the Spanish American milieu. This chapter deals with Mutis' use of aspects more closely related to the story like the *The Romance of Tristran* (Béroul) and *Tristan* (Von Strassburg) which look for a way of representing love through literature.

Álvaro Mutis wrote the novella *La última Escala del Tramp Steamer* in 1989, four years after Gabriel García Márquez published *El amor en los tiempos del cólera*. Both novels are about love, and this is important to the context in which Mutis's novel was published. Mutis makes clear from the start of his *novella* that he is going to write a love story, and recalls that he asked a good friend to undertake the task. This friend is García Márquez to whom he

dedicates the story: “A G.G.M., esta historia que hace tiempo quiero contarle pero el fragor de la vida no lo ha permitido” (*U.E.T.S* 13). The narrator says he would have preferred Márquez to have written this story he had in mind for years, since he was “a alguien que, en esto de narrar cosas que le pasan a la gente, se ha manifestado como un maestro” (13). Yet, had Mutis and García Márquez hypothetically written the same story plot, the outcomes would have been different not only in terms of craft as Mutis states, but also on the grounds of their different style, language and stance on patriarchy.

Mutis begins writing in a simple style, a fact he mentions from the first page: “hacerlo de la manera más sencilla y directa” (13); in this way he achieves distance from affectation in the language of love. At the beginning, the author writes an exordium which sets up an oral style that is akin to the mythical enchantment raised by love and legends that have been passed on from the past. In this exordium, it is not coincidental that he soon recalls the inspiration for his story:

“Ojalá con mi ninguna destreza, no se pierda aquí el encanto, la dolorosa y peregrina fascinación de estos amores que, por transitorios e imposibles, algo tienen de las nunca agotadas leyendas que nos han hechizado durante tantos siglos, desde Príamo y Tisbe hasta Marcel y Albertine, pasando por Tristán e Isolda” (*U.E.T.S* 14).

His conversational style and his appeal to works from the ancient Greeks to the bewitching Tristan and Isolde places his novel within the context of the literary love tradition of the West.

This appeal allows me to set out a line of argument that seeks symbolic and conceptual connections of this story with *Tristan and Iseut*, and the notions of love it entails.

The story is about a steamer, the Alción, which is seen by the narrator for the first time on one of his business trips to Helsinki as an executive of an oil company. The image of the steamer is described while at the same time he recognizes its mysterious signs.

Later on, the narrator goes to Costa Rica where he sees the Alción in the Nicoya Bay in Punta Arenas, by the Pacific Ocean. Once there the narrator meets a married couple who are in charge of a boat on which he travels. The wife is pleased to find out he is a novelist and asks him to write a “romantic story”. The narrator despises the idea of writing on love according to the “Género Rosa” she is expecting, and at first has some prejudices against the woman whom he sees as plain, not well read, nor intelligent:

“¿Para qué escribir, entonces, cosas tristes?” “Así salen - le respondí tratando de poder fin a este interrogatorio en donde no era precisamente la inteligencia lo que más lucía - , no tiene remedio.” Se quedó un momento pensativa y una sombra muy leve de desilusión le cruzó por la cara. Nunca pensé que estaba hablando en serio. A partir de ese momento, sin quedar excluido del grupo, no fueron, desde luego, para mí, las mejores sonrisas. (*U.E.T.S* 25)

He acknowledges the fact that she genuinely desires to hear a love story and that her request is a way of fantasising since her marriage is a failure. He suspects that there is truth behind her request and begins to observe her more closely. The narrator goes on describing her sensuality

using a colloquial language, far from either bawdiness or affectation, and highlights her feminine beauty which is also admired by other men. From that point on, the narrator tells us her husband, the ship's owner, is someone who acts every night as if he were single, and describes their marriage as a family business which is unfair to her. He realizes the woman's loneliness as a wife, and empathizes with her sadness. Mutis describes her beauty by saying the sailors would remember her image during their journey in the sea. He refers to her in the following terms: "era como si la urgente Afrodita de Oro, que evoca Borges, se acercara para bendecirnos" (*U.E.T.S* 26), and in this manner he praises the Costa Rican as an epitome of womanhood, beautiful and divine, one whose touch is a blessing, "una bendición."

This woman, whose name the author prefers not to know succeeds in persuading him to write her a story despite his initial rejection of the idea. Thus, her honesty gives her influence over the writer.

This story is told in two dimensions. The first one expresses the poetic soul embodied in the steamer, as if it were a Caribbean character "Fue entonces [en Helsinki] cuando, por primera vez, se me apareció el *Tramp Steamer*, personaje de singular importancia en la historia que nos ocupa" (*U.E.T.S* 17). "Esta aparición de un desastrado carguero del Caribe en medio de uno de los más olvidados y armoniosos panoramas de la Europa septentrional. El carguero hondureño me había regresado a mi mundo" (*U.E.T.S* 19). Through the presence of the steamer as a Caribbean presence in Nordic waters, the author creates the atmosphere for a cultural reflection on Europe and "mi mundo", meaning, the cultural realms of the Caribbean.

The contrast between the ship and the Nordic waters is an image that foreshadows his coming reflection on the European legacy.

The symbolism of the steamer has spiritual as well as historical dimensions. The author describes it as being already exhausted; a strong soul that has prevailed throughout the years. The steamer is a companion, a mind that travels along with human beings even though they turn away from poetry, and yet, it is a hard worker, one faithful to humankind. But the steamer is not completely a sort of wandering soul which belongs to nowhere; it is of Caribbean origin, one that reminds him of his own origins. Through the weak appearance of the “desastrado carguero”, the author seems to suggest its noble strength, the dreamer’s tenacity for life.

This first dimension is closely related to the second one. The steamer is also the material space where lovers have their bedchambers. It is the vehicle for travelling, and the source of income for both lovers, Jon Iturri and Warda. Mutis here mainly borrows the idea of the sailing boat as if it were his beloved’s body from Conrad’s story *Freya of the Seven Isles*. But it is also his beloved’s financial well-being, the source of Warda’s income and freedom in Mutis’ novel.

Like in the tradition of the Tristan and Isolde story, love as a poetic experience occurs in the wilderness, spaces for self-seeking that are useless in terms of pragmatic reality. Tristan and Isolde separate; Isolde returns to her husband King Mark, and Tristan dies after some time. In

Mutis's novella, Warda Bashur returns to her country and the Muslim cultural context there since she cannot always live in the open sea, meeting Jon in different ports. Her experience with Jon is understood here as part of her journey, her search for her own womanhood and the understanding of her religious and cultural convictions before she returns to them. On the other hand, Jon is left with the issue of his everlasting love for Warda (*U.E.T.S* 108), and Mutis here explains his own vision of death and love through Jon in a way that, as I will discuss later, is akin to the courtly love tradition.

The poetic description of the beloved in *La Última Escala del Tramp Steamer*: Mutis's development of language within the humanist trend of courtly romance.

Courtly language is one pivotal aspect in understanding how *La Última Escala del Tramp Steamer* develops the ideology of love embodied in the *Tristan and Isolde* story. The courtly love tradition had many different features that could hardly be generalized (chapter one), but there is a recognition that the troubadours endeavored to humanize carnal love.

Mutis's description of the love scenes and the women's body is ennobling in that, through his description of the erotic body, he conveys the woman's essence, which causes him to desire, admire and sometimes worship her. The love scenes, as well as those describing the woman's body, have a delicacy of language that may at times have spiritual undertones. His approach to language, I believe, is determined by his intention to exalt both the woman's body and sexual desire as a transcendent experience for the human soul. If compared to a different intention, that of placing carnal love according to a physical reality that is guided by

deceitfulness, power, or prejudice against age or poverty as a social reality, the language might be ironic, sceptical about the human spirit, thus bawdy, grotesque and even scatological as I discussed in the two previous chapters. Even when language is delicate, but as readers we suspect mockery, we reasonably can suspect whether such affectation is actually courteous and intends to ennoble carnal love. Though it has not always been the case, we can conclude that it seeks to undermine the stance of the ennobling language in order to also invalidate its intention.

Mutis focuses on his choice of language, and prefers to write “de manera sencilla” for he is very probably aware of affectation as a problem in the language that fails to poetically express love. Nonetheless, besides Mutis’ endeavour to use a language that humanizes love and the woman’s body, there are other aspects in his story that allow me to state that *La última escala del tramp steamer* is a development of *The Romance of Tristan* and the ideological concerns it conveyed.

Before I analyse the language of love in different passages of the novel, it is important to examine Mutis’ understanding of poetic language. According to his *ars poetica*, the aim to see the unseen through matter can be paralleled to the mystical language of the courtly romance, which saw the flesh as a way of revealing the spirit. Canfield has worked on Mutis’s view of the material and spiritual world, two aspects that are relevant for analysing the language of love in this novel:

La primera fase que deriva de la primera poesía de Mutis se integra en esa modulación del materialismo en sentido amplio que se encuentra en algunas corrientes del pensamiento contemporáneo, como el psicoanálisis y el existencialismo. La realidad, o lo que se puede percibir como la realidad mediante los sentidos, está constituida por “cuerpos materiales” o por “substancias corporales”, mientras las realidades espirituales y trascendentes se vuelven secundarias, precisamente porque escapan a toda negativa de sistematización racional. (“La Poética De Alvaro Mutis” 36)

According to Canfield, Mutis critically assumes the most hegemonic philosophical trends that put spiritual realities as secondary due to the impossibility of rationally explaining them.⁶⁸ Thus, his poetry explores matter in a search for its inner and corresponding spiritual reality. Canfield shows this perspective in Mutis:

La palabra “materia” aparece asociada a palabras menos tangibles como, por ejemplo, *lo vivido* (v. “la materia de tus años”, “la intacta materia de otros días”, “la esencial materia/de sus días en el mundo”, etc.) pone en evidencia esta perspectiva según la cual las realidades percibidas o sentidas por el poeta tienen una definida y sólida corporeidad; en cuanto si bien provienen de una dimensión no física, la intensidad de la percepción las vuelve “materiales”. (“La Poética De Alvaro Mutis” 36)

The critic states that Mutis’s exploration of the poetic image suggests that the vision of a spiritual reality occurs after a notable perception of the matter that contains it. There are studies of the importance of such a state of observation in Mutis’s poetry: “Nos sumerge en un estado de observación perpleja de esas realidades poderosas e incontrolables, y finalmente nos entrega la evidencia de que esas cosas sólo es posible verlas porque están en quien las ve” (Ospina 9). The idea the poet can perceive matter as a reflection of the unseen can be

⁶⁸ On Mutis’ *ars poética* also see: (Cuéllar V. and Mutis)

explained according to the neo-platonic postulate that states that the observer identifies his own spirituality in the observed object. According to this doctrine, contemplation is a concept related to the eye that can see the sun, for the former includes the latter “preparándose para la contemplación como el ojo espera la aparición del sol” (Alsina 64). This aspect is pivotal to the analysis of crucial passages and characters he endeavors to describe, for he enhances the importance of matter as a substance for poetry. For Canfield, this notion is related to Vallejo’s understanding of objects in Neruda (“La Poética De Alvaro Mutis” 36).⁶⁹

Canfield’s observation on the philosophical grounds of Mutis’ poetic images enables me to state that Mutis’ concern for the spiritual dimension of matter is a response to the philosophical and scientific postulates of our time that, I would prefer to say, “avoid” the non-material due to cognitive limitations, and that he seeks to show how this spiritual dimension is revealed through poetry.

The critic’s argument about Mutis’s exploration of matter connects to the author’s own descriptions in the novella *La Última Escala del Tramp Steamer*, and to his statement on the importance that words should be faithful to the lover’s testimony, since they relate to the source, that which Mutis calls “la materia del poema”. Mutis is careful in regard with his words. His description of Warda Bahur can be perceived as *descriptio pulchritudinis* which is a poetic convention of courtly love. According to Dronke, it is a description from the hair down to the feet that belongs to a mannerist tradition “prescribed as an orator’s technique in

⁶⁹ Parallel to Canfield’s theory of Mutis’ poetry, also see Luis Sáinz de Medrano who states: “La poesía de Neruda es también objetivación” and the critic points to Neruda’s statement on reality: “Hablo de cosas que existen, Dios me libre de inventar cosas cuando estoy cantando” (86).

antiquity” (*The Medieval Poet* 61). The convention has been parodied widely and it was repeatedly used by the Celts who introduced variants to the pattern, like that of the sexual incantation. It is a style that, in Mutis’ case, concurs with his commitment to matter as a source of non-material experience. In the following passage, Mutis stresses his reliance on real experience, and clearly establishes a distance from the unreality of the “género rosa”,⁷⁰ which would be a huge error. An erroneous writing style, he says in the following passages, would destroy the “fatal condition” of the love story:

Aquí me voy a ver en la obligación de hacer uso de la memoria con la mayor fidelidad posible, para transcribir las palabras de Iturri. El encuentro con Warda en el ALCIÓN, de no relatarse con ciertos elementos que él subrayó muy particularmente, tiene el riesgo de caer en la manida intrascendencia de las historias del género rosa. Nada podría falsear tanto el relato, despojándolo de su condición fatal e insostenible, como teñirlo de un matiz semejante. Trataré, pues, de ceñirme con la mayor fidelidad a las palabras de mi amigo. (*U.E.T.S* 63)

The narrator states that writing must be true to experience, and assumes such a language so as to be faithful to Iturri’s words. According to the critical views and the author’s own everyday statements in the novel, poetic language cannot be made up, it comes from real words which are discovered and interpreted through poetry.

Mutis has been frequently asked about his *ars poetica*, and he has stressed the difficulty in finding a word that expresses a vision, a problem that mystics can overcome “[La epifanía] Los místicos sí la logran, pero los poetas difícilmente” (Sefamí and Mutis 139). For instance, the poetry of the steamer Alción and the image of epiphany it conveys is related to Canfield’s

⁷⁰ It is important to keep in mind Mutis makes a difference between the immortal love stories he mentions at the beginning, while he rejects those of the “género rosa”.

view of Mutis's *ars poetica* which I discussed earlier. Mutis refers to the epiphany of the Alción as if a revelation "Cuando una de esas imágenes regresa con toda su voraz intención de persistir, sucede lo que los doctos llaman una epifanía" (*U.E.T.S* 42). Ashton Nichols discusses the wide use of epiphany in modern 20th-century poetry and fiction, and states that it is not surprising "if we consider the importance of the literary technique first called "epiphany" by James Joyce in his description of Stephen Daedalus's secular revelations. Indeed. Momentary manifestations of significance in ordinary experience have become a defining characteristic of twentieth-century fiction" (Nichols 1). The description of the steamer, of the "Bella Semidesnuda" and Warda Bashur, and the narrator's hearing of the Costa Rican's voice while he is half sleeping, are conveyed by capturing the image and sensations that are relevant to memory, that which "persists", and reveals the characters' sacred self.

The language of love in *La Última Escala del Tramp Steamer* does not exactly follow the style of *The Tristan Romance*, and it is not meant to do so, but it is rather a development of such language within the present time. The ideological precepts of courtly love humanize erotic love and the human body are a response to a historical religious context that considered matter as sinful and non-transcendent. Views such as these were related to the concept of woman's body as the "source of all evil": "Women come to embody the material corruption associated with the flesh and in which the theological and the gynecological blend" (Bloch 27).

Mutis relates to the humanizing aim in a different manner. He responds to a present context that, unlike the religious ethos implied in the courtly tradition, nowadays favours material reality, and disregards the spiritual one since it is beyond the physical realm. As a result of this, he is persistently seeking for a correspondence between matter and the spiritual, and sees poetry also as a religious invocation:

[La poesía] sigue siendo lo que fue cuando escribí el primer poema: un acto de persistencia y de manifestación de tratar vanamente, pero de intentar, que perduren una serie de imágenes, de recuerdos, de percepciones, que considero esenciales en mi vida. Es como un segundo oxígeno del cual yo saco la razón de vivir. Y en el fondo, un cierto sentido (siempre lo he tenido) religioso, de invocación. (Sefamí and Mutis 130)

His understanding of language in the novel is that of faithfulness to matter, for it is through perception that vision might appear. He describes the Costa Rican woman's semi-nakedness while he quietly observes her in all that she does. The image he conveys is his perception of who she is, of the main features of her being as he sees her in a short sequence of images.

Curiously enough, Mutis achieves a language of sensuality more when referring to the Costa Rican in his contained desire for her, than he does with his shared descriptions of Warda Bashur. The narrator-character does not "love" the Costa Rican, nor has he had intimacy with her: He is not pursuing her, seducing or seeing her as an impossible love. He does not know her, yet the presence of the woman creates a sexual tension he does not directly recognize. Once the woman appears in scene, he describes the beauty of her body with careful admiration.

I think Mutis did not mean to distract attention from Warda who is the main character of the story portrayed in this novel. Yet, there is a possible explanation for this: while the narrator must borrow Jon Iturri's words to describe Warda Bashur, a task that was difficult for Mutis (Moreno Zerpa and Mutis 61), his spontaneity is greater in relation to the Costa Rican woman. Therefore, there are two important differences in the description of the two and the aims of the author with each one of them: while Warda is the beloved one and is described within the context of courtship, the Costa Rican is seen more within the context of desire and love.

The narrator refers to the Costa Rican as a very spontaneous woman who is self-confident in the way she speaks to her clients, in the harmonious way she relates to her own body, her speed and complexion. The narrative tone of her first appearance and the kind of language she uses conveys the image of strength and readiness:

Los motores se pusieron en marcha bajo el mando del dueño, asesorado por el negro. De repente, unos gritos de mujer—"¡Ya voy, ya voy! ¡Espérenme, carajo!"—nos hicieron mirar hacia el fondo de la casa. Desde allí corría hacia nosotros una mujer vestida con unos de los más escuetos bikinis que recuerdo. Alta, de hombros ligeramente anchos y piernas largas, ágiles, que remataban en unos muslos ahusados y firmes. El rostro tenía esa hermosura convencional pero inobjetable lograda a merced de un maquillaje bien aplicado y a unas facciones regulares que no necesitan tener una notoria belleza. A medida que se acercaba a la barca era más evidente la perfección de ese cuerpo de una juventud casi agresiva ... "Si me llegan a dejar se mueren de hambre, huevones. Sólo yo sé dónde está la comida y en qué orden se sirve." Reía, regocijada. (*U.E.T.S* 22)

The narrator's perception of her vigorous body along with her spontaneity in words are two of the features he emphasizes in the roughly six pages in which the Costa Rican appears in this novella. His description of her physical body and movement seeks to bring a glimpse of her personality and the energy of her own self. As a *descriptio pulchritudinis*, he contemplates her sensuous body. This is a meaningful aspect in terms of the delicacy of the courtly tradition. It is through such details that he recalls her freedom, the ease with which he speaks to others, her good humor despite her marriage crisis, and above all, the importance she gives to herself and her work so as to humorously challenge her clients with swear words when she calls them "huevones". The narrator is captivated with the vision of her body: "el rostro tenía esa hermosura convencional pero inobjetable", "evidente perfección de ese cuerpo", and he connects the vigour, strength, and youth of her body to her personality. There is a harmony between the two, since her words are also fresh, humorous and as challenging as youth may be. His kindness to her is clear when he refers to her use of swear words as "la boticcelliana amable que que no le temía a las palabrotas" implying that she was very expressive and spontaneous. The perception of the woman as an entire entity, and the image that speaks of her essential being is itself a stance of the author's view of the body in relation to the person as a whole. His description points to uniqueness, a feature of the individual that brings understanding to their substance, akin to the epiphany image he recalls when seeing the Alción which is a vision of the sacred self.

Mutis at this stage of an awakening desire that is never fulfilled sees the Costa Rican from the passive observation of her semi-nakedness. This passivity or this being "caught" or seduced so to speak, is suggested when he feels not in control of himself, as though he were a teenager: "Esos diminutivos en boca de las costarricenses han tenido siempre la facultad de

inquietarme, dejándome en un estado de alerta sonambólico propio del más desorientado adolescente” (*U.E.T.S* 23). The same state of half consciousness is also evident in this passage where he goes to sleep after a disagreement he had had with her in relation to the romantic story she requested. His state of being half asleep and his being surrounded by her image and words overwhelm his senses:

El sol, el vino de California artificialmente aromatizado y la presencia, la voz, los gestos de ese cuerpo de mujer moviéndose en el calor del atardecer, me fueron adormilando hasta que entré en un sueño que no acababa de dominarme porque escuchaba las palabras del diálogo [que había tenido con la costarricense] sin penetrar mucho en su sentido. (*U.E.T.S* 25)

He disregards the wine as being artificial, and his somnolence is more akin to the warmth, the sun, the heat and the image of the woman’s body moving nearby. His observation is passive because he lets sensations take over his body and mind, almost, like in the middle of a dream. He feels as if he were in a state of half awareness.

His contemplation of her is in itself a search for her as a person and as a woman, and that is evidence of his intention to dignify both her and her body. Historically speaking, humanization of the female body falls within the realm of courtly love. The author’s concept of matter and the spiritual, as I said earlier, is transferred to his poetry of the admired woman. In this description, he praises her matter, her gestures and movements as a visible dimension of who she is. Thus he not only bestows freedom on her body but also grants her the freedom of walking around in bikinis as a way of expressing herself. Yet, it is important to note that her semi-nakedness is not interpreted as lewdness. On the contrary, it occurs as if something expected within the context of the heat of the Caribbean Sea; her nakedness is related to the

environment. This can also be supported by the fact that the writer does not refer to her bikinis as a breach of rules, but rather keeps on reminding us readers that her appearance is a blessing.

In this regard, the description of her last scene in the novel has more splendor than the first one. While the first one approached her in a way that revealed her personality, the last one poses a symbolic perception of her womanhood:

Pasaba entre nosotros para alcanzar a cada uno su vaso y era como si la urgente *Afrodita de Oro*, que evoca Borges, se acercara para bendecirnos” (23) “Cada uno [de los marineros] en su idioma, se encargaba de hacer comentarios sobre la mujer que nos acompañaba y que les sonreía con una elaborada inocencia, saludando con un batir de los brazos que dejaba los pechos casi al descubierto. Los comentarios arreciaron y no pude menos de pensar en que esa visión increíble acompañaría a esos hombres durante vaya a saberse qué interminable trayecto de su accidentado viaje. (*U.E.T.S* 26)

Mutis makes sure we know that the men’s admiration is based on her image, her being welcoming and of an “elaborada inocencia”, suggesting the complicity of both innocence and skilfulness in her. It is important to note, nevertheless, that Gina Ponce de León thinks the narrator sees her as an “exhibitionist” (117). In regard to the scene where all men including the narrator are enchanted with the woman’s spontaneity and beauty, the critic states that the narrator despises her instead: “Es cualquier mujer que considere que su papel primordial es servir la comida con cierto aire de elegancia y pasearse como un objeto más para llamar la atención de sus invitados e impedir cualquier conversación inteligente”(117). The critic

believes that the narrator distances himself from her movements, since she was deliberately walking as if being “como un objeto”, but I disagree with this view.

I think he is trying to tell us about the complexity of womanhood, the complexity to be found in any woman despite her apparent simplicity, be she a cook, a waiter or a business woman. The author stresses the Costa Rican’s youthfulness and energy and all of her movements are an expression of her vitality and her confidence to express herself through her body. Had the narrator not seen it as genuine, he would not have described her semi nakedness “saludando con un batir de los brazos que dejaba los pechos casi al descubierto” as a sight of a guiding and protective memory linked to the verb “acompañar”: “esa vision increíble acompañaría a esos hombres”. His description of the woman’s body in terms of her freshness and personal charm points to the transcendent nature of woman’s beauty as he and other men *see it*, and entails this symbolic idea of the feminine condition. Her assurance and narcissism, I believe, are understood within the realms of her personality, not in terms of a prejudice that could have regarded her, for instance, as “shameful”. He refers to her as walking by “olímpicamente”: “Pasaba entre nosotros para alcanzar a cada uno su vaso y era como si la urgente Afrodita de Oro, que evoca Borges, se acercara para bendecirnos. A pesar de esa belleza al alcance de nuestros sentidos, circulando con naturalidad olímpica, la conversación consiguió, al fin, tomar un curso natural y fluido” (*U.E.T.S* 23). The term “olímpica” here connotes thoughtless spontaneity; it is also associated with the “elaborada inocencia” he describes in her (*U.E.T.S* 26). But I think that, from a general view, had he looked at her as an “object”, as Ponce suggests above, his description would have been void or bawdy and the reader would not have known much about her nuances, her inner motifs and complexities. Thus, his description takes

distance, both from any possible bawdiness in the description of her body or any shallowness associated with the present material view of the body.

Curiously again, Mutis expresses his view of a woman he holds as not capable of maintaining an “intelligent” conversation during the scene of her request of a “rosa” novel. (I will discuss this aspect in detail in a subsequent section on Mutis’s treatment of the two women characters in this novel). But, in regard to the quality of both his observation and language used to describe her, the novelist dignifies the sensual body from his contemplative perspective, and his approach to her could plausibly be considered as a caring/loving one. He describes a distinctive female character and let readers know how his senses were intimately moved by her presence. Had he not been sensually “moved” by her, the description would have probably been non-sensual, and therefore not relevant to this study. The description is a mirror that tells us about the one who describes, as well as his view of beauty and the person.

I believe the way the narrator portrays his encounter with the woman and the sexual desire he feels is thoughtful. As I discussed in the first chapter, the ethics and aesthetics of sexual desire were a pivotal concern for Provençal eroticism. On the other hand, this description is consistent with the aims of the theologians and poets who were preoccupied with ennobling or humanizing the way men related to their sexual desire and to the dignity of the female body.

