

THE *SERRANA* UNDRESSED:  
RE-FRAMING THE READING OF THE ARCHPRIEST'S FOURTH  
MOUNTAIN ENCOUNTER IN THE *LIBRO DE BUEN AMOR*<sup>1</sup>

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Of the Archpriest's four mountain adventures in the *Libro de buen amor*,<sup>2</sup> the *cántica de serrana* [song of the mountain-maiden] in the fourth episode is the only one to present a mountain maiden not seeking sexual favors; rather, she prudently pursues the full commitment of marriage before she would bed the weary traveler who seeks her comfort and warmth. All four encounters are twice told by the traveler, the teller of the tale: first with a narrative verse, in *cuaderna vía* ("Mester de clerecía"),<sup>3</sup> and then, in a second telling, as a *cántica* in lyric verse. In the fourth encounter, the narrative crafted in *cuaderna vía* presents an animalized, almost monstrous version of the mountain maiden quite unlike any of the pretty, lively-complexioned mountain maidens in the *cánticas de serrana* of the previous three mountain encounters. If one follows Anthony Zahareas's suggestion to read each *cántica* version along with the *cuaderna vía* version as one story (*Itinerario* 263-64), then the fourth mountain encounter presents the reader with two distinct side-by-side versions of the same character: one referred to only by the epithet *yegua/yeguariza* [mare/mare-woman], in the narrative verse, the other referenced by her given name, Alda, in the lyric. To examine these two versions, or two sides, of the same character, I suggest a hypothetical function of metaphor and propose a semantic mechanism of humor that will facilitate the reading of the fourth mountain episode in the *Libro* as one single anecdote in two tellings, each telling scripted in opposition to the other. I hope to show that the *Libro* provides a framework within which both tellings of the encounter can be read against each other, revealing that both the narrative and the lyric tellings of this encounter function as a single and coherent humorous anecdote that in the end bitterly derides the mountain maiden for not acquiescing to the narrator's—presumably Juan Ruiz, the Archpriest of Hita—sexual whims.

## PARODY RECONSIDERED

Up to now, parody or a reaction to parody has played an essential role in analyzing the humor of the *Libro*. Hoping to show a possible mechanism for humor that does not rely on parody, I reconsider how parody has been utilized to access and to analyze humorous elements of the *serrana* [mountain maiden] encounters. The reading of the fourth mountain episode at which we arrive, however, does not preclude previous arguments based on aspects of parody that in the past have played a fundamental role in the literary analysis of the *Libro*, either parody for the purpose of “criticism, dispute and triumph” or parody that is “primarily entertaining and cheerful” (Deyermond 54).<sup>4</sup> While much of the *Libro*’s criticism focuses on parody, reacts against parody, or is informed by parody, the ambiguity of the text oftentimes makes it difficult to ascertain how humor in the *Libro* functions so that even establishing parody becomes complex.

In his watershed article “Some Aspects of Parody in the *Libro de buen amor*,” A. D. Deyermond sets out five parodic elements for analyzing the *serrana* episodes in the *Libro*, taking as his point of departure Pierre Le Gentil’s claim that the *Libro*’s *serranillas* [mountain maiden poems] parody French and Occitan *pastourelles* (I, 543-50). The first parodic element with which Deyermond concurs is Le Gentil’s observation that *cánticas de serranas* are set in winter (546-47), though the spring is “the traditional setting for the *pastourelles* and for much of medieval love-poetry in general” (63).<sup>5</sup> However, this point merits reevaluation when one compares the *Libro*’s *serrana* episodes to the Occitan *pastorelas* upon which Le Gentil bases his analysis (532).<sup>6</sup> For instance, the earliest extant *pastorella* in Romance, attributed to Marcabru, the first known *troubadour*, belies Le Gentil’s “traditional setting” *motif* as it begins with the traveler encountering a “little wench” wearing a “cape, a pelt lined tunic, a coarsely woven blouse, shoes and woolen stockings” (“L’autrer” st. i). Upon seeing her, he says: “you lovely thing, I am so sorry that you are stung by the cold” (st. ii), using the weather as a pretext for drawing her near. While this poem does not explicitly describe the winter setting, the context compels the reader to infer that this is clearly not a typical spring day with flowers in bloom and singing birds; rather, the reader sees a cold and blustery day that serves as the traveler’s pretext to propose that he cover—in all senses of the word—the young wench with his warm body.

In fact, the striking similarity between the winter setting, as well as shared linguistic features and literary *motifs*, in this Occitan *pastorela* and those in the fourth encounter in the *Libro* prompts María Luisa Meneghetti to propose that Marcabru's "L'autier jost' una sebissa," to which we refer here, may have been modeled after an Iberian lyric tradition.<sup>7</sup> Considering Meneghetti's observations—the striking similarity between both works—one might want to reconsider this element of parody proposed by Deyermond: if the first extant Occitan *pastorela* is set in winter, then it too would parody the traditional setting proposed by Le Gentil and would be an anachronistic parody of itself as well as of subsequent works, a literal impossibility. If humor in the *serrana* episodes depends on a winter setting as the principle element of parody, as Le Gentil argues, then the paradigm that leads to humor cannot apply, since, preceding the *Libro* by two centuries, the winter forms the framework of Marcabru's first *pastorela*.<sup>8</sup>

Another of Deyermond's parodic elements in the *serrana* episodes brings us to this paper's topic: the description of Alda, the fourth *serrana*. For Deyermond, the parodic element that invokes humor is the "point-by-point antithesis of the ideal lady" that Don Amor describes to the Archpriest (Juan Ruiz st. 431-35) since a beastly wench—Alda—is juxtaposed to the "ideal lady" of idealized beauty (63). But, as pointed out above, in the telling of the *cántica*, Alda, by name, is not a beastly wench, as Deyermond would have it, but a country beauty in every way: "hermosa, lozana, / e bien colorada" [pretty, lively, / and (nicely complected)] (1024de)<sup>9</sup> and it is the unnamed *yegua/yeguariza*, [mare/mare-woman]—the protagonist-narrator's epithet for her in the narrative telling—that is described as beastly in the antithesis Deyermond refers to. Deyermond conflates the two versions of the same character by attributing physical features of the mare/mare-woman to Alda, something that the text does not bear out.<sup>10</sup> To resolve the problems for the reader brought on by contradictory depictions in different versions of the same character, this beautiful Alda deserves to be considered as a contrast to the beastly one by virtue of being a distinct version of the same female character in the same anecdote. Proposing Don Amor's description of the "ideal lady," a worthy consideration of an ideal, Deyermond introduces a set of problems: textually, the fourth mountain encounter is 589 stanzas removed from Don Amor's ideal; contextually, the ideal lady description comes to the Archpriest in a dream in which Don Amor advises what type of woman might be ideal for him. However, a contingent

comparison, setting the *yegua/yeguariza* and Alda side by side, is perhaps more compelling than Deyermond's proposal.

