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# The Monk Who Knew the Ways of Love

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*The concept of a poetry of clichés, uniform by accident or design, impersonal, and lacking in individuality, is foreign to the aims and methods of any of these poets. Each one has his own intentions, of arguing, persuading, entertaining, instructing, expressing his own feelings, or creating a new and perfect work art. Each is an 'inventor'.*

*'E son inventores*

*Dig tug li trobador.'*

Thus Linda M. Patterson concluded her study, *Troubadours and Eloquence*,<sup>1</sup> and, although the reference is to those five troubadours whose works she analysed,<sup>2</sup> the methods of analysis and the conclusions reached indeed imply that a similar approach to the work of other troubadours would make it possible to extend this claim to originality and individuality much more widely.

Alongside this welcome tendency to view each poet as an individual we have also witnessed in recent years a quasi-structuralist approach which has stressed the uniformity to be found in the deeper structure of the *grand chant courtois* but which has paradoxically drawn further attention to what Paul Zumthor called '*des combinaisons à la surface innombrables*' and '*plusieurs indices formels constants*'.<sup>3</sup> It has thus been suggested that the art of the troubadour or trouvère is original primarily in its exercise of choice within a relatively strictly limited field and that, if art results from the tension between freedom and restraint, between Dionysius and Apollo, then the two poles of this dialectic are the exercise of choice of expression and the limitation of the field in terms of subject-matter and linguistic register. J. Gruber's recent study, *Dialektik des Trobar*,<sup>4</sup> whilst seeing the dialectic of composition in terms of *renewal* rather than of an unconditioned choice, helps further to define the notion of originality in relation to the troubadour *canço*.

Such discussion of the nature of originality in troubadour poetry led me to reconsider certain of the words of the troubadour Monge de Montaudou. Some features of the manuscript tradition of his works also suggested that a re-evaluation might be appropriate.

The numerous anthologies that have appeared in this century have been almost unanimous in including works by the Monk and in their preference for examples either of his *tensos* and *sirventes* or of his *enues* and *plazers*. Occasionally compilers have included one of his *cansos*, almost always the same one, chosen most probably because it is the only one for which music has survived.<sup>5</sup> The very few articles and papers devoted to the Monk's works have likewise concentrated on the humorous and satirical poems rather than the *cansos*.

There is really nothing very surprising in this; the *sirventes*, *Pos Peire d'Alvernh'a cantat*<sup>6</sup> is both amusing and an important source of information about the Monk's contemporaries; the *enues* and *plazers* are of more than merely formal interest, as are the *tensos*. Yet, if the rubrics are reliable, the Monk was also the author of *seven* surviving *cansos* as concessions to the dominant poetic mode on the part of a troubadour who saw his real talent as being for the satirical portrait or the burlesque debate. Such a view might be further encouraged by the suspicion that the Monk, more obviously than many other troubadours, was inclined to make further use of what had, in the past, proved to be a successful formula. Thus his *sirventes* is a reworking of Peire d'Alvernhe's *Chantarai d'aquestz trobadors*<sup>7</sup>; his *enues* and *plazers* owe a debt, both in content and form, to Bertran de Born.<sup>8</sup> Whilst he can lay claim to some originality of inspiration for whichever is the first of his *tensos* with God, he returns in three more songs to the same formula, in one even to the same specific subject of debate. If these interesting songs displayed such a degree of self-plagiarism and imitation of other writers, would this not be even more apparent in the *cansos* if these were a concession to the prevailing mode? However, this might be the wrong hypothesis. It is perfectly possible that it was in fact the *comic* songs which were the bread-and-butter, which were a response to public demand in the courts of the Monk's patrons, which were even conceivably written to order. Could it be that the Monk's true artistry is to be sought in the *cansos*? Or, at least, could it be that we should not too readily dismiss them as conventional hack-work?

There is little that is helpful on this question in any contemporary allusions to the Monk's writings. Twice in his songs he refers to his own literary production:

Senher, ieu tem que falhis  
s'ieu fatz coblas ni cansos;  
qu'om pert vostr'amor e Vos  
qui son escien mentis.  
(XIII, 25-28)

(Lord, I am afraid of sinning if I write *coblas* or *cansos*; for he who knowingly lies forfeits your love and You.)

Elsewhere, in the same *tenso* we find God scolding the Monk for having remained within the cloister walls to quarrel with his neighbours:

Monge, ges Ieu non grazis  
s'estas en claustra rescos,  
ni vols guerras ni tensos,  
ni pelei'ab tos vezis  
per que.l bailia.t remanha;  
ans am Ieu lo chant e. l ris,  
e. l segles en es plus pros  
e Montaudos hi guazanha.  
(XIII, 17-24)

(Monk, I am not pleased that you should be shut up in the cloister, that you should wish for strife and disputes, that you should quarrel with your neighbours to hold on to your power; I prefer singing and laughter, the world is the better for it and Montaudon profits from it.)

These two allusions were translated by the biographer into a statement that the Monk wrote satirical verses from within the priory of Montaudon and took as his subjects the *faits divers* of the surrounding territory:

E l'abas si.l det lo priorat de Montaudon.E lai el se portet  
ben de far lo ben de la maison.E fasia coblas estan en la  
morgia e sirventes de las rasons que corion en aquella  
encontrada.<sup>9</sup>

(And the abbot gave him the priory of Montaudon. And there he behaved in such a way as to benefit the foundation. And, whilst still a monk, he wrote *coblas* and *sirventes* about matters which were topical in that region.)

With the exception of the *tenso* quoted and a single *cobla*,<sup>10</sup> no such topical *coblas* or *sirventes* have survived. On the other occasion when the Monk mentions his own compositions he appears to allude both to the humorous, satirical vein and to the lyric voice. In the final stanza of *Pos Peire d'Alvernh'a cantat*, he says of himself;

Ab lo sezesme n'i a pro:  
lo fals Monge de Montaudon  
qu'ab totz tensona e conten;  
et a laissat Dieu per baco.

