

A Companion to Ramon Llull and Lullism

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Ephemeral Stories: Lull and Medieval Exemplary Literature

José Aragüés Aldaz

8.1 Introduction: Lullian Exemplary Literature: An Overview

The oeuvre of Ramon Llull abounds in stories, fables, comparisons and other short didactic forms, all susceptible of inclusion under the label of *exempla*. Attention to this literature has been a constant in Lullian scholarship and has enjoyed a notable surge in recent years. While we still lack an overall analysis of this author's *exempla*, there is no lack of attempts to define the genre, or of approaches to its aesthetic and rhetorical principles.¹ Most common are studies focused on the presence of exemplary forms in specific works. This presence has been traced in his *Blaquerna*, completed in 1283,² the first great novel of Llull's Quaternary Phase (1274–1289), and in particular sections of his second great novel from this period, the *Libre de meravelles* [Book of Marvels] written

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- 1 For introductions to Lullian *exempla*, see: Guillermo Colom Ferrá, "Ramon Llull y los orígenes de la literatura catalana [8]," *EL* 16 (1972): 37–47; Lola Badia, "No cal que tragats exempli dels romans," in *Miscel·lània Pere Bohigas* 1, *Estudis de Llengua i Literatura Catalanes* 3 (Barcelona: 1981), 87–94; Lola Badia and Anthony Bonner, *Ramón Llull: Vida, pensamiento y obra literaria* (Barcelona: 1993), 109–117 and 140–155; Mark D. Johnston, *ER* 100–116; José Aragüés Aldaz, "Exempla inquirere et invenire: Fundamentos retóricos para un análisis de las formas breves lullianas," in *La literatura en la época de Sancho IV: Actas del Congreso Internacional "La literatura en la época de Sancho IV" (Alcalá de Henares, del 21 al 24 de febrero de 1994)*, (eds.) Carlos Alvar and José Manuel Lucía Megías (Alcalá de Henares: 1996), 289–311; Eugènia Gisbert, "Metaforice loquendo: de l'analogia a la metàfora en els *Començaments de medicina* de Ramon Llull," *SL* 44 (2004): 17–52; Rubén Luzón Díaz, "Una aproximación a la noción de *exemplum* en la obra lulliana, seguida de un breve comentario en los *exempla* del capítulo 62 del *Libre de meravelles*," *Revista de llenguas y literaturas catalana, gallega y vasca* 12 (2006): 253–276; Anthony Bonner, *L'Art i la lògica de Ramon Llull: Manual d'ús*, trans. H. Lamuela (Barcelona and Palma: 2012), 293–302; and Lola Badia, Joan Santanach and Albert Soler, "Ramon Llull," in *Historia de la Literatura Catalana*, (ed.) À. Broch (Barcelona: 2013), 1:400–403. Xavier Bonillo Hoyos, "Catálogo de ejemplos lullianos," *Magnificat* 2 (2015): 55–127 offers a useful catalog of Lullian *exempla*; José Aragüés Aldaz, *Ramon Llull y la literatura ejemplar* (Alicante: 2016) provides a more detailed version of the analyses in this chapter.
- 2 Miguel Arbona Piza, "Los *exemplis* en el *Libre de Evast e Blancaquerna*," *EL* 20 (1976): 53–70.

between 1287–1289.³ A very rich bibliography exists especially for the seventh, well-known section of the latter text, known as the *Libre de les bèsties* [Book of Beasts], a text consisting of “stories within a story” and subjected to analysis for decades.⁴ We also have noteworthy studies of the two great compilations of *exempla* from Lull’s Ternary Phase (1290–1308): the *Arbre exemplifical* [Exemplary Tree] (the penultimate book of the encyclopedic *Arbre de sciencia* [Tree of Knowledge], composed in 1296,⁵ and the section of “beautiful *exempla*” (*pulcra exempla*) included in Lull’s *Rhetorica nova* of 1301.⁶ Finally, there also exist studies of those forms that favor exemplary expression, such as Marian miracles, whose peculiarities have been explored in two texts from different eras of Lull’s career: the *Libre d’Ave Maria* [Book of Ave Maria] (included in *Blaquerna*) and the *Libre de sancta Maria* [Book of Saint Mary] (1290–92?),⁷ composed in his Ternary Phase. In short, much is known. But there remains much to know, because nothing is more constant in the oeuvre of Blessed Ramon than his recourse to these short forms, present from his foundational *Libre de contemplació* [Book of Contemplation] (1273–1274?), composed before the formulation of his Great Art, to the sermons composed on Majorca during 1312–1313, in the period after the finished Art.

For the reader interested in the medieval *exemplum*, a first glance at Lull’s production can be provocative, yet disconcerting. It is true that Lull displays

3 Mark D. Johnston, “Exemplary Reading in Ramon Lull’s *Llibre de meravelles*,” *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 28 (1992): 235–250; Josep-Antoni Ysern, “*Exempla* i estructures exemplars en el primer llibre del *Fèlix*,” *SL* 39 (1999): 25–54; Xavier Bonillo Hoyos, “Els exemples del paradís i de l’infern del *Llibre de meravelles* de Ramon Lull,” *SL* 44 (2004): 53–78; “L’estructura dels llibres del Paradís i de l’Infern al *Fèlix* de Ramon Lull,” in *Actes de les Jornades Internacionals Lullianes: Ramon Lull al S. XXI* (Palma: 2004), (ed.) Maria Isabel Ripoll (Palma and Barcelona: 2005), 217–233; and *Literatura al “Llibre de meravelles”* (Barcelona: 2008), 98–107.

4 Barry Taylor, “Some Complexities of the *Exemplum* in Ramon Lull’s *Llibre de les bèsties*,” *The Modern Language Review* 90 (1995): 646–658.

5 Lluís Cabré, Marcel Ortin and Josep Pujol, “Coneixer e haver moralitats bones: L’ús de la literatura en l’*Arbre exemplifical* de Ramon Lull,” *EL* 28 (1988): 139–167; Albert G. Hauf, “Sobre l’*Arbor exemplificalis*,” in *Arbor Scientiae: Der Baum des Wissens von Ramon Lull* (Akten des Internationalen Kongresses aus Anlaß des 40-jährigen Jubiläums des Raimundus-Lullus-Instituts der Universität Freiburg i. Br.), (eds.) Fernando Domínguez Reboiras, Pere Villalba Varneda and Peter Walter (Turnhout: 2002), 303–342; Robert D.F. Pring-Mill, “Els *recontaments* de l’*Arbre Exemplifical* de Ramon Lull: la transmutació de la ciència en literatura,” in *Estudis sobre Ramon Lull (1290–1308)* (Montserrat and Barcelona: 1991), 307–317.

6 Ramon Lull, *Retòrica nova*, (eds.) Josep Batalla, Lluís Cabré and Marcel Ortín (Turnhout and Santa Coloma de Queralt: 2006), 68–71.