Related to this, Deyermond's fourth parodic element underscores rôle reversal: the first three *serranas* seek "sexual satisfaction" while only the fourth seeks matrimony (63); however, Deyermond does not account for the fact that it is only the beautiful Alda, not the beastly *yegua/yegariza*, who seeks legally binding matrimony.<sup>11</sup> Two elements set apart the fourth mountain encounter from the previous three: matrimony, proposed by Alda in the lyric version, and the beastly description of the *yegua/yeguariza* in the narrative version; the beastly description is absent from the lyric version as is matrimony absent from the narrative version. Together, these two distinctions paint an incongruent portrait when one considers both tellings of this fourth encounter as a single anecdote.<sup>12</sup> I propose that this incongruity is key to understanding the function of humor in this mountain encounter.

#### RE-CONTEXTUALIZING THE FOURTH MOUNTAIN ENCOUNTER

Having addressed the generally accepted claim of parody as the defining motive for the beastly description of the *serrana* in the *cuaderna vía*, as was necessary to further explore the function of humor and what the end humor might be, in this section I frame the fourth mountain encounter in a distinct context so that I can introduce a methodology for analysis in the section that follows this one; that section also outlines a mechanism for exploring the function of humor in the fourth mountain encounter—both tellings as a single anecdote—of the *Libro*.

In this section, I re-contextualize only the *cuaderna vía* telling of fourth mountain episode, set on a perpetually frigid pass, so cold that the protagonist, teller of the tale, runs to keep warm and prevent death from exposure and hypothermia.<sup>13</sup> Fearing for his life, at the foot of the path, he runs headlong into a brawny, grotesquely monstrous, corpulent mare-herder (st. 1006-1008); the teller-protagonist dehumanizes the *serrana* by animalizing her as a mare:

Sus miembros e su talla non son para callar,  
 ca bien creed que era grand yegua cavallar;  
 quien con ella luchase no s' podríe bien fallar:  
 si ella non quisiese, non la podríe aballar. (st. 1010)

[Her limbs and her figure are not to be passed over in silence, for, believe me truly, she was a horse-sized mare; anybody who might wrestle her would not find himself in good shape; if she did not want (it), he could not pin her down.]

This animalized woman has been compared to the savage undomesticated woman of literary tradition, who represents either sexual brutality or bestial sin, and as such constitutes the binary opposite of the mountain maiden or *serrana*.<sup>14</sup> Parody aside, Anthony H. Zahareas and Oscar Pereira underscore the superbly comic allusion to the capacity of this “mare” to subdue the human male in an erotic wrestling match. With this “mare” sufficiently endowed to resist being covered by a stallion comes the malicious insinuation of no visible physical means by which a human male can do so—“porque no hay por dónde cogerla para hacerle el amor” [for there is no visible means to take her to make love] (281); simply put, she is too wild for a human to mount. While Zahareas’ case rests on the active verbs *cavallar* and *luchar* in lines 1010bc (281)<sup>15</sup>—loaded with a double *entendre* that underscores the deviant sexual nature of unnatural females—one might ask why the teller settles on a mare to portray this herder. Would not, for instance, a swineherd turned swine be more degrading and equally at variance with nature, as seen in the anonymous thirteenth-century Occitan *porqueira*, titled “Mientre per una ribiera”? Though Deyermond considers that this Occitan *porqueira* “approach[es] the spirit of the Archpriest’s poems,” here (he speaks of the *serranas* in all four mountain encounters collectively) he observes that it does not create the same “effect achieved in the *Libro*” (64) nor does it reach the level of sophistication of Juan Ruiz’s art. Still, why a mare? Might it be solely for effect?

In fact, the *Libro* follows a cross-cultural practice of deriding a woman by speaking of her as a mare. A text that may serve to make this point in reference to the *yeguariza* [mare-woman] in the *Libro*’s fourth encounter would be the Occitan satire against love, “Dire vos vuoill ses doptansa,” in which Marcabru personifies Love as woman and bitterly animalizes her as mare:

Love has the habits of a mare: for she always wants to be pursued and she rubs against you time after time,—Listen!—nor will she ask for respite from it, whether you’re fasting or full. (st. x)

As translated and paraphrased here by Simon Gaunt, this poem describes a mare who embodies the unquenchable sexual desire of Love as an animalized woman, lewd sexual behavior being a recurring theme in Marcabru's work.<sup>16</sup> Though, in essence, this mare coincides with the underlying censure of a woman's inordinate sexual appetite in the *Libro*, Marcabru's biting satire does not have the same visual or humorous effect as does the *Libro*, for the *Libro* does not merely describe the female character: the *serrana*, the mare/mare-woman version of her, makes her intentions explicit as she aggressively engages the protagonist, the teller of the tale.

Though I am hard pressed to find other medieval Spanish texts that portray human males or females animalized as mares, a broader search of European medieval literature and texts leads to thirteenth-century Icelandic law codes, the *Grágás*, which proscribe various kinds of verbal, among other, insults (Finlay 21). The *Gulapingslog*, in particular, in cataloging proscriptions on insults requiring full compensation—including the right to kill the offender—lists three grievous ones: in one insult a man compares another “to a mare or calls him a bitch or a whore or compares him with any kind of breeding [i.e., female] animal” (Finlay 23). Meulengracht Sørensen comments that this type of insult “always conveys contempt, and its purpose is to expel the person concerned from the social community as unworthy; in this aspect, sexual symbolism was the strongest way of putting it” (qtd. in Finlay 24). Alison Finlay points out that, to this end, “the transference of insult into the category of animal emphasizes the impossibility of what is alleged, thereby drawing attention to its metaphorical force” (26).