E quar anc fetz vers ni canso  
degra l'hom tost levar al ven.  
(XVIII, 97–102)

(With the sixteenth there are enough: the false Monk of Montaudó who debates and argues with everyone; he has abandoned God for the sake of meat. And for ever having made a *vers* or *canso* he should be quickly hanged.)

The author of the *vida* was no doubt familiar with this *sirventes*, and this stanza further reinforced the picture of the Monk as a contentious satirist. Nevertheless, the terms *vers* and *canso* are present, and the biographer may have been reflecting this in speaking of the Monk's role as court-poet to Anfos of Aragon:

E.il reis li comandet qu'el manjes carn e domnejes e cantes e trobes; et el si fez.<sup>11</sup>

(And the king ordered him to eat meat and to court ladies and to sing and compose; and he did so)

Nowhere in the *vida*, however, is the Monk specifically credited with the composition of *cansos* but only *coblas* and *sirventes*. There is nevertheless some evidence for thinking that the *vida* may not reflect accurately the nature of the Monk's success as a poet.

Some of this evidence is provided by the manuscript tradition. Contrary to what one might expect, the *cansos* seem to have received a wider written diffusion than the other songs. Even the celebrated *Pos Peire d'Alvernh'a cantat*, found in twelve manuscripts (in whole or in part), is outranked by *Canso I*, which is carried by eighteen manuscripts and by *Canso IV*, carried by fifteen manuscripts. Indeed, the average number of manuscripts for each *canso* is nine (nearly always representing at least three families of mss) whilst for other poems the average number is four (in several cases representing only one family of mss, CER or D<sup>AI</sup>Kd). Moreover, parts of the *cansos* are included in collections of *coblas*.<sup>12</sup> In the *Perilhos Tractat*, Matfré Ermengau de Beziers quotes from the *sirventes*, *Pos Peire d'Alvernh'a cantat*,<sup>13</sup> but he also quotes, with approval, one stanza of the Monk's *Canso VII*, introducing it as follows:

... don le Morgues de Montaudó  
que saup lo cors d'amor fina  
seguet la dicha doctrina  
e dígs n'aital entresenha: ...<sup>14</sup>

(On this matter, the Monk of Montaudó, who knew the way of

*fin'amor*, followed the aforesaid doctrine and spoke the following guidance on the matter: ...)

The doctrine referred to is that, even if only pain comes from loving one's lady, pain from that source can be a greater honour than a rich reward from some other lady. Matfre professes to cite the Monk on another occasion, once more with approval and on a matter concerning the doctrines of *fin'amor*. However, this time, Matfre is probably mistaken; the stanza he quotes is ascribed by most manuscripts to Elias Cairel:

... et a la vetz es foleza  
qui trop mostra savieza  
per sso digs d'aquesta razo  
le pros Morgues de Montaudou  
que fo certz et enrazonat: ... 15

(... and, at the same time, it is folly to show too much wisdom, and that is why the Monk of Montaudou, who was sound and reasonable, had this to say on the matter: ...)

Matfre associates the Monk with Aymeric de Peguilhan and with "autre savi" on this question. Admittedly, Matfré Ermengau calls sixty-six troubadours to witness in the *Perillos Tractat* and presumably selects them, in the main, on the grounds that they provided material to illustrate a particular point which he wished to make. It is nevertheless clear that the Monk's *cansos* were known to Matfre; the one from which he correctly quotes is perhaps the most accomplished of the Monk's works in this genre if it is judged in terms of form and metre.

In his commentaries on the *Documenti d'Amore*, Francesco da Barberino quotes the Monk on four separate occasions as an authority on a point of courtly doctrine. On one occasion, da Barberino claims to have found the *dictum* which he cites 'near to the beginning of that Provençal book, the title of which is as follows: "Flores dictorum nobilium provincialium"'.<sup>16</sup> No trace remains, alas, of 'that Provençal book' and it is difficult if not impossible to identify any of the *dicta* cited by da Barberino with any of the Monk's surviving *cansos*. The citations are nevertheless evidence that the Monk's name was thought by da Barberino to command respect as an authority on *fin'amor* and on the moral issues which it implied, and these are matters treated in the Monk's *cansos*, not in his *tensos* and *sirventes*.

In some respects, the *cansos* appear conventional. *Canso III*, for example, contains a near exhaustive collection of 'Ventadornian' *lieux communs*: the lady's lack of *merce*; the timidity of the lover in

conflict with the force of *Amors*; the admission of *folia*; the weighing of one *bes* against one hundred *mals*; God and *Amors* as potential allies of the lover. All these are contained in a framework equally familiar in the songs of Bernart de Ventadorn: the framework that seeks to persuade the listener that he is witness to a crucial moment in the poet's reflection upon his situation in love. *Canso I* likewise offers a great many of the most familiar keywords and situations; a glossary to this song would amount to a comprehensive catalogue of the characteristic vocabulary of the medieval Occitan courtly lyric.<sup>17</sup> Again, the vocabulary and the imagined situations are particularly reminiscent of those to be found in Bernart de Ventadorn's songs; the poet is isolated in a framework consisting of the lady, her intimates, *Amor*, pain and joy, timidity and boldness; the lover is vassal, prisoner, victim of the lady or of *Amor*.

There is nothing specifically 'monkish' about any of these *cansos*; indeed they tend to confirm the view that the poetic *persona* adopted by most of the troubadours of this generation is surprisingly uniform in the context of the *canso*. The songs of the Monk have perhaps a somewhat learned tone: lengthy periodic sentences abound and one also notes a recurrent tendency towards sententious statements that have the tone of *dicta*:

... qu'Amors fai l'uzurier:  
c'ades on mais a, plus quier.  
(VII, 35-36)

(... for Love plays the usurer: the more it has, the more it wants.)