7 Paule Bétérous, “Ramon Lull et le renouvellement du thème des miracles Mariaux au XIII^e siècle,” *Cultura Neolatina* 38 (1978): 37–47; David J. Viera, “*Exempla* in the *Libre de Sancta Maria* and Traditional Medieval Marian Miracles,” *Catalan Review* 4 (1990): 221–231.

some respect for the traditional terminology of this genre, demonstrates knowledge of its essential forms, and utilizes some themes and arguments disseminated in exemplary compendia of his era. But this is only the point of departure for creating a corpus of material that is, for the most part, completely new. Within traditional generic (and some much more novel) models lie hidden hundreds of highly original, at times even surprising, stories. This approach contrasts with the practice of many contemporary writers, so often limited to reiterating narratives already consolidated in the literature or oral media of their milieu. As with the sermons or novels of this author, any analysis of the Lullian *exemplum* must begin, in effect, by recognizing its “alterity.”⁸

The reasons for this singularity are obvious. For Blessed Ramon, exemplary literature is not simply a vehicle for expounding norms of behavior. It is, above all, an instrument for disseminating the principles of his new Art, and thus a means for explicating the structure of the universe. It is not, then, just any means. Exemplary forms possess an obvious analogical dimension, thanks to their ability to illustrate spiritual ideas through comparison with the natural and human worlds, and analogy is precisely the foundation of the design of the cosmos in the thought of this author, faithful to the principles of “divine exemplarism,” that is to say, to the idea that the Creation reproduces, in each and all of its levels, the very form of the Creator.

In this sense, there are many details of the Art that necessarily reinforce the possibility (and even the necessity) of assiduously using exemplary literature. Among them, the confidence placed, during Lull’s Quaternary Phase, in a very concrete analogical procedure for the demonstration of reality, the so-called “elemental exemplarism.” According to this procedure, analysis of the modes of interaction among the four elements allows establishing a complex combinatory pattern, which illuminates analogically the activity of the other spheres of Creation. That labor of illumination alone would justify Ramon Lull’s invention of a new exemplary form, the so-called “metaphor” (*metafora*). Needless to say, his variety bears only a very tangential relation with the canonical forms of exemplary literature in his era: in its most advanced formulation (proposed in the *Començaments de medicina* [Principles of Medicine], written between 1274–1283), the Lullian “metaphor” accords the appearance of an *exemplum* to what clearly constitutes a rigorous intellectual and demonstrational mechanism, established as an indispensable element in the functioning

8 Lola Badia, “La literatura alternativa de Ramon Lull: tres mostres,” in *Actes del VII Congrés de l’Associació Hispànica de Literatura Medieval (Castelló de la Plana, 22–26 de setembre de 1997)*, (eds.) Santiago Fortuño Llorens and Tomàs Martínez Romero (Castelló de la Plana: 1999), 111–32, offers a clear discussion of this “alterity.”

of his Art. Ramon Llull does appreciate the value of other, more modest and conventional, exemplary forms, granting them considerable space in his oeuvre. The majority of Llull's *exempla* constitute, in effect, a valuable didactic aid, a literary recourse that makes concrete his theoretical assumptions, following the common function of the genre in every era. None the less, even in his most humble stories and similes there is latent some transcendent conception of the analogy defined by divine exemplarism. The *exempla* of Ramon Llull do not simply explain "metaphorically" spiritual realities from natural ones. On the contrary, they presuppose the existence of a real connection between them.

Such a transposition of advanced principles of exemplarism into exemplary literature was not common in the Middle Ages. In fact, Llull's stories often acquire unusual complexity, demanding from the reader enormous exegetical effort, sometimes guided by the author himself. Thanks precisely to this complexity, correlations become a suitable instrument for meditating on all Creation and, in that way, for contemplating the Creator. From this derives an aesthetic value that goes far beyond the decorative pleasure and utility traditionally associated with the genre. In the case of the Lullian *exemplum*, delight results from successfully deciphering its transcendent meaning; beauty, from the power of the genre to translate, through words, the lovely design of Creation.

Ramon Llull grants to the *exemplum*, in effect, an ambitious goal, imposing on it at the same time some inviolable limits: his associations are limited to translating into literary language the philosophical presuppositions of his Art, following strict, rigorous correlations. For this purpose, exemplary literature can of course pursue the most diverse formal pathways. Llull's writings manage to include the simplest similes deduced from the natural and human worlds, as well as the most complex comparisons (the most extreme in difficulty being the afore-mentioned *mataforas* from the *Començaments de medicina*). On the other hand, he must forego almost completely the brief narrative form most common in the homiletic and didactic literature of his era: the historical or true *exemplum*. The discovery of valid arguments to illustrate the principles of his Art is only possible by appealing to the far freer and more flexible realm of the imagination. Hence the Lullian oeuvre is filled with fictional tales, even though the concrete aspects of these display a certain oscillation over the course of time. This oscillation is dictated perhaps less by any evolution in the tastes of their author than by the requirements and specific character of the successive texts in which he inserts these *exempla*.

In the two novels already mentioned from his Quaternary phase (*Blaquer-na* and the *Libre de meravelles*), their intercalated stories fit into two generic

molds already well-established in literary tradition: the animal fable and the verisimilar *exemplum* (story featuring human characters). Examples of both models (some taken directly from oriental sources) co-exist within the plot involving animals in the *Libre de les bèsties*. But it is the verisimilar *exemplum* of his own making that clearly dominates the enormous fictional richness of the rest of the *Libre de meravelles* (and somewhat more modestly of *Blaquerna*), accommodated to the scheme, always plausible, that supports the plot in each work. In Lull's Ternary Phase, his writings adopt a new, somewhat more daring, exemplary modality. Their protagonists become personifications corresponding to the most diverse objects or natural beings (a sword, a shield, a rose, or a pepper) and to the abstract realities that appear in the theoretical pages of his Art (the Divine Dignities, the faculties of the soul, or even verbal tenses). These strange stories, which we might call "artful" because inspired by the methods of Lull's Art, flourish in the *Arbre exemplifical*, a repertory of brief forms created in order to recount, through a more accessible lense, the theoretical contents of the great *Arbre de sciencia*. The discovery of this new exemplary modality is, as it were, the happy result of a specific need and a certain apparent desire to explore new horizons of this genre. None the less, it does not imply any loss of confidence for Lull regarding the fable or the verisimilar story. Both genres also have a prominent presence in the *Arbre exemplifical*, and will continue to co-exist with the "artful" stories in the section of *pulcra exempla* already cited from the *Rhetorica nova*. The interest of this latter repertory is, moreover, considerable, since its contents present a kind of compromise between Lull's peculiar presuppositions and the expectations of readers undoubtedly accustomed to rather more conventional exemplary literature. Perhaps to aid this desire for accommodation, the *Rhetorica nova* offers Lull's most deliberate attempts to establish a minimal taxonomy for the genre and a strict application of its terminology, employed more loosely (although not, as we will see, wholly at random) in his earlier work.