Finlay clarifies that “the only female animals specified in the law are the mare and the bitch”; however, she makes quite clear that the law is not the only context that makes explicit this use of insult: “[I]nsults representing both males and females as mares involved in sexual acts suggest that the implication was inordinate sexual appetite—in itself, of course, a dreadful slur on medieval femininity” (26). To illustrate her point, Finlay gives an unusual example of an obscene verse in *Kormáks saga* of calumny directed at a woman, in which she is characterized as a mare to emphasize its (and her) sexual availability.<sup>17</sup> I draw on Finlay's perceptive observation to elucidate what Zahareas and Pereira allude to when they imply that there is no physical way to have sex with or to sate the *yegua/yeguariza*: it points to the metaphorical force of the figure of the *yegua* [mare] as transference to insult. Precisely, the physical

impossibility of what is alleged, though not the impossibility of what it represents, underscores the deviant sexual availability of the woman figuratively animalized as a mare.<sup>18</sup>

While the erotic wrestling match and the impossibility of bringing to fruition the sexual act with the *yegua/yeguariza* (st. 1010), as postulated by Zahareas and Pereira (281), resonates closely with the conclusions drawn by Finlay on the insults proscribed by the Icelandic legal codes and their appearance in the sagas, Zahareas and Pereira and others are hard pressed to give coherent meaning to the continued description of her in the stanza that follows it:

En el Apocalipsi Sant Juan Evangelista  
no vido tal figura nin de tan mala vista;  
a grand hato daría grand lucha e conquista:  
non sé de cuál diáblo es tal fantasma quista. (st. 1011)

[In his Apocalypse St. John the Evangelist never saw a shape like that, such a terrifying sight; against a big herd of (studs) she would be capable of (wrestling) and winning: I don't know what devil could love a spectre like that.]

A reading of this stanza might be: "Such an unsightly figure is not even seen in the Apocalypse, greatly capable of wrestling and vanquishing a great herd of studs, yet I know of no demon who would desire [make love to] such a phantasm."<sup>19</sup> While such a match would be repugnant, the explicit textual reference to the Apocalypse unmistakably evokes the image of the Great Whore of Babylon as John of Patmos describes her fall in the biblical book of the Apocalypse.<sup>20</sup>

18:2 He [an angel] cried out in a mighty voice:  
"Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great.  
She has become a haunt for demons.  
She is a cage for every unclean spirit,  
a cage for every unclean bird,  
[a cage for every unclean] and disgusting [beast].  
18:3 For all the nations have drunk  
the wine of her licentiousness passion.  
The kings of the earth had intercourse with her.  
(Faley's translation 140)<sup>21</sup>

The allusion to unquenchable sexual appetite is clear, but why make this unmistakable association of the *yegua/yeguariza*, the mare/mare-woman, with the apocalyptic Great Whore in the Apocalypse?

Catherine Keller's *Apocalypse Now and Then: A Feminist Guide to the End of the World*, which surveys cultural and political apocalyptic moments from antiquity to the present, may shed some light on the problem. Referring to sexual practices and preferences, and to the habit of seeing them in apocalyptic terms, Keller concludes that "sins against 'compulsory heterosexuality' inscribe themselves at the top of the list of beastly abominations to be purged in the desired—but, not necessarily coming—Armageddon" of any given cultural moment (252). Keller underscores that since John of Patmos, everyday people as well as political entities in Western culture have developed the habit of thinking of critical moments in eschatological terms as well as treating crises as Armageddons, pitting a perceived good against a perceived evil. Given the habit of this cultural practice, then, the teller of the fourth mountain encounter in the *Libro* faces his crisis—death by hypothermia—and experiences an apocalyptic moment as he runs headlong into the mare/mare-woman; any sexual act with her would be beastly abomination as her unstable desire reduces her to an abominable whore.<sup>22</sup>

Consequences of such actions are consistent with the mare metaphor found in Icelandic lore. William Sayres, for instance, gives the example of cowardice from Icelandic *Ölkofta páttir* in which the coward who flees from danger is denigrated: "[Y]ou were so scared you turned yourself into a mare, an abominable thing to do" (29). Being made a mare through one's actions or someone else's insults, then, makes one also an abomination. Reading the *yegua* metaphor as an insult for an abomination, if one imagines the possibility of sexual intercourse with her as Zahareas and Pereira infer, then, unravels the parody construct upon which much of the *serrana* criticism rests since interpretation no longer relies on the antithetical portrait that Deyermond proposes but on biblical imagery. One might then ask, what is the motive of the metaphor? Why does the *cuaderna vía*, a narrative form *par excellence*, fail to narrate the encounter but instead give little more than a disparaging extended description of the herder? Why does the action take place in the lyric verse of the *cántica*? How is the obvious humor of this encounter conveyed?

## A FUNCTIONAL MECHANISM FOR HUMOR

To date these concerns have not been fully raised, nor have the two distinct portraits of the same character been reconciled. To attempt to address these, I propose two scripts, or scenarios, semantically crafted to be read interdependently in order to convey how the humorous twice-told encounter functions.<sup>23</sup> While the audience listens to the anecdote, such scripts are played out for the hearer, evoked or triggered by a word, a phrase or a situation. As explained below, the one telling, in *cuaderna vía*, provides a **sexual script** while the other telling, the *cántica*, provides a **non-sexual** script. One is not compared to the other, rather they are set in opposition and it is the non-sexual opposition in the *cántica*'s portrait of Alda set against the explicit sexual humor of the *cuaderna vía* portrait of the *yegua/yeguariza* [mare/mare-woman] that evokes laughter. Analysis through this semantic mechanism of humor does not inhibit approximations to the text through other models of humor nor does it impede other theoretical methodologies of analysis; alternate models and methodologies, including parody, may still apply.

The semantic theory of humor and the mechanism by which the encounter can be analyzed—and upon which I base my methodology to re-assess the fourth mountain encounter in the *Libro*—is developed in Victor Raskin's *Semantic Mechanisms of Humor*, from which I adapt two concepts.