Sharing a similar humanistic concern, Simone de Beauvoir, who acknowledged that the poetic language inspired by the troubadours was an aspiration towards woman’s equality, states that

human morality in the present time should be engaged in giving meaningfulness to all human experience, in her discussion of a “moral erotic relation”:

In a genuinely moral erotic relation there is a free assumption of desire and pleasure, or at last a moving struggle to regain liberty in the midst of sexuality; but this is possible only when the other is recognized as an individual, in love or in desire. (459)

In the case of the passages which depict the interaction between the narrator and the Costa Rican woman, the narrator playfully lets readers know he is struggling with her attractiveness, and in his memory he constantly speaks of her as the “mujer del bikini”, “la semidesnuda de Nicoya”. But in overall terms, I believe he is guided by a similar spirit as the one depicted by de Beauvoir in the above passage.

However, the author’s language in describing the woman is better assessed when comparing it with equivalent decisions made by García Márquez in his description of Fermina Daza in *El amor en los tiempos del cólera*, García Márquez either describes Fermina as a maiden while sitting “bajo el almendro”, or he brings the passage of time to focus on her septuagenarian skin on their first night together.⁷¹ She is seen either as an unattainable woman, or through the reality of her aged body. The narrator places his attention on actions, for instance, in the sexual scenes with his other lovers he is more focused on the speed with which they undress, or Florentino’s initial moves. Furthermore, Juvenal’s teaching scene on Fermina’s “first time” is shown by plenty of actions he displays in bringing her to like sex. Overall, rather than using

⁷¹ Were it not because Florentino’s skin is described as “piel de nene”, it could be said the author’s aim is to enhance the reality of body decay and ironize about ideal sensuality. However, masculine fantasy stands as a contradiction.

a description as a way of discovering the woman, or say “the Other”, the narrator prefers to focus on the moves and sequences of the sexual act.

This parenthesis is necessary in order to show that García Márquez is more interested in establishing a pleasant and humorous tone. The writer’s approach to expressing the sexual scenes and the erotic body corresponds to purposes and concepts on gender relations and on carnal love itself. In the case of Mutis, there is a taste for the poetic description of the body which speaks of his belief in human love as an inner exploration.

The narrator’s desire for the Costa Rican paves the way for the second story of Jon’s love for Warda. At that point the narrative line is shared by Jon and the narrator who are linked by similar situations and concerns. Cardona López, explains that there is a parallelism between the two narrators of the story: the unnamed Press adviser (the main narrator) and Jon Iturri. According to the critic, Jon “El segundo es el doble del narrador” (34), he explains their differences: “A pesar de que mediante las coincidencias y las casualidades que animan lo singular de la historia de amor el narrador ha hallado su doble, éste no pierde su primordial posición de escucha e interparlante de Iturri” (35).

Jon Iturri’s description of Warda Bashur occurs from another perspective. Jon focuses on the harmony between Warda’s intelligence and beauty, and how her culture is reflected in all that she is: her speech, her gestures, movements, attitudes and beauty. Besides, Warda is Jon

Iturri's desired and beloved woman, the one he holds in his memory. For the time being, I will focus on Jon's language of love about her.

The narrator stresses the fact that he borrows Jon's words for telling his story, in a way that allows him to convey the truthfulness of Jon's falling in love. Thus, while Jon gives the testimony, the narrator encourages the readers to be sympathetic to the lovers,⁷² and in that way he follows in the story-telling tradition of the medieval romances. He lets readers know how he listens to Jon's story:

La manera como el capitán de navío insistía sobre la belleza de Warda Bashur tenía algo de reiterativo, algo de salmodia o cantinela. Era conmovedor escucharlo luchar con las palabras, siempre tan pobres y tan lejos de un fenómeno como es la belleza en un ser humano cuando ésta alcanza la condición de lo esencialmente inefable. Había, por ejemplo, un afán de describir la forma como, en cada ocasión, aparecía vestida la muchacha. (*U.E.T.S* 78)

The narrator refers to “la belleza en un ser humano” telling us that the fact that it is an episode which even though it might occur to anybody, it is the writer who, as a witness, recreates the beauty a lover can see. Jon's testimony is the evidence, the “matter” of the love story. Jon's effort to describe Warda's clothing is similar to Mutis's view of the role of clothing in his own writing (Sefamí and Mutis 134).⁷³ The link between matter and poetry is recurrent in this author.

⁷² On the narrator's sympathy for lovers in courtly love tradition, see chapter one.

⁷³ Mutis explains clothing is one of his writing tricks for shaping his characters. On the symbology of colors, it can be related to: (Dronke *The Medieval Poet*) Also, he states there is an influential work in Mutis' writing. On the semiology of fashion see: (Barthes)

The first time Warda comes into view she appears as if coming from a higher place and a half light half-darkness suggests or foretells the polarity of joy and sorrow that Jon Iturri will suffer. She exerts power through her gaze, her beauty, and last but not least, from her position within the business context where she has high status:

En esas estaban cuando [el narrador] sintió que la luz que entraba por la puerta daba paso a una semitiniebla repentina. Alguien en el umbral lo estaba mirando. Levantó la cabeza y no pudo decir nada. Lo que vio fue prácticamente imposible de poner en palabras. Un brillo de malicia en los ojos del Gaviero le transmitía [a Jon] un mudo “se lo dije”, entre insolente y benévolo. (*U.E.T.S* 66)

The following lines are devoted to giving an account of her intelligence and how it is expressed through her body. Just as he focuses on the Costa Rican’s “matter” and movements to describe her freshness; in this occasion the author speaks of Warda’s big black eyes to show her being alert and observant of the attitudes of everyone in the commercial meeting she is about to participate in. As readers, we can predict who she is. He speaks of her slow gaze, and tells us that she was cautious in not showing any hint of emotions that would not be appropriate to the rationality of business and negotiating contracts. Her intelligence is shown by the way she remains committed to her goals. The picture of her beauty is complete.

Era una aparición de una belleza absoluta [Jon] trato de reconstruir las palabras del marino en la noche del gran río - alta, de rostro armonioso, con rasgos de mediterránea oriental afinados hasta casi ser helénicos. Los grandes ojos negros tenían una mirada lenta, inteligente, en donde la prisa o la demasiada evidencia de una emoción se hubieran visto como un desorden inconcebible. (*U.E.T.S* 67)

This description of her intelligence, as a spiritual human value, is followed by the beauty of her femininity and she is compared to the museum sculptures in what is a clear allusion to the rational style of classic civilization:

El pelo negro, azulado, de una densidad de miel, caía sobre los hombros rectos semejantes a lo de los *kouros* del museo de Atenas. Las caderas estrechas y cuya suave curva remataba en unas piernas largas, levemente llenas, también semejantes a las de algunas Venus del Museo Vaticano [llevaba] una blusa de seda de corte clásico y una bufanda de seda con rombos verdes, rojos y marrones que traía al cuello colgada simplemente alrededor de éste... Los labios un tanto salientes, pero de un diseño perfecto, insinuaron una sonrisa y las cejas negras, densas sin llegar a romper la armonía del rostro, se distendieron. “Buenos días señores”, saludó en francés sin pretender ocultar el acento árabe que me pareció particularmente gracioso. (*U.E.T.S* 67)

The author tells us her eyebrows do not break the harmony of her face; her silk clothing and the geometric figures of her scarf continue the former pattern in the perfect lines of the female sculptures at the museum.⁷⁴ This portrayal is analogous to images in the courtly love lyrics; that the woman is an embodiment of spiritual truths, of knowledge or an enlightened spirit. (Dronke *Medieval Latin And...* 91). This scholar states this kind of writing is millenary and universal, not exclusive to the courtly tradition (*Medieval Latin And...* 2), yet, it is important to consider that such features of woman’s spirituality and goddess like images have been normally linked to Virgin Mary and the Aristotelian notion of Sapiencia that were of a common occurrence in the courtly love lyrics. There are polemics on this aim of perfection as being part of a twofold misogyny (Bloch 143); however it is a matter that requires a nuanced reading in order to rule out misogyny. With regard to Warda’s beauty, it seems to me that

⁷⁴ The narrator later on tells the readers he added the museum references to Jon’s account since he had said “esas estatuas de mujer que hay en Roma” (*U.E.T.S* 67).

perfection in this particular image aims to express the beauty of feminine intelligence. Mutis shows the spiritual and unseen side of matter in the beloved woman's body and presence.

Up to this point, I have stressed Jon's description on his first encounter with Warda Bashur, in that Jon is overwhelmed by Warda's beauty and corresponding wit. But above all, Warda is desired and loved by Jon. Their lovemaking is consistent with an urge for feeling and knowing each other; love occurs through the body:

Hicimos el amor una y otra vez, con la lenta y minuciosa intensidad de quienes no saben lo que va a suceder mañana. La obsesión de Warda por llenar el presente de sentido, descansaba en un juicio inteligente y cierto de las escasas posibilidades y de los obstáculos insalvables que ofrecía nuestra relación. (*U.E.T.S* 88)

The sexual act is linked to the concept of the short life span of love; it occurs as part of a journey that challenges death, and the end of time. The reflection has religious undertones and the erotic act is thus heightened. Her nakedness is a memory he wants to keep forever:

Warda, desnuda, adquiría como un aura que emanaba de la perfección de su cuerpo, de la estructura de su piel elástica y levemente húmeda y de ese rostro que, visto desde arriba, en el lecho, cobraba aún más su carácter de aparición délfica. No es fácil explicarlo, describirlo. A veces pienso que no lo viví nunca. Lo único que me ha detenido muchas veces ante la voluntad de morir es pensar que esa imagen muera también conmigo. (*U.E.T.S* 88)

The first line suggests that it is through her nakedness that he sees something like an “aura”, a “spiritual emanation” that corresponded to “la perfección de su cuerpo”; particle and energy at the same time, as if speaking of the paradox of (physical) light. It is clear that the spiritual emanation comes from the body, and the entire passage conveys the idea of a revelation “aparición délfica” or that “A veces pienso que no lo viví nunca”. Perfection, a term that cannot be overlooked here as it appears in all descriptions of Warda, and even of the Costa Rican, is a term that generally may be associated with the perfectionist side of misogyny (first chapter), and that too I will discuss later. Though his classical ideal of Warda’s beauty could have perfectionist connotations, Warda is seen as someone with doubts and nuances, and not just as a female stereotype. The perfection Jon relates to also speaks of the experience as being outstanding. His sight of her “aura” as an emanation of her body is told as if being an unusual event for him. Mutis’ language of love remains truthful to metaphysical notions that relate to the human and divine dimensions of the courtly romance language.

***La Última Escala del Tramp Steamer as a development of the The Romance of Tristan:
Love as a poetic journey.***

To assess the influence of *The Romance of Tristan* in Mutis’s novella, it is important to begin with Mutis’s own words on how he understands influence, which is, by the way, similar to that of the other writers studied in this thesis. For instance, Mutis disagrees with critics who

only acknowledge Conrad's or Melville's influence on him,⁷⁵ and not, for instance, Dickens'.

Influence is not imitation:

La influencia consiste en un escritor, en el caso de Dostoievsky o en el caso muy particular conmigo de Dickens, que te pone en movimiento dentro de ti todo un mecanismo y todo una energía para decir lo tuyo, no como Dickens, no como Conrad, lo que ellos fundamentalmente tienen, lo que hacen conmigo es mover adentro una serie de posibilidades que, en mi caso, generalmente están dormidas. ("Entrevista a Álvaro Mutis". Interview by Conget and Chang)

It is partly with this in mind that I set out in this study to explore similar concerns and ideological postures in the two works. In this section I will investigate the issue of fatal love and the concept of love as an inner journey that is at the heart of the Tristan story, or to say it in Mutis's words, that it is an "experiencia totalizadora, arrasadora" that transcends. Iturri's loving is a journey that takes over his life:

Un hombre que ha seguido una vida rutinaria, normal, regulada, y que de repente se encuentra con la mujer más bella del mundo, y esa mujer se enamora de él, y esto, sencillamente, lo destruye. Se hunde en la maravilla de este amor y de este contacto de piel a piel con esta mujer, y ya de él no queda nada. ("Entrevista a Álvaro Mutis". Interview by Sonia Grande)

Here Mutis points to key aspects of the plot of the Tristan story such as the love potion. In the following passage, Iturri's incoming passion lets him "absorto" in front of a door (alluding to a rite of passage) and hypnotized by "filtros" that are related to his past of "magos y santones" which brings the magical meanings to his dreamlike love for Warda:

⁷⁵ On influential authors in Mutis' work also see: (Hernández)

Él se quedó un momento absorto frente a la puerta giratoria por la que había desaparecido Warda. Regresó al barco y, sin desvestirse, se tiró en la litera a tratar de reconstruir cada rasgo de ese rostro, cada tono de esa voz, que lo sumían en un hipnotismo de filtros que iban a perderse en el pasado de su raza de magos y santones, de guerreros y navegantes sin estrella. (*U.E.T.S* 77)

For Tristan and Isolde, the love they felt for each other was an experience that made them isolate themselves, hide and lie to others, put themselves away in the wilderness, outside of the boundaries of the city and inside what was understood as being in sin. Their love was passionate, a madness that made Tristan take revenge and kill those who dared gossip to King Mark, Isolde's husband, while Iseut was skilful in deceiving her husband and their enemies. They were bound to each other in complicity; together they were one, in reciprocal love, and in the absolute certainty that sooner or later they would face the end of their loving and death. Such was their ordeal.

The possibility of the character's dramatic encounter with death is normally expected in a story of this kind. Its appeal stems from it. The lovers fear to be condemned for their sins and believe hell (real death) awaits them. Their actions concern them inasmuch as they are believers of the Christian faith. As I pointed out in chapter one, the narrators of the Tristan stories have sympathy for the lovers, and appeal for their salvation. King Mark listens to the people's request and decides not to kill the lovers in the wilderness scene: "it would have been terribly wrong / and if I had awakened him / and he had killed me, or I him / people would have condemned me" (Bérroul 2016-9). Similarly, the hermit hopes God will forgive them: "When a man and a woman sin/if they have love each other and then separated/and if they repent/and are genuinely repentant/God will forgive them for their transgression" (2345-

9). Parker emphasizes that the religious inner struggle was serious and meaningful for those poets who, compared to the scepticism of the present times, were genuine believers. He says one cannot ignore “the essential ambiguity and ambivalence of the tradition whereby sacred and profane love spoke the same language” (Parker 20).

The narrator of *The Romance of Tristan* is sympathetic to the lovers and thus persuades the audience to wish for their success. In a manner likely to appeal to his readers’ involvement, Mutis begins to write the novella and speaks of the tormented love stories of the tradition and states that the one he is about to tell his readers has “something”, “algo” of those fascinating stories, one of them being “Tristán e Isolda” (*U.E.T.S* 14). That something, the subject of this section, is to analyse the lovers’ journey that the author offers in the novel, and the quest that it entails.

Mutis knows such romances have prevailed because of the “fascination” and “hechizo” which has also been explained as the passion and madness of love that have intrigued readers of all times. Mutis says Jon’s overwhelming experience of love with Warda destroys him: “Se hundió en la maravilla de este amor y de este contacto de piel a piel con esta mujer, y ya de él no queda nada” (“Entrevista a Álvaro Mutis”. Interview by Sonia Grande). Mutis’ comments in this interview can be seen in Jon’s description of his experience “piel a piel”, with Warda which means the sacred, the memory he would only live for “ Lo único que me ha detenido muchas veces ante la voluntad de morir es pensar que esa imagen muera también conmigo” (*U.E.T.S* 88). Their carnal love is a sort of ritual he wishes to hold in his memory, and they recall one of the most appreciated of Mutis’ verses in *Amén*: “Que te acoja la muerte con

todos tus sueños intactos” (Los trabajos perdidos "Summa" 65). There is a suggestion that dreams will probably never die. The image also has the meaning of a *unio mystica* as the substance of this love that proves to be vital for him. The sexual act has undertones of the madness of Eros I mentioned in chapter one, and that is interpreted as the modern notion of libido an inner force “which brings together the two natures of man, the divine self and the tethered beast” (Dodds 218). Like Jon, Tristan could not survive Isolde’s absence, the idea being that he is one with her: “Since I do not have Iseut, nothing matters to me” (Bérroul 1025).

It is a view of love as a journey of self- knowledge through the other; thus separation becomes fatal to them. The lovers’ defending their space of love from the outer world has poetic and dreamlike connotations that defy notions of practical reality. Parallel to Tristan and Isolde’s hiding in the wilderness, Jon and Warda find that space in the Alción and in the different ports. Tristan and Isolde challenge their enemies while seeking piety and understanding, and likewise Mutis persuades us the readers about Jon and Warda’s desires, their need to separate from the world. Thus, their quest is recognized as heroic, for it appeals to people’s admiration and understanding of their having struggled for a true and genuine pursuit.

Mutis follows this tradition in that he persuades us, from the beginning, that Warda and Jon’s love was not just genuine, but that it is tormented and bewitching. During their first meeting, Jon is astonished by Warda’s presence as I explained earlier, while Warda approaches him in a manner that is more mysterious than is usual among business associates: "La sonrisa [de Warda] fue de aprobación—me explicaba Jon con una seriedad un tanto conmovedora-- de

conformidad, no sólo con mis dotes de marino, sino con algo más personal” (*U.E.T.S* 69). From that time on, we know as readers, from Jon’s account that he acknowledges he was no longer in control of himself. He experiences distress and anxiety depending on her being absent or near him. Jon feels “Como un colegial indefenso, desconcertado y temeroso” (*U.E.T.S* 84). He even states his life is going to change forever and thus we are told he is undertaking an inner journey, one that could occur when becoming one with Warda:

Pedí lo mismo [un Campari] olvidando mi principio de jamás tomar alcohol antes del mediodía. Éste y otros síntomas bien evidentes comenzaban a indicarme que algo estaba cambiando en mí para siempre y que esa mudanza tenía su origen en la presencia de Warda. Otra señal fue mi aceptación, indiscriminada y sin mayores preámbulos, de las condiciones del convenio con los Bashur. Aún hoy en día sigo sin poder recordar a ciencia cierta todas las cláusulas del mismo. (*U.E.T.S* 69)

Jon’s attitude reflects what Lewis calls love of a highly specialized sort: “The lover is always abject. Obedience to his lady’s lightest wish, however whimsical, and silent acquiescence of her rebukes, however unjust, are the only virtues he dares to claim” (Lewis 3). Jon knew his life was not going to be the same any more.

I will now discuss what I understand as the love journey in this novel, and what makes it a development of *The Romance of Tristan*: it is a quest of the self through poetry, which sends lovers towards an unknown situation that unavoidably will change their lives.

The first aspect has to do with the love journey as a poetic and spiritual experience. According to Mutis' notion of poetry, it is an attempt to steal or extract the ineffable from any experience while struggling to put it into words. The Alción metaphorically links poetry to love, and it is a meaning he develops throughout the novella. He speaks of the Alción as a person whose soul has been a long-time companion, a silent witness of human history. A visionary:

[El Alción] se deslizaba, irreal, con el jadeo agónico de sus máquinas y el desacompasado ritmo de sus bielas que, de un momento a otro, amenazaban por callar para siempre. Ocupaba ya el primer plano en el irreal y sereno espectáculo que me tenía absorto y mi maravillada sorpresa se convirtió en algo muy difícil de precisar. Había, en este vagabundo despojo del mar, una especie de testimonio de nuestro destino sobre la tierra [...] Lo sentí como un hermano desdichado, como una víctima de la desidia y la avidez de los hombres, a las que él respondía con su terca voluntad de seguir trazando sobre todos los mares la deslucida estela de sus lacerías. (*U.E.T.S* 18-9)

The Alción is the forgotten other, the embodiment of poetry, of a great soul, someone who loves humankind and remains with the lovers. The Alción is closely related to Maqroll, ship and poetry share a symbolic meaning. Mutis says of Maqroll: “es el poeta, la conciencia del barco, el vigía lúcido, el que otea, el que anuncia” (Moreno Zerpa and Mutis 61). Thus, since it is the poetic self, it is the one that enables them to be in love with each other. It is not unimportant that Warda prefers the Alción rather than the comfort of hotels: “Se le había metido en la cabeza [a Warda] el capricho de convivir con él en el barco, verlo trabajar allí en las maniobras de descarga y carga” (*U.E.T.S* 93).

Warda sees the Alción as the space for their love, and in that way it relates to the wilderness in Tristan and Isolde, a feature that is also similar to the lovers' cave in Gottfried's *Tristan*. The image of the lovers' bedchambers that consistently appears throughout this tradition holds symbolic meanings and mysticism:

The architectural features of the Lovers' Cave, to which Tristan and Isolde withdraw on being banished by King Mark, show similar treatment by Gottfried. They are given allegorical interpretations recalling the traditional allegorization of the Christian Church as a building. The roundness of the cave betokens Simplicity; its breadth the Power of Love; its height Aspiration; and so on. But, again, closer and most convincing analogies have been found to link them with the mystical interpretation of the 'Cubicle' in which the Soul suffers Union with God; and, most strikingly, with the mystical interpretation of the Tabernacle, which accounts, among other things, for the bed. (Hatto 15)

The steamer is symbolically linked to the lovers' space. In this novel, the Alción travels, and its journey goes along with the lovers' decisions; its fate is related to the end of the relationship; in the words of Abdul, Warda's brother: "Lo de ustedes (Jon y Warda) durará lo que dure el Alción" (*U.E.T.S* 98). The connection between the end of the Alción and their relationship, as well as some of the poetic meanings of the steamer, is borrowed from Conrad's concept of the brig *Bonito* in his story *Freya of the Seven Isles*.⁷⁶ The brig too is the lovers' "house of dreams" (Conrad 168-9). In Mutis' story, the steamer is essential to Warda and Jon since the narrator describes first his several encounters with the steamer in Helsinki, Bahía de Nicoya, Kingston and the Orinoco River. Each scene is later connected to a corresponding stage of Warda and Jon's relationship. The boat is a house that moves; a living

⁷⁶ [...] Dependent on things as all men are, Jasper loved his vessel – the house of his dreams; he lent to her something of Freya's soul. Her deck was the foothold of their love. The possession of his brig appeased his passion in a soothing certitude of happiness already conquered. (168-9)

space, such as Warda and Jon's journey is. Their love is a moving experience, and their insights on their selves are part of a ritual that will come to an end.

The Alción, is the sacred space for their being together. Thus love in this novel is seen according to poetry, and the title of the novel, *La Última Escala del Tramp Steamer*, could be interpreted, curiously, as the last scale, rather than the last port, if the word is interpreted as one of the Dante's circles in the *Divina Commedia*. It is not an accident that the narrator's first impression of Jon is that he was in "algún sitio semejante a los círculos del infierno de Dante, pero en donde los suplicios, en lugar de físicos, hubieran sido de un orden mental particularmente doloroso" (*U.E.T.S* 45). Thus, the hell or death the narrator recognizes speaks of the lover's fate once they are no longer together: "Jon Iturri en verdad dejó de existir. A la sombra que anda por el mundo con su nombre nada puede afectarle ya" (*U.E.T.S* 58). For Mutis, love also connotes fatality; Jon is the victim of either "la suerte o la desventura" of love as "una experiencia arrasadora" ("Entrevista a Álvaro Mutis". Interview by Sonia Grande). The narrator's last sight of the Alción also has symbolic meaning, one that does not only foretell the couple's end, but in a wider context, also foretells the death of the forgotten other. For instance, he speaks of the Alción as a beloved friend that is coming to an end, thus, elevated poetic expression will no longer be possible: "Nuestro modesto infierno en vida no da ya para ser material de la más alta poesía" (*U.E.T.S* 35). There is a suggestion that beautiful and genuine love stories can only occur within the realms of poetry.

Therefore, since love is the main theme of this novella, it becomes a challenge for poetry. It is the story of two people's encountering their own humanity in the experience of becoming

one with the other. The encounter with death is what brings revelation; it happens through people's opening to a self they do not dare see anymore, and poetry is there to witness the revelation of the human spirit.

As I discussed in the first chapter, the courtly love tradition, *unio mystica* is considered a source of self-knowledge, which is also analogous to the importance of the flesh in Christian mysticism. Jon suggests this idea in his description of Warda's nakedness I quoted earlier (88), that spiritual realities are revealed through matter (Canfield "La Poética De Alvaro Mutis" 36). However, if according to the narrator the poetic self-symbolized by the Alción is disowned by humans: "Lo sentí [al Tramp Steamer] como un hermano desdichado, como una víctima de la desidia y avidez de los hombres, a las que él respondía con su terca voluntad de seguir trazando sobre todos los mares la deslucida estela de sus lacerías" (*U.E.T.S* 19), what enables Warda and Jon to live "something" similar to the tormented love stories that Mutis refers to at the beginning of the novel? What connects them to the steamer?

Warda and Jon foster the poetic self in themselves. Their personality, their approach to silence, to the painful certainty that they will separate and the intensity of their experience correspond to a notion of life as a journey. Like Tristan and Isolde, they fear the end of the relationship, and such fear is the main obstacle:

Jon no resistió la tentación de hacerle la pregunta que, desde que existen amantes, ocurre sin remedio: "¿Pero eso quiere decir que no nos veremos más?" Warda le contestó de inmediato con un sobresalto tan espontáneo y sincero, que Iturri sintió un nudo en la garganta: "¡No, por Dios!, no se trata de eso. Ahora no podría soportar ni siquiera la idea de no vernos más. (*U.E.T.S* 101)

Mutis shapes the lovers' characters according to this human condition that can foster the poetic spell.⁷⁷ Jon, for instance, is described both as a man who is faithful to his Basque heritage, to a tradition that shapes his character, and he is at the same time someone who travels and explores spaces that are unknown to his people. There is a respect for traditions as well as a quest for the unknown, and such a duality has poetic undertones. The narrator describes Jon as a "vasco típico" (*U.E.T.S* 45) and further recognizes Jon's vocation for the quest despite his profound respect for his Basque roots: "Son rebeldes, es cierto, y nada conformistas, pero suelen morir en su ley" (*U.E.T.S* 51). Jon states that even though he never took risks in regard to his job as a captain: "acabé siendo socio y capitán de un *Tramp Steamer* que daba la impresión de irse a pique de un momento a otro. No he visto esperpento semejante" (*U.E.T.S* 51). Jon's strength derives from his people's teachings and rules; his decision to be the captain of the steamer comes from his love for Warda, from his desire to travel and to seek out the unknown.