In the trajectory that leads from the two novels of Lull's Quaternary phase to these later repertories, exemplary literature in time consolidates its place in the Lullian oeuvre. A glance at those novels allows us to observe the sense of this evolution. If *Blaquerna* is essentially a narrative occasionally adorned with *exempla*, the *Libre de meravelles* demonstrates the inversion of this scheme, by making its dialogued plot barely a foundation for sustaining an infinitely rich and varied mass of stories. The transition to Lull's Ternary Phase, on the other hand, imposes on expansion of the genre some theoretical obstacles, whose consequences are not easy to evaluate. The shift in the "analogical paradigm" that sustained the Art (that is, the replacement of "elemental exemplarism" with a new model for explaining reality, based on his theory of "correlatives")

could presumably have caused some decline in use of the Lullian *matافora* (at least in so far as it was conceived in the early *Començaments de medicina*). Neither his shift in paradigm nor his abandonment of the novel appears to have affected substantially the rest of the exemplary forms practiced by Blessed Ramon. On the contrary, perhaps the clearest consequence of Lull's abandonment of the novel is his investment of his literary vocation in the genre of *exempla*. In the *Arbre exemplifical* and *Rhetorica nova*, comparative passages appear juxtaposed without respect for any narrative frame. The *exemplum* has at last become an essential, if not unique, tool for the literary expression of Lull's Art that he had sought from its beginnings.⁹

Lull projects his own narrative vocation onto the protagonists of his novels, expressing his esteem for the genre by making them narrate a myriad of *exempla*. As voiced by these protagonists, stories become an efficient medium for transmitting instruction and for dialectical debate. The stories themselves thus end up establishing among themselves a kind of "dialogue:" in a thread of conversational avatars, one *exemplum* can complete, contextualize, or refute the meaning of another. Moreover, any of the characters that appears in these stories (whether a human, an animal, or an object) can introduce a new story, and thus generate a cascading multiplication of narrative levels, full of echoes and specular reflections, with a trace of *mise en abyme* that can surprise. Of course there is no lack of precedents in medieval literature for the dialogued deployment of stories or the successive subordination of narrative levels. But this narrative artifice truly attains, above all in the *Libre de meravelles*, remarkable beauty and an air of irreality. There is in fact, no definitive analysis of the literary techniques and procedures deployed in this novel (or in *Blaquerna*) that would reorient somewhat the existing scholarly attention accorded to the very short (and much more conventional) *Libre de les bèsties*. Obviously, these strategies have much less impact in the two major repertoires from Lull's Quaternary phase, but this is a topic that also demands more detailed analysis. There is no lack of instances of the narrative subordination of stories in the *Arbre exemplifical*, and certainly nothing seems left to chance in the structure of this text or in the section of *pulcra exempla* from the *Rhetorica nova*. The arrangement alone of material in both texts, determined by two different journeys through the levels of being, constitute a useful summary of the Lullian conception of the design of Creation.

The exemplary literature of Lull is the child of an enormous effort of experimentation. There are, as we have said, very few *exempla* employed by Blessed Ramon with a prior existence. Most of these passages are fruits of

9 See Badia, "Literatura alternativa," 12.

his imagination, *ad hoc* creations, whose arguments take form following the specific needs of the context in which they occur. Unlike traditional stories repeated again and again, the life of most Lullian stories begins and ends in a single discursive moment, which lends to them at times the sense of a fleeting, ephemeral construction. The creation of these stories thus seems to owe something to the combinatory skill established as the axis of Lull's writing and thought. There are many Lullian stories created from the mix and slight modification of a relatively limited cast of characters, scenes, and situations. This quasi-mechanical generation of stories makes some of them seem mere simulacra or narrative "hypotheses," capable of reformulation again and again in order to generate new narratives, as real (or unreal) as those before. Of course this may have to do with the simple sensation or impression caused by the contrast between this endless parade of associations and the conventions of a storytelling tradition based on a much more compact and limited body of narratives. Yet it is also true that Lull's stories do not lack examples of narrative "inconsistency:" as we will see, a particular story may seem to arise simply to include within itself another story (to the point that the resolution of this "frame-tale" is absent or lacks any sense), while other stories display a provisional or unstable plot, as if they lacked a definitive or univocal argument for all their possible audiences within the world of the novelistic fiction itself.

Once again, we should not exaggerate the number or the implications of these cases of apparent narrative incoherence. If they demonstrate anything, it is simply the versatility of a genre conceived by Lull as a "language," as simply a conventional means of illustrating reality (and therefore conveniently adaptable in the course of narration). In every case, this assumed adaptability must be seen in relation to another, indisputable fact: the exemplary literature of Ramon Lull constitutes a corpus that is ultimately provisional and incomplete. The stories included in the *Arbre exemplifical* are conceived, in effect, simply as samples of the entire universe of comparisons that a full exemplification of the contents of the *Arbre de sciencia* could come to produce. The stories in this work and those from the *Rhetorica nova* explicitly offer narrative models or patterns, which readers should imitate in order to fabricate their own repertoire of stories or *exempla*, adapted to their own specific needs. Both texts thus propose a true "art of creating *exempla*," inviting those readers to participate in the work of literary experimentation initiated by Lull. Complete mastery of this work requires, in any case, other forays into the extensive oeuvre of the author: for example, consulting the theoretical precepts on analogy and exemplarity scattered in his various writings (from the early *Començaments de medicina* to his final treatises on preaching), or even reading his novels. Reflections by their protagonists on exemplary literature (such as their commentaries on the true

meaning of some connections or their objections to the *exempla* presented by other characters) not only help to interpret correctly the keys to Lullian thought, but above all, show to readers a path for conceiving their own stories and for including them properly in their own discourse, whether public or private, oral or written. Viewed thus, Lullian storytelling displays a truly “meta-exemplary” dimension, which reveals clearly the “reflexive distance” adopted by Lull regarding this genre and thus underscores unmistakably the singularity of his narrative production within the panorama of medieval literature.

8.2 Exemplary Literature and Divine Exemplarism in the Middle Ages

8.2.1 *Varieties of Exemplary Literature*

Discussion of medieval exemplarism requires considering a whole mass of theoretical concepts and textual currents. As we know, the exemplarist inspiration of the Lullian oeuvre is sustained in large measure through the intelligent harmonization of two of those concepts and currents: divine exemplarism, philosophical and theological in nature, and the somewhat more accessible literature of *exempla*. Regarding the latter, the medieval West witnessed in the 13th and 14th centuries the convergence of a plethora of traditions.¹⁰ Some of these shared a preference for the historical or true *exemplum*. This model embraces, in effect, two somewhat diverse forms: the “homiletic *exemplum*” designed for preaching, and the so-called “rhetorical *exemplum*” with a more obviously historiographical application.¹¹ The origins of the latter remit to Greco-Roman Antiquity, and its essential model was the *Facta et dicta memorabilia* of Valerius Maximus, which recounts the heroic and virtuous actions of many more or less famous personages. This work enjoyed wide circulation in the Middle Ages and was translated into several languages, including, among others, Catalan

10 María Jesús Lacarra (ed.), *Cuento y novela corta en España: 1. Edad Media* (Barcelona: 2010), 25–41.

11 The vast bibliography on the collections of *exempla* includes: Jean Thiebaut Welter, *L'Exemplum dans la littérature religieuse et didactique du Moyen Âge* (Paris and Toulouse: 1927); Jacques Le Goff, Claude Brémond, and Jean-Claude Schmitt (ed.), *L'exemplum, Typologie des sources du Moyen Age Occidental 40* (Louvain: 1982); Peter Von Moos, *Geschichte als Topik: Das rhetorische Exemplum von der Antike zur Neuzeit und die historiae im "Policraticus" Johannis von Salisbury* (Hildesheim: 1988); Jacques Berlioz and Marie Anne Polo de Beaulieu, “Les prologues des recueils d'*exempla* (XIII^e–XV^e siècles): Une grille d'analyse,” in *La predicazione dei Frati dalla metà del '200 alla fine del '300: Atti del xxii Convegno Internazionale, Assisi, 13–15 ottobre 1994* (Spoleto: 1995), 268–299; and Jacques Berlioz and Marie Anne Polo de Beaulieu (ed.), *Les Exempla médiévaux: Nouvelles perspectives* (Paris: 1998).