One concept posits that jokes—and anecdotes—contain an element that “triggers the switch from one script to another,” which Raskin calls the “semantic script-switch trigger,” or simply “trigger.” There are two types: triggers that are ambiguous and triggers that are contradictory (114-17). For our purposes, the contradiction trigger seems more appropriate since the *cuaderna vía* telling of the fourth encounter seems completely incongruous in comparison to the *cántica*.<sup>24</sup> The concept also posits that humor is “created by a partial overlap of two opposed scripts” (Rankin 117); for our purposes, we can label one script as YEGUA/YEGUARIZA, after the epithet of the female character in the *cuaderna vía* telling, and the other script as ALDA,<sup>25</sup> after the corresponding version of the character in the *cántica* telling. In Rankin's system, “the opposition between the real and unreal situations evoked by the [script in the] text belongs to the actual/non-actual type; the non-

actual situation exists externally” to the actual situation (117). I propose that a similar opposition exists in the case of the fourth mountain episode, as conjectured by the protagonist-narrator—the teller—of the twice-told humorous anecdote.<sup>26</sup> Some of the contradictions that I focus upon include these features, two sides, or versions, of the same character.

**ALDA script: (in opposition→) YEGUA/YEGUARIZA script:**

(mountain-maiden)	(mare / mare-woman)
actual	non-actual
normal	abnormal
possible	impossible
[in a metaphoric sense]	[in a concrete sense]
goodness-related	badness-related
life-related	death-related
non-sex-related	sex-related
[holy matrimony]	[abominable deviant sex]
high-stature-related	low-stature-related. (127) <sup>27</sup>

Raskin’s second concept that I adapt has to do with the type of sexual humor, to which I allude in the opening paragraph to this section, and that “consists of an anecdote based on the **implied sexual opposition**” on the one hand, and an “**overt non-sexual opposition**” on the other. “Its non-sexual opposition contrasts the real-world human anatomy to a possible- [in a Dijkian sense, see note 26] world human anatomy; the opposition is applied to sex but it could very well be used equally well in any other area” (160):

Non-sexual oppositions [of this type] impose an element of the non-sexual world on the explicitly sexual situation of the anecdote. Here the hearer is reminded of the non-sexual world while still being immersed in the sexual world ...

[These anecdotes] are sexually explicit and involve various specific and non-specific scripts[:]; it is not these scripts which make up the humor. In general, this type of sexual humor can utilize the scripts, types of opposition or triggers, along with allusion, parody, [insult, etc.] available to verbal humor. The only difference is that all of these are projected on the explicitly sexual situation described by the text. (160-61)

Within this type is a more narrowly defined group made of anecdotes in which the sexual situation is feignedly mistaken for the non-sexual situation (163). Characteristically for this group, as in the fourth mountain encounter, “the necessary switch to the non-sexual script is triggered by a perceptual (visual, audial, or social) [and here may I include literary] similarity between the scripts” (163).

By reading the fourth mountain encounter as an extended and sophisticated joke in the form of a humorous anecdote related in two tellings, “based on the **implied sexual opposition**” on the one hand, and on an “**overt non-sexual opposition**” on the other, the reader or listener sees the full force of the anecdote take shape in the second telling of the *cántica* (st. 1022-42), the framework and the sexual script having already been established by the *cuaderna vía*’s first telling. Zahareas and Pereira would not disagree, for they encourage a simultaneous reading of the *cuaderna vía* and the *cántica* of this encounter:

[. . .] no puede leerse una versión de la experiencia con la serrana sin leer al mismo tiempo la otra. Era de esperar que hubiera varios esfuerzos para explicar la discrepancia y a base de hipótesis inciertas aventurar diversas interpretaciones de las cuatro aventuras o del libro. (284)

[One cannot read the one version of the mountain maiden experience without at the same time reading the other. One would expect there to be various efforts to explain the discrepancy, and on the basis of uncertain hypotheses venture various interpretations of the four (mountain) adventures or of the book.]

Though Zahareas and Pereira refer to the reader in this passage, I respond to Zahareas and Pereira’s invitation by approaching the text not so much as a reader would, but from the point of view of a listener of the twice-told tale who might form part of an audience for its reading or for its telling. That hearer need not understand the whole of the *Libro* to capture the humor of this tale; for as the hearer begins to witness the mountain maiden of the lyric *cántica*, he or she is still immersed within a contextual framework of the metaphorically sexual impossible world anatomy of the mare/mare-woman into which the narrative *cuaderna vía*

telling has absorbed him or her, since it is the narrative telling that appears first in sequence in the text of the *Libro*.

#### RE-READING THE TEXT

With the *cántica*, the lyric verse, the *Libro* imposes an element of the non-sexual real world of Alda's anatomy on the anecdote's explicitly sexual situation that has already been told with the *yegua/yeguariza* in the *cuaderna vía*. It does so by putting the *YEGUA/YEGUARIZA*'s unreal-animalized anatomy (re-contextualized in the previous section of this paper) in opposition to ALDA's non-sexual real-human anatomy; the teller recounts:

fallé una serrana	I encountered a mountain [maiden],
fermosa y loçana	pretty, lively,
e bien colorada.	And [nicely complected] (st. 1024bcd).

This real-world anatomy of the beautifully complexioned, lovely *serrana*, ALDA, creates a clash between the metaphorically possible world human and the unreal, impossibly sexualized anatomy (in a Dijkian sense) of the *YEGUA/YEGUARIZA* in the narrative, the first telling; keeping in mind the impossibility of sex with a literally improbable woman-mare converts that metaphor into an insult, as Finlay would say, underscoring the abominable taboo of sexual bestiality.

In the second telling of the twice-told tale, the teller-protagonist, fearing death by hypothermia, begs the *serrana* for shelter from the inclement weather (st. 1025-1026). The sensible Alda replies:

Pariente mi choça,	Brother, anybody
el que en ella posa	Who lodges in my hut
conmigo desposa	Gets married with me,
e dame soldada.	And gives me [his wages]. (st. 1027bcde)

The prudent response evokes the previously played script of *cuaderna vía* that narrates a version of her request for payment of services (st. 1009bc), while replaying the already witnessed beastly image of the *YEGUA/YEGUARIZA*, punctuated by the teller's warning: "los que quieren *casarse* aquí no sean sordos" [those who want to get married

should not close their ears at this point (my emphasis)] (st. 1014d). The warning is triggered here in the *cántica* by the word “DESPOSAR” (st. 1027d)—authorized legal matrimony—in Alda’s mouth; the teller’s warning also evokes the *Book of the Apocalypse*’s warning of heeding its words on abominable, licentious and damning alliances,<sup>28</sup> cautioning against congress with the likes of the *yegua/yeguariza*.