But it is a vision that tells us Jon is linked to the steamer, since poet and sailor have the same meaning in Mutis' work (Volkening and Mutis 13) . Both are old travellers who seek out an unknown horizon. The narrator's first description of him expresses the idea that such a capability comes from an enduring experience:

Los ojos grises, casi ocultos por las pobladas cejas, tenían esa mirada característica de quien ha pasado buena parte de su vida en el mar. Miran fijamente al interlocutor, pero dan siempre la impresión de no perder de vista una lejanía, un supuesto horizonte, indeterminado pero siempre presente. (*U.E.T.S* 44)

⁷⁷It could also be the other way around, that love makes them have a poetic spell. It is analogous to Lewis's linking love to being courteous: "only the courteous can love, but it is love that makes them courteous" (2).

Afterwards we are told, Jon cannot bear his life without Warda and that he looks forward to death. Jon hopes that his love might live through other beings: “Ésta [historia] que me ha sucedido terminará cuando yo termine y quién sabe si tal vez, entonces, continúe viviendo en otros seres” (*U.E.T.S* 108). The phrase “continúe viviendo en otros seres” has historical and cultural implications, for it also means the story lives on to other times, in other people. The possibility of another life is in him, too.

Mutis sets up his idea of the love tradition through the lovers’ national past and also how in both cases it relates to the American continent.⁷⁸ Later I will discuss the historical connections between the lovers’ nationalities and Spanish America. However at this point I will focus on how Warda’s religious quest gives her a vision for her love experience with Jon. In my view, Mutis explores the dialogue between two cultures from the spiritual insights of the lovers’ legacy.

At the beginning of our acquaintance with Warda as a character, we can see her as someone with business acumen. The first scene where Jon recognizes her beauty and intelligence leaves the impression that Warda is perfect. Nevertheless, as the pages go by, we see her dialogue with Jon explore their cultural condition, and she warns him not to see her as being more intelligent than she is (*U.E.T.S* 81). Shortly afterwards, the author shows Warda’s

⁷⁸ It seems to me that “navegantes sin estrella” refers to the archeological evidence that strongly suggests Basque sailors were in the American continent prior to the coming of Christopher Columbus.

awareness of her own spirituality. We can see what her brother Abdul says is true, that she is the most Muslim of her sisters (*U.E.T.S* 98), and that her sense of religion goes beyond a scheme of negotiation with rules. Warda is going through a “European experience”, and from the start there is the idea she is trying to examine herself, to explore her cultural beliefs before making crucial life decisions: “Digamos que soy conservadora pero que quiero decidir qué es lo que voy a conservar, sin consultarlo con los demás ni esperar su aprobación” (*U.E.T.S* 76). But as time passes, she forgets about this experience and enters another stage, “le confesó que la pretendida educación europea se había ido al cuerno” because she preferred to be with Jon (*U.E.T.S* 87). However, once the novel approaches its end, she reveals she is not so much preoccupied with her European experience, but more about her quest for a truth she wishes to see and understand: “Toda la clave de mi problema y, en general, el de muchos musulmanes: una sumisión superficial a preceptos con los que nos acostumbramos a negociar y el olvido a ciertas verdades esenciales.” (*U.E.T.S* 94).

For Warda, religion brings an understanding of what it is to be valued in life, since religion offers a perception of life from a perspective of the sacred. What does this relationship to the sacred tell us about Warda? I will attempt to answer this question through María Zambrano’s concept of how a god mirrors a specific culture:

Una cultura depende de la calidad de sus Dioses, de la configuración que lo divino haya tomado frente al hombre, de la relación declarada y de la encubierta, de todo lo que permite haga en su nombre y, aún más, de la contienda posible entre el hombre, su adorador, y esa realidad; de la exigencia y de la gracia que el alma humana a través de la imagen divina se otorga a sí misma. (Zambrano 27)

Warda embraces a religion that has given her a place in the world, and an understanding of the sacred. In that sense, Jon foresees the outcomes of Warda's quest in what he interprets as a warning he overlooked initially. She will return to her sacred order which is meant for those who travel through the desert:

Sí, ahora tomo vodka y hago el amor con un *rumi*, pero cada día me siento más ajena y desinteresada de Europa y entiendo mejor a mis hermanos que viajan a La Meca sin saber leer ni escribir, sin conocer el vino y resignados al castigo del desierto. (*U.E.T.S* 94)

Warda's quest starts from the "European experience", in her relationship with Jon, and finally she prefers to see the essential precepts of her religion in those believers who travel through the desert. Her understanding comes from acknowledging what really matters to her: her love experience with Jon, and the insight into death that it brings. After all, she is conscious of death when she seeks to make love to Jon as if it were the last day, for her love is real and essential for her existence. "Hicimos el amor una y otra vez con la lenta minuciosidad de quienes no saben lo que va a suceder mañana" (*U.E.T.S* 88). It could be interpreted as *Carpe Diem*, but like in *The Romance of Tristan*, the lovers' fear of losing each other and the certainty that they will separate unavoidably makes them look straight at death. While in *The Romance of Tristan* there is a fear of death in sin, there is also a hope that God would understand those who genuinely love each other. Yet, passion arises from fear and uncertainty.

Mutis's depiction of Warda's reflection on her religion in the believers' search for spiritual plenitude, Jon's suggestion of metempsychosis when speaking of the possibility that his story of love could continue to exist in other beings, the narrator's connection of Jon's falling in

love with the love potions of his ancestors all create the idea that Warda and Jon hold the spiritual concerns of their separate cultures. As I pointed out earlier, Warda and Jon's destinies were shaped according to the image of the steamer, within the context of their nationalities and culture. In this regard, I believe Mutis is giving his view that the literary love he mentions at the start of the novel, is linked to a spiritual and cultural heritage he recognizes in Jon and Warda.

His choice of Warda and Jon speaks of his understanding of a dialogue between Basque (European) and Lebanese (Arabic) cultures. The characters frequently speak as if they represented their culture, though the dialogues are more focused on Warda's opinions of Western culture (*U.E.T.S* 74, 76, 82). Her Arabic background is often referred to by Jon Iturri, who sees her as a representative of her culture:

Ahora no consigo reconstruir la material de nuestros diálogos. Recuerdo, sí, que estos tenían, por virtud del carácter de mi amiga, un tono sosegado y pleno en donde la anécdota y la sorpresa cedían el paso al examen y la asimilación de nuestra personal imagen del mundo y de la gente. Warda tenía, repito, algo de pitonisa. Avanzaba en la semivigilia de sus sensaciones con la firmeza de un sonámbulo. En esto era tan plenamente oriental como cualquier genio de las Mil y una Noches. (*U.E.T.S* 89)

By choosing them to let them speak to each other, the author is giving us his view on an important and yet unresolved debate on the Arabic heritage within the courtly love tradition. Even though a plausible theory like parallelism of universal archetypes has ruled out the Arab and other influences as original, this theory could be better confirmed once there is a greater

understanding of the Hispanic –Arabic poetry (Menocal).⁷⁹ At the meantime, I say that Mutis’s support for this view can be also linked to his laudatory poetry on the Arabic and Jewish thinkers and writers of the Andalusian age.

This aspect explains Mutis’ condition as a Spanish American writer since he is more likely to take into account the historical influence of the “Three Religion Spain” discussed in chapter one. This aside, Mutis has openly favored the Spanish legacy in his historical approach to the Spanish colonization of America which can be perceived in the author’s celebration of the Andalusian religious and philosophical heritage. Mutis’ comments on the poem, *Una Calle de Córdoba*, points to what he highly regards in a culture: “Plenitud, que me da, la noción de estar frente a lo milagroso. Frente a lo mejor que pudo dar un pueblo o una religión” (“Entrevista a Álvaro Mutis”. Interview by Conget and Chang). I believe Mutis’s favoring of the Arabic heritage is a result of his exploration of spiritual traditions from what is understood in the old and the new world.

This relates to Mutis being considered a Europeanized writer (Martin "Maqroll Versus Macondo" 3). I would agree that this author finds himself within the major trends of European literature, but as I have pointed out already, his perspective is not only European in this case.

It is also Spanish American which is a culture that is inextricably tied up with its historical

⁷⁹ Mutis’s choice of an Arab woman as the beloved of his story cannot be separated from the present cultural debate on the Arabic theory of courtly love. There is a view that power issues that have seriously affected research on the origins of courtly love lyrics and its Arabic imprint. For instance, Menocal points out that the ideological sense of the communal western self would be challenged if revisionism of heritage occurs (9). The author states that the literary studies on courtly love illustrate how preconceived images in favor of the only European origin of the vernacular lyric act upon scholars (71). She says troubadours’ poetry has been central since it is perceived “as being the originator of a whole branch of European literature” (72). Nevertheless, she says that despite the hard labor dedicated to finding the answer on the origins of the Provençal lyric “[the answer] is still as dark and mysterious in many ways as it once was” (72).

and cultural precedents. For instance, Mutis's vision of the Jewish and Arab heritage of Spanish culture is of praise when referring to the poem *Una calle de Córdoba*, where he speaks of "our Jewish heritage": "Tú sabes mejor que nadie de donde viene. Nuestra herencia judía" (Sefamí and Mutis 138), and on the Muslim one he says:

La sangre Musulmana que corre por toda persona que tenga sangre española, en mí siempre se carga de esta fatalidad. Eso no explica sino parcialmente ese destino mío de no tener tierra, de haber comenzado la niñez en un sitio de haber continuado en otro. (Balza, Medina and Mutis 75)

Thus, I would suggest Mutis gives us a cultural discussion on the love tradition when choosing characters that share a common heritage with Latin America.

However, this reading would differ from Gerald Martin's view of Mutis within the context of Latin American literature. The critic states that the writer is not typically Latin American according to his use of the Spanish language and Maqroll's condition as a foreigner: "He [Maqroll] is not evidently a Latin American, and does not- at first sight- represent anything particularly Latin American in character. Like postmodern fiction as a whole, he is thoroughly deterritorialized" (Martin "Maqroll Versus Macondo" 4).⁸⁰ I think this matter of national features could be misleading. Even though nobody knows Maqroll's nationality, his bond to the "tierras calientes" is clear in Mutis' first poems such as *Reseña de Hospitales de Ultramar* (*Summa*).⁸¹ But Mutis' territoriality should be traced through other paradigms which derive

⁸⁰ There are other statements akin to Martin's: "Maqroll is a stand-in for that part of us which, trapped in a postmodern world characterized by emptiness and meaninglessness, wishes to break free and find some authenticity, whatever the cost may be" (Siemens 31).

⁸¹ Mutis explains the presence of his childhood memories in his condition as a poet and a man of "la tierras calientes". See: (Mutis *Mutis, Escritor*.)

from the Spanish American spiritual heritage. Jon and Warda's discussion on their being heirs of cultures they perhaps no longer understand, is related to Mutis' own exploration of the said spiritual legacy, his nostalgia of myth and "la naturaleza autoreflexiva y refinadamente erudita de la escritura de Mutis" (Bizzarri 284).

Up until now, I have referred to how *La Última Escala del Tramp Steamer* develops the idea of love as a poetic experience. The lovers relate to their body and erotic desire as transcendent in their vision of life and death: their quest is metaphysical. Yet, this is the kind of story that could be interpreted as ideal, or not real. Therefore, my question is now, how does Mutis' link the courtly tradition to reality?

The narrator has a statement on reality that is associated with his fears that the steamer would come to an end:

La vida hace, a menudo, ciertos ajustes de cuentas que no es aconsejable pasar por alto. Son como balances que nos ofrece para que no nos perdamos muy adentro en el mundo de los sueños y la fantasía y sepamos volver a la cálida y cotidiana secuencia del tiempo en donde en verdad sucede nuestro destino. (*U.E.T.S* 20)

The statement can be interpreted as if the lovers were coming out from the poetic experience of love, from its madness, and the space of the wilderness. The lovers leave the steamer that is cherished by Warda; they must leave their space of dreams in order to return to reality. The narrator's words can be taken for the answer to the question I raised earlier.

Nevertheless, as I pointed out in the first chapter, for each vision of reality there is also an underlying ideology. Though *The Romance of Tristan* and other versions might be framed in a world of dreams, more idealistic as opposed to real, it finally acknowledges reality instead. The lovers are challenged by the common rules and the demands that others place upon them, like that of respecting the institution of marriage.

Tristan and Isolde's journey to the wilderness occurs while the love potion is still effective.⁸² Once it wears off, Isolde soon realizes she cannot live like a nomad, and that she cannot continue hiding. She needs all the comfort she used to have; therefore she decides to return to King Mark:

She kept repeating to herself: Alas, miserable woman!
 How you have wasted your youth!
 You are living in the forest like a serf,
 With no one to serve you here.
 I am a queen,
 But I have lost that title
 Because of the potion we drank at sea. (2201-7)

⁸² The love potion is an important archetype that speaks of the limitations of the love madness. According to Lacy, some versions of the Tristan and Iseut story have a three year potion whereas it is of unlimited times in others. The question on the potion relates to how long the lovers can endure being apart from reality.(xvi)

Indeed, there is a suggestion that a love journey of this kind, can hardly last in the context of pragmatic reality (Bérroul xvi).⁸³ There is also the question of whether the potion relates to a passage from conscious to unconscious love (Hatto 27).

The wilderness, which has dream-like connotations of a sacred space where lovers have a mystic experience, the love-union,⁸⁴ is an important symbol that evokes the “cave of lovers”,⁸⁵ but it is a temporary event in the lovers’ journey. In the case of Mutis’s novella, this space is the steamer, a companion for the lovers’ meeting in several ports, a situation that will not last long.

Mutis gives Warda the possibility of embracing freedom before she chooses to return to her own cultural context. For her, this journey is a window through which to see her lifetime decision of settling into her culture. Nevertheless, as she states, though her European experience (which is hidden from her family) could be interpreted as rebellious, it is in fact motivated by a desire for knowledge: “Mis hermanas, con esposo las dos, son las típicas

⁸³ “[The lovers] regret the fact the potion has deprived them of a life of comfort and luxury. Their concerns are more material than moral. Furthermore, once the crisis has passed, they promptly revert to their customary behavior, their meetings casting serious doubt on their desire to reform and removing any suspicion that their love may have waned with the potion” (Lacy xvi).

⁸⁴ Here I understand mystic in the non-orthodox way that is attributed to the courtly love tradition, as related to the Christian religion. Soul and flesh become one. This soul-body relationship became the main concern of the 12th-century theologians and mystics when dealing with the orthodox view of the flesh as being evil. In that sense, the courtly love tradition is said to be non-orthodox.

According to Scholem, A concept of mysticism depends on how a specific culture connects with the sacred (6, 9). Christian Catholics, this connection occurs through the body and the soul of Christ in the communion of the bread and wine.

⁸⁵ The Cave of Lovers which belongs to the wilderness is described with shapes, colors and objects that reflect medieval iconography according to Hatto’s explanation cited earlier. In Von Strassburg’s *Tristan* it is described as follows: “The cavern had been hewn into the wild mountain in heathen times, before Corynaeus’s day, when giants ruled there. They used to hide inside it when, desiring to make love, they needed privacy. Wherever such a cavern was found it was barred by a door of bronze ... The story tells us this grotto was round, broad, high, and perpendicular, snow white, smooth, and even throughout its whole circumference” (Hatto 261).

mujeres resignadas que siguen con fingido interés los negocios de sus maridos ... Tal vez quiera un destino semejante al de mis hermanas, pero escogido por mí” (*U.E.T.S* 75).

Thus, what she calls at that moment “her European experience” turns into an existential and cultural exploration. She undergoes an initiation ritual, and Jon Iturri is not only her companion and master for this transformation: he is several years older than she; he is her lover, and someone who cares for her interests. Mutis portrays Warda as a heroine who takes a decision to acquire knowledge at this initial stage. She shows confidence in her Arabic identity, but she wishes to return to that reality, not from a thoughtless and pragmatic submission to rules (*U.E.T.S* 94), but from having a substantial understanding of her religion. Her decision is predictable since her brother warned that she would return to her own culture. Her nostalgia for home occurs during her stay in Caribbean waters:

Warda comenzó a trabajar una nostalgia de su país y de su gente que iba en aumento a medida que más se familiarizaba con los encantos del Caribe ... Creo que ha llegado el momento de regresar a mi país y de ver a mi gente ... [La vida itinerante] la siento como algo que me va desgastando por dentro, que mina ciertas corrientes secretas que me sostienen y que tienen que ver con mi gente y con mi país; eres el hombre con el que siempre había pensado que podría vivir, tienes cualidades que son las que más admiro, pero llevas mucho andando en la vida y nada puede ya cambiarse. (*U.E.T.S* 100-1)

Like the narrator’s account on reality I quoted earlier, Warda is balancing her dreamlike life “la vida itinerante” she has lived on the steamer, and the family life she must return to. She cannot continue to live in the emblematic space of their love, however ideal it might be, for she now longs for roots that are substantial for her well-being. When she says “ciertas

corrientes secretas que me sostienen”, referenced above, she expresses her need for the firm ground of her nation. Her reflection regards to her origins, her culture. In this manner, her brother Abdul’s words become fact, and the lovers are faced with their separation.

Compared to Warda’s journey, Jon is left with the glimpse of the possibility of encountering her towards the end of his life, thus, fearing the loss of his memory of her once he dies. Eternal love for Jon is the hope that his memories of her could defeat death. Jon bears witness to his own fatal condition (*U.E.T.S* 108).

Their journey is a time and a space for lovers to seek for those truths that prove to be fundamental for them. That is also what the Tristan story tells us about the initiation rite that was known by the medieval audience such as the madness of love. Their going together in the search of their essential truths enables them to change their vision of that reality they will undertake again. The poetic experience of love allows them to come to terms with themselves. In the case of Warda, it seems to be an apotheosis, a moment of enlightenment that prepares the hero for the return to the real world. Warda’s journey with Jon ultimately brings her to the spirituality of her religion. Her compassion for the true believers who travel to Mecca, tells us she has obtained the meaningfulness she has been searching for. Warda’s experience could be analysed according to Campbell’s myth-analytical approach to the hero’s journey. Her new insight on the true believers can relate to the stage when the hero returns to the world and “regards compassion all sentient creatures suffering the evils of existence” (Campbell *The Hero* 149-50). But according to this author, return to the world is dangerous once apotheosis has been reached: “Even the Buddah, after his triumph, doubted whether the message of

realization could be communicated” (*The Hero* 193). All we know as readers is that Warda had to return home before she expected, and that she had the assurance she had control over her life. On what happened to her afterwards we do not know. Mutis prefers not to develop Warda’s further stages or “paths” that would correspond to the hero’s journey and her (possible) apotheosis or fulfillment is not shown to us.⁸⁶

Thus, love as a poetic experience cannot simply be described as ideal or utopian. Its impossibility has more to do with acknowledging reality, as can be seen in Warda’s thoughts concerning their imminent separation. On the other hand, this space of “dreams” or “poetry” as the author recalls is more associated with a spiritual exploration of the cultures in question. It is an archetype that shows one dimension of humanity, one that depends on the lovers’ willingness to take a journey through their inner selves.

Mutis is well aware of the importance of travelling within the novel. He develops a sequence of images that symbolize different stages of the initiation rites: “The heroes of all times have gone before us; the labyrinth is thoroughly known; we have only to follow the thread of the hero-path” (Campbell *The Hero* 25). As travellers and lovers, Warda and Jon wish to acquire wisdom before going back to the “real time”, “el tiempo en donde en verdad sucede nuestro destino” (*U.E.T.S* 20). For Warda, her love experience with Jon is an education that helps her look into herself and her culture, and for Jon it was the revelation of the transcendent images

⁸⁶Mutis does not develop further stages as other stories do. For instance, in the film *The Sheltering Sky* (Bertolucci), lovers’ separation is pursued through the woman’s travelling through the several hero-paths. The husband dies and his wife enters a labyrinth stage, and turns into madness. The whole film is set in the 20th century but it shows several symbolic icons like the loss of identity, the lovers’ journey through the desert, the tower, the fort, that were well known to the audience of the Middle Ages, and that are not very likely to be well recognized in this time.

he would keep beyond death. The poetic space does not contest reality, but rather brings a vision of it.

On women, masculinity and marriage: the ideological trend of *The Romance of Tristan* in Mutis's novel:

At the beginning of this chapter I stressed that *La última Escala del Tramp Steamer* is a development of *The Romance of Tristan* and that it follows some images and ideological precepts of the courtly romance. So far I have pointed out some images of the beloved and some sequences of the lover's story that can relate to the Tristan and Isolde story in terms of its poetic and ideological grounds as it is interpreted and recreated by Álvaro Mutis.

Mutis's treatment of female characters in the novella has resembled something that has been recognized in the courtly romance in terms of a humanization of the flesh, the parity of women compared to their male lovers, and, the recognition of their freedom to decide their sexual life despite marriage conventions and prohibitions. In my opinion, Mutis recalls that very same context that preoccupied the medieval audiences in regard to the injustice women suffered in marriage: "women were weak creatures who had necessarily to be subjugated because they were naturally depraved, that they were destined to serve man in marriage" (Duby 25). Thus, Mutis too continues the critical tendency of the courtly romance.

Mutis develops the Tristan and Isolde story when bringing humanizing aspects of this trend to the depiction of female characters, and in the portrayal of masculinity⁸⁷ that questions patriarchal assumptions on women. He does so by delving into the characters' personalities. His story develops the critical view of marriage as in the courtly romances. Despite the historical and chronological gap from medieval times, this view remains almost the same, evidenced by his portrayal of the married couple's crisis.

In the past section on Jon's description of Warda, I stressed that the narrator endeavored to express Warda's beauty in terms of her body and the clothes she wears, her gestures, her speech, her wit for business negotiations, her Arabic accent, her self-confidence and her intellectual concern for her cultural context. Warda's image here resembles that of Sapientia and her philosophical meanings which are linked to the worship of women in the courtly love tradition. Nevertheless, such perfectionism could be interpreted as misogynistic since the demand for perfection in women is a way of relieving women's image as evil or non-intelligent (Bloch 29). These are the images of perfection according to the orthodox trend of the courtly tradition:

Put it in its simplest forms, the sine qua non of desire - that is, of a woman's being loved - is that she be perfect. Yet the condition of her perfection is that she be self-sufficient, self-contained, complete - or that, being desired, she herself should not desire... To be loved, according to the logic of the courtly tradition, the woman must be indifferent, unattainable, unsullied—in short, a virgin. (Bloch 147)

⁸⁷ My analysis on Maqroll's masculinity is based on its relation to patriarchy on one hand, and on the ideological perspective it has on gender relations according to the text and references. I will follow John MacInnes statement that links masculinity itself with patriarchy: "the concepts of gender and masculinity are problematic because they originated in the struggle to defend patriarchy, not to demolish it" (77). The author stresses the ideological aspect of masculinity and expresses that recent research to legitimate sexual division is misleading, because "masculinity cannot exist as the property of a person; it can only be a social ideology" (77).

Unlike the above precepts, Warda does not fulfill the requirement of chastity that is associated with perfection. She told Jon that she had had several lovers, and besides that, she did not feel ashamed or repentant at all “No crea mucho en eso de la vigilancia musulmana. He tenido varios hombres en mi vida. *No regrets*” (*U.E.T.S* 83). And in regard to her intelligence, she takes a step ahead and subtly criticizes his perhaps exaggerated worship of her when regarding her intelligence as unusual: “No sé por qué me adjudica una inteligencia mayor que la normal” (*U.E.T.S* 81). Given Jon’s admiration, it is reasonable to view his idealization of her as caused by his desire. His making her an epitome of the Arabic culture is shown in that same conversation when she says: “Pero, en fin, nosotros llegamos a Europa con ojos muy ingenuos” (*U.E.T.S* 81), has more to do with his insane love for her, and with his intense love and admiration of her culture.

On the other hand, her frankness with regard to herself is consistent with the sensibility and truthfulness to herself that he acknowledges throughout the novella. Warda openly tells him about her private life and her sincerity could shake deeply rooted paradigms of purity and chastity men have with regard to women. If perfectionism is linked to woman’s chastity and strict obedience of rules, Warda would not be “perfect” and neither would Isolde. Yet, her being able to speak frankly to him tells us something about Jon and his masculinity:⁸⁸ he can be linked to the enlightened hero who recognizes and understands the woman before him.

⁸⁸ To assess Jon’s and Maqroll’s masculinity I will follow the patriarchal assumptions on men’s role and the way they as characters, relate or contradict it. In regard to contemporary politics of masculinity, Connell states: “Men receive much emotional support from women without social obligation to reciprocate. Heterosexuality is socially organized to prioritize men’s pleasure, in personal relationships as well as sexualized mass media. A double standard legitimates men’s sexual freedom and a commercial sex industry services it” (247).