and Castilian. Its classical contents inspired other new works that confirm the importance of the rhetorical *exemplum* in the learned culture of the era, such as the *Gesta Romanorum* and treatises by John of Wales and John of Salisbury. However, its presence in preaching was more modest. Imposition in the 13th century of a new model of sermonizing (the so-called “thematic sermon”) fostered the composition of numerous tools to aid preachers, among which the collections of homiletic *exempla* occupied a central place. Compiling material from biblical and hagiographical sources along with every kind of moral anecdote (stories illustrating the rewards and punishment received, here or in the hereafter, by typically anonymous characters), these collections, redacted in Latin by Cistercians, Franciscans, and Dominicans, circulated widely throughout the West, eventually with vernacular translations. In the Catalan sphere, the 14th century saw the compilation of a massive *Recull d'exemples i miracles* [Collection of *Exempla* and Miracles], a version of the *Alphabetum narrationum* of Arnold of Liège.¹² The presence of the historical *exemplum* (whether rhetorical or homiletic) in the Catalan sphere is likewise evident in other diverse works, from the sermons of Francesc Eiximenis and Vincent Ferrer to translations of the French *Somme le Roi*, the *De vitis patrum* (Catalan *Libre d'exemples de Sants Pares*) and the *De ludo scachorum* of Jacques de Cessolis (Catalan *Libre de bones costumes dels homens*). By the end of the Middle Ages, the historical *exemplum* had effectively invaded almost all domains of written and oral discourse, establishing itself as an indispensable instrument for the transmission of any moral instruction.

Another narrative form linked, though somewhat problematically, to the *exempla* comprises hagiographic and Marian miracle stories. Various authors insist on distinguishing *exempla* and miracles, given the inimitable character of miraculous deeds, although some miracle stories certainly do offer models of behavior worthy of imitation among devotees of a saint or of the Virgin. Compilations of Marian miracles in fact illustrate both their filiation with exemplary literature and their undeniable specificity: many of these stories find a place in collections of homiletic *exempla*, but collections exclusively of miracles in Latin also enjoyed growing popularity after the 11th century and, somewhat later, translation into the vernacular languages. The best-known are from the 13th century: collections in Castilian by Berceo, in Galician-Portuguese by Alfonso X, and in French by Coinci.¹³ From the end of this century or the

12 Arnau de Lieja, *Recull d'exemples i miracles ordenat per alfabet*, (ed.) Josep-Antoni Ysern (Barcelona: 2004).

13 Juan Carlos Bayo, “Las colecciones universales de milagros de la Virgen hasta Gonzalo de Berceo,” *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 81 (2004): 854–871.

beginning of the 14th date the Catalan prose *Miracles de la Verge Maria* [Miracles of the Virgin Mary], slightly after the two Marian works of Lull mentioned already.¹⁴

Exempla and miracles coexist in the sermon with a third brief form, the simile. Unlike the narrative character of these genres, the simile is descriptive in function: it illustrates an abstract reality by comparing it atemporally with some aspect of human or natural activity. Despite its frequent use, it did not attract compilations comparable to those of the other genres, although the *Summa de exemplis et similitudines* of Giovanni di San Gimignano, written between 1300 and 1310, certainly enjoyed wide fame throughout the West.

Less common in the sermon, but certainly popular in other spheres are the two narrative forms found so frequently in Lull's writings: the animal fable and the verisimilar *exemplum* featuring human characters. The former entered medieval literature in various ways. The first was the Greco-Roman fable tradition, whose origins were associated with the legendary figure of Aesop. This material enjoyed wide diffusion in the Middle Ages, thanks especially to its use in teaching rhetoric and grammar, although the medieval era also produced some original works, such as the *Narrationes* of Odo of Cheriton or the famous *Roman de Renart*, the animal epic with some traces in Lull's *Libre de les bèsties*. All these texts coexisted with others from a second fabulary tradition, apparently much better known to Blessed Ramon: oriental tales. This tradition, in which fables mix easily with verisimilar stories, brought to the West a new way of storytelling, based on subordination of its tales to a more or less complex narrative frame. In the Iberian Peninsula, various oriental tales appear in the 12th-century *Disciplina clericalis*, composed in Latin by the converted Jew Petrus Alfonsi and widely circulated in later centuries. Equally popular, though more complex, is the transmission of several works of oriental origin: *Kalila wa-Dimna*, *Sendebâr*, and *Barlaam et Josaphat*. The first of these – which clearly influences the main plot and the corpus of stories in Lull's *Libre de les bèsties* – has its origins in the Indian *Panchatantra*, as passed via Persia and the Arab world to the West through various channels. A Castilian translation, commissioned by the future king Alfonso X, appeared in the mid-13th century, although the work was known in Europe from a Latin translation, based on a Hebrew

14 *Miracles de la Verge Maria: Col·lecció del segle XIV*, (ed.) Pere Bohigas (Barcelona: 1956); *Miracles de la verge Maria: Un "mariale" lleidatà*, (ed.) Antoni Maria Parramon (Lerida: 1976); and Bétérus, "Ramon Lull et le renouvellement," 37–38. Carme Arronis Llopis, "Els miracles marians en *La vida de la verge Maria* de Miquel Peres," in *Actas del XIII Congreso Internacional de la Asociación Hispánica de Literatura Medieval*, (eds.) J.M. Fradejas Rueda et al. (Valladolid: 2010), 389–406, analyzes the later tradition of this genre in Catalan literature.

version, by John of Capua between 1273 and 1305, with the title *Directorium humanae vitae*; Raimon de Béziers also produced another version of the *Kalila*, influenced by the Castilian translation of the 13th century. Much more limited are traces in the Lullian oeuvre of the *Sendebär*. This work of uncertain origin circulated in two independent streams. The first, Oriental, stream corresponds to an Arabic text and its Castilian translation from the mid-13th century. But its dissemination in the West occurred chiefly through a stream of Latin versions, such as the 12th-century *Historia septem sapientium Romae* or the *Dolopathos*, by John of Alta Silva. From the former work derives a French translation in the same century and a Catalan version of the 13th century.¹⁵ Finally, Lull's novels seem to offer some echoes of the third influential Oriental work, *Barlaam et Josaphat*, which was originally composed in India, then translated into Arabic and Greek, with Latin versions made from the latter. Thanks to this process of transmission, what began simply as a biography of Buddha spawned an account of two supposedly Christian saints, widely circulated in East and West: the first Latin version appeared in Constantinople in 1048; other versions were incorporated, in the 13th century, in the *Speculum historiale* of Vincent of Beauvais and in the *Legenda aurea* of Jacobus de Voragine, thus assuring wide diffusion in the West. In the Catalan sphere, their legend appears included in the *Flors Sanctorum romançat* (based on the *Legenda aurea*) from the late 13th century. Somewhat earlier, the Barcelona Jew Abraham ben Šemuel ibn Hasday composed a Hebrew version.¹⁶ In effect, in the Iberian Peninsula Jewish and Muslim communities had enjoyed access to many Oriental texts, such as the *Thousand and One Nights*, since at least the 10th century. These communities produced a rich body of stories, dispersed in many kinds of texts: historical and philosophical works, travel narratives, and the literature of *adab* (miscellanies that offer certain norms of conduct of a practical nature, and related to the *māqāmat*, stories that weave diverse adventures around a major character). The result was an abundance of genres, whose knowledge by Ramon Llull is today difficult to assess.¹⁷