... que ben sabetz que nuills hom vas Amor  
no. is pot gandar, pois ve que ben li platz.  
(I, 36-37)

(... for well you know that no man can protect himself against Love since he sees that it pleases him well.)

... quar d'Amor son tug siey fag avinen,  
e pus hom es vilas ni enoios,  
pueys en Amor non a renda ni ses:  
amar pot elh, mas d'Amor non a ges  
si. lh fag e. lh dig tug no son amors.  
(IV, 23-27)

(... for all the deeds of Love are pleasing, and if a man is base or a dullard, then he can have no profit or gain from Love: he may love but

he does not possess Love unless all his words and deeds are of Love.)

Somewhat lengthier *dicta* have precisely the kind of didactic character that might account for da Barberino's view of the Monk as an authority on love or for Matfre Ermengau's praise of his sagacity.

E cel que son pauquet poder  
fa voluntiers no.n deu esser blasmatz,  
ab que del plus sia la voluntatz,  
e l'acuillirs, e.l gaugs, e.l bel semblans,  
e que sia lials e fis amans,  
e qu'en un loc aia tot son enten;  
cel c'aitals es val mais, mon escien,  
ad obs d'amar non fai ducs ni marques,  
quar sa ricors cujaria.l valgues.  
(V, 10-18)

(And he who does what little he can with a good will ought not to be blamed for it, always provided that his wish be for something more and for an increase in affability and pleasure, and a welcoming demeanour, and provided that he be a true and faithful lover and that he concentrate all his attention in one single place: such a man is, to my mind, of greater worth than a duke or a marquis would be, for these latter would expect their rank to come to their aid.)

Such *sententiae* might be thought appropriate to a man of the cloth, to one familiar with sermons and theological writings. It is equally likely, however, that they are related to the debating mode which is so prevalent in the work of poets of this period. It is a trait that is similarly frequent in the songs of Arnaut de Maruelh, Aimeric de Peguilhan, Pons de Capduoill and Peire Raimon de Tolosa.

Indeed, in the works of troubadours writing from around 1185 to the second decade of the thirteenth century, there is an interesting and widespread stylistic feature which is most pronounced in the *cansos* of the Monk. The feature in question is a particular form of the *exordium*. It is well-known that the nature topos was, from Guilhem IX onwards, the typical introductory material for troubadour *cansos*. The Monk uses this device only on one occasion, to remind his lady that he has *not* used it as a motivation for singing:

Era pot ma domna saber  
qu'anc no chantiey, ni aic joiy ni solatz,  
pel temps d'estiu ni per las flors dels pratz ...  
(V, 1-3)



(Now my lady may know that I never sang nor had I any joy or comfort because of the summertime or the flowers of the fields ...)

Instead in four out of his seven surviving *cansos*, he begins with an extended simile introduced by the phrase: "*Aissi com cel ...*":

Aissi com cel qu'a estat ses seignor ...

(I,1)

(Like one who has been without an overlord ...)

Aissi com cel qu'a plag mal e sobrier ...

(II,1)

(Like one who has a serious and important lawsuit ...)

Aissi com cel qu'es en mal seignoratge ...

(III,1)

(Like one who is subject to a cruel overlord ...)

Aissi com cel qu'om men'al jutjamen ...

(IV,1)

(Like one who is being led to judgment ...)

A search in Pillet & Carstens, *Bibliographie der Troubadours*<sup>18</sup> revealed seventy-four examples of introductory stanzas of this kind.<sup>19</sup> They included works by forty-one different troubadours and a few anonymous examples.

There was clear evidence in the manuscript attributions of "*Aissi cum ...*" songs that the popularity of this form of *exordium* had caused confusion amongst scribes, rubricators, and binders. This was especially evident in manuscripts C and M<sup>20</sup> where such doubtful attributions involve notably the Monk, Arnaut de Marueil, Rigaut de Barbézieux and Berenguier de Palazol, all of whom use this device at least once. Manuscript C alone contains forty-six examples, and from folios 89 to 118, there is an almost unbroken series of them grouped with scant regard for authorship, save that three are probably correctly attributed to Arnaut de Marueil. It is very noticeable that this device appears to have had few practitioners in periods earlier than that at which the Monk was writing: only two troubadours from earlier periods use it. One is Alegret<sup>21</sup> and the other Rigaut de Barbézieux. The latter used it twice, and on both occasions the analogies chosen are concerned with animals.<sup>22</sup> It is interesting to note that, in speaking of the *canso* in which Alegret uses the device, Martín de Riquer has observed:

'... canción de amor, cortés y elegante, privada de anécdota, pero con la terminología sentimental que estará más en uso a partir de mediados del siglo duodécimo.'<sup>23</sup>

It does indeed seem to be a technique much in vogue in the period after 1185. Of the forty-one troubadours who use it, eighteen were very close contemporaries of the Monk, ten were writing in the mid-thirteenth century and the remainder are troubadours to whose work no certain dates can be ascribed but who appear to be roughly contemporary with or later than the Monk. Of the troubadours mentioned in *Pos Peire d'Alvernh'a cantat*, seven out of sixteen used this formula at least once.<sup>24</sup>

The resemblance between most of the seventy-four examples is more than formal. In almost every case the allegory is a *social* one: that is, it relates to a man in conflict with his overlord, a man subjected to ill-treatment, imprisonment, or in jeopardy from some similar cause, for example:

Si cum cellui q'a pro de valedors,  
e.ill faillon tuich ja tant non er amatz  
en la sazón q'es desaventuratz ...  
(Pons de Capduoill<sup>25</sup>)

(Like a man who has many supporters, and yet, in his hour of great misfortune, they all fail him no matter how much he has loved [before] ...)

or:

Com cel qu'es pres e sap, son essien,  
que nulhs esforços no.l pot de mort gandar,  
e, pel greu dan que l'es en devenir,  
s'om li fai mal, no.l cal, ni n'es clamaire ...  
(Peire Duran<sup>26</sup>)

(Like one who is a prisoner and who knows full well that no power can save him from death and from the grievous harm that awaits him; if anyone does him harm, he does not care and makes no complaint about it ...)