What can be seen as an image of perfection is interpreted by Gina Ponce de León as Mutis's attempt to create a "new woman", a sort of utopic character who fails to be convincing. In her study of Mutis' view of women in *Ilona llega con la Lluvia* and *La Última Escala del Tramp Steamer*, the critic discusses a view on utopia and anarchy of women in these works of fiction, and endeavors to compare Ilona of *Ilona llega con la Lluvia* with Warda Bashur in terms of these values of freedom and choice. Ilona stands up for her anarchic attitude and Warda is seen as a failed character who is less fit than Ilona. According to Ponce, Warda Bashur loses identity and connection with reality:

La imagen anarquista en dirección a la representación feminista es una nueva actitud del narrador hacia la exploración del ámbito femenino que le preocupa; no obstante, la nueva percepción de la mujer no se sostiene y termina abandonada [...] Warda Bashur, pierde su identidad y se convierte en una lejana proyección de Ilona. (106)

Ponce's reading does not take the issue of the love story into account at any moment. However, I am interested in Ponce's assessment of female and male characters within the grounds of the challenges of gender and on what she considers as Mutis' utopia. It seems to me that the critic's comparison to Ilona is misleading since Warda is more connected to other purposes. Ilona is shaped according to Mutis's exploration of people "al final de la cuerda" referred to by him in an interview: "A mí me interesan profundamente esas situaciones límites, esa gente que está - repitamos esa frase que no es de Conrad, sino de la Marina Inglesa - 'al final de la cuerda'. Esas personas que ya no tienen nada que perder ni nada que ganar, que ya lo jugaron todo" (Balza, Medina and Mutis 77). The author explores the marginal situations where characters like Ilona can get into. The story of Ilona and his

business associates suggests Mutis' concern for those who are submerged in unlawful spaces (Poniatowska and Mutis 125). But the matter is different with Warda, since she embodies a cultural discussion between the Arabic and European heritage to the West as I pointed out earlier in this chapter. Her distance from seeming rebelliousness against her Arabic life style is nothing but a way of pursuing the truths and essential concepts of her religion. Thus, contrary to Ilona who is "al final de la cuerda", someone who has nothing to lose, Warda seeks to know her place before she commits to it. Warda is concerned with being conscious of her decisions when she says she is a conservative person who wishes to know what she wants to keep. (*U.E.T.S* 94)

The fact Warda is shaped according to an ennobling view of women, one that is analogous to the courtly tradition, might explain why she might be conceived of as a utopian character or as not connected to reality. I would agree with Ponce de León that this character is marked by the author's own views on women who stand up for themselves, though not the same ones the critic refers to in her work. I think Warda's features also are rooted in Mutis's exploration with Warda's spirituality, one that is key to her condition as a lover and beloved, and to her embodiment of a cultural voice. I think this aspect sometimes overrides her concern of looking for more psychological truths and motivations.

However, though Warda is praised as beautiful and intelligent which could be perhaps seen as utopian, Mutis also presents her through some realistic features of her flirting. The narrator describes Jon and Warda's relationship in terms of flirting games, picaresque approaches that she agrees to play games with him in order to get the "galantería" or "nice phrases" she

expects from him: “Siempre había en las palabras de Warda como una escondida invitación a que le contestara con una galantería” (*U.E.T.S* 73).

Warda’s inner quest is as individual as it is cultural, for her decisions are linked to the European-Arabic context. For instance, she sees a particular sexual experience she had through her opposing views on the “guilt” imposed by the Protestant religion, and her comment is strikingly ethnocentric on her part: “No soporto a esos nórdicos ... y, por lo poco que recuerdo de una fugaz relación que tuve, aman con toda la culpa protestante adentro” (*U.E.T.S* 92-3). In this sense, I will say Mutis seeks to shake some misconceptions of women in the Muslim world, and sets out a possible space for discussion, setting up his own religious and cultural exercise. Warda embodies a voice of the Arabic spiritual heritage viewed from the present time. Moreover, she may be seen as the beloved one according to the Arabic influence in the love poetry of the West I pointed out in earlier pages.

It is my view that her character should not be read according to a psychological exploration as is the case with Ilona. This novel mainly develops its characters through images, and Warda should be seen as an image of the beloved according to Mutis’s sense of the poetic self. She is a woman who has reached independence, an heir of the Arabic culture, she is a heroine who has gone through a sequence of trials during her love experience. And in this way, this novella is more like *The Romance of Tristan* that is devoted to images that were widely understood by the audience of the Middle Ages, and not through the psychological analysis that would be more expected in narratives of today.

Mutis's treatment of Warda as a woman in her spiritual quest and in her cultural voice is a condition that would be more expected in a male character, and speaks of Mutis' recognition of an overall human condition that does not depend on gender. His view of Warda as a female character is more focused on the images of the beloved woman and in his view of her educational and economic independence. As readers, it is through Jon's commentaries on Warda as the woman/other, and their interaction as lovers, that we know about Jon's masculinity.

Unlike the "machista" model which expresses Florentino's determination to be the one to decide, to have the last word in regard to women, Jon Iturri is a man who does not live according to that scheme. A sense of masculinity that questions hegemony over women as a way of being sexually successful necessarily corresponds to a critical view of patriarchy. Jon follows different pathways; he prefers to be true to himself. His views on his own age, his race, his job and his failures shape a corresponding masculinity that does not seem preoccupied with hegemony. Therefore, this authenticity enables him to assume love without being concerned about issues of power like being competitive in terms of number of his female conquests. Iturri says: "Nunca he sido un hombre con mucho éxito entre las mujeres. Yo creo que las aburro un poco" (*U.E.T.S* 112). Also, he connects with Maqroll's egalitarian approach to women, since he admires Warda's self confidence in her own life even though her behaviour does not accord with the traditional expectations of female conduct: "Jon estaba sorprendido por la forma como Warda hablaba de sí misma con una inteligencia y una objetividad no sólo poco femeninas" (*U.E.T.S* 76). Yet, the author seems not to agree with it and says immediately afterwards: "al menos así se lo parecían a él". In that sense, Mutis's female characters adjust to the present status of women in this age, who decide their own

lives, while a male character like Jon Iturri can accept the masculine-feminine complexity in women's personality.

Jon's conception of his own self is akin to Maqroll's fictional world. Maqroll, who is the main character of Mutis's stories and is also present in *La última escala del Tramp Steamer*, embodies Mutis's concepts of the self. Compared to Tristan, Maqroll and Jon are also interested in pursuing their love experience rather than proving their leadership over women. In regard to other aspects of manhood, Tristan proves his prestige as a man when succeeding in defeating his enemies and working his will against them. He too, proves noble when respecting his uncle King Mark despite his being his rival in the love triangle. Compared to Don Juan, there is no such a thing as proving manhood through women. In this regard, there are some similarities and differences between Maqroll and Jon. Maqroll and his friends resemble Tristan in that they are more concerned with their individuality and their journey experience than they are with proving their manhood. Their manhood can be inferred from their concept of themselves, from the way they relate to others, and to the women they love. For instance, Maqroll's existential concept of himself corresponds to an approach to women:

Women are of great significance to him-sexual pleasure and communion, as Consuelo Hernandez has pointed out, are a counterbalance to the chaos and deterioration of the world as perceived by Maqroll-yet he establishes no permanent liaisons, and it is not always circumstance that separates him from the women he loves; I have called him a romantic figure, yet the perplexities and complications of his nature make him realistic in the highest sense of the word. (Grossman 28)

In this regard, Maqroll reflects a concept of masculinity that relates to issues of stability and "success". It is not an accident that Maqroll does not aim to control the woman he loves nor is

he preoccupied with patriarchal impositions on being successful; there is a philosophical ideal behind this. Mutis' view of the "loser" is at the core of this character. According to José María Conget:

[El Gaviero] Es un hombre melancólico, es un hombre abocado al fracaso permanentemente y él lo sabe...cada vez que le ofrecen una aventura, él se apunta a ella. Aventuras a las que siempre le van a dar un dinero que no le interesa y que sospecha que le va a ir mal. ("Entrevista a Álvaro Mutis". Interview by Conget and Chang)

Thus, his actions are not that concerned with aims or purposes, but with what human experience entails. This vision of experience as a quest has close implications for his relationship with women and friends in general as can be seen, for instance, in Jon's and Warda's dialogue and sense of intimacy. In regard to Conget's commentary, Mutis confirms Maqroll's nature as a loser from a philosophical perspective, and clarifies that he is not an adventurer, since human experience is for him, an act of exploration:

[El gaviero]. Él se sumerge en la experiencia, porque sabe que si no, se muere, que nunca podrá ser un espectador neutral, un hombre al margen, un hombre de reposo...Él sabe que va a fracasar, pero es que jamás para él el éxito ha sido importante. Yo he sido, además un gran admirador, y un gran atento a los perdedores, a mí los vencedores me causan una sospecha terrible. Porque siempre he pensado que el vencedor está ebrio de su victoria, y no está viendo nada. Él que perdió, que está recostado en el muro mientras el vencedor desfila, es el que sabe qué es lo que va a pasar, por qué perdió, y cómo a lo largo del tiempo el vencedor acabará en sus manos. ("Entrevista a Álvaro Mutis". Interview by Conget and Chang)

Paradoxically, Mutis' view of the loser entails a final triumph.⁸⁹ Maqroll is conceived as the hero who comes from failure to understanding, and that explains the last phrase "el vencedor acabará en sus manos". Furthermore, his sense of masculinity is more like that of a man who pursues enlightenment, who sees the rites of passage as a source of strength. It can be inferred that for Maqroll, the issue of "dominating women" is an illusion, a suspicious aim. His masculinity wins in terms of understanding. Campbell explains how the hero reflects himself in the woman as a mirror in the quote in the next passage "by deficient eyes she is", "by the evil eye of ignorance". The man's sense of self thus creates a corresponding image in the woman:

Woman, in the picture language of mythology, represents the totality of what can be known. The hero is the one who comes to know ... Woman is the guide to the sublime acme of sensuous adventure. By deficient eyes she is reduced to inferior states; by the evil eye of ignorance she is spellbound to banality and ugliness. But she is redeemed by the eyes of understanding. The hero who can take her as she is, without undue commotion but with the kindness and assurance she requires, is potentially the king, the incarnate god, of her created world. (*The Hero* 116)

Campbell's discussion is within the context of the hero's meeting with the goddess. Enlightenment is in itself a triumph of the self, and it is parallel to the understanding of the woman. It is another type of victory that relates more to Maqroll as the loser who wins by his understanding.

Having said this, it is more likely that Maqroll chooses not to mind whether he has more power than women or not. Maqroll's friends, men and women, share similar views. For

⁸⁹ On Mutis' concept of the winning side of the losers see: *Maqroll el gaviero o las ganancias del perdedor*. (Sessarego).

instance, it is difficult to see Maqroll being too worried about a girlfriend leaving him for another man. He is a nihilist, “sabemos que su cualidad más eminente es la inasibilidad” (Panabière 17); he would prefer to keep silence and face his own failure. Besides, it is through this understanding he shares his beloved Ilona, the Triestine woman, with his best friend Abdul Bashur:

El tal Gaviero anduvo por ejemplo con una triestina que también fue amante de Bashur, sin que por eso se afectara la amistad de los dos compadres. La imaginación de esta dama para las más sorprendentes y arriesgadas combinaciones financieras llegó a extremos delirantes. Salían con bien de todo y los tres terminaban muertos de la risa. (*U.E.T.S* 63)

This situation is recalled in *La Última Escala del Tramp Steamer*, but it refers to his earlier novel, *Ilona llega con la lluvia*.⁹⁰ But we as readers must be careful in judging this situation: Maqroll and Abdul do so because they accept Ilona as she is and not for the sake of adventure. Maqroll sees Ilona and he is so delighted to see her he forgets the past and confesses his devotion for her. The language is real and passionate in the way he expresses love for Ilona:

Tengo dos dólares en el bolsillo y son los últimos. Pero ahora que te veo, que te siento aquí, frente a mí, te confieso que todo eso se convierte en un pasado que se esfuma en este instante gracias al vodka, al olor de tu pelo, al acento triestinopolonés de tu español. Vuelvo otra vez a sumergirme en algo muy parecido a la felicidad. (*Mutis Ilona* 76)

Their ethical stances are different, and they are already a departure from conventions, as it is also from the kind of libertinage where lovers are anonymous. On the contrary Maqroll's

⁹⁰ Mutis usually refers to his poetry and his other novels in any of his works. The fact Maqroll is a character of this novel, makes it part of the Gaviero Cycle.

relationships are based on friendship, complicity, caring for Ilona as the woman he loves, and it is not hard to see nobility and delicacy in Maqroll, two key qualities of the courtly language, ethics and aesthetics of relationships. Their concept of love is as erotic as much as they have deep roots in friendship.⁹¹

And indeed, it is on the grounds of friendship that Warda speaks to Jon of her love life and Jon responds not according to prejudice, but to friendship. The conversation about their sentimental life continues and he is realistic in regard to his experience, something that she admires in him:

[Warda] Sigamos con mi ‘educación sentimental’. Cuento con su ayuda.” Le dije que ya la tenía desde antes. “Pero no sé – añadí - , lo que un cincuentón como yo pueda aportar de válido, de positivo. “Ya lo aportó y ya está contabilizado”, me respondió con una mirada, la primera de franca y gozosa coquetería, que me dejó como esos gatos que caen del tejado y, por un momento, no saben bien lo que ha sucedido ni dónde están. (*U.E.T.S* 83)

Despite the similarities I have noted in regard to the love relationships in Maqroll’s world, I think Warda and Jon’s relationship differs from Maqroll and Ilona’s in that the characters are not quite “al final de la cuerda”. Even though their love occurs in ports and places where there is a possibility of freedom, and Warda is hiding from her family social and religious precepts, Warda is bound to return to the world. On the other hand, as lovers they are committed to their reciprocal love, and even though there is not such a thing as a vow of fidelity between

⁹¹ This kind of exploring friendship in lovers is also portrayed by Héctor Abad Faciolince, a contemporary Colombian writer, which suggests a similar trend within the regional literature Abad’s novel is about two lovers who face violence and death of the city of Medellin in Colombia, by sharing and loving each other more as friends who seek to share their intimate stories. See: (Abad Faciolince)

them, their honesty with each other tell us such vows would not have been necessary. Therefore, this love story relates to *The Romance of Tristan* in the concept of love that derives from other works of Mutis's narrative: there is a connection with poetry as a shared human condition, rather than to the possible reality of love in marriage.

Compared to Warda Bashur, the Costa Rican woman is not only remarkably different, but she also embodies another perception of womanhood. Firstly, I will go through the narrator's description of them from their different intellectual and cultural features. It is important to interpret what Mutis is trying to tell us through the Costa Rican or la "Mujer del Bikini", "la Venus Boticceliana", "La Bella Semidesnuda" or "La semidesnuda de Nicoya" in the sense that she is a married woman and mother, a person in a marriage crisis situation. Secondly, I will discuss the scene that brings out the issue on woman's freedom, and gives a view of the conventions of marriage through an emblematic image of it. In this manner, Mutis joins the long polemic on the importance of adultery in the courtly romance, one aspect that has directly challenged the heart of patriarchal ideology.

First, I will focus on Mutis's view and treatment of the Costa Rican woman, recalling Gina Ponce's interpretation which sees her as an average woman with no identity: "El narrador nos presenta una mujer embarcada en la tradición cultural, centralista y falocéntrica; es una mujer sin identidad, cualquier mujer esposa y madre de la era moderna" (117). In the same passage, the critic continues: "[El narrador] abiertamente critica la imagen tradicional de la mujer, en su papel de objeto decorativo, esposa y madre. Su actitud y comentarios sobre una mujer de la que no conoce ni siquiera su nombre, indica una clara repulsión hacia la función que

desempeña” (117). The critic finally sees misogyny in what she considers “un ataque virulento”, a virulent attack against the woman’s request for a love story (118), and in the fact that he recalls the woman’s ignorance on geographical names (119).

In regard to the narrator’s rejection for her condition as an unintelligent and traditional (or average) woman, I will try to focus on the critic’s weaknesses in regard to the textual references. The critic omits the fact it is this woman who requests a love story and that she finally succeeds in convincing the narrator, and thus she attains recognition.⁹² For instance, the woman stops smiling at him and yet, she continues her request to the extent that he admits he surrenders: “El Viejo y consabido juego, pensé. El de Nausicaa y el de Madame Chuchat. Delicioso en ocasiones pero, a menudo, desarmante e infructuoso” (*U.E.T.S* 27). On the other hand, her words about the steamer (*U.E.T.S* 26) turned into a memorable prediction he recalled in different times of the story (*U.E.T.S* 40, 100) when he also remembered her as the “semidesnuda de Nicoya” (*U.E.T.S* 39). The fact her words on the Tramp Steamer remain in his memory is evidence he gives importance to her. The fact he decides not to know her name has nothing to do with rejection:

En el camino a San José de que ignoraba el nombre de nuestra bella compañera de paseo. No quise preguntárselo a Marco. Era mejor conservar en la memoria esas dos presencias anónimas que, a partir de entonces, permanecerían inseparables en mi mente: la boticelliana amable que no temía a las palabrotas y el derruido fantasma del *Tramp Steamer*. (*U.E.T.S* 27)

⁹² According the theory of social exchange, her success in obtaining favours through others increases her social value. See:(Blau)

On the contrary, the Costa Rican, in all her beauty, appears next to the steamer as the initial guide of the narrator's story. Her importance in this story is heightened through her image as a *Boticellian Venus*, which stands as an icon for womanhood. A feminist approach could judge his admiration as thinking of her as an object, but that issue is still arguable. For instance, the passage where Ponce sees the narrator complain about the woman walking by and distracting the men from having a conversation, the text says otherwise. The narrator recalls that her approaching them was a blessing "se acercaba para bendecirnos" (*U.E.T.S* 23). Mainly, I think he is trying to tell us about the complexity of womanhood, since her apparent simplicity goes along with her sensitivity in foreseeing the fate of the Alción. As he stated in an interview I referred to earlier, he finds women capable of vision even more than men (Balza, Medina and Mutis 77).

Indeed, the narrator was prejudiced against her, and though her condition as a housewife could have added to this idea of not "being intelligent" or "not an having identity" like the critic points out, his initial view of her motives and feelings tells us readers that the woman has legitimate concerns that reverse his initial prejudice against her. It is rewarding to find the unexpected value somebody has once we acknowledge we have made a wrong judgment, and it is pleasant to encounter those situations in a story. It happened that her genuine feelings were recognized by the author, and her sincerity - as the narrator understands it - was powerful enough to make him change his mind. She finally wins the negotiation for a romantic story request, and the narrator is not moved by pity, but out of his acknowledgement of her distress. Her success speaks of her value to the writer, and to a wider extent, to the realms of social recognition: "Social approval and personal attraction are basic sources of

support for an individual's opinions and judgments, for his values and self-conception" (Blau 85).

I think Mutis' choosing a housewife with a traumatic relationship for the novel's opening scene relates to the fact she is someone who would read "romantic" stories. He is prejudiced as anyone could be when first meeting somebody, and his being offended by the Costa Rican woman's request has more to do with the low prestige of romantic stories of the "género rosa" she was asking for. This conflict between them relates more to the issue of the love story which is the main topic of the novel. Nonetheless, he knows her request comes from her desire for dreams rather than just plain entertainment. He reflects on how he understands her reality, and starts realizing its importance. He sets out his appeal to the tradition, to his view of poetry, of language, and he thinks of a story with a simple plot; he writes the love story. Moreover, the fact that he portrays characters of different social, cultural and educational characteristics has universal and multi-class undertones. The love appeal touches all kinds of people in the social spectrum: The Costa Rican as "una mujer tradicional", Warda as a well-read Muslim, and the Basque Jon Iturri as a mysterious and a neither well-read captain of the steamer.

It seems to me that the two women in this novel correspond to two different and complementary aspects of the idea of women according to the courtly Romance. Warda stands for the love madness and the inner quest that is a shared condition in both lovers. Moreover, though Warda could be thought of as an ideal woman, her recognition of her sexual liberty is in itself a departure from some misogynist view of women that despite

considering them innately “evil” turns them into “redeemed virgins” for the sake of the Christian faith. Thus, Mutis is departing from patriarchal and religious prejudices and supports the view of women’s liberty to choose their sexual life. Jon’s realistic acceptance of Warda’s past opens a space for friendship between lovers and fosters confidence and honesty between them. His attitude on women’s honesty (one major and central concern of the patriarchal view of love) resembles the challenging posture of courtly tradition.

The second aspect of Mutis’s treatment of women has to do with his portrayal of what I consider the novel’s emblematic image of marital crisis. This aspect allows the writer to give us his view on the “honesty” that is imposed on women despite circumstances against them. Mutis approaches the long held discussion on whether adultery is essential to the Tristan tradition by expressing the present relevance of that issue in a scene that depicts a case of absurd masculinity.

The many versions of Tristan, which “are central to the definitions of courtly love” (O’Donoghue 6), bestow on love a power above marriage. It is an inversion of the patriarchal values that, in my view, has not been developed within that radical scheme. Though many characters in this story are worried about the King’s honour, according to Lacy, they both succeed in getting away with their purposes thank to divine help:

Many readers will choose to ignore the fact that the lovers are hardly examples of virtue; Tristan and Iseut are adulterers and liars, and Tristan betrays the man who is both his uncle and his feudal lord. Yet, Bérroul makes the lovers sympathetic by praising their beauty and devotion, lamenting their suffering, and, above all, informing us at every turn that God is on their side and will destroy their enemies. (Bérroul xv)

Lacy is ironic about the sympathy for lovers and overlooks their “lack of virtue”, but I see it more as a humorous slap in the face of convention. The story is one where love grants lovers a license for subverting order, therefore marriage is defeated through irony. It is interesting to note that those who break the secrecy principle and spread the news about Tristan and Isolde’s romance for the sake of the King’s honour, are finally defeated or killed. In short, though marriage and codes of honor are recognized, true love is above the marriage vow when love is genuine, and thus, lovers’ lying is tolerated. The lovers’ need to make love to each other goes beyond their own strength. The secrecy principle is an ethical and recognized entity, not just between lovers, but one that also engages any witness. These considerations shape what can be interpreted as the subversive humor in the *The Romance of Tristran*.

This negative meaning of marriage in medieval times was matter of discussion by the literature from the 14th-century and on. Thompson points out that Chaucer and Boccaccio reflected on individual freedom within marriage: “Boccaccio’s interest in marriage is allied to his interest in the well-springs of individual action, which action, as we know from Aristotle, concerns choice” (228). Though Boccaccio was more sceptical than Chaucer, their reflection was based on whether marriage could abide truthful love, and thus they explored this issue through the characters’ difficulties for free will compared to the impositions of society.

The question of adultery as essential to the courtly romance, though still not settled, is consistent with the overall ideological scheme of courtly romance. With regard to medieval

times, de Beauvoir insists on the social and economic grounds of the literary debate on love. In the case of Mutis's novel, the scene of marriage crisis is not a structural device for conflict, since it does not take part of the main story-line between Jon and Warda. Its insertion at the beginning of the novel discusses the issue of women's freedom and sets the tone for the rest of the story. Thus, it is no coincidence that this novella, which was intended to follow the story of Tristan and Isolde as the author says on the second page, explores the theme of marriage and (possible) adultery in a contemporary context. What does Mutis have to say on this?

I will focus on the scene which I partially reviewed when analysing the description of the Costa Rican woman. As I commented earlier the scene shows a narrator that undergoes a tension from admiring the Costa Rican, expressing some of his feelings to the readers without giving any opinion on that erotic "tension" he felt. The passage of her sudden arrival to the boat is immediately followed by her husband's response:

Reía, regocijada, mientras el marido, frunciendo ligeramente el ceño, simulaba ocuparse del tablero de instrumentos. En voz baja le ordenó algo al timonel y, sin hacer comentario alguno, salió a la cubierta de proa. Allí se sentó en el borde del estribor y comenzó a disparar con una cuarenta y cinco a los alcatraces que volaban encima de nosotros. La tensión en la pareja se iba acentuando con evidencia hartamente molesta al ritmo de los disparos, ninguno de los cuales daba en el blanco y sólo conseguía atronar nuestros oídos y hacer más difícil el diálogo. "No se preocupen—comentó ella sin dejar de sonreír -, cuando se le acabe el parque nos va a dejar en paz. Qué quieren tomar. ¿Una cervecita para el calor o algo más fuertecito? (*U.E.T.S* 22-3).

It seems that the husband is responding to the possibility any of the men on board might approach his wife. His violent reaction in warning about his rights over her in this scene occurs while we are told he disregards her as a woman. He shoots over the air space above the narrator and the other men on board, and the narrator despises this and says it is a nonsense action that only sought to torture their ears: “ninguno de los cuales daba en el blanco y sólo conseguía atronar nuestros oídos”. By using a forty-five, the kind of gun that is meant for people while shooting albatrosses, the husband warns of property rights. The narrator is suddenly in the same situation troubadours surely despised when they wrote their songs. A husband of that sort is not the kind of man they wanted to be.

We are told he does not love his wife. The wife had seen him with whores inside the car in her way from her parents' house: “En la noche, seguía haciendo su vida de soltero como si jamás se hubiese casado. Su mujer lo había sorprendido varias veces recorriendo la calle principal de San José con el coche lleno de putas” (*U.E.T.S* 24), and that her economic status in that marriage was very weak, since his family owned the ship “El dueño del yate, heredero de una inmensa fortuna, trabajaba como esclavo todo el día a órdenes de su padre, un asturiano implacable” (*U.E.T.S* 24). In this regard, the author stresses a notable difference between her husband and herself. He says that while her husband has a forged politeness, on the contrary, his wife is the opposite due to her humble social condition: “y las atenciones a cada uno de nosotros, prodigadas con cordialidad espontánea y gentil muy común en los compatriotas de su clase y aún más evidente y marcada en las de condición más humilde” (*U.E.T.S* 24). It is clear Mutis is drawing sympathy to the Costa Rican on the grounds of an economic situation

that has penalised her for being not only a hard worker, but for having the good nature of the social class she comes from. The narrator is inviting us to understand the unfairness of her vulnerability and lack of freedom, and is telling us how entrapped she is in her marriage. On the other hand, through the scene of the shooting of albatrosses, the author shows us an emblematic image of fallen patriarchy.

It is important to acknowledge that the narrator is persuading the readers not only that the Costa Rican is the victim in this relationship, but that she also faces her husband's abuse with dignity. After their quarrel mentioned in the scene cited above, she returns to the clients and is attentive to them. The author tells us she is a victim, a woman who legitimately desires to be loved, and the fact she is kind to others is a way of asking for love in return. However, it could be argued of course, that such a fact explains her narcissism and her consciousness of her semi nakedness as a source of beauty and admiration. But again, she is not an absolute victim: beauty is one of the resources she has to defend herself and she uses it. Thus, it is understood here that in a position of abusive relationship, she is strong enough to seek solutions.