15 On the Catalan version, see: Edward J. Neugaard, "Les col·leccions de *exempla* en la literatura catalana medieval," in *Josep Maria Solá-Solé. Homenaje. Homenaje. Homenaje (miscelánea de estudios de amigos y discípulos)*, (eds.) A. Torres-Alcalá, V. Agüera and N.B. Smith, 2 vols. (Barcelona: 1984), 1:165–168; and Miriam Cabré and Anton M. Espadaler, "La narrativa en vers," in *Historia de la Literatura Catalana*, (ed.) À. Broch (Barcelona: 2013), 1:367–369.

16 Tessa Calders i Artís, "El *Blanquerna* de Llull i el Príncep de Hasday," *Miscelánea de Estudios Árabes y Hebraicos: Sección de Hebreo* 60 (2011): 67–98.

17 Rameline E. Marsan, *Itinéraire espagnol du conte medieval (VIII^e–XV^e siècles)* (Paris: 1974).

These were not, of course, the only exemplary genres available in this era. Didactic literature also incorporates allegorical narrative *exempla* and complex comparisons (some very far in tone from the sermon similes mentioned above). On the other hand, oral transmission was the natural channel for the dissemination of innumerable popular stories, in constant osmosis with those circulated in writing. All these genres and channels filter, in greater or lesser degrees, the “taste for telling” that ultimately leads from exemplary literature to the literary story, and from there to the *novella*. Minimizing didacticism, complicating plots, and multiplying narrative detail constitute the keys to this development, and its critical stages in the works of Don Juan Manuel, Chaucer and Boccaccio. Ramon Llull’s storytelling, somewhat earlier and rather less investigated, offers a different example of the same effort at experimentation, and the same “taste for telling.”

8.2.2 *Illustration, Persuasion, and Ornament: The Functions of the Genre*

Medieval literature offered its readers not only an enormous wealth of *exempla*, but also a preceptive method for the genre, based on a rich convergence of traditions. In their reflections on exemplary literature, classical preceptists had already proposed three complementary functions for the *exemplum*: (1) as a resource for persuasion; (2) as a didactic tool for the exposition or demonstration of abstract concepts; and (3) as a means to ornament discourse. The latter function derives from the status of the *exemplum* as a rhetorical *figura*, thanks to which it appears sometimes as a “figure of thought” and sometimes as a “trope.” The first two functions derive, on the other hand, from appreciation of the *exemplum* as a “proof,” that is, from its capacity to demonstrate the suitability of a particular behavior (recalled from a similar past deed, real or fictitious) or to corroborate the truth of a general rule or law (cited from a particular case or through comparison with another, analogous general rule).

Its probative value, contextualized more precisely below, appears recognized already in the works of Aristotle, Cicero, or Quintilian, which conceive the *paradeigma* or *exemplum* as an especially effective means of persuasion in deliberative oratory. This function obviously seems better suited to the historical *exemplum* than to fictitious ones or to similes. Quintilian thus appears to limit the function of these latter forms to the mere metaphorical illustration of abstract realities, and Cicero therefore links the exploitation of these forms to elegance of style and to pleasure, in works such as *Brutus* and *Orator*. In his *De oratore*, he defines the *exemplum* and simile as *figurae sententiarum*, the same classification found in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and *Institutio oratoria* of Quintilian. Oddly, late Antique grammarians such as Donatus and Diomedes

shift these devices to the somewhat more elite category of tropes, associating them with the more elegant metaphor.¹⁸

In the 13th and 14th centuries, knowledge of the tenets of ancient grammar and rhetoric was of course undeniable, as evidenced by the circulation of many of the texts cited and the filtering of their ideas through medieval treatises on these disciplines or through new preceptive guides for the arts of poetry, letter-writing, and preaching in this era. In all of these spheres, the *exemplum* maintains its triple value as persuasion, illustration, and pleasure, though certainly with some interesting innovations. New grammatical treatises like the *Doctrinale* of Alexander de Villa Dei and the *Graecismus* of Evrard de Bethune, adopted as textbooks in 13th-century universities, repeat the classification of the *exemplum* as a trope, but illustrate this function with biblical examples. The dominant influence of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* in medieval rhetoric maintains the interpretation of the *exemplum* as a figure of thought. This same interpretation appears in the arts of poetry of the 12th and 13th centuries, somewhat surprisingly, given their origins in grammatical doctrine: the treatises by Geoffrey of Vinsauf, Evrard de Bethune, and John of Garland classify the *exemplum* and comparisons among the figures of thought recommended for the “simple ornament” (*ornatus facilis*) of a poem, thus sanctioning their utility within a specific literary genre.

Advice from the classical rhetoricians about using *exempla* in prologs appears adapted in all three major medieval arts of discourse: the *artes poetriae* recommend the *exemplum* as a device for the “artful” beginning of a poem; the *artes dictaminis* make the *exemplum* a mode of introduction in epistles; and the *artes praedicandi* acknowledge its value in the introduction of a sermon. For example, the 14th-century sermon theorist Henry of Hesse asserts that the insertion of *exempla* in the *prothema* of a sermon is characteristic of modern homiletic style, although the older and ancient styles also admitted the use of similes and allegories. In the same period, Robert of Basevorn and Alfonso d’Alprão note the option of using *exempla* in another introductory section (the *introductio thematis*), as does Martín de Córdoba in the 15th century, recommending that sermons begin with comparisons, hagiographical *exempla* or “lovely fictions” (allegories that obviously recall the tenor of many Lullian *exempla*). This was not the only role prescribed in homiletics for exemplary material, which also possessed an obvious value in developing a sermon (that is, in its *amplificatio* or *prosecutio*), as is clear from the treatises of Robert

18 Marsh H. McCall, *Ancient Rhetorical Theories of Simile and Comparison* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1969); Bennett J. Price, “*Paradeigma* and *Exemplum* in Ancient Rhetorical Theory,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of California (Berkeley: 1975).

of Basevorn, Richard of Thetford or the Catalan Francesc Eiximenis. In their texts, the dual utility of *exempla* for beginning or amplifying a sermon combines with the three other functions (demonstration, illustration, ornamentation) already recognized by classical and medieval preceptists.¹⁹ These define very well a scheme of techniques familiar to Ramon Llull, though of course necessarily redirected in his theoretical recommendations and in the use of exemplary literature in his writings.