Though desperate for shelter, the teller-protagonist protests that a married man can only pay for lodging (st. 1028). The sympathetic Alda boards him but does not lodge him in the hospitable “sierra nevada” custom. Providing a fire, the best in mountain fare and drink, she hints that payment in gifts would guarantee a warm bed at no additional cost (st. 1029-33), until the teller-protagonist asks:

“¿por qué non pedides la cosa çertera?”	“Why don’t you ask for the [real] thing?” (st. 1034bc)
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While he refers to making his payment in sexual favors, as he finds himself penniless, she, on the other hand, understands “*cosa çertera*”—the real thing—to mean matrimony, which she would very much like, and begins to list what are for her the rustic accoutrements of wedding attire. The hearer visualizes her clothed in a well-dyed ribbon, a made-to-order collared shirt, well-crafted tin beads, jewelry of value, soft fur, a good hood striped with elegant cloth, and nice high boots made with wrought leather (st. 1035-37). Going down ALDA’s wish list, the listener of the anecdote dresses her, head to foot, in the outfit requested while having in the back of his or her mind the previous version of the *YEGUA/YEGUARIZA* in a semi-undressed state, as we shall see below.

This opposition begins to replay the previously viewed sexual script exposing the semi-clothed *YEGUA/YEGARIZA*’s sexualized anatomy, as witnessed by the teller-protagonist who, in his first telling, admits: “en verdad sí, bien vi fasta la rodilla” [“in truth, I did see (down) to her knee”] (st. 1016a); this type of expression triggers a binary sexual script, *SEXUAL EXPOSURE*, with two values: the ‘unexposed’ as its normal value” (Raskin 156), which ALDA represents, juxtaposed to the “‘exposed’ as the abnormal, unexpected value” (156), which the *YEGUA/YEGUARIZA* represents. The listener of the anecdote superimposes the lovely figure of ALDA over the figure of the *YEGUA/YEGUARIA*, recalling her previous semi-nude state:

Teníé por el garnacho [las sus] tetas colgadas,  
 dávanle a la çinta pues que estavan dobladas,  
 ca estando senzillas dar' ién so las ijadas:  
 a todo son de çitola andarén sin ser mostradas. (st. 1019)

[She had (through her jacket her tits hanging out),<sup>29</sup> they only reached her waist because they were doubled back, for if they hung loose they would have (hung) below her flank; they would jig to every tune on a citole without having been taught how.]

In the *cuadernavía* telling, the teller of the tale must have been able to see the *yegua/yeguariza* undressed to the waist in order to judge the inordinate size of her breasts. “SIZE plays a secondary role here, thus rendering the anecdote more sophisticated” (Raskin 158). As Raskin would say, the “general non-sexual opposition [of ALDA, then,] is replaced by the [recalled] specific sexual opposition [of the *YEGUA/YEGUARIZA*]” (156): “GENITAL SIZE, represents PROWESS, and is used as a binary feature with normal performance opposed to ‘sexual athleticism’ á la Hercules”; an ‘average’ vs. ‘gigantic’ for GENITAL SIZE represents, respectively, normal vs. abnormal values (156). The *YEGUA/YEGUARIZA*’s abnormally large GENITALIA speaks to her perceived beastly sexual appetite, here comical but also threatening for those who would sexually engage her, as Zahareas and Pereira infer.<sup>30</sup>

Having not yet concluded this telling, the teller-protagonist in the first telling continues the undressing of the *yegua/ yeguariza* as he reveals her torso to the hearer:

costillas mucho grande en su negro costado,  
 unas tres vezes contélas, estando arredrado (st. 1020ab)

[enormous ribs in her filthy sides, I counted them some three times, it (her jacket) standing apart]

Her jacket, “garnacho” (st. 1019a), must have fallen open, “arredrado,” (st. 1020b), giving him ample opportunity to count her ribs, not once but thrice. But, does such a beast merit a third look? The hearer can only speculate how much the teller actually sees from his half-hearted denial:

dígot' que non vi más ni t' será más contado,  
ca moço mesturero non es para mandado. (st. 1020bd)

[I tell you that I saw nothing more, nor will more be told to you,  
(since a tell-tale) lad is no good for conveying messages.]

Jacques Joret's reading of this text, "no te quiero relatar más, porque irás a contarlo por todas partes, cambiando mis palabras" ["I do not want to relate more to you, because you will go about telling it abroad and changing my words"] (1990, 442), relies not only parody but on scripted action that underscores the suggestive state of affairs, as here the teller of tales self-censures his own content.

With this part of the sexual script played out, this auto-censure begs the hearer to supply the gaps in the text so that he or she can continue the scripted version of the *cántica* of ALDA proposing legal matrimony if the teller-protagonist can acquiesce to her request, what to her is the 'real thing'—"cosa çertera" (st. 1034c):

serás mi marido	you shall be my husband
e yo tu velada.	And I your lawful wedded wife. (st. 1038de)

Knowing sexual favors will not work, wanting no part of marriage and unable to provide gifts, he resorts to asking her to extend credit (1039), repayable on a return trip, but the comely Alda, wanting no part of this offer, replies:

Non ay mercadero	[A merchant is no
bueno sin dinero,	Good without money,
e yo non me pago	And I am not pleased
del que no m' da algo	By anyone who does not give (pay)
	something
ni l' dó la posada.	Nor do I give him any lodging.]
	(st. 1041)