Mutis's handling of the point where a marriage crisis could develop into a woman's infidelity without actually portraying it, I believe, is due to his being aware of the taboos and the consequences of supporting a position on behalf of women. It could be said that Mutis is a "malo frustrado" as Balza calls him in an interview (Balza, Medina and Mutis 70). I do not know exactly what meaning of "malo" would fit here, but I am more inclined to see it as a problem of appealing to the readers. My view is that it is difficult to follow the portrayal of

infidelity in *The Romance of Tristan*, given that the Mutis' potential audience might find it distasteful.

Even though Mutis chooses to keep the Costa Rican non-adulterous, he does not exactly follow "party lines". I think that by portraying the wife as someone who desires to be loved, he is suggesting a tension with the legitimacy of patriarchal assumptions on marriage, and therefore he unites this story within the ideology of the courtly romance. On the other hand, by keeping her non-adulterous, Mutis legitimizes her wish to be loved while avoiding any issue of dishonesty against her, especially for those who do not recognize women's right to choose even under understandable circumstances, which was not the case for the courtly romance audience. The scene poses the ethical dilemma between the person and the social institutions: "No man is wholly free, and no man is wholly a slave. To the extent to which a man has freedom, he needs a personal morality to guide his conduct" (Russell 82). But despite the setbacks of context and prejudices, Mutis succeeds in suggesting his uneasiness with women's position in marriage: we can see the woman is trapped, attached to her son, perhaps fearing to lose him in case of a divorce since she is in a lower economic position. Her exaggerated care for the child is nonetheless seen by the narrator as stemming from possible guilt of her part "La madre prodigaba al niño, que comenzaba a marearse, unos cuidados que me parecieron excesivos. Era como si tratara de compensar con ellos la culpa que pudiera caberle en la evidente crisis de su matrimonio" (*U.E.T.S* 23). The Costa Rican woman is surrounded by prohibitions: her husband is threatening the sea birds and the clients tell us her fidelity originates from nothing but fear. The tension the author creates here draws attention to the fact that love is not possible without women's freedom.

Conclusion

I find it useful to conclude by commenting on the author's addressing the audience at the beginning of the novella. Álvaro Mutis' decision to write the requested love story in the present time was a challenge. Mutis shows he is conscious of the language issues that have impoverished love stories and assumes his telling it from his understanding of both the tradition and the present context. Such a position is coherent with the author's view of literary influence as that which derives from the reflection that is awakened by the influential works.⁹³ He suggests he hopes to bring "algo" "a bit" of that magic enchantment of these stories, and as readers we should wonder what the difficulty might be.

Through the *Alción*, Mutis expresses the heart of the difficulty. The steamer has several meanings, but the most important one is that it embodies poetry. Once we know the steamer is a forgotten, faithful companion of humankind, it is not difficult to understand that, for him, poetry is the great energy of the love spell, the source of dreams, and the companion of the lovers' quest. But the *Alción* is tired, its engine soon collapses: "se deslizaba, irreal, con el jadeo agónico...que, de un momento a otro, amenazaban por callar para siempre" (*U.E.T.S* 18), and parallel to it, the lovers' journey comes to an end. I believe, Mutis knows his limitations in creating a fascinating and passionate love story, for its centre depends on the

⁹³ "La influencia no es que uno quiera escribir como Baudelaire, sino que la poesía de Baudelaire te mueve adentro tus propias inquietudes, tu propia visión del mundo" (García 63)

health of the Alción, which comes to symbolize the poetic mind of present time⁹⁴ (*U.E.T.S* 45).

La última escala del Tramp Steamer is within the courtly traditions that explore love as a dream of the human mind. An ideological reading of “love as a dream” may be explained as an effort to depart or leave behind a patriarchal order that was leading people’s lives away from their true selves, their sense of the beloved, of the other, of justice. Such departure explains Tristan and Isolde’s hiding in the wilderness, Jon and Warda’s meeting in different sea ports. The lovers’ need to meet in spaces beyond the city walls, and the presence of the Alción as an embodiment of poetry that accompanies lovers in their quest, give us substantial clues that love in this novella occurs in the realms of dreams as a way to subvert patriarchal conventions.

In his reading of the legendary romances, Mutis creates the Alción as a reminder of poetry, a character about to disappear from love stories, its source of enchantment. But on the other hand, he sees the importance of long lasting issues in gender relations and marriage present in *The Romance of Tristran* that remain almost untouched in this novel. The Costa Rican’s marriage crisis does not resemble Isolde’s, but it does mirror the concerns and sympathy of its audience. As Lewis points out, the courtly romance spectators were eager to idealize sexual love in “its new tenderness and delicacy” (13). The scholar explains the transcendent meaning of the courtly appeal beyond the Middle Ages “Any idealization of sexual love, in a society

⁹⁴ Mutis has stated he does not feel identified with the present time, and I think that explains his nostalgia behind the image of the wounded or tired Alción. His historical view explains such departure from the present, since he considers that important spiritual values decayed after the fall of Bizancio. (Mutis, Serrano et al. 2002) (45)

where marriage is purely utilitarian, must begin by being an idealization of adultery (13). In this regard, Mutis' approach to the matter of women's freedom brought by the romance is possible to contextualize within the aims of the courtly tradition.

Mutis presents an important reflection on a sense of gender relations and masculinity through the fictional world of Maqroll to which the novella belongs. Like Maqroll, Jon conceives his life and, thus, his manhood from an understanding of who he is, so that he is more concerned with authenticity than with being "successful" with women. The resemblance with Tristan is centered on their pursuit of a love that is fatal to them, and in that loyalty they achieve a sense of self regardless of death.

CHAPTER FOUR

The two spaces of *Pedro Páramo*: From the decadent patriarchal order of Comala to the Ideology of Courtly love.

Ya conté alguna vez que fue Álvaro quien me llevó mi primer ejemplar de Pedro Páramo y me dijo: “Ahí tiene, para que aprenda”. Nunca se imaginó en la que se había metido. Pues con la lectura de Juan Rulfo aprendí no sólo a escribir de otro modo, sino a tener siempre listo un cuento distinto para no contar el que estoy escribiendo.

Gabriel García Márquez en “Mi amigo Mutis”.
Prologue to Mutis’ *Tríptico de mar y tierra*.(451)

Rulfo’s *Pedro Páramo* (*P.P*) is a novel that critiques the decadent order of the fictional city Comala by appealing to the ideology and language of courtly love as in the Tristan and Isolde story and other courtly narratives. The patriarchal order in Comala is marked by despair and the absence of love, which is pathetic in the characters’ failure to attain their most cherished desires, which causes them to suffer in the world of the dead. The ghosts there mourn and tell how Comala was destroyed by Pedro’s abusive power, which is in itself a sign of patriarchal decadence. This order is contrasted with a second space in the novel that concerns a world of dreams and sexual desire which implies a departure from the first world of violence and corrupt power. Rulfo responds to this absence⁹⁵of love by creating a space that shares the

⁹⁵ Jiménez de Báez states that Rulfo’s work is a quest for love: “La obra de Juan Rulfo es una búsqueda amorosa, atenta, obsesiva, que las circunstancias suelen hacer angustiosa y hasta parecer contradictoria. Nuevo Colón, busca el sentido último de la tierra que es México: la raíz que explica el quehacer del hombre y lo justifica” (“De La Escritura..” 937).

main features of the courtly love tradition. Susana San Juan's ennobling of her body and her sexual desire, her challenge to the church, as well as Pedro Páramo's worship of Susana as the beloved, create an atmosphere that contrasts with the world of the dead. It is my aim to show that Rulfo appeals to paradigms of the courtly romance language and gender ideology to create the second world of dreams and praise of the beloved. The second space of dreams and the desired love contrasts with that of absence of love and the abandonment of the weak, and I believe they are combined to show imbalance. The fact Comala has been destroyed by the unlawful power of Pedro Páramo over the land and its fruits,⁹⁶ points our attention to issues of patriarchal decadence. In this regard, Jiménez de Báez speaks of "la *orfandad*" (*Del Páramo* A.. 523) that derives from the absence of love and rules. It is not an accident that a violent patriarchal order such as "cacicazgo" is contrasted with a space of dreams and love, which can be paralleled to the courtly love tradition's critical stances on patriarchy.

From now on I will discuss the way these spaces have been interpreted by critics. Some of them have not only recognized the existence of the said spaces of downfall/hell-paradise/dreams, but have also pointed to Susana San Juan as the epitome of hope in this novel, and in this respect they anticipate my interpretation. Secondly, I will focus my attention on the stylistic and language features that describe this world of dreams as a development of the courtly narrative tradition, as well as pointing to Susana San Juan's characterization within the context of the Mexican revolution. Finally, I will discuss how the novel critically responds to the abusive patriarchal order as one that prompts imbalance and death in Comala.

⁹⁶ The issue of the land relates to Rulfo's concern about the agrarian reality of his time. John Brushwood sees narrative innovation and political change in Mexico. For the critic, Yáñez y Rulfo tienden a "esencializar" la realidad mexicana, apoyándose en temas regionales pero haciéndolos accesibles a un público universal (...) En ella se aúnan dos tendencias: el cosmopolitanismo en las técnicas y estrategias narrativas, y el nacionalismo, o regionalismo, del tema agrario" (105).

1. The literary spaces in the novel.

I have stressed that this research is concerned with the second plane of dreams and sexual desire as a way of contesting and subverting the world of the dead of the first plane, that of violence and an abusive patriarchal order.

Amancio Sabugo points out that Rulfo's narrative structure is shaped by different planes of meaning rather than by a story line: "Rulfo no emplea una técnica lineal en su narrativa, sino una técnica de composición de planos" (418).

There are interpretations that point to the novel in terms of hopelessness and failure to overcome the world of death, and leave out the possibility of hope. However, these readings are centred on Juan Preciado's journey. For instance, Sabugo says that Juan Preciado lives within illusions, and cannot overcome his experience in hell. For the critic, "En Rulfo sólo existe el infierno-Comala" (421). In the same manner, Canfield centres her analysis of Juan Preciado's journey as a metaphor for Comala, and says he fails to defeat the law of the tyrant. Juan Preciado cannot outgrow it "el muchacho *no crece y muere*" ("Dos Enfoques" 979), and the critic states that it happens because he has no faith and cannot understand ("Dos Enfoques" 985). Thus, for these critics one space is the consequence of the other: for Sabugo a failed illusion turns Comala into hell, and for Canfield the law of the tyrant turns Comala into hopelessness. In both cases, these interpretations refer to the first space of death and patriarchal degeneration that can never be defeated by illusion and immaturity since there is failure to see reality as it is and to fight against it.

However, other readings point to a second order. From a more socio-political perspective, Fares sees a dichotomy “old order of the cacique” on one side and a critical view that favours “modernization” on the other. For the critic, the novel is the metaphor of revolutionary Mexico within the first space: “el Viejo orden del caciquismo y del campesinado que depende de la figura patriarcal de Páramo” (Fares 83), which contrasts with the second space: “las formas narrativas que critican y deconstruyen los temas y elementos referenciales, anticipando y reflejando las políticas gubernamentales” (84). While Fares points to a second space of “criticism and modernization”, Salvatore Poeta understands this second space as the “nation-mother”. For instance, he recognizes the dichotomy between the government (as representing the first space “father’s abandonment”), and the second space as being the “nation” that is linked to the mother “aquella zona sagrada u ‘ombligo’ de la tierra prometida” (159).

Other critics also have recognized a second space as one that is symbolized by paradise and water. Teresa Longo alludes to the ancient Mexican conception of the universe and states “this contemporary novel resurrects the ancient belief in the union of opposites as a cosmic necessity” (65). Thus, the two planes of meaning are meant to unite despite oppositions. The critic sees “the union of a man and a woman corresponded to a rhythm in the cosmos” (65) and gives paramount importance to Susana’s narrative voice as a reminder of “this beautiful and harmonious universe” (65). Susana embodies eroticism and union, which opposes the chaos and imbalance in Comala. In a similar vein to the spaces of paradise and death, Phil Swanson recognizes the biblical sources of the story in “the pattern of illusion giving way to despair” (58) that echoes the punishment of Adam and Eve. The critic concludes, “The

glimpse of Paradise overtaken by the reality of the fall is a basic principle of the narrative”(58).

But it is Jiménez de Báez’s studies on the symbolism of this novel that have brought up more the idea of the “ritmo en contrapunto” (*Del Páramo A.* 507). According to the critic, Rulfo’s hope makes the novel a “contrapunto” between the “lado moridor” and what he foresees as hope (“De La Escritura..” 938). This concept explains the symbolic opposites in the novel in terms of men-women and sun-moon. The critic mainly states that the space of the fallen patriarchy is represented by the sun: “Así los signos de la caída del mundo patriarcal están ligados a los efectos destructivos de un mundo solar que calcina y erosiona la tierra y condena al hombre a la sed” (*Del Páramo A.* 506). For her, the decadent solar order is linked to the erosion of the land, the lack of fruit, and to orphanhood: “La *orfandad* en el nivel simbólico implica la pérdida del ley moral, de la raíz y del amor nutriente y protector o, más bien, el vacío de la deseada unión de los contrarios, generador de la vida” (*Del Páramo A.* 523). This space is contrasted with the moon which represents the other world, the one associated to the mother that means transformation and rebirth: “La luna, en cambio, manifiesta el mundo materno, transformador, cambiante, al que se asocian los símbolos regeneradores del agua (lluvia, mar, río)” (*Del Páramo A.* 506). Thus, the water, the feminine and the moon are placed within the second space as a possibility of regeneration.

Jiménez de Báez points to the ideological issues raised by this opposition from a symbolic perspective and explains that “al fallar el Padre, dentro de un sistema patriarcal, se despedaza el pueblo” (*Del Páramo A.* 546). She sees the importance of Susana in terms of her role in developing consciousness:

La ausencia de la madre obliga a Susana San Juan (figura del Centro; conjunción de la pureza y el amor que se corresponde al principio femenino, de acuerdo con su nombre) a asumir también el discurso de la verdad y del juicio, proveniente de la conciencia (el principio masculino). (*Del Páramo A.* 550)

She later concludes that Pedro is the embodiment of the imbalance of the land, while Susana embodies the possibility of hope and fruitfulness “Pedro Páramo es la tierra producto de un sistema que pierde, preciosamente, su sentido natural y se prostituye. Susana San Juan es el principio telúrico, el fruto y potencial de vida negado a esa tierra” (*Del Páramo A.* 566).

Luis Maldonado concurs with my view of Susana by stressing the way she rebels against the law of the father through her body. This matter is important within the trend of the courtly romance in its aim to ennoble the woman’s body as a subversive response to the establishment. Maldonado’s opinion on Susana San Juan relates to her madness as a way of defending her body: “La locura potenciará su corporalidad como un espacio de resistencia a la violencia fálica del ley del padre. En un mundo de cuerpos sometidos y violados, Susana se presenta como un cuerpo impenetrable” (40). The critic highlights Susana’s madness, a condition that belongs to the second space of dreams. Maldonado sees desire as a departure from patriarchal laws in terms of Lacanian theory: “perdido el juicio, su cuerpo se posiciona fuera de la ley fálica que ha subyugado a Comala” (43). Her subversion, according to the critic, is that of resisting the sexuality implied in the patriarchal system, which occurs through Pedro: “Pedro responde a la fantasía rural de un poder íntimo, falocéntrico, que se urde en la usurpación y en el poder sexual” (47).

The idea of Susana’s sexuality and its possibility of defying order, and “Resistencia a la violencia fálica” explains the importance of her praising her erotic body, in a world of

madness that can be paralleled to the space of imagination and dreams which hold the possibility of breaking away from a subjugating reality.

Pedro Páramo's and Susana San Juan's praise of the beloved have been acknowledged by Longo as harmonious and heavenly within the novel. It has also been associated with a state of Paradise, of nostalgia for childhood, with the "illusion" of love and also with the eternal return (Dorfman 255-8).⁹⁷ Critics have interpreted such states as part of Pedro Páramo's fantasy on the one hand⁹⁸ and Susana's madness on the other, since her madness is understood by some critics as a real break from rationality.⁹⁹ But it is my aim here to demonstrate that the love passages are the character's most precious memories and that they should be read as real and substantial, since his invocation of her consistently occurs throughout the novel to the point of transcending death. The second space of love is a subversion that brings counterbalance to the tensions created by despair and death in the novel. The fact that Pedro Páramo feels passion for Susana to the extent that he surrenders and seeks death, conveys one of the most recognizable features of the Tristan and Isolde tradition. Therefore, love and passion are of paramount importance in this second space, and the question is, how do the language and ideology of the courtly romance respond to the abusive patriarchal order of Comala?

⁹⁷ Symbolic readings of the novel, point to this as one of the few passages related to a harmonious space (Longo) or to a decadent one (Pimentel); to a nostalgia for the past and a reading based on the eternal return (Freeman).

⁹⁸ On Pedro's fantasy or adolescent setback. See: Pupo-Walker.

⁹⁹ On Susana's insanity as illusion or mainly a not serious interpretation or account on reality. See: (Hannan). This contrasts to other authors who see her insanity as enlightenment and the only possible way of opposition.

2. The literary space of courtly love in the novel: Pedro Páramo and Susana San Juan.

The first and most important example that suggests the presence of the Tristan and Isolde tradition is the poetic language which Pedro Páramo uses to address and speak of Susana San Juan, his pursuit of her love, and his response to her death. Nevertheless, Pedro Páramo's acts as a "*cacique*" and the fact that women in Comala desire to have children with him, directs our attention away from the poetic spell of his dream-like scenes with Susana. In this outer sphere, the one that has been more widely discussed by critics, Pedro's approach to women has to do with power. Unlike Don Juan or Florentino, Pedro Páramo does not need to make any effort to seduce women through deceit, nor to show off any skill in order to confirm his masculinity; nor does he make any psychological or idealistic effort to search for love in all the women he takes to bed. And even when he deceives Dolores Preciado, he does it as if it were any other business deal,¹⁰⁰ and not because he needs to search for some ideal love or to affirm his masculinity through her. Pedro is not a Don Juan. On the contrary, Pedro displays his sexual life mainly as a matter of power over women. Further, he is answerable to no one for his actions, unlike García Márquez's character, Florentino, who would only be afraid of his beloved Fermina's judgment upon him, and not from being respectful of communal rules.¹⁰¹ There is also no need for Pedro to calculate a strategy or verbal act to entice women, as it is enough for him to knock at the door of their bedchambers. And even if they do not open it, as in the case of Damiana Cisneros, he turns back for there are others willing to make

¹⁰⁰ Fulgor's cynical petition of marriage to Dolores on behalf of Pedro Páramo: "El matrimonio no es asunto de si haya o no haya luna. Es cosa de quererse." [...] Fulgor Speaks: ¡Vaya muchacho listo ese Pedro!--, decirle que no se le olvide al juez decirle que los bienes son mancomunados" (*P.P* 43).

¹⁰¹ Disregard for law sets Florentino to the *cacicazgo*. Though Florentino shares many of the features of Don Juan, he disregards moral rules. However, rules are paramount in the Don Juan stories; Camus emphasizes Don Juan's consciousness of his fate, and states that for all that call for Don Juan to be punished: "Don Juan is already ready" (71).

love to him “con ganas” as Eduviges Dyada did (Diego 285).¹⁰² Needless to say, Don Juan must develop skills of seduction in order to surpass rules of a patriarchal order that claim to protect women. On the contrary, Pedro *is* the law¹⁰³ and thus, does not need to transgress rules; a different condition from Don Juan’s who sooner or later must face them, especially within those communities which foster Christianity (Rougemont *The Myths* 107).¹⁰⁴ Pedro is the macho model of masculinity, and belongs to the “cacicazgo”, an order that coexists with a Church that has failed to maintain the patriarchal order established by history (Quirk 21).

Yet, Pedro is paradoxical¹⁰⁵ in his inner sphere, the one that gives an account of his admiration for Susana, his desire and religious worship of her. This inner and outer dimension of Pedro Páramo I refer to here, have been acknowledged by some critics, and disregarded by others. For instance, the lyrical language of love in Pedro Páramo’s addressing Susana has been interpreted by Blanco Aguinaga who explains that Pedro Páramo, like many of the characters of the novel, seems to have an inner life that is independent from the exterior. Of Pedro he states: “Y como este niño sentimental, hacia dentro (que será luego el cacique brutal hacia afuera), todos los personajes de la novela” (Blanco Aguinaga 103) . Sommers reads the passage in a similar manner and agrees with that contradiction as paradoxical: “Un pasaje inicial apresa la paradójica sensibilidad de un hombre por lo demás brutal” (“A Través..” 53). The critic relates Pedro Páramo’s tragedy to Susana’s death “Su sueño muere, y con Susana, su amor”. On the other hand, José de la Colina explains Pedro’s revenge as a result of his

¹⁰² Eliseo Diego discusses on phalocentrism in Rulfo’s female characters.

¹⁰³ “-¿Cuáles leyes Fulgor? Las leyes de ahora en adelante la vamos a hacer nosotros” (*P.P* 44).

¹⁰⁴ Rules are substantial to Don Juan’s features as a transgressor. Rougemont refers to the conflict between Don Juan’s and the Christian moral: “Beyond good and evil, beyond the rules of the game, a passion must reveal itself; either death or eternal life. So Don Juan must vanish (for Don Juan won only by cheating, and if there are no longer any rules, one can no longer cheat)” (*The Myths* 107).

¹⁰⁵ On the paradoxical features of Mexican people see: (Silva Herzog and Martínez 363)

dangerous passion for Susana San Juan. But not all critics recognize Pedro's genuine love for her.

For instance, Pupo-Walker, attempts to explain this double nature as Pedro's inability to overcome adolescence: "La tragedia fundamental del protagonista parece ser el resultado de su incapacidad para reconciliar su humanidad adulta con sentimientos adolescentes y a veces pueriles que aún le asaltan" (166). In a similar vein Hannan sees Pedro Páramo's love as fake (448). When Hannan refers to the romantic language, for instance, she cites the business plan used by Pedro to deceive Dolores. Her commentary suggests that: "Love merely becomes a source of useful rhetoric in this game of possession, and both Pedro and Fulgor manipulate the language of romance" (448). Yet, when she refers to Pedro's words to Susana, she states he only acts as an outsider: "Susana is a body objectified by fantasy". And in regard to the reconstruction of memory linked to the poetic process, the critic underestimates the language as not genuine: "Pedro's idealization of Susana is not immediately harmful, but it is conspicuous, particularly when "memory" (reconstruction) repeats the process" (447). Criticism of this regard has understandably underestimated Pedro's poetic praise of Susana, since it is not clear how these two dimensions of Pedro's "inner sensibility" and "outer violence" link to one another.

Ariel Dorfman explains Pedro Páramo's tragedy in terms of the solitude of power, yet the critic considers Pedro Páramo's love for Susana as illusory and states that it also has to do with some type of split personality:

La ironía trágica está en el hecho de que ese hombre que los domina a todos es incapaz de realizar y controlar su propia vida, es incapaz de resolver la dualidad

que existe entre ilusión y realidad, es incapaz de convertir su personalidad dividida en una integrada individualidad. (156)

But there is a common trend in Sommers, Blanco Aguinaga, de la Colina and Dorfman in that they recognize the poetry and seriousness of Pedro's love for Susana and Blanco Aguinaga sees the clue when he states Pedro Páramo is a "símbolo de la tensión entre la violencia exterior y la lentitud interior de la vida Mexicana" (115). In regard to Pedro Páramo, Blanco Aguinaga suggests that despite his being a cacique, he too is the result of exterior demands: "Pedro Páramo que aun cuando llega a ser cacique, como todos los personajes de Rulfo, responde mecánicamente a los estímulos exteriores: 'Sí, abuela', 'Sí abuela', 'Muy bien, mamá'" (103), and explains Pedro's duality in terms of the inner and outer elements of Rulfo's characters: "Y como este niño sentimental, hacia adentro (que será el cacique brutal hacia afuera)" (103). Inconsistencies in Pedro as a character are perhaps not far from Rulfo's words in regard to his creation of Pedro as "algo exactamente irracional" (Rulfo and González 1144).

Critics have agreed in seeing Pedro's words for Susana as idealized, but the matter remains controversial. Susana's liberating meaning in the novel gives us hints as to Pedro's acknowledgement of her. Susana's outstanding intellectual defence of her feelings; her redemption at the end of the novel; the suggestion that Pedro knew her body during their early age,¹⁰⁶ may suggest it was not an innocent and idealistic fantasy. She has been defined as unconquerable by the critics (Frenk 38), but I believe that the fact Susana was not conquered by Pedro Páramo cannot be taken as a praise of Susana's chastity, one that could place her in those idealistic altars for virginal women. Luis Maldonado states that "Además de ser un

¹⁰⁶ The scene is recalled by the conversation between Bartolomé and Susana San Juan: "Dice que jugabas con él cuando eran niños. Que ya te conoce. Que llegaron a bañarse juntos en el río cuando eran niños. Yo no lo supe; de haberlo sabido te habría matado a cintarazos", to what Susana responded, "No lo dudo" (P.P 87).

objeto del deseo, Susana es también un sujeto que asume su sexualidad de forma activa. Por medio de un lenguaje lírico su personaje es construido como un cuerpo pendularmente deseado y deseante” (40). Susana is a sensual character, as can be seen in Rulfo’s own appreciation of her as a symbol of love and the ideal woman: “Sí, estoy diciendo unos secretos que no debería decírselos a nadie. Considero que esta mujer [una Susana de su realidad] que busca el hombre sí existe; a la larga se le puede encontrar. Yo la encontré” (Rulfo, Fuentes and Roffé 77). Pedro’s praise of Susana is therefore, understandable. It is his recognition of her that suggests that Pedro Páramo is capable of vision and feeling. Pedro’s pursuit of Susana’s love, I believe, is not a case of a tyrant’s capricious wish. His outstanding love for Susana remains at the moment of death, and he is defeated by sorrow for her absence, in the way lovers are in the tradition of the courtly love romance.