8.2.3 A “Lesser” Proof: Scope and Audiences

Theorists treating the *exemplum* defend its demonstrative function just as insistently as they contextualize its use. Their wavering collocation of the genre is comprehensible in the light of Aristotelian theory regarding the “hierarchy of argumentation,” in which the *exemplum* or *paradigma* is a kind of comparative proof proper to the realm of rhetoric, and thus subordinate to the enthymeme, or “intrinsic” argumentation. The more rigorous realm of logic or dialectic demands, on the other hand, use of (comparative) induction or (intrinsic) syllogisms, both conclusive or “necessary” forms of argument, instead of the simply “probable” *exemplum* and enthymeme.

The comparative and rhetorical character of the *exemplum* thus imposes a dual limitation on this genre: one from its irrelevance in the realm of logic and the other from its subordination to intrinsic reasoning as a means of understanding reality. But these same limitations suggest as well the reasons for its success.²⁰ Its restriction to rhetorical discourse also acknowledges its persuasive value in civic oratory and the contexts associated with this, but even more importantly for the Middle Ages, in the exhortation to virtue. For this purpose, the superiority of the *exemplum* requires expression with conviction and without limits, in support of the famous dictum “actions speak louder than words” (*magis movent exempla quam verba*). This truism embraces multiple levels of meaning, all predicated on the superiority of deeds to words. These could range from the importance of a preacher’s own behavior (the *exemplum* of his life) in fostering virtue to the efficacy, for the same purpose, of recalling real events (historical *exempla*) rather than fictitious ones. But they could also appeal to the persuasive power of any historical or fictional account or even a simile

19 José Aragüés Aldaz, “*Deus concionator*.” *Mundo predicado y retórica del “exemplum” en los Siglos de Oro* (Amsterdam: 1999), 181–204, summarizes medieval doctrines on this genre. Similarly, Welter, *L’Exemplum*, 66–82; and Le Goff, Brémond, and Schmitt, *L’Exemplum*, 43–57 and 145–164. On the rhetorical *exemplum*, see Jean-Yves Tilliette, “*L’exemplum rhétorique*: questions de définition,” and Peter Von Moos, “*L’exemplum et les exempla des prêcheurs*,” in Jacques Berlioz and Marie Anne Polo de Beaulieu (ed.), *Les Exempla médiévaux: Nouvelles perspectives* (Paris: 1998), 43–65 and 67–82.

20 Aragüés Aldaz, “*Deus concionator*,” 67–86.

(an *exemplum*, in the broad sense) over any subtle or sophisticated argumentation. This power clearly involves the concrete and accessible quality of the genre. For Humbert de Romans, stories are “easily understood by the intellect, impressed firmly in memory, and heard with delight by many.”²¹ The simplicity of *exempla*, their mnemonic force, and their ability to provoke pleasure are, in effect, the advantages recognized in every era by the preceptists and compilers of this little genre, who do not hesitate to ponder its capacity for evoking visual images or for moving emotions from admiration to pathos. Taken as a whole, these advantages reflect the perfect match of exemplary literature to the needs of the three powers of the soul (memory, intellect, and will). At the same time, they explain its utility for instructing uneducated audiences, such as those “simple” people (*vulgus et simplices*) whom Giovanni di San Gimignano cites in the preface to his famous collection of similes.²² The appeal of this genre to the humblest levels of society obviously cannot be exaggerated, because the *exemplum* also served much more demanding audiences, especially in the realm of rhetoric, and in all the literary modes supported by that art, whether for pleasure (the novel) or for instruction (the sermon), yet still far removed from the exalted speculations of philosophy or theology. The latter disciplines had developed a concept of analogy and exemplarity – divine exemplarism – that was far more transcendent and ambitious, and with which exemplary literature maintained, even in the best cases, only a tangential connection.

8.2.4 *Exemplary Literature and Divine Exemplarism: Divergences*

Exemplarism is, as is well known, a premise common to all creationist philosophies in the medieval West, supported by several complementary concepts. First, the conception of Creation as a reflection of God, a lovely image full of theophanies or manifestations of divinity, offered to humankind for its interpretation. Second, the perception in the universe of an orderly hierarchy of being, descending from the angels to the most humble beings, but reproducing, though with increasing imperfection, the divine exemplar. From all this derives a definition of human nature as a world in miniature (a microcosmos) and an understanding of all existence as a perfect system of correspondences (that is, analogies) between spiritual and material realities.

The origins of some of these ideas remit to the Bible (beginning with Gen. 1.26, “Let us make man in our likeness”) and to the earliest patristic commentaries on Creation (the so-called hexameral literature). It is equally obvious that, in its later formulations, divine exemplarism also displays an unequivocally

21 Cited in J. Th. Welter, *L'exemplum*, 72: “Narraciones ... et exempla facilius in intellectu capiuntur et memorie firmiter imprimuntur et a multis libentius audiuntur.”

22 Ioannes de Sancto Geminiano, *Universum praedicabile* (Cologne: 1679), 2.

Platonic conception of the cosmos. The harmonious structure of the universe, the “participation” of the material world with an ideal realm, and the gradation of beings are Platonic concepts that, as filtered through Neoplatonism, pervade medieval Christian thought. The works of Saint Augustine and the Pseudo-Dionysius (clearly echoed in Lullian thought) mark two essential phases in the transmission of these principles, adopted by many thinkers of the 12th century (from Saint Anselm to Hugh of St. Victor), and ultimately elaborated by Aquinas, Bonaventure, and other scholastic authorities.²³

The work of all these authors established a conception of exemplarism very different from that presented in the exemplary literature of the era. Their language reveals the magnitude of this gap, in the use of some deceptively common terms. The looseness surrounding the utilization of words such as *exemplum* and “likeness” in the literary compilations of brief genres contrasts with the rigor imposed in employing these and similar terms among the theologians. This rigor appears in endless qualifications, sometimes reluctantly, as when Bonaventure distinguishes true “likenesses” from those that are merely “vestiges” or “images” of divinity, or considers two possible terms for designating earthly realities, depending on whether they involve simply “passive” copies of the divine exemplar (*exemplata*) or “active” models for human contemplation (*exemplaria*). He resolves this quandary in favor of the first term, undoubtedly because it corresponds best to the actual assumptions of his overall scheme.²⁴

Exemplary literature and divine exemplarism constitute two very different discourses, just as their audiences are different, which explains their scant interaction in the medieval era. For this reason, perhaps the literary form most suitable to the principles treated by the theologians is the natural simile, a form that allows (at least in theory) exploration of the analogies between the material and spiritual realms of Creation. For this same reason, some principles of divine exemplarism could tacitly support use of this concrete genre in contemporary sermonizing and didactic literature. However, this generally

23 Leo Spitzer, *L'armonia del mondo: Storia semantica di un'idea* (Bologna: 1967); Johann Auer, *El mundo, creación de Dios*, in *Curso de Teología Dogmática*, (eds.) Johann Auer and Josef Ratzinger, Vol. 3 (Barcelona: 1979); and Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *Gloria: Una estética teológica* (Madrid: 1986) are among the many accounts of these developments. On their role in Lull's work, see Robert D.F. Pring-Mill, “El microcosmos lul·lià,” in *Estudis sobre Ramon Llull (1956–1978)* (Barcelona: 1991), 53–85.