The Monk's *Canso I* begins in a very similar manner:

Aissi cum cel q'a estat ses seignor  
en son alo, francament et en patz,  
c'anc ren non det ni.n mes mas per amor.

ni fo destregs mas per sas voluntatz;  
et eras es per mal seignor forssatz, ...  
(I, 1-5)

(Like one who has been without a suzerain, in his *alleu*, in freedom and in peace, who never gave or spent anything except for love, and was never compelled save by his own will, but who is now subject to the power of a wicked suzerain ...)

It is clear that this is a rhetorical technique, and it is worth recalling that the techniques of rhetoric are those of debate. The allegory drawn serves as an *exemplum*, a parallel *casus*, designed to amplify, explain, and perhaps provide a structure for the *razo* of the song. In general, the *cel* or *hom* is the poet/lover; the *senhor* or other oppressive power is either the *domna* or *Amors*. Rarely, if ever, is the allegory pursued beyond the first stanza in any explicit manner. Most often it introduces a prolonged argumentation on the rights and wrongs of the lover's professed situation. In some instances new allegories are introduced as the song proceeds. Thus Aimeric de Peguilhan begins by comparing his situation with that of the gambler, then speaks of the prison of Love which holds him fast; then *Amors* becomes a bond, then a magnet to which he, the lover, is drawn like a piece of metal. Only in the final stanza is this series of allegories resolved in an apostrophe of the lady.<sup>27</sup>

Whilst it may be imprudent to generalize overmuch from these songs, it appears that it is not only the presence of lengthy allegories that appears characteristic of troubadours of this generation, but also the choice of illustration and their use of the debating mode. Certainly there is no lack of instances of earlier troubadours using a social situation, especially that of vassaldom, as an allegory of the lover's relationship with his lady, but there are few instances in which it is so clearly announced as the *point de départ* for a debate. The imagery in these poems, with some exceptions (such as that by Aimeric de Peguilhan detailed above) is not visual, simple, or drawn from nature (in the sense that such epithets might be applied to Bernart de Ventadorn's *lauzeta* or Rigaut de Barbézieux's elephant); it is complex, and it depends upon an understanding of social interaction.

This is certainly true of the Monk's *Canso I* (quoted above) and also of his *Canso III*:

Aissi cum selh qu'es en mal senhoratge  
e non troba merce ni chاوزimen  
ab son senhor, ans, car lo raub'e.l pren,

si volria mudar de son estage  
sobre senhor que.l fos de bon uzatge ...

(Like a man who lives under bad overlordship and finds neither mercy nor discrimination in his lord, but rather, since the lord steals and takes from him, he would like to move from his dwelling to some other lord who might deal fairly with him ...)

Another feature which is particularly evident in the Monk's *cansos* relates closely to this device of the allegorical *exordium*. It is a feature which has been identified as being characteristic of most troubadour *cansos* but appears, in all but one of the Monk's songs to be unusually explicit and recurrent. The feature in question is that identified by P. Zumthor<sup>28</sup> and others, namely the self-referential nature of the *chanson d'amour*, the idea that to 'sing is to express love'; 'love is that which is expressed through song', so that the term *chanter* contains the notion *aimer* and vice-versa. These songs are, moreover, *paralipses* on a large scale; that is, the poet writes, speaks, sings in order to say that he *dare not* write, speak, sing, tell of his love or, indeed, love. Frequently also we may say that, since there is a kind of dramatic tension between the poet and the professed object of his love, there is also a version of this dramatic tension in the professed dilemma: to speak or be silent, to sing or not to sing, to love (i.e. declare love) or to suffer in silence (conceal love). Thus the *moment* of the poem is the moment of dramatic revelation - the moment when the poet resolves to speak, but it is also a moment which may be renewed at will, for when he decides to speak, it may well be in order to declare that he dare not speak. A part of this fiction, of this drama, is that if he speaks, all will be transformed: either tragic loss or bliss will ensue. This tension between speech and silence is at the centre of the drama played out in the Monk's *cansos*.

In *Canso I, Amor*, the tyrannical suzerain, has placed the poet in a place such that he dare not speak or show his desire:

... on non aus dir ni mostrar mon talen  
(I,10)

Further in the same song, he begs *Amor* not to inspire him to speak:

... e prec Amor que ia cor no.m mezes  
qu'ieu vos pregues, dompna, car tem que.us pes.  
(I,41-42)

(... and I beseech Love not to inspire me to court you, Lady, for I fear that it may offend you.)

He counsels his lady not to show her displeasure if his words fail to please her:

... que, s'ieu vos prec, no.m siatz de peior  
aculhimen si mos prejars no.us platz,  
et aissi er totz temps lo digs celatz.  
(I,46-48)

(... that, if I court you, you do not accord me a worse reception if my prayers do not please you; thus *what has been said will be forever concealed.*)

He has maintained silence for two years:

... mas de mi n'a dos ans passat al men  
qu'ie.us son privatx qu'anc de re no.us enques.  
(I,65-66)

(... two years at least have gone by for me whilst I have been in your confidence and never asked you for anything.)

