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Literacy, Spiritual Allegory, and Power: Lull's Libre de l'Orde de Cavalleria \

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Catalan Review, Vol. IV, number 1-2 (1990), p. 357-376

LITERACY, SPIRITUAL ALLEGORY, AND POWER:
LLULL'S *LIBRE DE L'ORDE DE CAVALLERIA*¹

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Although Ramon Llull devoted his life to the sacred cause of spreading the Faith, one of his most widely disseminated writings was a treatise with more secular concerns, his *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria*.² This work is, arguably, one of the most influential texts produced in medieval Spain. Its readership became international. Within a few decades, the Castilian don Juan Manuel adapted it in writing his own *Libro del cavallero et del escudero*. By 1500 the *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria* was translated into French, Scottish, and English. The version published by William Caxton became the first work from a Hispanic writer to be printed in England.³ Consequently, modern historians often cite Llull's text as the quintessential statement of medieval Christian chivalric ideals: Maurice Keen readily declares that the *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria* «became the classic ac-

¹ This article expands a paper originally delivered in a session on «Literature of the Spanish Courts», sponsored by the International Courtly Literature Society at the 1988 Modern Language Association Convention in New Orleans. I thank Joe Snow, Steve Suppan, Charity Cannon Willard, Julian Weiss, George Greenia and Anne Bartlett for their subsequent suggestions and encouragement concerning my arguments. I am also grateful to the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C., where I did most of the research on this paper in spring of 1988, while serving as a visiting NEH senior fellow.

² All references, hereafter given parenthetically, are to «parts» and pages of *Llibre qui és de l'orde de cavalleria*, ed. Pere Bohigas, in Ramon Llull, *Obres essencials*, 2 vols. (Barcelona, Selecta, 1957-60) 1, 513-45. Also useful is the commentary in the dual Italian-Catalan edition of Giovanni Allegra, *Il Libro dell'Ordine della Cavalleria* (Roma, Edizioni Francescane, 1972).

³ On these translations, see the bibliography cited by Allegra, *Libro* 16-31 and Bohigas, *Obres essencials* 1, 524-5.

count of knighthood» in all Europe except Germany.⁴ Now, Lull's manual was certainly not the only guide to chivalry available in the later Middle Ages. Its popularity, especially in an era when both manuscript and printed books were still created in response to individual tastes and demands, testifies to a real functional appeal for aristocratic readers. What were the reasons for this appeal? In the remarks that follow, I hope to show the arguments and methods of Lull's *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria* might have seemed attractive because they served several important political, social and cultural interests of the lay nobility. The first of these is the redefinition of chivalry as an enterprise devoted above all to the common good. The second is the explicit adoption of chivalric values and ideals as a body of knowledge equal, if not superior in authority to, clerical learning. The third is the reinterpretation of moral and social roles as a means of elevating the identity and status of the aristocratic «self». Finally, I hope to suggest how all these interests depend upon the interpretative methods explicitly employed in the *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria*. The dissemination of these strategies in Lull's text illustrates how the spread of literacy contributed generally to the renegotiation of the resources of cultural power among the various lay and clerical elites of the later Middle Ages.⁵

My analysis takes as its point of departure some arguments first suggested by J.H. Hexter nearly forty years ago. In a well-known article on the education of the aristocracy in the Renaissance, Hexter proposed that European nobles in

⁴ *Chivalry* (New Haven, Yale UP, 1984) 11.

⁵ Useful general considerations appear in studies of England and France such as Janet Coleman, *Medieval Readers and Writers, 1350-1400* (New York, Columbia UP, 1981) and Serge Lusignan, *Parler vulgairement: les intellectuels et la langue française aux xiii^e et xiv^e siècles* (Paris, J. Vrin, 1987). J. N. H. Lawrance offers some suggestions regarding Spain in «The Spread of Lay Literacy in Late Medieval Castile», *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 62 (1985), 79-94.

the fifteenth century began to cultivate both chivalric and humanistic learning as a means of maintaining political influence that they could no longer exert through military force or territorial dominion.⁶ Though Hexter's argument was explicitly provisional and quickly challenged by other historians, its basic premise — that learning provided new resources for the exercise of power — continues to animate much recent work in cultural theory and criticism.⁷

In Ramon Llull's *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria*, those resources depend fundamentally upon the treatise's extended analogy between the clerical and chivalric orders of society. The basic operative assumption of the treatise is the very conventional view that «los pus nobles, los pus honrats, los pus acostats dos oficis qui sien en est món, és ofici de clergue e ofici de cavaller» (2; 53ob).⁸ In order to understand the strategy of Llull's treatise, it is necessary to recognize how this basic analogy organizes most of its material.⁹ This recognition seems to have eluded Keen in his analysis of Llull's treatise.¹⁰ He notes that Llull composed the *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria* around 1280,¹¹ after already devoting some fifteen years to his

⁶ «The Education of the Aristocracy in the Renaissance», *Reappraisals in History* (Chicago, U Chicago P, 1979), 45-70.