Or simply put: no money, no deal. The teller retrospectively telling the tale spitefully introduces a malicious preface to Alda's last retort by creating a new and distinct portrait of her; the teller says: "Díxome la *heda*" ["The *ugly thing* said to me" (my emphasis)] (st. 1040a), meaning, "deforme, torpe, mala, abominable,"<sup>31</sup> more aptly in English: "having an

appearance or aspect which causes dread or horror; frightful or horrible, esp. through deformity or squalor.”<sup>32</sup> The image scripted up to this point in the *cántica* portrait, the second telling, has been of an “hermosa, lozana, bien colorida” [pretty, lively and lively-complected] ALDA that suddenly becomes undone, triggered by a single word “HEDA,” an unexpected word that shocks, that seems out of place,<sup>33</sup> bringing to full force the insulting script played out in the *YEGUA/YEGUARIZA* version, replayed here upon ALDA for having denied the protagonist, the teller-protagonist, any sexual favor. Disgruntled, he is left undone for his audacity of expecting everything for nothing, and so he resorts to retaliation.<sup>34</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

The cultural practice among jealous husbands and disappointed lovers of demeaning a worthy woman by calling her ugly—“*heda*” in the case of the *Libro*—and deriding her for not acquiescing to their sexual whims is documented quite aptly by Moshé Lazar in his article on the Occitan love lyric “*Fin’amors*.” Following this practice, the jilted teller-protagonist of the tale in the *Libro* reverts to insulting Alda by demeaning her for resisting his futile advances. This conclusion can be reached by interdependently reading both the lyric telling and the narrative telling of the fourth mountain encounter. The twice-told tale functions in much the same way as do the practices described by Raskin, for humor is employed to deride a prudent but “hermosa” (pretty) Alda, by constructing two tellings: one, a non-sexual opposition that contrasts the real-world anatomy of the lovely complexioned, well-clothed ALDA in the *cántica* to another, the impossible world, animalized anatomy of the semi-dressed woman-made-mare, *YEGUA/YEGUARIZA* of the *cuaderna vía*. The metaphor of making a mare out of a woman here serves an additional secondary purpose, as found only in complex texts, by representing the script of FORBIDDEN SEX that alludes to zoophilia and demonophilia, abominable practices provoking malicious laughter as only biting insult can; yet in condemning such unions as apocalyptic abominations, the teller casts a dreadful slur on Alda’s personal femininity as well as on medieval femininity as a whole.

Though I may not agree with Deyermond on exactly what the figure of the mare-woman parodies in the fourth mountain encounter, I would

agree that parody is essentially at play here, but only with respect to the *yeguariza's* description and her behavior, though that alone adds little to the fourth mountain encounter as a whole. I would also agree with Hart, that parody or irony alone complicates the problem of reconciling the lyric telling to the narrative one, two tellings that seem destined to be read together. Neither parody nor irony, though, interferes with the proposed interdependent reading proposed here; rather, they help establish the element of evoked humor in the script that is played by a semantic script-switch trigger that brings the fourth mountain encounter to life.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> A version of this article, “The Serrana Mesurada Undressed: Using the Cuadernavía Narrative as a Framework for Reading the «Cántica de serrana» in the *Libro de ‘buen amor’*,” was delivered at the Medieval Association of the Midwest Annual Conference, Universidad de Puerto Rico en Mayagüez, 12-13 January 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Hereafter referred to as “*Libro*.”

<sup>3</sup> The form known as *cuaderna vía* was established in the second stanza of the *Libro de Alexandre*, so that *mester de clerecía* now refers to a monorhyme tetrascope of Alexandrine lines (fourteen syllables per line, divided into two equal hemistichs).

<sup>4</sup> For a concise review of literature that establishes the importance of parody in medieval studies as well as in the *Libro*, see Deyermond 53-54.

<sup>5</sup> I treat only the parodic elements that Deyermond proposes that speak to the *serranilla* episode analyzed here and do not discuss all of the five parodic elements that he proposes.

<sup>6</sup> I have argued elsewhere that the Castilian *serranillas* (what we call in this paper “mountain encounters”), are closer to Occitan *pastorelas* than to the French *pastourelles* (Quintanar *ad passim*).

<sup>7</sup> Meneghetti claims that Marcabru stayed in Alfonso VII’s court for about a decade, between 1134 and 1143 (she does not clarify if he visited or remained in Alfonso’s court). To bolster Meneghetti’s argument we point to Jean-Marie D’Heur who documents that from 1137 to 1147 Marcabru must have been in Northern Spain and in Santiago de Compostela on at least three occasions. Gaunt, based on studies of Marcabru’s work, places him in Northern Spain at least eight times in the second quarter of the twelfth century (2-3), as he comments that very likely Marcabru was familiar with the peninsular lyric tradition. This would imply that there was a lyric tradition in Romance in the Iberian Peninsula two centuries before the *Libro*.

<sup>8</sup> As far as I know, up to now no critic of Occitan lyric has considered “L’autier” a parodic work.

<sup>9</sup> Throughout this article, I quote from Joset’s very accessible yet rigorous edition. Where another edition of the *Libro* or the mountain adventure poems is quoted, I reference it by the editor of that edition.

Translations to these are from Willis's edition of the *Libro de buen amor* with my emendations to his translation enclosed in square brackets.

<sup>10</sup> In her article "El cuerpo grotesco en el 'Libro de Buen Amor,'" Haywood analyzes the *cuaderna vía*, narrative version, and refers to the mare/mare-woman by the name Alda. It is interesting to note that it is only the lyric version that follows the narrative one that portrays the lovely feminine version of the mountain girl in the female character named Alda; however, none of the feminine beauty featured in the lyric version is included or commented upon in Haywood's analysis.

<sup>11</sup> Though in the third mountain adventure the subject of a union is broached, it is not by the loutish mountain lass, Menga Llorente, but by the traveler, who introduces the subject by saying: "I travel the mountains where I would gladly *cassar*" ["ando la sierra / do m' casaría de grado"] (998cd). Although *cassar* may mean 'marriage' it does not necessarily mean 'matrimony' since along a spectrum of a union, meaning can range from 'marriage,' including common law, to cohabitation, to 'illicit union' as is pointed out by Kasten and Nitti ("Casar," def. 1, def. 2). In this particular case, Zahareas and Pereira read Menga Llorente's response to indicate that the traveler will have great opportunities for sexual union as they read *casar* as 'to join together' and *recabdo* as 'sexual arrangement' (for a full discussion, see Zahareas and Pereira 279).

<sup>12</sup> Marino underscores that up to now, no explanation has been offered for the discrepancy between the narrative and the lyric versions of the fourth mountain episode of the *Libro* (60-62).