In *Canso VI* the same point is urged, but here he speaks of a seven-year silence and is willing to prolong it yet further:

e s'ieu penses c'om no.s n'aperceubes,  
tutz temps, dona, vos anera siguen,  
ses cor que ia re no vos en disses.  
(VI, 69-71)

(... and if I thought that no-one would notice, I would follow you around for ever, *without any intention of ever saying anything to you about it.*)

In the first stanza of *Canso V*, the term *chantar* could be replaced with *amar* virtually throughout:

Era pot ma domna saber  
qu'anc no chantiey ni aic joy ni solatz  
pel temps d'estiu ni per las flors dels pratz;  
qu'ella sap be que mais a de dos ans  
qu'ieu non chantei, ni fon auzitz mos chans  
tro qu'a leis plac que, per son chاوزimen,  
volc qu'ieu chantes de leis celadamen;  
per qu'era chan e m'esfors com pogues  
so far e dir c'a l'avinen plagues.  
(V,1-9)

(Now my lady may know that I never sang nor had I joy or comfort because of the summertime or the flowers of the fields; for she knows well that it is more than two years since I sang or since my song was heard until it pleased her, in her wisdom, to desire me *to sing of her secretly*; and so I now sing and force myself as best I can to do and say that which pleases the fair one.)

The expression *chantar celadamen* (I.7), like *digs celatz* (I.49), contrives to bring together in an oxymoron the ideas of speech and silence, revelation and concealment. The Monk achieves the same effect later in the poem by different means:

E si merces no.m pot valer  
ab vos, domna, c'us messagiers privat  
parles per mi, qu'ieu no.n sui azinat  
(V,37-39)

(And if mercy can be of no avail to me with you, lady, let a *secret messenger speak for me*, for I am not able ...)

The same *canço* throws an interesting sidelight on the idea that love and song are to be identified with each other. In the *tornada*, probably addressed to Maria de Ventadorn, the Monk observes:

Na Maria, be.us deu amar mos chans,  
qe a la fin e al comensamen  
se daur'ab vos ...  
(V,55-57)

(Lady Maria, *my song must indeed love you*, for its beginning (i.e. 'era pot *ma domna* saber ...') and its ending (i.e. 'Na Maria') are embellished with *you*.)

When the poet states that he dares not break silence or that he has only now dared to do so, it is, of course, the lady's displeasure that he fears:

... mas quar non aus mostrar mon cossirier  
de tal guiza qu'a lieys no saubes mal ...  
(II,27-28)

(... but since I dare not show her the cause of my concern in such a way that she would not be annoyed ...)

The specific consequences of such displeasure are made clear:

... e s'es forsatz per fin'amor coral,  
que forsa.ls ricx e.ls paupres per engual,  
que la preguetz de cor per bona fe

e l'ametz mais que no soletz guanre,  
aqui meteys se partira de vos  
e.us volra mal e, us metra ochaizos.  
(II,39-44)

(... And if you are forced by true heartfelt love, which can compel rich and poor alike, to beseech her from your heart, in good faith, and to love her more than you were wont for a long time, it is precisely then that she will turn away from you and wish you ill *and lay an accusation against you*.)

The phrase *metre ochaizos* is legal terminology; the revelation of love is seen as a crime, or at least, as a tort. The Monk uses this image again in Canso III:

D'aitan sui folhs, e fas aital follatge  
cum selh que pres a estat.lonjamen  
et es estortz; e pueys vai enqueren  
tal re per qu'om lo torn en presonatge.  
(III,21-25)

(In this regard I am foolish and commit the same kind of folly as a man who has been a prisoner for a long time and has escaped but then goes seeking precisely the thing for which he will be put back in prison.)

In *Cansos II* and *IV*, the introductory allegory is that of the lawcourt. If this is seen, not merely as a *casus* or an *exemplum*, but as a dramatic setting, then such a setting would be a very appropriate one in which to pursue the speech and silence topos: a setting in which the idea of speech as an incriminating act would have an added force. This is indeed the position of the accused or the defendant in a lawsuit: he *must* speak to justify himself and his actions or, in the case of a plaintiff, to persuade the court to right the wrong of which he complains, but, at the same time, to speak may incriminate him or cause him to lose what he seeks to gain.

In *Canso II* the allegory is very quickly translated, not into fiction of the poet's position in regard to the lady or to *Amor*, but into the poet's own lawsuit in the *court of Love*:

... del plait d'amor hai eu fag atrestal ...  
(II,5)

(... in the lawsuit of love I have done just the same ...)

It is not, in fact, an allegory resolved but an allegory transferred, and the judicial language continues through this stanza and into the next, so that the lawcourt provides a setting and not merely a parallel:

Aissi cum selh qu'a plag mal e sobrier  
 que non auza escoutar jutjamen,  
 que per dreyt pert tot so que vai queren,  
 e metria tot lo plag voluntier  
 en dos amicx, peï far bon acordier;  
 del plait d'amor hai eu fag atrestal  
 qu'ab ma dona sai be que dregz no.m val  
 per qu'ieu Amor pregui et a Merce  
 del plait d'amor, qu'en aquestz dos mi cre  
 que.m poirion far jauzen e joyos  
 de lai on dregz no.m poiria esser bos.  
 Mas pus de re no la prec ni l'enquier  
 que m'en val dregz? ni que vauc plus languen  
 pus tort no.m fai e m'honra finamen  
 e m'a solatz adreit e plazentier?  
 Que ges non ai tan malvatz escudier  
 qu'ilh no l'honre aitan si Dieus mi sal,  
 cum hom due far son amic natural.  
 E ia non er tant irada de re  
 qu'il no ria de bon cor quan mi ve,  
 e platz li fort mos enans e mos pros;  
 e ve.us lo tort que.m fai totas sazos.  
 (II,1-22)

(Like one who has a serious and important lawsuit and who dares not listen to the verdict, for, through justice, he loses all that he goes seeking; he would gladly hand over the entire case to two friends to make some good settlement; in the lawsuit of love I have done likewise, for I know well that justice avails me nothing with my lady; and so I have besought *Amor* and *Merce* in the lawsuit of love, for I have faith that these two may make me happy and joyful where justice could be of no use to me.)