⁷ Regarding the debate that has arisen surrounding this issue, see the critiques of Lee Patterson, *Negotiating the Past: The Historical Understanding of Medieval Literature* (Madison, U Wisconsin P, 1987).

⁸ This focus on the two elite orders of medieval society had become commonplace in social and political theory by Llull's day. See Georges Duby, *The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined*, tr. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago, U Chicago P, 1980), 346-53. See also the precedents noted by Allegra, *Libro*, 78-9.

⁹ On the many comparisons and correlations that it generates, see Mario Ruffini, «Lo stile del Lullo nel "Libre del Orde de Cavaylerie"», *Estudios Lullianos* 3 (1959), 37-52 & 252-62.

¹⁰ Keen's brief description of Llull's career includes egregiously apocryphal details taken from out-dated biographies; *Chivalry* 8.

¹¹ The exact date of composition is uncertain, but the text is evidently one of Llull's earlier writings. Anthony Bonner suggests 1279-1283 in his chronolo-

missionary projects, and hence concludes that Lull's treatise seems «somewhat more ecclesiastically oriented» than other popular chivalric manuals. Keen none the less maintains that the work appears «little touched» by the values of moral renewal absorbed by the mainstream of medieval culture after the Gregorian Reform.¹² This assessment seems confused, but this confusion in fact reflects the commixture of contending cultural and social values that Lull's treatise creates. In deference to Keen, it is true that the *Libre de l'orde de cavaleria* is not a theological exhortation like Saint Bernard's *De laude novae militiae*.¹³ At the same time, Lull's text provides little or no detailed information regarding such popular topics of vernacular chivalric literature as warfare, jousting, heraldry, hunting, estate management, or even courtesy. Instead, it focuses heavily on the social, political, and ethical duties of the individual knight.¹⁴ The specific project of this text is to assimilate the secular and sacred aspects of those duties in a new figure of the ancient type of the *miles Christi*. Lull's doctrines may consequently look somewhat old-fashioned. His social and political ideology does not deal directly with the particular circumstances of his own day, but instead treats contemporary issues indirectly by using them as *exempla* to illustrate venerable ideals from the era of the Gregorian reforms. The general end of such proposals is a sort of «Christian utopia» where all temporal and spiritual enterprise serves God alone.¹⁵

gy from *Selected Works of Ramon Llull* (Princeton, Princeton UP, 1985), 1262.

¹² *Chivalry* 11, 6.

¹³ See the comparison by Antoni Oliver, «El "Libre del Orde de Cavalleria" de Ramon Llull y el "De Laude novae Militiae" de San Bernardo», *Estudios Lulianos* 2 (1958), 175-86.

¹⁴ Bohigas claims that the work «entra de ple en el terreny pràctic i polític» but more rightly concludes that «tot el tractat té un to apològic»; *Obres essencials* 1, 521, 522.

¹⁵ See J. N. Hillgarth, «Raymond Llull et l'utopie», *Estudios Lulianos* 25 (1981-3), 175-85.

For example, Lull advocated a union of the military crusading orders and even another crusade to the Holy Land, in which a warrior prince would lead a new corps of knights and missionaries.¹⁶ The crusades and crusading orders had already encouraged arguments regarding chivalry as a spiritual vocation.¹⁷ However, the model of Christian knighthood created in the *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria* is far more comprehensive than the example already available in military orders such as the Templars. Lull's works typically imply the broad integration of all social and political classes into one *ordo Dei* whose ultimate goal is the salvation of all souls.¹⁸ The broad fusion of spiritual and secular values in the *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria* serves the ultimate ends of «evangelical allegory» (restoration of apostolic Christianity) and «philosophical anagogy» (ultimate triumph of the truth of the Faith).¹⁹ The *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria* attempts to save the knight as a Christian *novus homo*.

Within this broad objective one of the specific achievements in Lull's new model of chivalry is the definition of a higher duty than personal gain as the ultimate obligation of all knightly service. That duty was the very origin of knighthood, according to the *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria*, which explains it in an

¹⁶ In his *Liber de fine* of 1305, ed. Aloisius Madre in *Opera Latina*, vol. 9, Corpus Christianorum-Continuatio Medievalis, 35 (Turnholt: Brepols, 1981), 233-91.