<sup>13</sup> Whereas in all previous scholarship the protagonist-narrator is referred to as Juan Ruiz, or the Archpriest, from this point forward, I refer to the male character in this mountain encounter as the teller of the tale or as the teller-protagonist.

<sup>14</sup> Spitzer departs from the realist trend when he considers that this episode is about a legendary and unreal character, the wild-man or wild-woman, a nature of vegetation or fertility. For him, these are like the supernatural wild-women that seek love from men, according to tenth-century witnesses, framed within a dangerous and fearful nature (123). Spitzer here comments on the *serranas* in the *Libro* as a whole, not specifically Alda of the fourth encounter. Spitzer's point of view of the *serranas* continues to influence the criticism of *serranillas* in the *Libro*. For a discussion of the mountain maiden as monster, see Hart who

focuses on comparisons to Germanic narrations that associate the wild with the demonic (89-92). For another reaction to Spitzer, see Zahareas who considers the portrait of the *serranas* a faux one and not one of “pure realism” (*Art* 150). See also Kirby who sees *serranas* as wild women, along the lines of Bernheimer’s *Wild Men in the Middle Ages*, belonging to the carnivalesque cycle, proposing the episode was written during Lent 1329. Alternatively, Haywood conflates matters by referring to the mare/mare woman as Alda, considering the character as grotesque since it belongs to a confusing category that distorts and transgresses the physical boundaries between wild animal and humanness. Animal metaphors underscore an accumulation of sins; lasciviousness or licentiousness or avarice, envy and servility, as well as a diabolical and violent nature; she does not mention the lyric version in this reading (“El cuerpo grotesco” 441-50; *Sex* 49-96), though consequently she does, but only to refer to the sexual proposal by the archpriest (*Sex* 119).

<sup>15</sup> The metaphor for “*cavallar*,” to ‘mount’ is obvious. As Adams point out, “*luctor*, to wrestle, has reflexes in the Romance languages used for sexual intercourse (OFr. *luitier*, OSp. *luchar*)”; the metaphor is wide spread in classical Greek and classical and medieval Latin literature (157-59).

<sup>16</sup> The mare’s excessive sexual appetite is illustrated by its capacity to conceive, as explained by Pliny: “It is well known that in Lusitania, in the vicinity of the town of Olisipo and the river Tagus, the mares, by turning their faces towards the west wind as it blows, become impregnated by its breezes, and that the foals which are conceived in this way are remarkable for their extreme fleetness; but they never live beyond three years” (VIII. lxxvii). We note that the example that Pliny gives here is from mares found in the Iberian Peninsula. Through Vasvári’s comments, we can see how this “fact” comes to form the basis for a metaphor of sexual politics in the Middle Ages: “the example of the domination of the [mare] is very apt” since there is a “metaphoric equivalence between the [mare] and the insatiable uncontrollable woman,” a binary opposition that “reinforces the privileges of ‘culture’” represented by a human male over “‘nature’” represented by “woman/animal, the latter as violent, savage and potentially destructive” to a human male dominated culture. “Such synecdochic thought has led even to the practice of bridling, saddling, or mounting disobedient women in public ceremonies of humiliation” (455). Vasvári focuses on the Exemplum XXXV, “De lo que contesçió a un mançebo que casó con

una muje muy fuerte y muy brava” in *El Conde Lucanor* and does not draw on the fourth mountain encounter in the *Libro* for her commentary, however fitting this may have been.

<sup>17</sup> In this example the ruling goddess, Steingerðr, is depicted as an “old, proud mare in stud” and the hero a stallion who would have “leapt on the back of the goddess of threads (woman), who stops battle-ready spears of the vagina(?)” (Finlay 26-27). Karen Swenson remarks of the slurs against goddesses that the goddesses are not attacked as ‘goddesses’ or as ‘women’; they are attacked as ‘wives’ as ‘women belonging to males.’ It is not, one suspects ‘unwomanly’ to sleep with several men; it does seem, however, that a man who does not control ‘his women’s’ essential promiscuous nature is an ‘unmanly man’” (75).

<sup>18</sup> It is not clear if Zahareas and Pereira are implying that the disparity between human-male and the mare-woman genitalia size make them too incompatible for successful sexual congress.

<sup>19</sup> This interpretation rests on the meaning of *hato* as “wild-herd” (1011b): “rebaño ò manáda que consta de muchas cabezas de ganado” [“flock or wild-herd made up of many head of cattle”] (*Diccionario de autoridades*. Ed. facsímil, s.v. “hato”).

<sup>20</sup> As David E. Aune points out, “many early Christian writers assumed that the author of this book [Revelation] had also written the Gospel and Letters of John and identified him with the John the son of Zebedee, one of the twelve apostles. Both these assumptions seem false” (2307). Juan Ruiz seems no exception in this respect. Most scholars have come to the determination that John of Patmos was a Palestinian Jewish Christian who emigrated to Asia Minor some time after the year 70 (Faley 6-7). See also Aune 2307-09.

<sup>21</sup> 18:2 et exclamavit in forti voce dicens cecidit cecidit Babylon magna et facta est habitatio daemoniorum et custodia omnis spiritus inmundi et custodia omnis volucris inmundae / 18:3 quia de ira fornicationis eius biberunt omnes gentes et reges terrae cum illa fornicati sunt (*Biblia*)

<sup>22</sup> Speaking to the instability of heteronormativity in the *Libro*, Hutcheson posits that the *Libro* relentlessly relates man seeking sexual consummation however he can. For Hutcheson, the *Libro* reveals indications of a sexual consciousness against the cultural constructions that control it and give it voice, of repeated representations—with abandon—of desire in multiple discursive ways. Hutcheson sees the

battle between don Carnal and doña Cuaresma at the end of the Lenten season as the return to normality from a season of carnal deprivation, and the ensuing celebratory orgy of sex and food, a free-for-all of ravenous beings seeking to satiate themselves in an entanglement of male and female bodies engaging in indiscriminate sex and gluttony. Neither gender nor sex is differentiated as heteronormativity is abandoned; all seek sexual consummation and consumption of food to sate their carnal desire with meat and sex (327-30). Although Hutcheson focuses on gender/sex, heteronormativity is destabilized in the fourth mountain adventure but in a different way. In the image of yegua/yeguariza (mare-woman animalized), in the phantasm/"specter," in the "unflattering comparison to the beasts of the Apocalypse" (Haywood, "Cuerpo grotesco" 444), and in the (im)-possibility of sexual congress and the hyper-sized genitalia, we see heteronormativity abandoned: here, zoophilia as well as demonophilia are in play, measured against the cultural constructions that control sexual desire, a libidinous appetite some might seek to sate with abandon and that the traveler/protagonist/narrator warns against, a warning that may imply that these may not be unknown practices in the Middle Ages. [See note 28 for a comment on the warning].