But, since I neither beg nor beseech her for anything, of what use to me is justice? And why do I go on lamenting, since she does me no wrong and honours me truly and has due and pleasing consideration for me? For I have no squire so lowly that she does not honour - so help me God - as much as one should one's natural friend. Never will she be so sorrowful about anything as not to smile warmly when she sees me; my advancement and my gain please her much: such is all the wrong which she ever does me.)

In the first stanza, love is seen as a case to be judged in a court; the lady is the judge, but the poet fears that justice may not save him. In



the inquisitorial courts of the later twelfth century it was permissible for the accused or the defendant to call in supporters, known as *valedors*;<sup>29</sup> the Monk therefore calls in *Amor* and *Merce* to put his case. In the second stanza, the court as a setting is less evident; nevertheless the terms *dregz* (12) and *tort* (13 and 22), perhaps also *prec* and *enquier* (11), have been coloured by the legal context of the first stanza.

In *Canso IV*, the allegory is of a specifically criminal case, but the crime is trivial:

... que es per pauc de forfag acuzatz ...  
(IV,2)

The accused could flee but knows that his crime is so trivial that he submits to his trial - a risk, however, since he does not have the court on his side:

... et en la cort non es guaire amatz ...  
(IV,3)

Once again the allegory is transferred:

... atressi m'a Amors en tal luec mes  
don no.m val dregz ni l'aus clamar merces.  
(IV,7-8)

(... thus Love has brought me into such a place that justice avails me nothing, and I dare not appeal to it for mercy.)

The second stanza makes the setting even more explicit:

Bona dompna, si ieu fos lialmen  
en vostra cort mantengutz ni jutjatz  
lo tort qu'ie.us ai fora dreiz apellaz;  
qu'ieu m'en puesc ben esdir per sagramen;  
donc contra mi non avetz nul garen  
qu'ieu anc falhis, dompna cortez'e pros ...  
(IV,10-15)

(Good lady, were I judged or upheld according to law in your court, the wrong I am accused of committing against you would be deemed lawful; for I can easily exonerate myself by means of an oath; therefore you have no evidence (witness?) against me that I ever committed any crime, worthy, courtly lady ...)

Here are many of the procedures, much of the vocabulary of the inquisitorial court: Love is the court officer who has brought in the accused; the lady is the judge or the injured party; the oath forms part of

the procedure as does the presentation of evidence. The crime is that of having loved, of having spoken:

... mas quar vos am e tot quant de vos es,  
e quar n'aus dir en manhs ricx luecs grans bes.  
Ve.us tot lo tort, dona, qu'ieu ai ves vos.  
(IV,16-18)

(... but that I love you and all that pertains to you, and because I dare to say great good of you in many a noble place: this is all the wrong, lady, that I am guilty of towards you.)

Later in the *canso* he urges the lady not to believe the *avol gen* who speak ill of him (37). Coloured as the song is by the setting, the *lauzengiers* are now playing the role of false witnesses.

Admittedly, the allegory of the law-court only explicitly furnishes the setting in two of the Monk's *cansos*. Nevertheless, terms, expressions, and situations related to the practice of feudal law recur in almost all the others. *Canso I* speaks of the force exerted by a tyrannical overlord but also refers to the impossibility, in the imagined case, of resolving the conflict by means of a *plag* (11): that is, by a settlement having legal force. In *Canso III*, the Monk wishes that *Amors*, implicitly in the role of *valedor*, might give him the courage to stand before his lady under the protection of a *guiatge*; here to be understood, most probably, in the sense of 'safe-conduct' (rather than in the more usual sense of 'guidance').<sup>30</sup>

Mas si.m prezes Amors en son guiatge  
que denan lieys auzes seguramen  
dir lo bon cor qu'eu l'ai celadamen,  
e qu'ilh vas me non camges son coratge  
ni m'en fezes son bel solatz salvatge,  
si aquest guit Amors far me volia,  
jamais en mi nulhs hom non peccaria  
qu'ieu no.l guies tan quan mos poders es,  
et ab lo guit, bon ostal no.l fezes.  
Aital coven, Amors, vos en faria.  
(III,31-40)

(But if *Amors* were to take me under its safe-conduct so that I might safely stand before her to reveal the true feelings which I have towards her in secret, and if she should not change her attitude towards me or change her kindness into harshness, if *Amors* would grant me this safe-conduct, then no man would ever find me wanting in giving him safe-

passage to the best of my ability and, together with the safe-passage, giving him good lodging. Such an agreement I would make with you, Love.

In *Canso VI*, the poet sees himself as the potential injured party if the lady does not show *merce*, but he consoles himself with the thought that a single day can make great reparation:

... us jorns pot far emenda gran ...  
(VI,45)

The terms *tort*, *dreit*, *jutjamen*, *blasmar*, *clamar*, *plait*, *coven* occur with such frequency in the Monk's *cansos* as to colour even those which do not have a specifically judicial setting and to give judicial overtones to such terms as *merce*, *pregar*, *requerir* and *perdonar*.

There are three reasons for drawing attention to these features of the Monk's *cansos*. The first is to show what is characteristic of this troubadour's style; that is, that the combination of the allegorical introduction with the speech/silence topos and the legal terminology gives a special dramatic sense to the *canso*, making the poet into the defendant, the plaintiff, or the accused and the lady into the judge or the plaintiff, making the *canso* itself into an explicit plea in the legal sense. All of this fits clearly into the pervasive debating mode of *cansos* of this period as well as recalling the origins of rhetoric itself.