¹⁷ See Colin Morris, «*Equestris ordo*: chivalry as a vocation in the twelfth century», *Religious Motivation: Biographical and Sociological Problems for the Church Historian*, ed. Derek Baker, Studies in Church History, 15 (Oxford, Blackwell, 1978), 87-96 and J. Riley-Smith, «Crusading as an act of love», *History* 65 (1980), 277-92.

¹⁸ See Hélène Wieruszowski, «Ramon Lull et l'idée de la Cité de Dieu», *Politics and Culture in Medieval Spain and Italy* (Rome, Storia e Letteratura, 1971), 147-71, esp. 157.

¹⁹ Excellently described by Vicente Servera, «Utopie et histoire. Les postulats théoriques de la praxis missionnaire», *Raymond Lulle et le Pays d'Oc*, Cahiers de Fanjeaux, 22 (Toulouse, E. Privat, 1987), 191-229.

often-repeated etiological myth. In the post-lapsarian primitive age when the spread of vice had turned all people from their duty to God, «un home pus amable, pus savi, pus leial e pus forts, e ab pus noble coratge, ab més d'ensenyaments e de bons nodriments» was chosen from every thousand and set above the rest in order to restore justice (1; 528b-29a).²⁰ In this manner Lull's text resolves the ancient debate over the nature of true nobility and the right of aristocratic rule (a question discussed in more detail below). Knighthood was originally the public recognition of superior virtue and talent, and therefore latterday knights must perpetuate that virtue and talent, while their subjects must reward that virtue and talent with material support and political submission (1; 529ab). Ultimately, it is this original selection of the knight from the «community of people» that obliges the knight to respect the common good above all (6; 543a). To this secular origin and justification for knighthood, the second part of the *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria* adds the sacred purpose of defending the Faith. It explains the particular social and political duties of the knight as theological allegory. The place or the Emperor at the summit of the medieval feudal hierarchy «signifies» that God rules all. The diversification of that hierarchy in the subordinate levels of kings, princes, dukes, counts, barons, and so forth «demonstrates» *per contrarium* how God rules unassisted, while humans require subordinate officials. The specific duties of the knight range from defending his earthly lord to assisting the weak to organizing towns and trade (2; 531a, 532b, 533a). The imposition and administration of justice was the paramount obligation of the knight.²¹

In this manner, the arguments in Lull's *Libre de l'orde de*

²⁰ This anecdote develops the derivation of *miles* 'knight' from *mille* 'thousand' found in Isidore, *Etymologiae* 9.3.32; ed. W. M. Lindsay (Oxford, Clarendon, 1911).

²¹ Allegra, *Libro*, 83-4.

cavalleria integrate secular and sacred duties into a single social and political ideology in which human and divine government are analogous and coextensive. Keen suggests that Lull's treatise was one of the first to associate chivalry with the art of government, a favorite argument in later medieval manuals of knighthood.²² Hexter notes that late medieval and early Renaissance treatises on aristocratic education often claim that virtue and wisdom create an obligation to participate in government and that service to the common became one of the most popular arguments in the literature on aristocratic duties.²³ This contention evidently served the nobility's desire to fill positions often awarded to commoners or clerics. Lull's text simply states that the knight's concern with his honor makes him a more reliable official than a non-knight (2; 531a).

In the same way that the *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria* assimilates the divine duties to the human obligations of the knight, so it assimilates the distinctive enterprises of the clergy and nobility, namely learning and warfare. According to Lull's book:

Ofici de cavaller és mantenir e defendre la sancta fe catòlica... On, enaixí con nostro senyor Déus ha elets clergues per mantenir la sancta fe ab escriptures e ab provocacions necessàries, preïcant aquella als infels ab tan gran caritat que la mort sia a ells desirable, enaixí lo Déu de glòria ha elets cavallers qui per força d'armes vencen e apoderen los infels, qui cada dia punyen en lo destrüiment de la sancta Esgleia (2; 530b).

The argument of this passage already assumes that both nobility and clergy share the same ultimate purpose as all the rest of creation: that is, to honor, to serve, and to know God.²⁴ The two

²² *Chivalry*, 16.

²³ «Education of the Aristocracy», 65-7. See also Arthur Fergusson, *The Indian Summer of English Chivalry* (Durham, NC, Duke UP, 1960), 104-41.