24 José Aragüés Aldaz, “Fronteras estéticas de la analogía medieval: Del adorno retórico a la belleza del Verbo,” *Revista Española de Filosofía Medieval* 6 (1999): 157–174; cf. Bonaventure, *Itinerarium mentis ad Deum* 2.12, *Obras de San Buenaventura*, (eds.) L. Amorós et al., 6 vols. (Madrid: 1955), 1:588–589.

involves only a vague influence, since these similes rarely serve a real heuristic or intellectual intention.

On the other hand, recourse to comparative forms is hardly lacking in the writings of scholastic authorities, most especially in the work of Bonaventure. However, his examples explore reflections of divine activity not only in nature, but also in human language and knowledge, thus anticipating the focus of some of Lull's most advanced "metaphors." For example, Bonaventure asserts that every object generates a likeness of itself perceptible to the senses, symbolizing thus the eternal generation of the *Verbum*, an "image" of the eternal Father, and of His salvific Incarnation. In his *Itinerarium mentis ad Deum* and other writings, human intellection is not only a means for investigating divine being, but also perhaps its most complete metaphor. Founded on principles of divine exemplarism, theological discourse always prefers exploring these and other sublime analogies, limiting the simple natural simile to a very restricted space, and refusing any place to the other forms of exemplary literature, such as the fable or story. At least until Ramon Lull, whose work in this regard presents a felicitous innovation, and a clear exception.²⁵

8.3 Theoretical Foundations: Exemplary Literature and the Lullian Art

8.3.1 *Exemplary Literature and Divine Exemplarism: Intersection*

The oeuvre of Ramon Lull offers a transparent space of intersection between divine exemplarism and exemplary literature, perhaps the fullest and most surprising from the entire medieval era. The convergence of these traditions in his work is certainly not coincidental or sporadic. Rather, this phenomenon results from profound theoretical convictions and constitutes the natural outcome of the dual intention that guides the writing of Blessed Ramon: that is, the desire to base his Art on appropriate theological foundations and the need to disseminate it among an audience not accustomed to such an elevated level of discourse.

For this second purpose (dissemination of his thought), he makes use of exemplary literature. Some episodes of *Blaquerna* present this literature as a tool for instructing the most humble, but it was familiar to all those audiences to which Lull directed his missionary and catechetical efforts: for Jews and Muslims (for whom the *exemplum* was a common means of transmitting

25 José Aragüés Aldaz, "Falses semblances: Ejemplarismo divino y literatura ejemplar a la luz de Ramón Lull," in *Actas del VIII Congreso de la Asociación Hispánica de Literatura Medieval* (Santander, del 22 al 26 de septiembre de 1999) (Santander: 2000), 1:175–184.

knowledge), for the bourgeoisie of Majorca and Montpellier, and for the demanding members of the Faculty of Arts at Paris, whose early schooling would have included Aesopian fables.²⁶

Divine exemplarism, for its part, offered to these demanding academic readers a familiar language and, at the same time, provided Lullian thought a dual ontological and heuristic foundation: that is, a key to the mode of real being (*modus essendi*) and a method to understanding it (*modus intelligendi*). Llull thus owes to divine exemplarism his harmonious conception of the universe, based on a belief in the perfect analogical correspondence between all its levels, and between these and the divine exemplar that they ultimately reproduce. And he owes to exemplarism as well his essential mechanism for exploring the universe, based on the constant navigation of its analogical pathways. From his *Libre de contemplació* to his last learned writings, he conceives perceptible reality as a “sign” of intellectual reality and of divine truth, following these same pathways. Thanks to this cosmic symbolism, all creatures “signify and demonstrate” God to the human mind.²⁷

8.3.2 *The Lullian Art and Metaphor*

Of course, divine exemplarism acquires in Llull’s oeuvre very specific characteristics, derived from its adaptation to the complex structure of his Art, and also involves diverse manifestations in the course of development over time of its original theoretical structure. In his Quaternary Phase, exemplarist principles crystalize in a specific demonstrational method, which Frances Yates

26 *Blaquerna* 2.66, (eds.) Soler and Santanach, NEORL 8:303. See Badia and Bonner, *Ramón Llull*, 109–129, and Arbona Piza, “Los exemplis,” 60.

27 *Doctrina pueril* 68, (ed.) Joan Santanach i Suñol, NEORL 7:176: “all creatures signify and demonstrate God to human understanding” (“totes creatures signifiquen e demostren Deus a la humanal intelligència”); compare *Libre de contemplació* 2.29.169, (eds.) Antoni Sancho and Miquel Arbona, in *OE* 2:482–486, and similar passages discussed by Bonner, *L’Art i la lògica*, 293–298. On Llull’s analogical exemplarism, see Pring-Mill, “El microcosmos lul·lià” and “L’estructura analògica de l’Art lul·liana,” in *Estudis sobre Ramon Llull* (1956–1978) (Barcelona: 1991), 241–252; Mark D. Johnston, “The Semblance of Significance: Language and Exemplarism in the ‘Art’ of Ramon Llull,” Ph.D. dissertation, The Johns Hopkins University (Baltimore: 1978), 37–44; Michela Pereira, “El concepte de natura en el context de les obres científiques de Ramon Llull,” *Randa* 19 (1988): 57–67; Josep Maria Ruiz Simón, “De la naturalesa com a mescla a l’art de mesclar (sobre la fonamentació cosmològica de les arts lul·lianes),” *Randa* 19 (1988): 69–99, and *L’Art de Ramon Llull i la teoria escolàstica de la ciència* (Barcelona: 1999); Manuel Bauçà Ochogavía, *L’exemplarisme de Ramon Llull* (Palma: 1989); Gisbert, “*Metaphorice loquendo*,” 29–37; and Josep E. Rubio, “Thought: The Art” and “The Natural Realm,” in *Raimundus Lullus: An Introduction to his Life, Works and Thought*, (eds.) Alexander Fidora and Josep E. Rubio (Turnhout: 2008), 243–310 and 311–362.

labeled “elemental exemplarism.”²⁸ According to this method, the analysis of the relationships between the four elements provides a combinatory pattern that the Art converts into a paradigm for the allegorical explication of any theological, moral, or learned question.