The second reason is that there are other grounds for associating the Monk with ideas and situations related to the lawcourt. In his *tensos* the Monk uses the lawcourt as a fictional locus for debate. Specifically it is the court of God which, as it appears in these *tensos*, bears some resemblance to the *Parlement du roy*: an institution which was increasing in importance in the period at which the Monk was writing.<sup>31</sup>

In the *tensos*, four cases are heard before the court of Heaven. In *Tenso XIII*, the Monk has been summoned *a parlamen* (1), not exactly for a misdeed, but in order that he should give an explanation of his behaviour: he has abandoned his poetic activity, and God demands to know why. The song consists of alternate stanzas of accusation and defence and ends with the Monk levelling a counter-accusation against God: God has failed in his duty as an overlord to protect his vassal, Richard Coeur de Lion, a neglect that has resulted in Richard's captivity and a consequent threat to the Holy Land. In *Tenso XIV*, again *a parlamen*, we hear an appeal (*clam*) in which the Monk acts both as witness and advocate (he is, in effect, a *valedor*). The *vout*, that is the painted statues or icons of the saints, appeal to God against the use made by ladies of paint for cosmetic purposes. This practice has so

inflated its price that the pious no longer paint devotional objects. The case is not resolved, despite threats from God and the suggestion, made by the Monk, of a *coven*. In *Tenso XV* and *Tenso-SirventesXVI*, which are clearly intended to be performed one after the other,<sup>32</sup> two cases are heard. The first is again a *clam*. The plaintiff on this occasion is St Julian, patron of those seeking hospitality and shelter for the night. His appeal is couched in precisely the kind of terms one would expect from a plaintiff in a feudal court:

Dieus, a Vos mi clam ieu,  
cum hom forsatz,  
dezeretatz de tot son fieu  
e malmenatz.  
(XV,7-10)

(God, I appeal to you as a man under oppression, completely disinherited of his rightful fief and mistreated.)

His specific complaint, that travellers in various regions of Languedoc are no longer offered the hospitality which they could formerly expect, is scarcely borne out by the evidence which he offers, and no judgment is delivered. Without interruption, the Monk then passes on to an account of another case in which the *vout* are ranged against the *domnas*:

Quan tuit aquist clam foron fat  
lor son comenchat autre plat  
on n'ac d'iratz:  
las domnas e.ill vout son mesclat,  
e.l plaz rengaz.  
(XVI,1-5)

(When these complaints were over, then other cases began in which there were some angry people: the ladies and the images quarrelled and the cases were drawn up.)

The basis of the *plait* is first expounded by the *vout*, then the *domnas* state the basis of their defence. God, as judge, intervenes to propose a *coven*. The *vout* haggle briefly over its terms, St Peter and St Lawrence draw up the heads of agreement, and the *coven* is duly sworn by both parties. The ladies, however, do not adhere to its terms, and once more the *vout* lament the loss of their *plait*. The concluding *sirventes* section is a comment by the Monk on the use of cosmetics of all kinds by the ladies and an account of the materials which they use for this purpose.

The Monk's remaining *Tenso XVII* is on a more traditional subject: a debate between a rich man (*Manens*) and a poor man (*Frairis*). It does not, however, take place in court but on the highway. Nevertheless, when a point is reached at which they despair of ever reaching agreement, it is proposed that the matter be submitted to judgement, specifically to that of the Count of Urgel:

So dis lo manens: "Ieu quier jutjador,  
frayri, que nos parta d'aquesta clamor:  
e.I coms d'Urgel sia."

So dis lo frairis: "Ben es fazedor  
quez elh o defin'en dreg et amor,  
quar tostemps tenria."

(XVII,57-62)

(The rich man said: 'I want a judge, who might free us from all this arguing, poor man: let it be the count of Urgel.' The poor man said: 'It is indeed possible that he might decide the matter in justice and love, for [otherwise] it would go on forever.')

We have seen how Francesco da Barberino, in a work purporting to be based on *dicta*, judgments about love made by troubadours, cites the Monk as authority. On one of the four occasions when he does so it is precisely in connection with an inquisitorial trial held in the court of a count of Toulouse that the Monk's name is mentioned, albeit only as the source of the story. Apocryphal, though it may be, it is still interesting to find an allusion to the Monk in such a context: that of a trial which da Barberino uses as a precedent to establish a rule of conduct.<sup>33</sup> It might also be noted that the biographer states that the Monk presided over the *Cour du Puy*, presumably as adjudicator, since it was his task to award the sparrowhawk prize:

... E fo faichs seingner del Puoi Santa  
Maria e de dar l'esparvier. Lonc temps  
ac la seingnoria de la cort del Puoi,  
tro que la cortz se perdet.

(Vida,12-13)

(... And he was made lord of the Puy-Sainte-Marie and entrusted with the award of the sparrowhawk. He held the lordship of the Cour du Puy for a long time until the court came to an end.)