²⁴ Lull called this moral finality a thing's «first intention»; on this doctrine,

orders simply employ different means to this common end. Some of Llull's other writings make this same argument using the famous Gospel image of the two swords (Luke 22.38). Where the commonplace interpretation of this image in medieval political theory explained these swords as the two branches of temporal and spiritual authority, *regnum* and *sacerdotium*, in Llull's work they usually represent arms and learning, the two weapons necessary to convert the infidel.²⁵ The *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria* assumes that this common end justifies similar means, and hence proposes that chivalric ideology be organized as a body of learning and taught in schools. The story of the primitive origins of chivalry in Part One of the *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria* includes an extended analogy between the training necessary to chivalry and the science or skill necessary to various liberal and mechanical arts (I; 529b-530a). That section concludes thus:

Si falliment no fos en clergues ni en cavallers, quaix a penes fóra falliment en les altres gents; car per los clergues hagra hom devoció a Déu, e per los cavallers temera hom injuriar son proïsme. On, si los clergues han mestre e doctrina, e estan en escoles per ésser bons, e si tantes ciències són que estan en doctrina e en letres, injúria molt gran és feita a l'orde de cavalleria con no és enaixí una ciència demostrada per letres, e que'n sia feta escola, con és de les altres ciències (I; 530a).

This passage illustrates superlatively how the *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria* creates a new model of knighthood through interpretative correlation of chivalric and theological values. It begins by distributing the two great commandments from the Gospel—love of God and love of neighbor (Matthew 22.37-9)—between the clerical and noble orders. Just as an exegetical or homi-

see my comments in *The Spiritual Logic of Ramon Llull* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1987), 16-17.

²⁵ On contemporary interpretations of the two swords by political polemicists, see John B. Morrall *Political Thought in Medieval Times* (New York, Harper Torchbooks, 1962), 34. On Llull's interpretation, see Wieruszowski, «Ramon Llull et l'idée de la Cité de Dieu», 151.

letic exercise explicates a verse from Scripture as its *thema*, so this paragraph develops the meaning of the premise that it proposes initially.²⁶

The practical educational consequences of this argument would not necessarily be parallel. On the one hand, since love of God precedes love of neighbor, the clerical order presumably excels the knightly order. However, the analogical argument constructed from this premise concludes that the chivalric order should possess institutions of learning equal to those of the clerical order. On the other hand, the claim that the lack of these resources «injures» chivalry appeals to social values of honor and status that presumably apply to both the lay and ecclesiastical hierarchies. Yet, this common claim to honor does not require that knights receive the same education as clerks. The Prologue to the *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria* offers the work itself as an ideoneous exposition of chivalric art or science. As mentioned earlier, Llull's text contains few details concerning such chivalric practices as heraldry, hunting or government. In most cases it simply mentions them in order to offer moral lessons regarding their exercise. For example, it recommends hunting and other sports as necessary to maintaining a knight's bodily skills, and concludes that the ethical skills of the soul require equal practice (2; 530ab). Similarly, it mentions the training in

²⁶ On techniques of the «thematic sermon», see James J. Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, U California P, 1974), 310-38. Llull's huge oeuvre includes only one explicit reference to this technique, in his *Liber de praedicatione*, ed. Abraham Soria Flores, *Opera Latina*, 3-4 (Palma de Mallorca, CSIC, 1961), 1, 406. On Llull's rhetorical theories, see my «The *Rethorica nova* of Ramon Llull: An *Ars praedicandi* as Devotional Literature», *De ore domini: Preacher and Word in the Middle Ages*, ed. Thomas L. Amos, Eugene A. Green, and Beverly M. Kienzle, *Studies in Medieval Culture*, 27 (Kalamazoo, Medieval Institute, 1989), 119-46 and «The Natural Rhetoric of Ramon Llull», *Proceedings of the Illinois Medieval Association*, Vol. 3, ed. Ruth E. Hamilton and David Wagner (DeKalb, IL, Northern Illinois University, 1986), 174-192.

courtesy known in many Provençal manuals as *ensenyament* and explains that the internal formation of noble youths deserves far more attention than the external equipment of the gear or horses (6; 543a).²⁷

The suggestion in the *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria* that chivalry requires education and schools illustrates well-known medieval arguments regarding the identity of nobility, virtue and learning. In social and political theory of Lull's day, these arguments especially served to support the distinction between corporeal and spiritual virtues.²⁸ The treatise's proposal regarding schools for knights also assumes that whatever is written enjoys greater authority or truth, and that whatever is authoritative or true properly deserves to be written. Lull's proposal concerns the authority of books, rather than the use of literacy per se. Although Lull's treatise on the education of children, the *Doctrina pueril*, explicitly recommends teaching the rudiments of vernacular and Latin grammar,²⁹ the *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria* nowhere mentions training noble children to read and write. Its argument instead seeks to provide for chivalric training the same *auctoritas* and *magisterium* enjoyed by clerical education.