Earlier in this chapter I argued not only that Pedro Páramo’s love and desire for Susana is transcendental, since it is consistent throughout the novel, but also that his love is beyond any individualistic interpretation, since it is linked to the fate of Comala. Love leaves the bedchambers and acquires a wider symbolic meaning. The failure of love to take place destroys both Pedro Páramo and Comala.

Paradox is not strange in Rulfo, as it can be interpreted from his personal letters to Clara Aparicio in *Aire de las Colinas (Cartas)*. He began his correspondence with her in October 1944 after meeting her for the first time in Guadalajara, and continued to do so even after their marriage on the 24th of April 1948. In those letters he is self-conscious about the presence of both good and evil in him and the way such inner tensions relate to the beloved as well as to the self. In several of these letters he stresses that he is “evil” and that Clara saves

him from darkness: “pensé lo bueno que sería yo si encontrara el camino hacia el durazno de tu corazón; lo pronto que se le acabaría la maldad a mi alma” (*Cartas Vi* 36); “mi corazón no era tan tierno. Más bien despiadado. Estaba acostumbrado a ser duro y despiadado y tú viniste y lo ablandaste” (*Cartas Xviii* 79); “si acaso crees que soy bueno es porque te has estado mirando a ti misma” (*Cartas Lii* 213). These three passages reveal his concept of the beloved as someone who is utterly necessary for his reconciliation with human kind, for he acknowledges hatred has taken over his being and that Clara, in this case, is the other, the beloved who will transform him. His praise of her is religious in that he worships her as being above him.

And what is Pedro Páramo, but a man who also fails to build love from its absence? Absence of love and the desire to transcend it, such is the tension that lies at the core of the novel. Pedro Páramo is the embodiment, the uttermost symbol of that failure that causes the downfall of Comala. In this regard, there are two main points that give textual evidence of Rulfo’s insertion within this tradition through *Pedro Páramo*. The praise of the beloved is pivotal to infer the approach to language and the ideology that underlies *The Romance of Tristan*. Pedro Páramo’s pursuit of Susana’s love never declines throughout the novel, and his poetry is not only real and genuine, it is also present in some of the most beautiful passages, some which have been interpreted by critics as a place of nostalgia. His love for her is revealing of an inner self, and her loss makes him realize the absurd,¹⁰⁷ thus he chooses to dismiss his power and die. His passion overcomes the unmasking of death, thus his love proves to be truthful until the end.

¹⁰⁷ I think it is his acknowledgement of the absurd and suicide, as Albert Camus sees it, what makes him an absurd man and a tragic hero.

The first of Pedro Páramo's memories, for instance, have been recognized by its beauty and dream like tone that belongs to the second plane as I have argued so far. Teresa Longo has linked this and other harmonious and heavenly passages to the symbolic meanings of elements that surround them. Its phonetic structure has been acknowledged in the sounds that repeat Susana's name as if it were an echo; and, the overall verbal tense of indefinite time make these scenes convey an image of eternity. The language follows the pattern of a prayer and admiration for Susana in the context of his childhood memories:

El agua goteaba de las tejas hacia un agujero en la arena del patio. Sonaba: plas plas y luego otra vez plas, en mitad de una hoja de laurel que daba vueltas y rebotes metida en la hendidura de los ladrillos. Ya se había ido la tormenta. Ahora de vez en cuando la brisa sacudía las ramas del granado haciéndolas chorrear una lluvia espesa, estampando la tierra con gotas brillantes que luego se empañaban. Las gallinas, engarrñadas como si durmieran, sacudían de pronto sus alas y salían al patio, picoteando de prisa, atrapando las lombrices desenterradas por la lluvia. Al recorrerse las nubes, el sol sacaba luz a las piedras, irisaba todo de colores, se bebía el agua de la tierra, jugaba con el aire dándole brillo a las hojas con que jugaba el aire.

- ¿Qué tanto haces en el excusado, muchacho?

- Nada, mamá.

- Si sigues allí va a salir una culebra y te va a morder.

- Si, mamá.

“Pensaba en ti, Susana. En las lomas verdes. Cuando volábamos papalotes en la época del aire. Oíamos allá abajo el rumor viviente del pueblo mientras estábamos encima de él, arriba de la loma, en tanto se nos iba el hilo de cáñamo arrastrado por el viento. ‘Ayúdame, Susana.’ Y unas manos suaves se apretaban a nuestras manos. ‘Suelta más hilo.’

....

“Tus labios estaban mojados como si los hubiera mojado el rocío.”

- Te he dicho que te salgas del excusado, muchacho.

-Sí, mamá. Ya voy.

“De ti me acordaba. Cuando tú estabas allí mirándome con tus ojos de aguamarina”.

Alzó la vista y miró a su madre en la puerta.

- ¿Por qué tardas tanto en salir? ¿Qué haces aquí?

- Estoy pensando.

- ¿Y no puedes hacerlo en otra parte? Es dañoso estar mucho tiempo en el excusado. Además, debías ocuparte en algo. ¿Por qué no vas con tu abuela a desgranar el maíz?

- Ya voy, mamá. Ya voy. (P.P 15-7)

According to Longo, this Paradise is supported by the language of Pedro Páramo's poetry. For instance, Susana's name is expressed as water both on a phonological and lexical level: "The repetition of the /a/ and the /s/ recalls her name. She is present in the lexical level: "agua", "goteaba", "lluvia" and "gotas" that identifies her with water and the coming of the sun after the rain "estampando la tierra con gotas brillantes" (67). The critic's study of the prosody and the "eternity" effect of the indefinite time in this passage supports my view of the second space of paradise and harmony in *Pedro Páramo*.

Pedro's praise of Susana, his memory of their staying on the hill, while they could hear "el rumor viviente del pueblo mientras estábamos encima de él", appears as an exceptional image within the novel. The "rumor viviente" contrasts to "los rumores" that occur among the dead in most of the text. The space¹⁰⁸ of desire and lyrical praise of the beloved is emphatically shown as a living one. Life is here like the statements referred to above, in the sense that there is harmony between the elements, as opposed to other fragments where, for instance, water occurs in a chaotic manner as if turning against people: "si todavía queda algo de agua, ésta solo se da en la forma contaminante y mortífera de un sudor nauseabundo" (Pimentel 284) and "si llueve, la lluvia incesante arrasa las cosechas" (284).

Moreover, Pedro's words and intimate desire for Susana have a correspondence to the rural countryside that surrounds them. The connection between the tone of the scene, the character's emotional response to the landscape and other enclosed settings has been acknowledged by critics (Forgues 14). For instance, this passage connotes softness of water which falls in small drops that slowly and swiftly nourish the smallest living being without

¹⁰⁸ For the notion of space I use in this analysis see: *The Poetics of Space* (Bachelard)

bringing any disturbance to them. Kite flying and holding its strings is a way of playing with running air. Delicacy in addressing the beloved, though not exclusive of the courtly romance, is one of its most distinctive features.

The scene is, compared to that of the world of the dead, full of life, and that of a kind that recalls softness and pleasure. His memories of Susana speak of a femininity that encloses him inside the “excusado”. And even the “excusado”, despite all the unpleasant connotations that recall the times before decent plumbing, and the plausible interpretations of it being a sign of restrained sexuality, is also coherent to the rural setting. The “excusado”, a place that recalls the social and historical circumstances of the peasants in the revolutionary Mexico, links the scene to the soil as much as the chicken that chases the worms. Pedro Páramo’s dreaming scene is closely attached to reality: to his feelings, to the rural countryside, and above all, to the demands of the outer world embodied in his mother’s requests.

Thus, his praise of Susana has a poetic correspondence to the land, the air, in short, to Comala, which is an important aspect of Rulfo’s language of love in this novel. Love is twofold, it is intimate and collective. The bedchamber is connected to the square. Love is an inner as well as an outer mirror, as much as its absence is.

The outer meaning of Susana is suggested by Pedro in the following quotation. He addresses her as if through a prayer. His religiosity gives a hint of Susana’s outstanding and sacred meaning:

A centenas de metros, encima de todas las nubes, más, mucho más de todo, estás escondida tú, Susana. Escondida en la inmensidad de Dios, detrás de su Divina Providencia, donde yo no puedo alcanzarte ni verte y adonde no llegan mis palabras. (*P.P* 77)

He sees Susana as a superior being to himself in what could be read as a feature of the courtly love tradition in regard to women as saviors, as I commented earlier on Rulfo's love letters. The passage echoes Dante's image of her beloved Beatriz.¹⁰⁹ This image occurs in all of the three novels I study in this thesis. However, Mutis has also developed the theme in one of his poems *En el Río*, where Maqroll: "insistió en contraer matrimonio con una negra madura y sonriente que exhibía sus grandes senos *a la entrada del templo*, con una expresión alelada y ausente" (Reseña de los hospitales... "Summa" 99). In this regard, it has been said that:

En contraste con la imagen de Beatriz en *La Divina Comedia*, en tanto figura virginal, blanca, liviana por su pureza, la negra aparece densa en la magnitud y robustez de sus bustos, no feliz sino "alelada". Su estampa es oscura y redonda, como la tierra o la noche, como la materia pura, a diferencia de la imagen espiritual de la mujer, luminosa y aérea. (Rincones Díaz 91-2)

The angelical tone of the image also appears in Rulfo's third letter to his wife Clara: "Todo el camino me vine piense y piense que en Guadalajara se había quedado una cosa *igual a las cosas esas que andan por el cielo*" (*Cartas Iii* 27) points to what is perhaps a widespread image of the spiritual woman. However, there is devotion. For Pedro, Susana is almost a saint, someone who is protected by God "Escondida en la inmensidad de Dios, detrás de su Divina Providencia". Nevertheless, the distance that separates them causes him sorrow. It is her loss that causes him despair. As readers we know she left Comala at early age, and that she was perhaps insane by the time they came to live together:

No creas. Él la quería. Estoy por decir que nunca quiso a una mujer como a ésa. Ya se la entregaron sufrida y quizá loca. Tan la quiso, que se pasó el resto de sus años aplastado en un equipal, mirando el camino por donde la habían llevado al camposanto. Le perdió interés a todo. Desalojó sus tierras y mandó quemar los enseres. Unos dicen que porque ya estaba cansado, otros que porque le agarró la desilusión; lo cierto es que echó fuera a la gente y se sentó en su equipal, cara al camino. (*P.P* 84)

¹⁰⁹ "He folded his arms around this lady and together they seemed to ascend heavens. I felt such anguish at their departure that my sleep could not endure" (iii) See: *Vita Nuova* (Alighieri *Vita Nuova*)

After her death, his denial of life is as passionate as Tristan's, thus he becomes, paradoxically speaking, a courtly lover. His life is no longer worth living for he pursues death, which slowly falls upon him. When the narrator says "desalojó su tierras" as readers we can understand that he is disregarding the power he had strongly kept up until that moment, the other Pedro Páramo he built for Comala. The "desalojo" is also a way of emptying himself and admitting his life had been absurd. Pedro Páramo talks very little, his sorrow is silent in words but the images of his downfall are sound: "mandó a quemar los enseres" and "echó fuera a la gente". He dismisses both things and people and starts to destroy his mask, thus paving the way to what can be considered a suicide. He empties his house and sits "y se sentó en su equipal, cara al camino", an image of waiting in solitude and desolation, related to his mourning for Susana. She is gone and Pedro surrenders, for the space of dreams and desire, however, fails and defeats Pedro's will of power.

The various images of his mourning of Susana and of his slow and conscious death, dramatize the meaningfulness of his surrender. It is the acknowledgement that, for him, life without love is not worth living. For instance, images of Pedro sitting down appear several times in what might be stated as Rulfo's mastery in connecting sequences through the same poetic images of his falling arms (*P.P* 84, 122-27). The last of them occur in the scene when Abundio stabs him, and he stands up to do his last walk before his fall:

Allá atrás, Pedro Páramo, sentado en su equipal, miró el cortejo que se iba hacia el pueblo. Sintió que su mano izquierda, al querer levantarse, caía muerta sobre sus rodillas; pero no hizo caso de eso. Estaba acostumbrado a ver morir cada día alguno de sus pedazos. (*P.P* 127-28)

He is waiting for death, and so it comes. The idea that his body parts have been dying, that "él estaba acostumbrado" conveys his lack of will. It is at this moment that his memories of

Susana, the ones that have been repeated throughout the novel, appear at the end as a sentence. Death gives him the ultimate vision, that which he desired and cherished most lovingly, the Pedro he failed to be:

Había una luna grande en medio del mundo. Se me perdían los ojos mirándote. Los rayos de la luna filtrándose sobre tu cara. No me cansaba de ver esa aparición que eras tú. Suave, restregada de luna; tu boca abullonada, humedecida, irisada de estrellas; tu cuerpo transparentándose en el agua de la noche. Susana, Susana San Juan (*P.P* 128).

His poetry of Susana is again, like those days of kite flying, a cosmic one, a revelation, “no me cansaba de ver esa aparición que eras tú”. This is one of the passages that conveys the double code of the courtly love tradition, mainly, that the sacred and the profane speak the same language. The moon has several meanings: “la luna grande en medio del mundo” refers also to her house, “la Media Luna”, the axis mundi. Compared to the childhood praise of their early years, the water is not moving but still, for she is no longer alive. Water is a mirror “tu cuerpo transparentándose en el agua de la noche”, an image of cosmic beauty, and thus, sacred. The former lines stress the tactile images of softness “suave”, and her body being feverishly touched by the moonlight as the verb “restregada de luna” echoes García Lorca’s images of the dead woman and the moon in *Romance Sonámbulo*¹¹⁰ (1:10-3, 6:5-6). The eroticism of her dead body continues “tu boca abullonada, humedecida”, and this last praise of her is imbued with both religious undertones and a passionate spell for her body.

Pedro’s invocation of Susana San Juan is relentless from beginning to end. The author shows Pedro Páramo’s inner thoughts of an endless quest for Susana. Once he knows she is returning to Comala to live with him, he passionately speaks as if the world had opened to him: “Sentí

¹¹⁰ The meaning relates to the feminine symbolism of Susana as a cosmic beauty reflected by the moon and the water. The moon shines over her while she is dead; it echoes the moon and the dead woman’s body in the poem *El Romance sonámbulo* in Federico García Lorca’s *Romancero Gitano*: “Bajo la luna gitana/las cosas la están mirando/y ella no puede mirarlas...Un carámbano de luna/la sostiene sobre el agua” (1:10-3, 6:5-6).

que se abría el cielo. Tuve ánimos de correr hacia ti. De rodearte de alegría. De llorar. Y lloré, Susana, cuando supe que al fin regresarías” (*P.P* 87).

Thus, the fact Rulfo tells us Pedro Páramo is a lover to the extent that his words prove to be truthful is one piece of evidence that supports my thesis that the author is appealing to the Tristan myth. It is difficult to disregard Pedro’s consistent and religious invocation of Susana as a whim, or even worse, as a madness of love that cannot be anything else but an illusion. My opinion is that Pedro’s passionate love for Susana is acknowledged by the narrator who also persuades us of his love:¹¹¹

Él creía conocerla. Y aún cuando no hubiera sido así, ¿acaso no era suficiente con saber que era la criatura más querida por él sobre la tierra? Y que además, y esto era lo más importante, le serviría para irse de la vida alumbrándose con aquella imagen que borraría todos los demás recuerdos? (*P.P* 99).

The narrator not only confirms that Pedro’s frequent memories of Susana are real; he also suggests that it makes Pedro both the lover and the tyrant.¹¹² His memories of her bring to light to his memories of darkness, the debts and the failures that haunt him at the moment of his death. Pedro’s condition as a lover within the Tristan tradition is one of the first steps to start considering the courtly love tradition as a presence which dialogues with the absence of love in Comala.

¹¹¹ Samuel O’Neill says “Rulfo nunca analiza a su personaje principal” (288). Even though he makes others refer to Pedro Páramo, the narrator makes a short statement about him in this passage.

¹¹² Martha Canfield sees him not as a *caudillo*, but as a *tirano*. According to her, Pedro Páramo: “ejerce la violencia pero no se deja arrastrar por ella exteriormente, se define mejor con otro adjetivo: imperturbable, adjetivo que, a su vez, calza muy bien al patriarca en su versión, no de caudillo, sino de tirano, según demuestra la abundancia de epítetos que le aplica el narrador, del tipo ‘de granito’, ‘insondable’, ‘de piedra’, ‘inescrutable’, etc” (“Dos Enfoques” 970).

Susana San Juan's praise of the beloved: the tradition of Héloïse and Dante's Francesca¹¹³ as contesting voices.

Susana's praise of Florencio is also considered beautiful. It belongs to the space of dreams and sexual desire within the novel. Though Susana fits the image of the woman in love who would follow her lover to death, just as Isolde would in the *Romance of Tristan*, her commitment to Florencio, her lover, is achieved by a straightforward praise of her own sensual body and her passion for him. Whereas Isolde's defence is portrayed through her skilfulness for deception, and her words are taken as a playful way to tell the truth and deceive at the same time,¹¹⁴ she is never verbally rebellious. Both Isolde and Tristan are respectful of their religion. But Susana's confidence and intellectual strength to challenge Father Rentería directs our attention to her voice. As readers we can appreciate that her insanity might be serious enough to allow her to speak with freedom. Susana's rebelliousness can be linked to Francesca and her defence of her love for Paolo in the *Commedia*. Rodríguez and Barricelli have found Dantean tones in the scene of the incestuous siblings, and have linked the sister to Francesca in the way "this carnal sinner conceives herself" (18), but the critics leave out the idea that Francesca speaks up for her love and that she does not hide or repent for her passion. Though I can agree that the sister is as condemned as Francesca is, Susana is like Dante's character in that she openly expresses her passion for Paolo, and thus confirms a moral position. Susana San Juan's discussion with father Rentería, as well as her characterization, employs a straightforward language in defence of love. Thus, Susana can be

¹¹³ The connections between Pedro Páramo and Dante's *Commedia* have been recognized. For Rodríguez and Barricelli: "the cemetery of Comala strikes us as a Jaliscan version of the sixth circle (*Inferno X*) in which Dante comes across the tombs of the heretics" (16). The prologue of *Espejo de escritores* says: "Muchos críticos han coincidido en decir que la obra de este escritor es la versión moderna y existencial del purgatorio dantesco" (Roffé 64).

¹¹⁴ Isolde's truthful and deceiving oath proves her skill and determination to defend her love for Tristan: "No man has ever been between my thighs / except the leper who made himself a beast of burden" (Bérout 4205-6).

considered a major development of the tradition that was initiated by Helóise as a writer, and Francesca as a character. Their praise of their lovers is also meant to defend their love and their sensual body, in response to the Christian orthodoxy and the Church for fostering and maintaining a patriarchal ideology that had attempted to repress the female body and sexual love.

Susana's defiance falls within the overall anticlerical context of the Mexican Revolution (Quirk 4).¹¹⁵ And the necessary reflection that comes across is that Susana's contesting voice is underlined by the same preoccupations of the women writers of the Middle Ages, who knew the matter of Eve's sin had to be debated and de-legitimated. The issue is so current that, for instance, the medieval writer Christine de Pizan and the contemporary philosopher Simone de Beauvoir have been considered to have been in the same "specific situation" (Fenster 69). It seems that Susana's defiance of her body seeks to invalidate the very same moral topic that has burdened women, in order to legitimate their voice.¹¹⁶ The freedom and force she uses to speak should make us wonder about the situation that justified her breaking the order. The madness of her voice, her appealing to desire as a moral strength directs my attention to both the quintessence of the courtly love romance, and the modern aims of the Mexican revolution novel.

After she is told of Florencio's death, Susana exclaims:

¹¹⁵ Robert Quirk states the revolution opposed the power of the Catholic Church in order to insert Mexico into modernity. According to the historian, the power held by the Church (attachment to the medieval order it brought along with the Spanish crown) was caused by the need of a reform in order to pave the way for a modern state. The Church was unable to fulfill the spiritual longings and beliefs of the peasants and ordinary people, because of the low quality of the priests who were also scarce in small villages. Regarding the worship of the Lady of Guadalupe, the historian links her figure to the Dark Mother Goddess of the Aztecs, Tonantzin, and states that although the villagers call themselves Catholics, they probably know very little of the Christian theology. (4)

¹¹⁶ On women's voice also see: (Lakoff and Bucholtz)

¡Qué largo era aquel hombre! [Florencio] ¡Qué alto! ¡Oh!, por qué no lloré y me anegué entonces en lágrimas para enjuagar mi angustia. ¡Señor, tú no existes! Te pedí tu protección para él. Que me lo cuidaras. Eso te pedí. Pero tú te ocupas nada más de las almas. Y yo lo que quiero de él es su cuerpo. Desnudo y caliente de amor, hirviendo de deseos; estrujando el temblor de mis senos y de mis brazos. Mi cuerpo transparente suspendido del suyo. Mi cuerpo liviano sostenido y suelto a sus fuerzas. ¿Qué haré ahora con mis labios sin su boca para llenarlos? ¿Qué haré de mis adoloridos labios? (P.P 104-5)

It is important to note that while Pedro's poetry towards Susana reflects a language more like that used in *The Romance of Tristan*, Susana's words are in a rebellious tone that is more directed to the ideological issue of carnal love. For instance, while Pedro's admiration for her is expressed as a prayer to someone who is above Comala and himself, Susana praises Florencio from her own body. The passage, which I think could be read as poetry, shows that the lovers' bodies have their own spirit, a feature that is conveyed by words with movement and meaning: "estrujando el temblor" "suelto a sus fuerzas". Bodies are transcendental in themselves;¹¹⁷ they too are spirit.

Nevertheless, despite the fact that Pedro's words resemble a prayer, he is passionate when describing Susana's dead body as "restregada de luna".¹¹⁸ The language of carnal love in this novel is especially centered on Susana's body.

But there is also a second aspect we must keep in mind when reading the cited passage, and it is the fact that Susana San Juan is addressing God. Were it not for the fact she directs her dialogues either to God, to Rentería, or to religious questions on life, sinfulness and hell when speaking to Justina, we could more easily link her words to, say, *Ulysses'* Molly (Joyce), or

¹¹⁷ The importance of the body in Susana's speech explains the body is pivotal for understanding Rulfo. Maldonado points out "La tendencia de la crítica que reprime la dimensión física de la novela a favor de los elementos intangibles del texto pasa por alto la composición tremendamente material de la historia" (27).

¹¹⁸ Earlier I discussed how this image echoes *Romance Sonámbulo*: See: (García Lorca)

to a recent trend in women's writing that is centered on the sensual body (Istarú).¹¹⁹ But Susana's feverish expression of her desire, her contesting the idea that souls are to be saved while the flesh is implicitly disregarded, is a matter that coincides with one of the major concerns of theologians and poets of the courtly love tradition: the aim to humanize carnal love and the woman's body. Her steadfastness and rebellion, the high spirit and confidence of her words, shares an echo with the women's discussion on the theme of Eve during medieval times.

It seems that the Mexican culture's obsession with the openness of the female body brings Rulfo into developing an idea about love, one that is especially embodied in Susana San Juan as a character. For it is important to remember Susana is constantly celebrating herself and her love for Florencio while facing death. This is at the center of her challenge to Rentería. Nevertheless, this is not only a religious question, it is a political aim to overthrow the power of the Christian religion over people's lives, as it can be read within the context of the Mexican Revolution (Sommers "Entrevista: Juan Rulfo" 59).¹²⁰ It has been claimed that *Pedro Páramo* has a ghostly presence because of the "substrato moral católico en la cultura rural Mexicana" (Bullosa 295) Susana's challenge is more linked to something about the Christian morality that matters to them (Freeman and Kemp 297), what Christianity¹²¹ has to say about life and death. Had it been otherwise, Susana or the other characters would not have

¹¹⁹ Joyce's Molly has a freedom to express erotic thoughts that occurs more within the context of psychoanalysis and the stream-of-consciousness novel. Ana Istarú's poetry celebrates woman's body and sexuality. In both cases, theological discussion is not central in their discourse.

¹²⁰ According to Sommers, Rulfo's doubts made him be cautious in regard to faith in modernity: "el mundo de Rulfo contrasta agudamente con el de Yáñez, cuyo anticlericalismo implicaba la necesidad de reforma, de nuevos ajustes de las normas morales. Rulfo concibe dudas tan profundas como para cuestionar cualquier fundación de la creencia en la sociedad moderna" (Sommers "A Través.." 159).

¹²¹ On the matter of Christianity in México: "se puede decir que la historia de México, sobre todo en el plano espiritual, es la afirmación o negación de la religiosidad. Por cualquier lado que se tome nuestra ascendencia, por la del indio o la del conquistador español, desembocamos en razas de una religiosidad exaltada" (Ramos 507).

challenged Rentería¹²² from her own view of death; neither would have Rulfo made his characters demand Rentería to honor his Christian vows. For instance, in the scene where Padre Rentería asks the woman to pay for the Gregorian mass for her sister, and she responds she does not have money, the issue on Christian ethos arises right afterwards: “¿Qué le costaba perdonar?” (*P.P* 35). The critical tone appeals to “stale Catholicism” that has been recognized in both Yáñez and Rulfo which relate to the power of the Church in pre-reformation times (Rodríguez-Alcalá and Barricelli 14). Thus, it is not surprising that Susana San Juan’s poetry of the beloved follows the tone of rebellious honesty of an important 12th-century theologian, writer, and lover like Héloïse, and that of Dante’s Francesca, who is perhaps the most polemical and respected character in the *Inferno*.¹²³ She strives for love at the threshold of Hell.

Here I should like to relate Susana San Juan’s tone to both Héloïse’s personal letters to Abelard and Francesca’s verses in the *Divina Commedia*. For there is a persistent question of why their passions are disgraceful, of those desires they feel in their bodies, truthful and blissful as they describe them, are a sin that will send them to hell. Susana’s concern is like Tristan and Isolde’s discussion when pleading for people’s understanding or God’s mercy. They all share a concern for salvation and thus they appeal to their religion. As I pointed out earlier in the chapter on Mutis’s novel, lovers’ quest for their beliefs on life and death drives them to reflect on their religion.