The third reason for drawing attention to these aspects of the Monk's *cansos* is to complement the study of R.H. Bloch in his treatise on medieval French literature and law<sup>34</sup>. Bloch succeeds in drawing

many parallels between literary developments of the twelfth century and the radical transformation in judicial practice at this time: a movement away from the 'trials by deed' (ordeal, battle) of the early part of the century towards 'trial by word' (investigation, production of witnesses, depositions etc.). P. Ourliac in 'Troubadours et juristes'<sup>35</sup> had already made the link between the language of the troubadours and that of the law

La poésie emprunte d'emblée la langue du droit.<sup>36</sup>

and:

La langue qu'ils emploient comporte très souvent des expressions techniques dont les traductions rendent assez mal compte. Parfois les formules des actes sont transcrites presque littéralement. Parfois même, l'allusion à des institutions juridiques est certaine: qu'il s'agisse de l'arbitrage ou du duel judiciaire.<sup>37</sup>

Indeed, in a footnote to the above observation, Ourliac suggested that the Monk's *Canso II* might prove to be a good example of what he was proposing; he did not take the point further, but such was not the purpose of his article. One may perhaps conclude, however, that, at the time that the Monk was writing, there was a growing interest in debate (as Bloch proposed), an interest which should be related to the evolution of the judicial system of the time, and that the prevalence of social questions as *exempla* reflects this, whilst the Monk's frequent exploitation of the vocabulary and procedures of the court as a setting and a source of rhetorical colour for his songs should remind us that, when we speak of courtly poetry, the court to which we refer is also the court of law.

## Notes

1. Oxford, 1975 pp. 211-212.
2. Marcabru, Peire d'Alvernhe, Giraut de Bornelh, Raimbaut d'Aurenga, and Arnaut Daniel.
3. De la circularité du chant, *Poétique*, 12, 1972: pp. 465-485.
4. Tübingen 1983.

5. *Chanson V* of my edition, (*Les Poésies du Moine de Montaudon, édition critique*, Publication du Centre d'Etudes Occitanes, Montpellier, 1977). Pillet-Carstens, 305, 6. All references in this article are to my edition.
6. *Sirventes XVIII*
7. Pillet-Carstens, 323, 11.
8. In particular to Pillet-Carstens 80, 7, 8, 37.
9. Vida, 3-4.
10. *Cobla XIX*.
11. Vida, 11.
12. In mss. F (Rome, Biblioteca Chigiana, L. IV. 106), J. (Florence, Bibl. Nazionale, MAGLIAB, 776, F.4.) and N (N. York, Pierpoint Morgan, 819).
13. Ed. P.T. Ricketts, Leiden, 1976, lines, 28167-72.
14. Ricketts, II. 31163-71.
15. Ricketts, II. 28580-7.
16. Ed. Antoine Thomas, *Francesco da Barberino et la littérature provençale en Italie au moyen âge*, Paris 1883, p. 183.
17. *Amor, merces, talen, sens, foudatz, dans, hes, dolor, iratz, s'entenre, valor, pregar, aculhimen, celar, fals digs, honor, beutatz, joy, solatz, joven, nescis, cortes, drut, privatz, enquerir, amar finamen.*
18. Halle 1933.
19. Phrases of similar form and meaning such as: *Enaissi cum ...*, *Tot aissi cum*, *Si cum*, *Atressi cum* were included in the search.
20. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, fr. 856 and fr. 12474.
21. Pillet-Carstens 421, 1 (*Atressi cum lo leos ...* and 421, 2 (*Atressi cum l'orifans ...*. In 421, 3, Rigaut begins "*Atressi con Persavaus ...*"; the technique is similar to but not identical with the other examples.
22. *Los trovadores, Historia literaria y textos*, Barcelona 1983, p. 236.
23. Arnaut de Marueil, Folquet de Marselha, Guillem de Sanh Disdier, Peire Vidal, Peirol, Raimon Jordan, and Raimon de Miraval.
24. Pillet-Carstens, 375, 20.
25. Pillet-Carstens, 339, 2.
26. Pillet-Carstens, 10, 12 (*Atressi.m pren com fai al jogador ...*).
27. art. cit.
28. Cf. the poem by Pons de Capduoill quoted above. The *valedor* seems to have had a role which fell somewhere between that of counsel for

the defence, witness for the defence, and the 'Prisoner's friend' who appears in courts-martial.

30. The more usual term is the cognate *guidonatge* as in Peire d'Alvernhe's *Rossinhol, en son repaire* ... (Pillet-Carstens, 324, 23):

... Que tan l'am de bon coratge  
c'ades lai entr'on dormis  
et ab lui ai *guidonatge*,  
joi e gaug e joi e ris ...

However, Mistral also lists *guidáge*, *guidági* as "action de guider, conduite, direction, guidage, ancien droit seigneurial, sauf-conduit (vieux)." (Dictionnaire dou felibrige, s.v. *guidage*).

31. See R.H. Bloch, *Medieval French Literature and law*, Univ. California Press, 1977.
32. In mss. DaKd, the only mss. which contain *Tenso-Sirventes XVI*, the latter follows directly after *Tenso XV*; the metre of the two poems is identical, the B rhyme is the same in the two poems (at least, as far as Stanza IX of *Tenso-Sirventes XVI*, whereafter it changes with each stanza), so that the two pieces could easily have been sung to the same tune. The first line of XVI contains a reference to the matters dealt with in XV: "*Quan tuit aquist clam foron fat* ...": 'When all these complaints were finished ...'.
33. The story is related on folio 42 of the *Commentary* (Thomas, p. 187):  
Ponit monachus de Montalto quod tempore status comitis Tollosani, quidam ex suis militibus nomine dominus Ugonectus, nocte quadam in Montepesulano cum quadam uxore alterius captus fuit et deductus ad comitis presentiam per burgenses. Quem cum comes interrogaret de istis, confessus est totus; sicque comes dixit ad eum: 'Et quomodo ausus es honorem nostrum sic postponere atque tuum?' Respondit miles et dixit 'Domine, illud quod feci faciunt omnes milites et scutiferi tui.' Deinde comes, obmissis aliis que fecit circa justitiam contra eum, dixit testum regulae presentis.  
The rule which follows states that bad example should not be allowed to lead one into error; true virtue is in remaining good in the midst of evil men.
34. See note 31.
35. In *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale*, 1966, pp. 159-177.
36. art. cit. p. 162.
37. art. cit. p. 161.