The definition of the common good as the ultimate objective

²⁷ The education suggested here broadly recalls the dual training in «nurture and literature» often provided in aristocratic household; see Richard F. Green, *Poets and Princepleasers: Literature and the English Court in the Late Middle Ages* (Toronto, U Toronto P, 1980), 71-101 and Nicholas G. Orme, *From Childhood to Chivalry: The Education of the English Kings and Aristocracy 1066-1530* (London, Methuen, 1984). Ralph V. Turner adds important considerations regarding the lesser nobility in «The *Miles Literatus* in Twelfth— and Thirteenth—Century England: How Rare a Phenomenon?» *American Historical Review* 83 (1978), 928-45. Lull mentions this dual training in his own *Libre de Blaquerna* 86, 6 (*Obres essencials* 1, 245).

²⁸ See Alexander A. Murray, *Reason and Society in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, Oxford UP, 1978), 271-81.

²⁹ Ch. 73, 1-3; *Obres*, Vol. 1 (Ciutat de Mallorca, Comissió Editora Lulliana, 1906), 130.

of knightly service and the recognition of knightly training as authoritative knowledge readily suggest another important achievement of Lull's *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria*. This is the development of a new model of the «self». The huge mass of medieval moral and ethical literature has lately attracted keen attention from scholars who recognize its importance in this development. Beginning in the thirteenth century, the literature created to institutionalize the confessional practices of the Church especially fostered new models of individual conscience and subjectivity.³⁰ In vernacular literature as well social relations became «psychologized» as virtues like loyalty or honor came to be represented as components of personality.³¹ As confessional manuals defined conscience and guilt, so chivalry manuals defined class and duty. In the later Middle Ages, texts with an overt spiritual focus, like the *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria* may have offered welcome alternatives to the increasingly severe claims of penitential theology and the power of social control that it projected.³²

The basic analogy between clerical and knightly roles in Lull's *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria* strongly promotes reorganizing spiritual or ethical ideals with chivalric categories of behavior in new social, political, or cultural roles for the aristocratic «self». A very simple example appears when the treatise describes the church ceremony for dubbing the new knight. The account of this ritual explains that only a properly created knight can legitimately confer knighthood. It concludes by declaring that both

³⁰ See especially Colin Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual 1050-1200* (London, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1972); Thomas Tentler, *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation* (Princeton, Princeton UP, 1977); and the very suggestive arguments of Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. Vol. 1: An Introduction*, tr. Robert Hurley (New York, Random House Vintage Books, 1980), 58-63.

³¹ As argued by R. Howard Bloch, *Etymologies and Genealogies: A Literary Anthropology of the French Middle Ages* (Chicago, U Chicago P, 1983), 226.

³² On the «burden» created by this theology, see Francis Oakley, *The Western Church in the Later Middle Ages* (Ithaca, Cornell UP, 1979), 126-9.

the «spiritual knight» (that is, the priest) and «earthly knight» (that is, the feudal lord) confer knighthood (4; 537b-538b). This metaphorical reference to the priest as «knight» is hardly remarkable as a variation on the traditional image of the *miles Christi*, and the ecclesiastical rite for making a knight had become well-established by Llull's day.³³ The importance of this metaphor consists in the assimilation of sacred and mundane roles that it enables Llull's book to promote. If the priest is a «spiritual knight» because he fights for God and participates in creating new knights, so the knight could be a «temporal priest» because he prays to God and could participate in creating new priests. Llull's metaphors could serve contemporary debates over the relations between secular and ecclesiastical authority in the same fashion that the traditional metaphor of the «two swords» served both papal or imperial polemicists in these debates.

A somewhat more complex example of how the treatise's analogies generate new definitions of the chivalric «self» appears in the explanation of how a knight should possess «spiritual vision» and «spiritual hearing». These are the inner senses that enable moral allegory because they perceive higher, spiritual truths:

Si Déu ha donats ulls al menestral per ço que veja obrar, a l'home pecador ha donats ulls per ço que pusca plorar sos pecats, e si el cavaller ha donat lo cor per què sia cambra on estia la nobilitat de son coratge, al cavaller qui és en sa força e son honrament, ha donat cor per ço que hi sia pietat de mercè... On, cavaller qui no haja ulls ab què veja los despoderats, ni ha cor ab què pens lurs necessitats, no és ver cavaller (2; 532b).