¹²² On the matter of theological discussions, Monsiváis explains that, there were two kinds of writers of the Mexican revolution. The first searched for the true Christian beliefs to the extent of embracing mysticism, and the second, like Yáñez, was more concerned with the reality that was opposed to such beliefs (75). I think Rulfo does not take sides as Monsiváis suggests, for the dialogue between Padre Rentería and the Cura of Contla shows both the importance of Christianity and a criticism on the Church’s failure to guide people’s souls.

¹²³ Dronke states she is the only one who speaks to Dante in the *Inferno*, and thus so in order to defend her love for Paolo. See chapter one.

Héloïse's letters to Abelard are an epistolary dialogue that discusses the soul and the body, and their struggle to explain the nature and the ethics of their desires in what seems to be a sincere relationship with God. In the following passage, Héloïse writes to Abelard, and utters her indignation and even accuses God of what she considers an outrage, and thus discloses what is considered her "ethic of intention" (Abelard 115).

For if I truly admit to the weakness of my unhappy soul, I can find no penitence whereby to appease God, whom I accuse of the greatest cruelty in regard to this outrage. By rebelling against his ordinance, I offend him more by my indignation than I placate him through making amends through penitence. (132)¹²⁴

Such an aim explains Héloïse's transparency and straightforwardness and has a high spirited tone that resembles Susana's confidence and self-acceptance. In the following passage, Héloïse gracefully appeals for understanding:

The pleasures of lovers which we have shared too sweet – they can never displease me, and can scarcely be banished from my thoughts. Wherever I turn they are always there before my eyes, bringing with them awakened longings and fantasies which will not even let me sleep. Even during the celebration of the Mass, when our prayers should be purer, lewd visions of those pleasures take such a hold upon my unhappy soul that my thoughts are on their wantonness instead of on prayers. (133)

Héloïse's eroticism contests the "sinful" meanings of the flesh. Dronke holds the hypothesis that Héloïse might be the predecessor to Dante's Francesca,¹²⁵ and that their similarities have to do with their intellectual discussion in defence of love. Héloïse, would follow Abelard to hell: "I would have had no hesitation, God knows, in following you or going ahead at your bidding to the flames of Hell" (117). For Francesca, love is *gentilezza*, and thus, she maintains

¹²⁴ On Héloïse's concern for true repentance, Radice suggests reading letter 1: "Wholly guilty though I am, I am also, as you know, wholly innocent. It is not the deed but the intention of the doer which makes the crime, and justice should weigh not what was done but the spirit in which was done." (Abelard 117).

¹²⁵ According to Dronke, Abelard and Héloïse's story and writings were well known at the University of Paris during Dante's visit. Dronke discusses on the theological implications of Francesca and Paolo's fate in the *Divina Commedia* and states that the polemic remains to the present day, a fact that plays in favour of interpreting Susana San Juan's discussion within this trend. (*The Medieval Poet* 382)

her decision of remaining in hell for Paolo is with her.¹²⁶ Like Héloïse,¹²⁷ Francesca is non-repentant.¹²⁸ Here she speaks to Dante in the Inferno:

When read we of the smile, so thirsted for,
 Being kissed by such a lover, he that may
 Now from myself be parted nevermore,
 All trembling, kissed my mouth: destined to play
 Our Gallehault was the book and he, as well,
 Who wrote it: further read we not that day'.
 (Alighieri *The Divine Comedy. Text with Translation in the Metre of the Original.*
 Inferno, Canto V: 133-8)

In short, their heresy is related to their praising their lovers instead of God, an issue that is at the core of the Christian Orthodoxy's condemnation of carnal love. Héloïse admits: "At every stage of my life up to now, as God knows, I have feared to offend you rather than God, and tried to please you more than him. It was your command, not love of God which made me take the veil" (134). Francesca defends her passion for Paolo, a confession that is not followed by repentance, but by an admiration of their mutual love. Héloïse and Francesca were convinced their love could not possibly offend God, and the question that follows is, where does Susana San Juan's passion stand in this regard?

Rulfo focuses on the heresy at the most important scene of a Christian death, that moment when the last sacrament is to be bestowed upon the dying Susana. The scene begins to develop during her conversation with Justina where she asks about crucial questions on death as it is seen by Christianity. I believe, Rulfo's quest for death, the "Mexican obsession" is the

¹²⁶ On the role of Francesca's dissent to the moral stances of the church. See chapter one.

¹²⁷ Non-repentance according to Jean de Meun's interpretation, though Dronke states it should not necessarily be extended to Héloïse the real person, but only to the letters. See Chapter one.

¹²⁸ Paolo and Francesca were found in hell: "Condemned to be tormented in its fashion/are; I was told, the carnal sinners, they/ who submit to reason to the sway of passion." (Alighieri *The Divine Comedy. Text with Translation in the Metre of the Original.* 36-9), Dronke highlights Francesca's intellectual defence on love in verses 100-107, which is followed by an erotic description of the way she is loved by Paolo (Dronke *The Medieval Poet* 373).

search of human truths. Thus, Susana asks about sins, and she responds through her own senses as a way of touching reality. Justina, for instance, sees Susana's vision as a blessing, a revelation: "Mi suerte no es tan grande como la tuya."

-¿Verdad que la noche está llena de pecados Justina?

-Sí, Susana

-Debe serlo, Susana.

-¿Y qué crees que es la vida, Justina, sino un pecado? ¿No oyes? ¿No oyes cómo rechina la tierra?

-No, Susana, no alcanzo a oír nada. Mi suerte no es tan grande como la tuya. (*P.P* 113)

And envisaging already her place within the divine order, like the romance heroines I referred to above, we can infer her statement on hell is related to her hearing "como rechina la tierra", to the senses, the reality she can speak of. As Jiménez de Báez has stated, Susana San Juan is thinking and feeling at the same time (*Del Páramo A.* 550):

-¿Tú crees en el infierno, Justina?

-Sí, Susana. Y también en el cielo.

-Yo sólo creo en el infierno - dijo. Y cerró los ojos. (*P.P* 114)

Her answers could be seen either as a confession or a revelation. The issue of Susana's repentance remains a doubt to Justina, and yet Susana receives the communion. It is important to recall the fact that communion is considered a very mystical Catholic sacrament, for it enables the believer to let Jesus' body as "flesh and blood" come inside them. Yet, it is interesting that Rulfo transmutes the act as one where she takes Florencio's body instead:

[Rentería] Esperó a que Pedro Páramo la levantara recostándola contra el respaldo de la cama. Susana San Juan, semidormida, estiró la lengua y se tragó la hostia. Después dijo: "Hemos pasado un rato muy feliz, Florencio." Y se volvió a hundir en la sepultura de sus sábanas. (*P.P* 115)

Like Héloïse and Francesca, Susana San Juan's admiration for Florencio is above her admiration for God, thus, her rebellion is complete. However, whether that could be

interpreted as making her destined for hell, is doubtful. The following passage reveals Rentería's own intuition about those truths he also struggles with:

[Rentería] Tuvo intenciones de levantarse. Dar los santos óleos a la enferma y decir: "He terminado." Pero no, no había terminado todavía. No podía entregar los sacramentos a una mujer sin conocer la medida de su arrepentimiento.

Le entraron dudas. Quizás ella no tenía nada de qué arrepentirse. Tal vez él no tenía nada de qué perdonarla. (*P.P* 119)

Susana's determination that she had nothing to confess, and her conviction it was Florencio's body that she needed suggests the transcendence of the flesh, and links the novel to *The Romance of Tristan* in the way lovers desire to join each other after death. The scene is challenging to Christian orthodoxy as Susana San Juan ennobles both her body and sexual love:¹²⁹ "Tengo la boca llena de tierra" she says as an utterance, and further confirms her love for Florencio has trespassed death:

Tengo la boca llena de ti, de tu boca. Tus labios apretados, duros como si mordieran oprimiendo mis labios..."

Se detuvo también. Miró de reojo al padre Rentería y lo vio lejos, como si estuviera detrás de un vidrio empañado. Luego volvió a oír la voz calentando su oído:

-Trago saliva espumosa; mástico terrones plagados de gusanos que se me anudan en la garganta y raspan la pared del paladar...Mi boca se hunde, retorciéndose en muecas, perforada por los dientes que la taladran y devoran. La nariz se reblandece. La gelatina de los ojos se derrite. Los cabellos arden en una sola llamarada...

[...]

"Él me cobijaba entre sus brazos. Me daba amor." (*P.P* 118)

¹²⁹ Hannan argues that the novel defends women's sexuality, but she at the time stresses a maternal self in Susana. Though she can be linked to the soul of the nation, the maternal view of her could bring confusion and disregard the main sensual feature of her as a character, besides, Susana has no children. I understand Hannan's words in the way Susana is also a mother: "The novel features [physical sensation and action] in a defense of woman's sexuality, woman's identity. In fact, I would argue that women are *the* subject of Rulfo's text and Susana's life an individual history crucial to the novel; at the core of this individuality is the maternal self, the living "mother" who must cultivate her own identity" (459).

Susana's passion for Florencio goes beyond death; she kisses him and her mouth "Tengo la boca llena de tierra" places her at the grave, willing to love him wherever he is. She searches for his kisses. His lips are hard, as death is, but it is also the hardness of tension, of strength. The image is sensual "como si mordieran oprimiendo mis labios."

The deadly kiss suggests ghost stories, about those who would never rest until they could encounter their lover either in this or the afterlife. Stories of ghosts wandering for their lovers, are millenary,¹³⁰ and have appealed to the poetic imagination since the beginning of times. This scene shows how lovers could defy death, and since their resurrection is heretical because of the lovers' power, it recalls the courtly tradition.

But this view of death and lovers' power is not only heretical to the Christianity of which the characters speak, its passionate spell also defies the rational and skeptical readings of the present day. It is heretical to Catholic Christianity, but at the same time defies rationality. For instance, Rulfo's description of death has been regarded as magic and mysterious (Sabugo Abril 418, 29).¹³¹ Nonetheless, the critic recognizes that Rulfo manages to convey passion and reality in times of skepticism, in contrast to what he considers Dante does within the context of a God-centered world (425).¹³² The image of the worms and the transformation of the dead body in the way it deforms the praised mouth is not abstract: "Trago saliva espumosa; mastico terrones plagados de gusanos que se me anudan en la garganta y raspando la pared del

¹³⁰ Also see: (Dronke *The Medieval Poet*)

¹³¹ Sabugo sees Rulfo's depiction of death with distance and some mockery "esos recovecos misteriosos", and links the world of Comala to magic: "Juan Rulfo indaga en las fuerzas telúricas e inexplicables por la razón, en esos recovecos misteriosos adonde llegan las sinrazones de la magia o la religión, los argumentos para-anormales. El mundo no es nada razonable porque es movido por iluminaciones, corazonadas, sentidos, más que por razones. El azar y la necesidad se cruzan para parir argumentos que parecen inverosímiles" (418).

¹³² Though Sabugo's view on Dante is debatable, it appeals to contemporary taste and gives us hints on the present reception: "Dante no logra convencernos con sus descripciones de poeta omnisciente, profético y terrible. Su infierno pertenece a una cultura medieval, teocéntrica, pero ya a las puertas de la Edad Moderna, donde el bien y el mal libran una batalla definitiva. El infierno de Rulfo pertenece a nuestra cultura" (425).

paladar...Mi boca se hunde, retorciéndose en muecas”. On the contrary, it adds more to reality, to a consciousness of death that can be acknowledged in modern times, even when the meaning of death might be empty, or subject to taboo. The strength of this scene relies on its straightforward view of the Mexican idea of the dead body on the one hand, and on the idea of resurrection through love on the other. Therefore, what is heretical to the Christian doctrine, that sees resurrection of the flesh only through Jesus, could at the same time be taken as defiance of rationality. Though the transcendence of the human spirit may still not be comprehensible to the rational mind, Rulfo has kindled the sense of passion in his novel.

I believe that Rulfo’s quest for this understanding of love and death is undertaken through Susana San Juan. It is her language, the strength of her insanity, the strength of her voice “[a Rentería] -¿Qué va usted a decirme? ¿Me va a confesar otra vez? ¿Por qué otra vez?” (*P.P* 117), and her questioning that give her an unexpected authority. Her appearing naked in some images speak of her persistent defence of sensual love. Her non-repentant death scene with Rentería as a Church representative, embraces the most radical trend of the humanization of the female’s body and sexual love, a heretical aspect of the courtly love debate that Rulfo joins in her.

This is the point, I believe, where Rulfo makes a step further into the humanistic ethos of the courtly romances. Susana is a liberating character: her praise for her own body, one that has been explained as part of her narcissism, might have more of a symbolic and collective meaning associated, perhaps, with the female symbol of the nation. Her insanity, explains Hannan, is a response to an order she is defying, a rebelling force which is pivotal within the novel: “The mentally disturbed Susana responds with a powerful assertion of her own desire

in and through the memory or fantasy of sexual pleasure, her euphoric response breaking the patriarchal hold on her body. That madness is the sole means of self-assertion”(Hannan 441). Thus, the question that arises is, what is Susana liberating through praising the reality of the body? How does her subversion relate to the context of the Mexican nation? Since her insanity is necessary for her to freely speak her mind about her sexuality, her pleasures, and dreams, what would the purpose be within the national context of the novel?

3) Susan’s madness and sexuality as subversion to a historically established order.

Susana’s madness enables the author to appeal to a more liberated voice. As I have argued earlier, Susana’s disregard for the authorities that surround her, her desire to challenge the establishment and celebrate her love and sexuality should be read within both the humanizing effort of the courtly romance and the context of the Mexican revolution’s ideals.

Madness in Susana has been acknowledged as rebellious. According to the critics, it is a way for her to reveal her sexuality through her narcissism (Valdés 498). Her insanity has been seen as a “muerte relativa” , and a way to defy order: “la posibilidad de censurar las normas del sistema general” (Befumo Boschi 437). Susana has also been seen as full of life, and there is a suggestion that she could hardly be associated with death: “there is the obvious fact that this character indulges pleasure and life, and not death” (Hannan 461).

Hannan’s statement of Susana as being related to life is consistent with my thesis that she embodies the space of love, the harmonious world within the novel, the space for nourishing water, the playful wind, and the celebration of the body and all the life it entails. And I would

like to add that life for her is a celebration that deepens when facing death.¹³³ Therefore, her insanity turns into a state of being, an existential position. Insanity becomes a force, an energy that enables her to defy the given patriarchal order while choosing another order, that of freedom to speak of her body and her sexual desire.

That second order stands for that space of love, which is exceptional within the novel. Within the context of Comala and its desolation, the rumors about unpaid debts, the lack of forgiveness, it might be logical to see the space of love as an illusion, an unreal world. Thus, if celebration of life is an illusion, there is no other place for Susana but insanity. For Comala is real, and it is the same place where she can hear “el pecado”, and it is the same place where the souls remind Juan Preciado of the moral disaster caused by Pedro Páramo. Therefore, Susana’s madness is not just a technique used by Rulfo to say what could not be said otherwise. Susana San Juan’s madness is an enlightened one.¹³⁴ Hers is one that seeks to think and feel through her body, and in my opinion, this is a development of an ancient effort to humanize the woman’s body in relation to the curses that have fallen upon it, is a quintessence of the courtly love ideology. Her madness is as clever a choice as can be made, and I believe, it becomes the redemption of Susana’s body that embodies hope in this novel.

Hannan sees Susana’s insanity as a way to deny the view of women as sexual subjects, and states its effects on the community:

¹³³ Susana’s statement at her grave: “Siento en el lugar en que estoy y pienso...

Pienso cuando maduraban los limones. El viento de febrero que rompía los tallos de los helechos, antes de que el abandono los seicara” (*P.P* 80).

¹³⁴ Dodds’ work on the madness of Eros as a form of enlightenment links to Susana’s madness as a rebelling force. According to Dodds’ discussion on Socrates and Plato’s perception on madness, it is a divine force that might foster change in social norms. (64)

Perhaps symbolizes the generally dead relations between men and women. On a more literal level catastrophe is the ironic result of the community's own tolerance or support of "macho" values. Collective idealization of the macho man is clearly no foundation for a healthy or productive society. (464)

Susana San Juan's has also been perceived as redeeming death in a way that contrasts with the world of despair within the novel (Jiménez de Báez "De La Escritura.." 566). The critic has suggested that despite Rulfo's skepticism concerning the possibility of his characters achieving their desires, he gives a possibility of hope:

En la historia individual y colectiva del México revolucionario moderno, del mundo occidental de entreguerras y del neocolonialismo en nuestros países templó su óptica del "lado moridor"...Lo extraordinario es la firmeza de su fe en la posibilidad del futuro, que contrapuntea siempre la visión sofocante del primer plano.(*Del Páramo A.* 938)

The critic acknowledges that the "primer plano" of the novel corresponds to "el lado moridor", which brings about the other possibility of hope, the second space of meaning. However, hope here is mediated by Susana's madness; thus, hope still does not form part of the real world, that of the "primer plano". It is worth bearing in mind that the courtly tradition "attempts" to ennoble human love; it does not mean it will be successful in reality. As Lewis, Parker, Dronke and de Beauvoir have pointed out from different angles, the courtly tradition found a way to defy the abusive patriarchal rules and misogyny in pre-renaissance times. Susana San Juan's world is a way to contrast and oppose that of the abusive order and death in Comala. It is my view that the world of Susana was a way of humanizing the symbol of "La Chingada", which stands as a metaphor of Mexico.¹³⁵ Namely, the ideology of love is perhaps a way to challenge the "Chingada" as a symbol.

¹³⁵ Hannan has argued that: "In Susana's (re)lived sexuality corporeal energy becomes a creative force on a wider scale, sprawling outward in positive connection with the earth and with other human beings" (466).

The contesting voice of the courtly tradition, a contesting voice in present Mexico.

Earlier in this chapter I stressed that the second space of the novel, that praising sexual desire and the body, relates to the humanistic trend of the courtly romance that was critical of the patriarchal order. Susana's madness gives her the possibility of having a voice that contests the historical and theological order. The aim of her discourse should be linked to similar ones that were also concerned with a theological and patriarchal order that was brought by colonization. Agustín Yáñez's view of Christianity in his novel *Al Filo del Agua*, (a novel that Rulfo recognized as influential in his writing of *Pedro Páramo*) (Sommers "Entrevista: Juan Rulfo"), is seen by Carlos Monsiváis within the anticlerical and modernizing aims of the revolution (370).

In *Al filo del Agua*, Gabriel's madness of love for Victoria is associated with the religious celebration of "Jueves de Ascension", and his passion for her is associated with that of Christ in a manner that can be considered heretical (Yáñez 158). Yáñez's novel belongs to the trend that sought "la idea de la novela como el orbe esencialmente trágico que, en su dimensión alucinada y expiatoria, le hace justicia al país donde se produce" (370). In his discussion of Yáñez's novel, Monsiváis stresses its anticlericalism (372), and that such criticism in the novel responds to the need to subvert the language of the Church that is also, that of colonization: "Un lenguaje imperial durante casi cuatro siglos, persiste porque es simultáneamente la voz de la autoridad, la cosmovisión que no admite heréticos y el espacio de salvación" (375). The novel, therefore, relates to the aims of modernizing Mexico. In the

same way, the matter of sexuality is interpreted by the critic as an ideological response to the old order (376).¹³⁶

Susana's praise of sexual desire parallels the aim of subverting the theocratic order described by Monsiváis in Yáñez's novel. However, Susana's freedom and the language that she uses to contest Padre Rentería contrasts with women in Yáñez's story. According to Monsiváis, women characters in *Al Filo del Agua* are "aliadas naturales de la teocracia en un régimen patriarcal", and he continues:

En la narrativa latinoamericana de mitades de siglo XIX a mitades del siglo XX, la coqueta es la víctima propiciatoria. Exhibe sus galas y poco después sucumbe, provoca y es castigada, incita sólo para comprobar su esencial inermidad. (Monsiváis)

Susana is important inasmuch as she constitutes a departure from the role that is normally given to women. Yet, such a departure seems to be possible only from the space of non-normality, from the madness that causes her freedom.

As I explained in the first chapter, medievalisms are not only found in medieval Europe, for there are also parallels in the postcolonial world. The term medieval in Mexico: "might also include the culture Spaniards brought with them to the New World" (Rabasa 27). Medieval trends were related to Spanish colonization, in that they had been influential in Spanish culture and its way of establishing its power, but as I mentioned in chapter one, they too meant a source of rebellion against that same conquest. Therefore, similarities between the language and ideology of the courtly romance within the rebellious space of the novel *Péramo*, in my view, create a very convenient development of that tradition. The

¹³⁶ Also see Chapter one.

circumstances of the Mexican revolution and the political importance of turning over the power of the Church¹³⁷ concur with those of the lovers in Medieval Europe, given that colonization brought along the same patriarchal and religious institutions that had been challenged by the courtly love spirit.

The death and fall of both Pedro Páramo and Comala reveal the ideological aspect of the courtly love tradition, especially its criticism of patriarchy. The ideology of love is critical of a system that focuses on marriage as a utilitarian institution that minimizes women. In Rulfo's novel, Pedro Páramo breaks the harmony when being utilitarian in deceiving Dolores, an event that triggers Juan Preciado's failed journey. Pedro embodies the decay of the patriarchal order, one that prompts imbalance and downfall in Comala. But above this, Rulfo is stating that Pedro Páramo is defeated by the traps he uses to defeat others. His abusive power brings pain and injustice to the people and the land. There is a symbolic parallel between the half taste of fruits and Pedro's children's with the lack of center, the imbalance. The "contrapuntos" of the novel, as Jiménez de Báez has suggested, points to the feminine and masculine principles that do not encounter each other. In this section, I will discuss the tensions of the first space of patriarchal decadence and death, and the critical ideology that lies behind it.

4) Criticism of marriage and the imbalance between the feminine and masculine principles.

¹³⁷ On how Pedro Páramo relates to the Mexican Revolution, also see: (Hart)

Pedro as a cacique writes the rules, owns the entire land, and is himself the overwhelming power of Comala. As a form of patriarchy, “cacicazgo” in this novel is solely focused on a violent notion of power that praises the “macho” manhood, which is capable of capturing and holding the city as if he were a God. In this regard, Rulfo says the Jalisco region had inherited the autocratic form of power from the Spanish conquest, one that his novel criticizes: “Yo soy de una zona donde la conquista española fue demasiado ruda. Los conquistadores no dejaron allí ser viviente... Los hijos de los pobladores, sus descendientes, siempre se consideraron dueños absolutos. Se oponían a cualquier fuerza que pareciera amenazar su propiedad” (Rulfo and Sommers 22).¹³⁸ Pedro epitomizes “cacicazgo” as a serious setback in a patriarchal order that is fostered by Christianity in revolutionary Mexico. And such a setback, as it can be inferred throughout the novel, is nothing but the failure of the Church to spiritually lead the city, to seek protection for the weak, mainly women.

But the abuse of the “cacicazgo”, despite its primitive features, can be related to abuse of the patriarchal order that was mocked and challenged by the lyrics of the troubadours and by the courtly love romance. It is clear in the novel that Pedro Páramo humiliates Dolores and his children’s mothers. His most important crime was his unpaid debt to Dolores that made Juan Preciado begin his journey. It is Pedro’s consciousness of debts that defeats him and makes him hide underneath the blankets when Abundio comes to kill him. At the scene of his death, there are only two memories in his mind, both of them very substantial: Susana San Juan, and his unpaid debts. His debts reveal the underground of death in this novel, that which brings imbalance.

¹³⁸ Also see: (Rulfo "Juan Rulfo").

I will focus on the debt to Dolores and Juan Preciado, not only because it is actually the beginning and the end of the novel, but mainly because it is the matter of that debt that expresses Rulfo's awareness of marriage in a decadent order. Marriage is a problem for love. Such has been the concern of a tradition that has contested patriarchy, and Rulfo appeals to the long discussion on marriage through Pedro Páramo's deceit and humiliation of Dolores Preciado. As readers, we know Pedro swindles Dolores, and that he mistreats her to the point where she has no choice but to leave him.

Compared to the praising of the beloved, the following passage stands for the absence of love in the story. I believe Rulfo focuses on the bedchambers as a dimension of the square, and begins to suggest the correspondence between the intimate sphere and the exterior one; that of Comala. Eduviges Dyada gives account of Dolores's happenings in her marriage, and of the bed replacement she agreed with Dolores on her wedding night:

“-No puedo - me dijo-. Anda tú por mí. No lo notará.”
 “Claro que yo era mucho más joven que ella. Y un poco menos morena; pero esto ni se nota en lo oscuro. (P.P 22)

Dolores knows the wedding night is an obligation as can be inferred from her request to Eduviges. Whatever reason or moon is causing her decision to not sleep with Pedro Páramo, her argument “no lo notará” is convincing. As readers we know it has several meanings, and one of them refers to her wedding night as being a sexual act with no-identity, no face. She manages to get away with it, and darkness makes it possible: “pero esto ni se nota en lo oscuro.” Eduviges continues:

“Tu madre en ese tiempo era una muchachita de ojos humildes. Si algo tenía bonito tu madre, eran los ojos. Y sabían convencer.
 “-Vé tú en mi lugar - me decía.
 “Y fui.
 “Me valí de la oscuridad y de otra cosa que ella no sabía: y es que a mi también me gustaba Pedro Páramo.