<sup>23</sup> By script I refer to a "large chunk of semantic information surrounded by a word or evoked by it" (Raskin 81). It can also be evoked by a phrase or an expression. "The script is a cognitive structure internalized by the native speaker and it represents the native speaker's knowledge of a small part of the world" (81). Here, I propose that additionally, the *Libro* also provides a script for the listener/reader in the text of each telling. "Every speaker [and hearer] has internalized rather a large repertoire of scripts of 'common sense' which represents his/her knowledge of certain routines, standard procedures, basic situations, etc., the knowledge of what people do in certain situations, how they do it, in what order, etc." Some of these are shared with certain groups—family, neighbors, colleagues—and some are restricted to individual or professional experiences (81). The *Libro* as a whole draws from a wide repertoire of scripts.

<sup>24</sup> In fact, Hart's inability to reconcile the contradiction between both versions of the mountain girl leads him to speculate: "Así, la versión lírica no hace más [sic] que complicar nuestro problema; es muy posible que no se trate ni siquiera de una de las tres cantigas prometidas al final de la versión en cuaderna vía" [In this way, the lyric version does nothing

more than to complicate our problem; it is very possible that it (this lyric version), has nothing to do with the three *cantigas* promised at the end of the *cuaderna vía* version] (92).

<sup>25</sup> I use capital letters for naming the script in question and to distinguish the named script from the characters in the poem which I referred to in lower case letters. When referring to the trigger function of a word, that word will also be in capital letters.

<sup>26</sup> Raskin refers the reader to Dijk's explanation of actual and possible worlds:

a possible world is 'something' AT which a set of propositions are satisfied. Conversely, a proposition is therefore often defined as a set of possible worlds, viz the set of possible worlds at which this proposition is satisfied. Note that the notion of a possible world should not be identified with our intuitive ideas of (our) 'world', 'reality', etc, but as an abstract construct of semantic theory (model theory). Thus, our actual world is just one element of a set of possible worlds. A possible world, as the term 'possible' suggests, is also any state of affairs which is not the case but which MIGHT have been the case. This possibility may be of various types: we may imagine a situation where the facts are different from the real or actual facts, but compatible with the postulates (laws, principles, etc) of the actual world. (Dijk 29)

The use of those terms in this paper concurs with Dijk's explanation.

<sup>27</sup> Haywood's comments may be instructive here for visualizing the *YEGUA/YEGUARIZA* script; for Haywood, "[the 'mare/mare-woman'] exhibits diabolical peculiarities given her confusing form, an unflattering comparison to the beasts of the Apocalypse and in the narrator's eyes: 'I don't know what devil could love such a spectre' ['spectre' here referring to the 'mare/'mare-woman']" (1011d, 1008). Haywood comments that the "contorted form is terrifying—by the diabolical associations—as well as comical—by her approximation to the bestial world, by her devilry, by sin, and by the inferior part of her body." For Haywood, "the [mare/mare-woman] occupies a space in the grotesque since she is a being that is neither human, nor animal, nor diabolical, nor female, nor male, rather is a confluence in greater or lesser degree of all these categories" ("Cuerpo grotesco" 444). It is this nowhere space—for Haywood the grotesque—of being and nonbeing at once, that the character occupies, and the conglomeration of beings, of which she is

comprised, that point to a world of the impossible, of something that at once is but cannot be.

<sup>28</sup> This warning to the hearer in the mare/mare-woman version of the fourth mountain encounter evokes the warning given by John of Patmos to those hearing the reading of the *Book of the Apocalypse* when speaking to the seven churches: “Whoever has ears ought to hear what the Spirit says to the churches” 2:7, 2:11, 2:17, 2:29, 3:6, 3:13, 3:22. The warning here, then, is danger of frequenting beastly sexual haunts for demons, abominations of apocalyptic proportions.

<sup>29</sup> I opt for “jacket” here instead of “blouse” as Willis translates because the description below states that the teller could count her ribs, probably something difficult to do through a blouse: “garnacho,” n. m. dress or blouse, (perhaps a jacket), *Lba (Libro)*, 1003c; 1019c.

<sup>30</sup> For Haywood, to some degree, gender here is put under scrutiny since, although her breasts may have some trace of femininity, hers are very much contradictory to the prevailing aesthetic by their grotesquely and inordinately exaggerated size (1019); more significant are her inordinate height, her facial vellus hair, her formidable strength, and her deep voice (1015a, 1016-18) all which connote a latent masculinity (“Cuerpo” 444).

<sup>31</sup> *Autoridades*, s.v. “feo, fea.”

<sup>32</sup> *OED*, s.v. “ugly.”

<sup>33</sup> Marino comments that the adjective “*heda*”, the only pejorative allusion to Alda in the lyric version of the encounter, may be the link between the lyric telling and the narrative telling of the fourth episode (62); I propose that HEDA is not only the link but the script-switch that triggers the playing of the MARE / MARE-WOMAN script upon the ALDA script.

<sup>34</sup> Filios comments that the protagonist narrator marks his anger towards the *serrana* with the word “*heda*” (1040a), although why exactly he would be angry with her is not clear in Filios’s reading. For Filios, “the narrator gets revenge beforehand, [in the *cuaderna vía* that appears first in sequence], by portraying her as most monstrous of the four *serranas*” (Filios 153). Filios does not explain how revenge can be meted out before an offense. Filios seems to see that *heda*, ugly, in the lyric version, is somehow linked to the mare/mare-woman in the *cuaderna vía* version, but does not elaborate on how they function in relation to one another.

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