This passage epitomizes the way in which moral allegories organize values in Llull's *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria*. It begins with a proportional comparison between the eyes used for material purposes by the artisan and the eyes used for spiritual pur-

³³ Keen, *Chivalry*, 65-72.

poses by the devout sinner. It then posits a corollary comparison between the knight's heart as an organ of physical affection and the knight's heart as an organ of spiritual affection. (This comparison evidently exploits the etymological association of *cor* 'heart' and *coratge* 'will'.) Finally, it conflates the two analogies, concluding that the good knight should use both his eyes and his heart for spiritual ends. This process of defining corollary values, reorganizing them, and then integrating them into a role perhaps anticipates in a rudimentary way the king of «self-fashioning» usually associated with the humanist «individualism» of Renaissance culture. Moreover, Lull's example may even imply how this process necessarily involves accommodation of a «divided self». ³⁴ The correlation of clerical and knightly orders in Lull's *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria* both fosters and represses difference in the «cultural unconscious» of the new role that it proposes. The categories of knight and hermit (or lay and clerical) provided a model of the divided self for Lull, just as those of court and country did for later Renaissance writers. That division perhaps reveals itself in the oxymoronic metaphor of «spiritual knights» or the dual status of the «hermit knight» who introduces Lull's text in its famous Prologue.

Now these three achievements of the *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria* — definition of a chivalric obligation to serve the common good, recognition of the authority of chivalric training, and reorganization of roles for the aristocratic «self» — are all ideals that would probably make Lull's *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria* attractive to aristocratic readers. Equally attractive, however, is the manner in which this text develops and presents those ideals. Virtually all of the passages cited thus far have employed arguments based on allegorical, analogical, or symbolic interpretations of one sort or another. In general,

³⁴ See on this question the suggestions of Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago, U Chicago P, 1980), esp. 159-63.

these arguments employ broadly what the Scholastics called «moralization», that is, the exposition of «moral allegory» or the «spiritual sense». ³⁵ The didactic use of moralization is hardly unique to the writings of Ramon Llull, but his work is peculiar because of its virtually exclusive reliance on moralization as a method of expounding all philosophical and theological issues. Elsewhere I have argued that his entire Great Art constitutes and extended formal scheme of moralization, employed as a universal method for reducing all human knowledge to divine wisdom. ³⁶ Thus Llull frequently recommends his Great Art as an infallible alternative to the sophistical and potentially heretical methods of his Scholastic peers.

In the *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria*, the interpretative processes of moral allegory collocate seemingly disparate terms of chivalric and clerical discourse. The best-known example is the detailed analysis of the spiritual meaning of the knight's dress and gear, from his sword to his chain mail vest to the reins of his horse (5; 538a-40a). ³⁷ Several basic interpretative distinctions appear repeatedly as devices for organizing the various knightly and clerical moral, social, or political values that Llull's text attempts to correlate. Perhaps the most frequently employed is the dichotomy of body and soul. The following passage is typical:

aitan honrada és natura en los arbres e en les bèsties con en los hòmens, mas per la nobilitat d'ànima raonable, qui participa tan solamente ab lo cors de l'home, per açò natura ha major virtut en cors humà que en cors bestial. On, per açò

³⁵ On the wide scope of this nearly ubiquitous practice, see the excellent discussion by Judson Boyce Allen in *The Friar as Critic: Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages* (Nashville, Vanderbilt UP, 1971).

³⁶ *Spiritual Logic*, 5.

³⁷ Llull's apparently original explanation combines the usual chivalric account of the symbolism of the knight's weapons (Bohigas, *Obres essencials* 5, 523) with spiritual metaphors like those in the famous account of *armatura Dei* from Ephesians 6, 13-17.

l'orde de cavalleria consent que per moltes nobles costumes e per molts nobles fets e per nobilitat de príncep, pusca haver cavalleria alcun home de novell honrat linatge. E si açò no era enaixí, seguir-s'hia que cavalleria mills se convengués ab natura de cors que ab virtut d'ànima; e açò no és ver, con sia cosa que nobilitat de coratge qui cové ab cavalleria, se convenga mills ab ànima que ab cors (3; 535b).

Or, stated more simply: it is legitimate to create new knights based on their personal valor rather than their family lineage, because the soul and its effects (such as valor) are more important and worthy of recognition than the body and its effects (such as lineage).