“Me acosté con él, con gusto, con ganas. Me atrincheré a su cuerpo.” (*P.P* 22)

Dolores’ decision appears to be innocent. Rulfo describes her tenderness through Eduvigés, a female character, and we could think of her almost as a saint. But there is more to it. Dolores’ handling of the matter, her determination to remain faithful to herself that night, speaks of self-respect, intuition and a reasonable fear. And what makes her fear reasonable, is what marriage has been for women since ancient times. Rulfo pays great attention to the matter of property and gender, to the historical abuse that has occurred to women through marriage contracts. Despite the fact that de Beauvoir’s thesis on private property as an impediment for equality between men and women to love is plausible,¹³⁹ she admits patriarchy can find a way to overcome it.¹⁴⁰ In Dolores’ case, for instance, though she has economical privileges, her gender plays against her as much as Pedro Páramo’s power. De Beauvoir says that, even in the most ideal circumstances of “women’s economic and social autonomy”, patriarchy could appeal to the so called women’s inferiority: “she is not viewed by society in the same way; the universe presents her in a different perspective” (691). In this view of marriage as problematical, the author confirms his critical approach to the cacicazgo as a form of patriarchal power, thus exhibiting the same concerns of the courtly love ideology.¹⁴¹

While Dolores appears as a charming woman at the beginning in the scene I referred to above: “Si algo tenía bonito tu madre, eran los ojos. Y sabían convencer”, Eduvigés also describes her change. Dolores had a previous softness and innocence, but later on she hates him: “sus

¹³⁹ De Beauvoir explains women’s freedom in ancient Egypt was possible thanks to the absence of private property (118). She states that private property played against women’s independence in the Middle Ages (132).

¹⁴⁰ On the obstacles for feminist progress and the patriarchal script of the Marxist movement, see: (Mires 53-5)

¹⁴¹ Dolores’s case can be compared to men’s dismissal of women once marriage to them was no longer profitable. See Lewis’s commentaries in Chapter one.

ojos humildes se endurecieron.” Pedro Páramo behaves with Dolores in a very inconsiderate manner, as if she were a vassal. The imbalance or injustice has an effect on her:

“Ella siempre odió a Pedro Páramo. ‘¡Doloritas! ¿Ya ordenó que me preparen el desayuno?’ Y su madre se levantaba antes del amanecer. Prendía el nixtenco. Los gatos se despertaban con el olor de la lumbre. Y ella iba de aquí para allá, seguida por el rondín de gatos. ‘¡Doña Doloritas!’

“¿Cuántas veces oyó tu madre aquel llamado? ‘Doña Doloritas, esto está frío. Esto no sirve.’ ¿Cuántas veces? Y aunque estaba acostumbrada a pasar lo peor, sus ojos humildes se endurecieron.” (P.P 22-3)

Pedro Páramo’s cynical response “quería más a su hermana que a mí” shows how brutally he behaved with Dolores, his son’s mother. It is this aspect of him that has reasonably been interpreted as his only true self; to the extent that many critics disregard his love for Susana. Here Pedro takes advantage of Dolores’s desire to see her sister in order to dismiss her and finally (he does not say it, but it can be inferred) to take her inheritance for himself:

“Quisiera ser zopilote para volar adonde vive mi hermana.

“No faltaba más, doña Doloritas. Ahora mismo usted irá a ver a su hermana. Regresemos. Que le preparen las maletas. No faltaba más.

[...]

“Quería más a su hermana que a mí. Allá debe estar a gusto. Además ya me tenía enfadado. No pienso inquirir por ella, si es lo que te preocupa.”¹⁴²

“-¿Pero de qué vivirán?

“-Que Dios los asista.”

“...El *abandono en que nos tuvo, mi hijo, cóbraselo caro.*” (P.P 23)

Were it not because the matter of property and marriage has not been fair to women from ancient times, and that it is still an issue that is brought back by abuse of power, it could possibly be thought that Pedro’s action is moved merely by villainy. Though his swindling of Dolores was a choice, and that he knows he is to be charged for his debts at the scene of his death, Comala is also to blame for his abuse. It has been said that writers have a strong intuition of the relationship between tyrants and people:

¹⁴² It can be inferred Eduvigis is Pedro’s lover at that point, and it may play against the validity of her testimony, but such reality is consistent with the unavoidable sexual link regarding the bed replacement event, and with Dolores’ words on Pedro Páramo. I think this is not a matter of betrayal, but of a hidden complicity, while it shows Rulfo’s treatment on women friendship in this novel.

La intuición de algunos escritores ha encontrado esta escondida identidad entre el tirano y su pueblo. ¿Qué lector no siente que Pedro Páramo es tan de Comala – tan mexicano – como Juan Preciado y que, con otra fortuna, como Miguel páramo, pudo haber sido él también un Pedro Páramo? (Canfield "Dos Enfoques" 973)

Pedro's children could have had their father's fate. This recalls the macho values of power, the idea that manhood is proven by overwhelming strength and violence. It is the type of masculinity that leads men to assume masks that will play against balance and harmony. Connell¹⁴³ has explained that men prefer to subordinate values such as feelings and relationships in order to meet the demands of manhood and the establishment. In the "cacicazgo" as the given order, it is power and not relationships that matters to Pedro Páramo. But the question is if it is possible for a city to survive with a power that plays against women's dignity? The cacicazgo as an order has conspired against them all.

It has been acknowledged that Pedro Páramo's debt to Dolores and her son is crucial. His crime against them is vital to the plot from the beginning. We know Dolores is filled with hate, struggles to restore their dignity, and commands her son Juan Preciado to take revenge on his father. But both mother and son fail to do so. Dolores is a victim of this absence of love as much as her son is. Thus, neither of them manages to restore a sense of balance to Comala.

The failure of the fruits and of Pedro Páramos's children: The imbalance of the feminine and the masculine in Comala.

¹⁴³ Connell discusses gender differences on the personal *Letters of Abelard and Héloïse*. Though Abelard is quite a different case from Pedro Páramo, I take Connell's statements about the influence of establishment in men's decisions. He comments on Radice's view of Abelard in the *Historia* and Letter Two, in that he fits the modern model of men whose lives are : "subordinated to the ongoing process of individuation and achievement", and agrees with Radice in that it diminishes men's capacity in their emotional development. Connell explains that Héloïse's difficulty to understand Abelard is rooted in women's different views on ethics (29).

The fate of Comala is clear: life is not possible without the harmony of the feminine and the masculine, the outer dimension that contrasts with Susana.¹⁴⁴ If his unjust rule erodes the land, victimizes his women and sends his offspring to human sterility, Pedro's sorrow for Susana's death finally defeats him and turns Comala to wasteland.

The relationship between the feminine and the masculine as archetypes underlie, I believe, not just the courtly love tradition but any ideology that seeks an egalitarian relationship between men and women. Though this trend of thought is archetypal, it is coherent and akin to the courtly love ideology in that it is concerned with gender equality as what makes love possible. In short, love has as much to do with the overall scenario Octavio Paz calls "la plaza", the city, as much as it has to do with the bedchamber. One has a correspondence to the other. Thus, in this section I will focus on the outer meaning of both ideological tendencies, how concepts of love mirror a corresponding outer sphere.

In the wider context of Comala, the breakdown between the feminine and masculine has been noticed by critics interested in the novel's symbolism (Baker 57-8).¹⁴⁵ It has been suggested that the double symbolic meanings of the dry land and Comala's downfall is opposed to the feminine images of water. The absence and death in Comala has been interpreted as chaotic:

En la Comala de hoy todo es una pura ausencia y negación: ausencia de luz, de agua, de aire, que acaban de traducirse en la muerte del hombre y la tierra. Si hay aire, éste parece haberse aliado con el fuego para aniquilar al

¹⁴⁴ In a likely manner, Jiménez de Báez has seen Susana San Juan's presence in the novel, as the mediator to "la conjunción de la pureza y el amor que corresponde al principio femenino" (*Del Páramo A.* 550). In the same work the critic stresses how Susana is symbolically associated to water according to what she understands as the transmuting nature of Susana in some stages of the novel. Water and earth are the feminine principle; while air and fire the masculine one.

¹⁴⁵ The water symbology is especially related to Susana San Juan. Baker sees Pedro Páramo's associated to the lack of water. Water "represents the abundance of life which is associated with love and happiness while Pedro Páramo is a child." (57) "Without will, and without the unifying power of love, Pedro Páramo has become, as his name suggest (sic) nothing more than a *sterile pile of stone*." (58).

hombre (aire caliente e irrespirable); si la tierra aún produce algo es para envenenar el aire (saponarias podridas); si todavía queda algo de agua, esta sólo se da en una forma contaminante y mortífera de un sudor nauseabundo. (Pimentel 283-4)

But the critic also stresses the correspondence between the images of nature and people's lives: "el modelo de los cuatro elementos le sirve a Rulfo para subrayar el desequilibrio, que se agrava gradualmente, entre la naturaleza y el hombre" (284).

On the other hand, the dismantling of the center or "despedazamiento"¹⁴⁶ is the failure to bind the union of opposites: "La orfandad en el nivel simbólico implica la pérdida de la ley, la mora, de la raíz y del amor nutriente y protector o, más bien, el vacío de la deseada unión de los contrarios, generadora de la vida" (Jiménez de Báez *Del Páramo A.* 523).¹⁴⁷ The land cannot grow plants without water, thus heat, dryness and bitter fruits are the result of such failure. Fruits are sour and, according to Jiménez, the sterility of the soil speaks of social decay: "El mal structural conduce siempre al problema de la tierra. Por eso la escritura manifiesta la culpa social con los frutos de la tierra" (*Del Páramo A.* 545). Following the same topic on the harmony of elements, Donald Freeman interprets the downfall of Comala through Mircea Eliade, and speaks of the initial time as that when man lives in harmony with nature (259). The critic speaks of the coming "desintegración gradual" which I see akin to Jiménez's "despedazamiento": "Las casas [de Comala] pierden sus tejados y cubiertas exteriores, quedando reducidas a restos esqueléticos" (260). For Freeman, "El deterioro gradual del hombre y su contorno tiene una sola dirección: la muerte" (61).

¹⁴⁶ Jiménez understands the "despedazamiento" as the loss of a center, the fall: "Al fallar el Padre, dentro de un sistema patriarcal, se despedaza el pueblo. El texto nos permite observar este proceso en los diálogos entre Pedro Páramo y sus hombres que se van a la Revolución, y en la relación del padre Rentería con su iglesia. Paralelamente al proceso de la caída que observamos en Pedro Páramo, sus hombres pierden el centro, pero capaces de actuar, se lanzan a la lucha con todas sus contradicciones. Son los signos destructivos de un mundo solar fuera de su centro" (*Del Páramo A.* 546).

¹⁴⁷ This critic also describes three fundamental movements or stages in Susana's process, and interprets her name is associated with thought and feeling: "Siento el lugar en que estoy y pienso" (*P.P* 80).

Pimentel remarks on how the break between the elements is conveyed through a non-fertile land. Disharmony in nature corresponds to a human condition:

Es notable que los espacios intermedios [del purgatorio] parece compartir atributos de los otros dos [paraíso e infierno], porque si la tierra es fértil –como en el espacio del recuerdo—naranjos y arrayanes agrios no deleitan los sentidos del hombre, sino que hostilizan; la imagen acusa, ya para entonces, un divorcio entre el hombre y su entorno vital. (283)

This divorce from men and his surroundings referred to by Pimentel is based on the dialogue between the “Cura de Contla” and Rentería¹⁴⁸ The cura de Contla blames both Pedro Páramo and Rentería for the infertility of the land despite its soil being fertile because of Pedro Páramo’s being the only owner of those lands. The agrarian vision of harmony is total, it overwhelms all that there is. It is the feature that makes the novel regional¹⁴⁹ but, at the same time, it draws us back to the universal meanings it also contains.

The same hostility of the land and the poor taste of fruits can be paralleled to Pedro’s offspring. According to Canfield, neither Juan Preciado nor Abundio succeed in defeating their father¹⁵⁰ (“Dos Enfoques” 977). Pedro Páramo’s children would have failed had they been raised by him or not, for there is a reading that good fatherhood does not go along with marriage: “la casi total ausencia de relaciones amorosas que coincidan con la institución (sobremanera, la institución del matrimonio) conectan con la gran problemática rulfiana de la ausencia o debilidad de la figura paterna” (Matamoro 29). All this “despedazamiento” (Jiménez de Báez “De La Escritura..” 546), explains the impossibility of Pedro’s children

¹⁴⁸ “[sentados bajo una enramada donde maduraban las uvas] –Son ácidas, padre – se adelantó el señor cura a la pregunta que le iba a hacer--. Vivimos en una tierra en que todo se da, gracias a la Providencia; pero todo se da con acidez. Estamos condenados a eso.

-- Tiene usted razón, señor cura. Allá en Comala he intentado sembrar uvas. No se dan. Sólo crecen arrayanes y naranjos; naranjos agrios y arrayanes agrios. A mí se me han olvidado el sabor de las cosas dulces” (*P.P* 76).

¹⁴⁹ See:(Fares 75)

¹⁵⁰ Canfield stresses the irrationality of the act.

acting consciously in their pursuits. Their actions are unconscious; they cannot overcome fear and irrational drives like hatred and impulsivity. Canfield analyses the children's failure to defeat Pedro Páramo, and stresses that they actually did not grow up. In the case of Juan Preciado "Si el viaje de Comala representa el descenso en lo profundo de la psiquis, el hecho de no regresar indica una patología irreversible. El rito de paso de la pubertad a la madurez queda trunco: el muchacho *no crece* y muere" ("Dos Enfoques" 979). Her statement on Juan Preciado has symbolic parallels to the problem of the land and fruits that cannot mature or get their full plenitude. Juan Preciado, according to Canfield, died and never knew exactly what it was he had to see and know:

La aventura de Juan Preciado se presenta mal, ya desde el principio. Para él, el *llamado* está en el pedido de su madre agonizante, al que responde con una negativa interior. 'Así lo haré, madre'. Pero no pensé cumplir mi promesa' (PP, p.7). Hay, por tanto, una desobediencia inicial. ("Dos Enfoques" 983)

The critic states that Juan Preciado acts out of fear and distrustfulness, but she especially calls attention to his lack of faith: "El debe solamente *conocer y tener fe*, y los obstáculos se irán superando como con la ayuda de seres sobrenaturales. Pero como hemos visto, Juan Preciado ni tiene fe ni conoce" ("Dos Enfoques" 985).

Juan Preciado has also been seen as "un niño ingenuo, un iluso" (Sabugo Abril 419). The critic disregards his quest as moved by ignorance. "El joven Juan Preciado va hacia la vida sin saber el infierno (la mentira) que le espera" (419). But ignorance and immaturity are the point of his departure, which the hero must overcome through several trials before he accomplishes his aim. I bring attention to this aspect, since Canfield's states that Juan Preciado's initial weakness is what causes him never to grow. His decision "not" to take his mother's words seriously causes him not to fight, not to defeat the father, not to bring back the dignity that had been stolen from them: "Juan Preciado, renunciando al enfrentamiento, intenta la fuga, es

decir, el olvido, la evasión: las desastrosas consecuencias constituyen una de las claves de la novela.” (Canfield "Dos Enfoques" 976-7). Juan Preciado’s departure as a passive response to his mother’s request and his refusal to undertake the task “pero no pensé cumplir mi promesa” (*P.P* 7), speaks of an original wound, a deadly one, as if a damaged root could not raise the plant to the surface. He cannot overcome the underground, the initial irrationality and innocence of initiation rituals, and that could be considered the inverse of Perceval in his connection to the mother.¹⁵¹ Unlike Perceval in the *Perceval: The Story of the Grail* (Chrétien), Juan Preciado lacks spiritual strength, which would have enabled him to move forward and undertake his journey. His mother is deeply wounded, his father has taken away his love and support as he has all the land and people under his rule; thus, Juan Preciado cannot depart.

Another notorious failure to come to a higher consciousness is that of Abundio Martínez, who kills the father with the same hatred he cannot overcome within himself:

Abundio Martínez mata al padre, pero no lúcidamente: su borrachera tiene también un valor simbólico. Él no reconoce la parte de sí que vive en el padre y así su acto no es liberatorio: su alma seguirá vagando por los alrededores de Comala, masticando ese “rencor vivo” que, siendo sobre todo suyo, él parece reconocer sólo en Pedro Páramo. (Canfield "Dos Enfoques" 976)

The tension comes to an end once Pedro Páramo accepts Abundio as his own defeat. His mask has completely fallen off by the time Abundio goes to kill him:

Sé que dentro de pocas horas vendrá Abundio con sus manos ensangrentadas a pedirme la ayuda que le negué. Y yo no tendré manos para taparme y no verlo. Tendré que oírlo, hasta que su voz se apague con el día, hasta que se le muera su voz. (*P.P* 128-9)

¹⁵¹ Campbell’s approach to myth discusses aspects of tribal life which points to the difficulty for humans and especially the male to outgrow childhood (*Transformations* 1-23). In regard to the Parzival legend, the author states that Perceval is the chosen knight since his faith could lead him to the Saint Grail (*Transformations* 246). Despite Juan Preciado being the inverse of Perceval, I bring the connection since the role of the mother, as a beginning, is pivotal for understanding both stories.

Pedro knows he is guilty and is waiting for a reality he could not avoid any longer. He knows he has no right to speak or to evade. This obligation to listen to Abundio has an endless or eternal connotation. His phrase “hasta que se le muera su voz” is a total acknowledgement, not so much of Abundio’s request for money to bury his wife, but of his moral debt to him.

And in the case of Miguel Páramo, Canfield sees the impulsiveness and sexual appetite that are out of control, just as the horse he rides at the moment of his death. Therefore, in the given agricultural language the Cura of Contla shares with Rentería, Pedro Páramo’s children are fruits that cannot be eaten since they do not reach ripeness. Neither Miguel, nor Abundio, nor Juan can mature, they die at young age. Abundio, has an only son who dies soon after birth. Miguel dies while seeking a woman he never reached during his journey. If considering some critics’ posture in that Juan Preciado’s aim is “la invención del padre” (Ruffinelli 447), this view on his original wound would be consistent with his failure.

The reality of the fruits in this novel speaks of Pedro Páramos’s debt to the land. The reality of the children speaks of his debt to the women who unsuccessfully tried to raise them. Pedro Páramo’s tragedy is to encounter the feminine principle, both from his failure to live with Susana, and from his disregard for the women he abandoned. Women’s wounds come from the imbalance that plays against them: Susana San Juan’s is a symbolic victim of greed and sexual abuse from the father;¹⁵² Dolores is a victim of Pedro as much of an economical system that fosters his actions against her. Therefore, it is not accidental that women turn out to bear witness to the moral disaster. The importance of women’s voice in this novel has not been much acknowledged as being privileged witnesses of the downfall of Comala. Some

¹⁵² Scene of the Andrómeda mine. (*P.P* 94-5)

perspectives are misogynist. For instance, Alberto Vital considers women's testimony to Juan Preciado as destructive. It is not the reality of women's words what drive him insane, but rather the fact that women talk too much (exceso): "El relato de Eduviges consigue en la cabeza de Juan aumentar los murmullos...su exceso y su colapso inducen el caos dentro de Juan" (59). He states that Eduviges as well as the other women talk too much and that their words have no merit, and he does not consider their narrative importance. The statement is akin to the millenary tendency to underestimate women's voice as a "desire to silence them" (Bloch 17).¹⁵³ Inversely, my point is that it is through them that Rulfo reveals the inner side of an abusive patriarchy. Comala's downfall is reflected in the failure of the feminine (water, the mother) to nourish, and of the failure of the masculine (the land, Pedro and Rentería)^{154 155} to bestow prosperity and justice. Pedro Páramo's fall tells of the patriarchal crisis and downfall (Jiménez de Báez *Del Páramo A.* 506), and the acknowledgement of women's voices are at the core of the novel. Pedro's abusive ownership of the lands and a "cacicazgo" that weakens the role of women in society have caused unhappiness and death. The symbolic language of imbalance between the feminine and masculine principles is paralleled to disharmony and infertility. Absence of both love and faith is what lies behind Juan Preciado's unwillingness to undertake his journey. In the outer sphere, the problem of the land, property (Beauvoir 118-32), and the breaking between women and men, bring the critical views on the failures of the

¹⁵³ Other critics are contradictory in this regard. Sabugo says Juan Preciado finds the women he meets as liars and hypocritical "a su paso, las virtudes descubrían sus caretas cortesanias y parecían mujeres de conveniencia con sus sonrisas hipócritas", but later he states that characters cannot lie since they are dead (419).

¹⁵⁴ Jiménez's view of Rentería is linked to Judas' major sin, which was hopelessness and suicide. She sees the importance of Christian values in a town overwhelmed by sin and guilt, and the need for a redeemer of the land. The land suffers, the sin against orphans, against the Spirit: "El "pecado" del padre Rentería, cuya confesión aparece en el capítulo 41, ha sido contra el Espíritu. No sin contradicciones y errores se ha prestado a la mercantilización de los sacramentos, lo cual explica su nombre" (*Del Páramo A.* 545).

¹⁵⁵ Samuel O'Neill sees Pedro Páramo's power as of a "progresiva desintegración espiritual" (287)

Patriarchal system. The novel points to the spiritual as well as the political arguments that the courtly love ideology entails.

CONCLUSION

This study shows how discourses of romance and courtly love are inscribed in the three Spanish American works of fiction in question. It has made the links between the European traditions of Don Juan, Tristan and other related narratives through recognizable conventions of style and language that are inextricably linked to a gender ideology. As a result of this analysis, it has been possible to see how the different authors develop these traditions keeping some essential features and making changes along particular ideological lines. In the same manner, just as the original medieval and renaissance versions of these traditions relate to a cultural and historical context, so do the works of these authors within contemporary Latin America. In this regard, my analysis has shown that those “untouched” aspects of the traditions in question correspond to similar issues in the different contexts, which supports the idea that medievalisms cannot solely be considered in their original spatiotemporal dimension, since its trend of thought has reached many aspects of modernity in the post-colonial world.

Having shown that the study has achieved its main purpose, I wish now to show other results that have emerged from this thesis. The first one is that this research provides other reading alternatives to romance in Latin America. So far, the work on the foundational aspects of the romance, as an approach, has focused on the sociological and political aspects that are linked to the romances in Latin America as a result of colonization and foundational programmes. In this regard, Sommers justifies her work on the grounds of romance as a mirror of those programmes. My proposal aimed to focus on matters of language conventions that have been

transcendent in literature, while also paying attention to the ideological meanings in a bigger picture as well. I was more preoccupied with the artistic and philosophical meanings that underline romance and courtly love, for it was pivotal for me to find out what were the authors' trends of thought in their portrayal of romance, and what they had to say on the conventions they borrowed.

But the authors' choices, the critical or supportive stances they have in regard to the romance traditions and their ideological trends, are consistent with their style and to the main concerns of their narratives. For instance, García Márquez carnivalesque images, his humoristic depiction of reality through the grotesque explains his approach to love in *El amor en los tiempos del cólera*. He chooses to parody the language of romantic love and Florentino's fake idealism in a way that it is more akin to the Don Juan tradition. But there is a contradiction: while García Márquez is sceptical of the European discourse of modernization due to his opposition to postcolonial values, he nevertheless raises the prestige of the Don Juan figure along with its corresponding patriarchal ideology. Despite the fact that Florentino mocks Don Juan's elegance and bourgeois status, the matter becomes futile when considering how male seduction is elevated and highlighted in this novel. The importance of "machismo" within the Latin American context, I believe, plays an important role in creating Florentino. He is a Don Juan that reflects the social and cultural realm of the Caribbean, while improving the already downgraded prestige of the womanizer.

A different approach to these traditions is featured by Álvaro Mutis. Mutis' exploration of poetry as a reflexion of the human soul understandably poses a perspective on the Tristan tradition and on any other poetry. Far from mocking the bad poems that García Márquez

raises as part of the popular culture, Mutis tells us (or teaches us) through his novella, not only that the language of love should be truthful to oneself, it should also come from a genuine and deep observation of the beloved. Moreover Mutis' depiction of the steamer as an inner and sacred space relates to Tristan and Isolde's experience in the woods, and in short, to that utopic world that contrasts with the reality in the present world. Thus, Mutis' state of being an exile is parallel to the lovers' search for a space of dreams, however fatal it might be. His writing of the courtly love tradition corresponds to his view of matter in poetry. He also embraces the humanistic and spiritual perspective that the courtly love tradition gives to issues of gender relations that still prevail in the present.

Pedro Páramo's universal transcendence comes from Rulfo's experience in the Mexican revolution, from his deep preoccupation with faith and the drama of human failure. For Rulfo, I believe, death is as important an issue as love is. For the characters of his novel, the impossibility to enter that cherished world of dreams and love, the distance that keeps the characters away from it might be interpreted as a tragic sign. As a courtly lover, Pedro's sorrow at losing Susana and his slow breaking and falling into pieces, dramatically shows that he cannot outlive his beloved's absence. Beyond Pedro's fatal condition, he surrenders his power and accepts his punishment. He epitomizes people's inability to love, the essence of their solitude. According to Rulfo, Pedro Páramo symbolizes the people: "Hay que notar que algunos críticos toman como personaje central a Pedro Páramo. En realidad es el pueblo" (Sommers "Entrevista: Juan Rulfo" 19).

Unlike Susana who redeems herself through her liberating voice and her transcendent passion for Florencio at the moment of her death, Pedro does not triumph. His inner flaw cannot be solved, thus he will never enter paradise. As a courtly lover, despite his immense vision of that other side through Susana, the space of love is forbidden for him; he is condemned. His tragedy is to have been defeated by death in the most immense solitude. Unlike the courtly love heroes like Tristan or Romeo whose capitulations entail fulfilment and plenitude before death, Pedro encounters death in its most dramatic emptiness. Unlike for instance, Rick in *Casablanca* (Curtiz), who accepts his defeat for the sake of noble ideals, Pedro is haunted by remorse and debts. Rulfo shows the image of a courtly lover that cannot occur since his spirit is hurt to death: Pedro breaks into pieces, just as his soul does.

I believe that besides the particular and regional realities that encompass the authors' view of the romance and courtly love, their portrayal can appeal to audiences beyond those realities. In fact, the essential features of these traditions have been shared by cultures and peoples in very different geographical and temporal scenarios. García Márquez's reinvention of the Don Juan figure through the alliance narrator-Florentino, Mutis' depiction of the steamer as a symbol of love and poetry today, Rulfo's depiction of the lover's spiritual failure, and Susana San Juan's redemption through her body, show the complexity with which medieval romances have been rewritten in twentieth century Latin America.

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