The correlations of chivalric and clerical values that the dichotomy of body and soul enables sometimes consists simply in the apposition of chivalric and theological elements. For example, Part Six of the *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria* enumerates the «customs» proper to a knight. It begins with the three theological and four cardinal virtues, claiming that these are the «root and origin» of all good customs (6; 540a). Fortitude is especially important because it provides the strength to resist the seven mortal sins, and this one theological virtue becomes a pretext for review of *both* chivalric and theological vices. The explanation of that resistance integrates specifically chivalric ideals among the theological cardinal virtues. For example, when fortitude resists avarice, it promotes loyalty; when it resists envy, it promotes liberality, and so forth (6; 540a, 542a). This review of chivalric customs ends with a simple listing of the common characteristics of the ideal knight: «leialtat, veritat, ardiment, vera larguea, honestat, humilitat, pietat e les altres coses semblants a aquestes» (6; 543a). At worst, this brief serial mention might imply that these chivalric virtues merit less attention than the traditional cardinal virtues, which this section of Lull's treatise has expounded much more fully. At best, it also suggest that this collection of virtues forms

a typical Scholastic *distinctio*, or array of interrelated terms.³⁸ In this way, the common enumeration of these chivalric and cardinal virtues also establishes a common value or sense for them all.

These uses of moralization in Llull's *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria* are certainly not novel. The virtually endemic practice of allegorical, analogical or symbolical interpretation in medieval culture has provided modern scholars with grounds for judgements as diverse as Johan Huizinga's fascinated distaste with the late medieval «symbolist attitude»³⁹ and J.B. Allen's deliberate appreciation for Scholastic «ethical poetics». The particular kind of moral allegory that Llull's treatise employs would surely have been familiar to his potential readers in many other media, from the arts to popular preaching. Llull's massive vernacular oeuvre itself testifies to the dissemination of such interpretative methods in the lay culture of his era. The use of moralization to establish a new model of knighthood in Llull's *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria* is simply one more example of the transfer of interpretative techniques from clerical to nonclerical discourse that accompanied, perhaps inevitably, the spread of literacy during the later Middle Ages. Distinctions between «clerical» and «non-clerical» uses of these strategies may seem arbitrary, especially if judged by subject matter alone. Llull's contemporaries more readily distinguished proper from improper uses of spiritual allegory according to their purpose, as in the debates about the value of imaginative literature and the so-called «allegory of the poets».⁴⁰

³⁸ In the manner described so well by J. B. Allen, *The Ethical Poetic of the Later Middle Ages: A Decorum of Convenient Distinction* (Toronto, U Toronto P, 1982), 101.

³⁹ *The Waning of the Middle Ages: A Study of the Forms of Life, Thought, and Art in France and the Netherlands in the Dawn of the Renaissance* (New York, Doubleday Anchor Books, 1954), 202.

⁴⁰ For diverse estimations regarding the secular applications of allegory, see Richard H. Green, «Dante's Allegory of Poets, and the Medieval Theory of Poetic Fiction», *Comparative Literature* 9 (1957), 118-28 and David Aers, «Reflections on the 'Allegory of the Theologians', Ideology and *Piers Plowman*»,

Certainly literacy and interpretation were not completely coincident cultural practices. Literacy had long since ceased to be the privilege of the clergy and the secular exercise of learning imparted for sacred purposes had produced bitter denunciations of *clerici aulici* even before the period of the Gregorian reforms.⁴¹ In these circumstances, it is perhaps scarcely surprising that Lull's *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria* so easily extends the moral *auctoritas* and *magisterium* of learning from clergy to nobility. One passage explains how knights who possess learning (*letres*) make better judges than persons who possess learning alone, because knights also possess the duty and authority to maintain justice (2; 531a). His remarks suggest that, in practice, the virtue and learning of an educated aristocracy would excel that of clerics.

Finally, the contribution of Lull's work to promoting lay exercise of the resources of literacy also invites analysis of its relevance for modern critical and theoretical issues such as the phenomenal status of textuality or the discursive constitution of the subject. His use of alphabetic symbolism in the Great Art suggests an «insistence of the letter» whose broader functions lie beyond the consideration of this paper.⁴² The *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria* suggests a role for writing that falls somewhere between the play of differential *écriture* theorized by Derrida and the «mythologizing structure» that Gellrich finds in the medieval «idea of the Book».⁴³ This role appears most prominently

Medieval Literature: Criticism, Ideology, and History, ed. David Aers (New York, St. Martin's, 1986), 58-73.

⁴¹ See C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness: Civilizing Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals, 939-1210* (Philadelphia, U Pennsylvania P, 1985), 54-66.

⁴² See Jordi Llovet, «Ramon Lull: nostàlgia de la lletra», in Jordi Llovet, Xavier Rubert de Ventós and Eugenio Trías, *De l'amor, el desig i altres passions* (Barcelona, Edicions 62, 1980), 89-151.

⁴³ Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, tr. Alan Bass (Chicago, U Chicago P, 1981), 27-8 & 65-6; Jesse M. Gellrich *The Idea of the Book in the Middle Ages: Language Theory, Mythology, and Fiction* (Ithaca, Cornell UP, 1985), 31.

in the narrative frame created by the text's Prologue.⁴⁴ The situation established there effectively dramatizes how cultural power operates through discursive strategies for controlling the circulation of signs. The Prologue tells how an aged knight, having grown too old for battles and tournaments, becomes a hermit and retires to a life of contemplation. One day, a squire on his way to a royal court to seek knighthood encounters the hermit. As the squire approaches, the hermit ceases his prayers and begins to read a book instead. When the squire arrives, the hermit queries him about the purpose of his journey, and discovers that the youth knows little about chivalry. The hermit offers to instruct the squire, using the book that he was reading. The book is, of course, Lull's *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria*. When the hermit has finished reading the treatise to the squire, he asks the squire to take the book to the royal court, where he

sàviament e ordonada donà e representà aquest libre al molt noble rei e a tota la gran cort, e soferí que tot cavaller qui am ésser en orde de cavalleria lo pusca translatar [i.e. copy], per ço que a les vegades lija e record l'orde de cavalleria (Prol.; 528b).

This little scene defines several possible textual and cultural relationships. At the level of dramatic order, it would be easy to dismiss the way in which the book's appearance anticipates the squire's instruction as simple prolepsis, a lapse typical of the capricious plot construction of medieval romance. However, the temporal and spatial priority of the book in this scene just as easily asserts the authority of written knowledge, and then valorizes the history or *traditio* of that authority. The wise old man reads to the naive youth, thus personifying the relationship between virtuous ancients and corrupt moderns. The contrast of youth and age was a commonplace organizing distinction for des-

⁴⁴ On precedents and parallels to this device, see Allegra, *Libro*, 52-9.

cribing social and cultural change.⁴⁵ Lull's Prologue uses it to define the reception of the chivalric values that it expounds. If we imagine that medieval culture organizes the world as a discourse that is always already meaningful, then it is hardly surprising that the scene of reading, rather than the scene of writing, is foregrounded in narrative frames such as this Prologue. Lull's two vernacular spiritual romances, the *Libre de meravelles* and *Libre de Blaquerna*, use similar devices. Whether employed by Lull, don Juan Manuel, Boccaccio or Chaucer, these frames allegorize the intersubjective reception of their discourse and provide models of communication for disseminating a text's political, social, or cultural authority. They organize communication as moralization, by integrating their own exemplary discourse into their reading, thereby collapsing or perhaps escaping the distinction between real and implied readers. In the *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria*, the knights at court comprise the prospective «textual community»⁴⁶ for Lull's treatise. When the text explains how «aquest qui compon aquest libre, soplega al noble rei e a tota la cort» to promote respect for chivalry (I; 530a), the narrative frame of the Prologue, the exposition of doctrine in the rest of the treatise, and the positions of author and reader converge in one «argument», «lesson» or «occasion».⁴⁷

In conclusion, then, it is possible to see how the overall assimilation of clerical and knightly roles in Ramon Lull's *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria* promotes specific social, cultural or political developments that would have strongly interested later aristocratic readers. His text's integration of sacred and

⁴⁵ See Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton, Princeton UP, 1983), 488.

⁴⁶ As defined by Brian Stock, *Implications of Literacy 90-92* or «Medieval Literacy, Linguistic Theory, and Social Organization», *New Literary History*, 16 (1984-85), 14-29.

⁴⁷ In the sense suggested, in a somewhat different proposal, by J. B. Allen, *Ethical Poetic*, 263-74.

secular virtues justifies aristocratic claims to political participation, especially as a necessary response to divine mandate. It also attributes to aristocratic training the same *auctoritas* and *magisterium* already enjoyed by clerical learning, and thus justifies noble pretensions to hold positions often given to clerics. It provides an example of how to create new models of the aristocratic «self», especially through the integration of ethical and cultural values. Ultimately, the *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria* and its arguments are all «consequences of literacy». ⁴⁸ It reminds us that the practice of literacy never comprises mere reception of content, but also entails mastery of the methods of literate discourse, especially the privileges of controlling the interpretation and communication of signs by oneself and others. Where the *Libre del orde de cavalleria* rather obviously uses those methods, other texts perhaps do so less openly. We should consider whether the fifteenth-century *gaya sciència* might not have held similar value for its courtly audiences. ⁴⁹ Even where this literature appears most frivolous or pedantic, it may none the less have offered to its readers ready occasions for practicing potent strategies of communication.

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⁴⁸ See Stock, *The Implications of Literacy*, 522-31.

⁴⁹ On this movement, see Roger Boase, *The Troubadour Revival: A Study of Social Change and Traditionalism in Late Medieval Spain* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978).