Elemental exemplarism permeates much of Lull's exemplary literature but finds the vehicle best suited to its expression in the novel and demanding comparative category of the Lullian *matafora*. As noted already, the essential text for understanding the sense of this category is the *Començaments de medicina* (1274–1283). This work is one of four born from applying the first version of his Art (the *Ars compendiosa inveniendi veritatem* of ca. 1274) to various other academic disciplines (the other three works treat theology, philosophy, and law). Starting from the traditional principles of medicine, the work seeks to shed new light on them by explaining them, as Lull says, “artfully and metaphorically” (*artificialment et mataforicalment*). The meaning of this dual expression is complicated. Basically, Lull proposes the solution for an urgent problem of his era (the compounding and proofing of simple medications), by systematizing ways to mix their elements according to his combinatory method. The latter is thus an “artful” model, and so harmonized with the preliminary rules of his Art. It is also “metaphorical” in two different senses. First, because it employs language codified according to the peculiar nomenclature of Lull's Art. Second, because it is constructed on a combinatory pattern for the analogical illumination of every material and spiritual realm of reality. That illumination finds expression through the *matafora*, a concept to which Lull devotes the final chapter of this work.²⁹ After defining the term in the conventional way (“signifying one thing through another”), he exemplifies it through a series of passages, which explore the analogical correspondences between different medical, natural, moral, and theological questions, all illuminated through the abstract and universal system of his Art. For example, various passages develop the analogical implications of complex concepts associated with the processes of material generation and corruption, such as the “seventh simple point” (*lo.vii. punt simple*), related metaphorically to the seven days of the week, the Incarnation, the Holy Trinity, “and many other things lengthy to tell” (*et moltes d'altres coses que serien longes a recomptar*). This final chapter therefore treats matters as diverse as eating and fasting, poisons and laxative herbs, the hours

28 Frances A. Yates, “The Art of Ramon Lull: An approach to it through Lull's Theory of the Elements,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 17 (1954): 115–173.

29 Gisbert, “*Metaforice loquendo*,” 25–29 and 37–45, analyzes this concept of *matafora* and its antecedents in theology and exegesis; see also Ruiz Simón, “De la naturalesa com a mescla,” 75–76, and Bonner, *L'Art i la lògica*, 63–66 and 293–300.

of the day and night, the seasons of the year, justice and law, the dangers of vanity, and the superiority of Christ's nature above all others.³⁰

Only the bearings of the Art allow the mind to navigate safely the realms of knowledge. Thus the *Començaments de medicina* exceed the boundaries of their apparent purpose (explaining medical science) in order to become a guide for studying all other disciplines: "we treat metaphor in this art, so that it will be a method for uplifting the mind in this discipline and in other disciplines, since through metaphor the mind is empowered to understand, because it considers different species at one time."³¹ In this sense, the metaphorical exposition of medicine is only one possibility within a symbolic reading of all aspects of reality. The text thus strives not only to offer a handful of more or less suggestive analogies, but also represents these analogies as samples or models for guiding a reader in learning strategies of analogical demonstration, that is, in mastery of Lull's Art as a "metaphor" that makes sense of every realm of Creation. Seen thus, the comparisons included in this work anticipate, very early, the paradigmatic or "meta-exemplary" dimension achieved in so many other manifestations of Lullian literature.

Created as an expression of elemental exemplarism, metaphor occupies a central place in the demonstrational mechanism of Lull's Art throughout his Quaternary Phase. However, elemental exemplarism plays a more modest role in the next, Ternary, phase of Lullian thought. Beginning with his *Ars inventiva veritatis* (1290), Ramon Lull proposes a new explanatory model of reality, based on re-establishing the function of the Divine Dignities and on application of his new theory of "correlatives." It is unnecessary to explore here the details of this new foundation, explained fully in chapter four of this volume, but is simply sufficient to recall that, following this new paradigm, the likenesses of the nine Dignities constitute not only the ontological foundations (*principia essendi*) of all Creation, but also the indispensable means of understanding it (*principia cognoscendi*). Knowledge arises from observing the immanence of these likenesses in each and every level of the universe, and so renders largely unnecessary recourse to the model of the four elements for allegorical comprehension of higher realities.³²

30 *Començaments de medicina* 10, (ed.) Lola Badia, NEORL 5:104–114; see also parts 1 and 6, (ed.) Badia, NEORL 5:47–50, 88–91 and 100–101.

31 *Començaments de medicina* 1, (ed.) Badia, NEORL 5:48–49: "de matafora tractam en esta art, per tal que sia art a exalsar l'enteniment en esta art et en altres artz, cor per matafora s'apodera l'enteniment a entendre, per so cor en .i. temps se gira sobre diverses especies."

32 Ruiz Simón, "De la naturalesa com a mescla," 90, reviews this foundational role of divine likenesses; Badia and Bonner, *Ramon Lull*, 92, note the corresponding decline in recourse to metaphorical techniques.

The Ternary Phase thus reinforces the analogical design of Creation at the same time that it displaces the use of metaphorical techniques for explicating its structure. Elemental exemplarism remains, but as an alternative method of demonstration, which evidently implies a corresponding decline in the use of metaphor. But this is a matter to analyze carefully. The *Ars inventiva veritatis* recommends use of this device, linking it still to the expression of elemental exemplarism. Moreover, it is possible that Llull began extending his initial conception of it, in order to make it a form able to assume new functions. This is what the later *Liber de lumine* (1303) appears to suggest. This text starts from a very concrete reference (the light of a candle) in order to illustrate analogically the operation of the Art in all levels of reality. That is, it operates “artfully and metaphorically” (*artificialiter ac metaphorice*), as Llull recalls, repeating the same phrase used in his *Començaments de medicina*. The latter section of the *Liber de lumine* tours various spheres of reality (beginning with God, the angels, and heaven) by means of the usual series of questions or problems (*quaestiones*), which the reader must solve based on the theory of Llull’s Art applied to the light of a candle in the previous sections.³³ However, a vast gulf separates the advanced *mataforas* of the *Començaments de medicina* from the comparisons in the *Liber de lumine*, which are much simpler and subjected to the later postulates of his Art, from the *Tabula Generalis* (1293–1294) and *Ars compendiosa* (1299). It is impossible to know, therefore, whether Llull regards these comparisons as true *mataforas* or, on the other hand, they constitute a less precise type of exemplary literature. In effect, Llull appears to avoid applying the term “metaphor” to them, preferring instead the generic terms *exemplum* and *similitudo* (“likeness”) already established in the tradition of that literature.

8.3.3 *The Lullian Art and Exemplary Literature*

As a result, it is not easy to define the limits of Lullian “metaphor” and so to fix exactly its relationship to the other exemplary forms that Llull employs. The *Art demonstrativa* and the *Ars inventiva veritatis* allude collectively to the persuasive force of “metaphors, likenesses, and *exempla*” (*metàfores e semblances e exemplis; exempla, similia vel metaphoras*).³⁴ The terms *exemplum* and “likeness” often possess equivalent meaning in Llull’s works, applicable to any comparative passage employed in his discourse. It is possible that in these two texts

33 *Liber de lumine*, (ed.) Jordi Gayà Estelrich, ROL 20:36–62.

34 Gisbert, “*Metaphorice loquendo*,” 25, notes the relevance of *Art demonstrativa* 3.10; cf. *Obres selectes de Ramon Llull* (1232–1316), (ed.) Anthony Bonner, 2 vols. (Palma: 1989), 1:388; see also the *Ars inventiva veritatis* 3.7, MOG 5:45.

the term “metaphor” offers a similar meaning, in which case the series just quoted would be limited to presenting a triad of synonyms. However, it is also clear that this term has no basis in the tradition of exemplary literature, which is why, in Lull’s case, it almost always seems to define a very specific (and demanding) category situated within the upper limits of that literature.

Hence, the *mataforas* of the *Començaments de medicina* possess at least three distinctive traits: their novelty, their theoretical sophistication, and their subjection to principles of elemental exemplarism. The rest of Lull’s exemplary literature displays more flexible and conventional features. Most of that literature consists of forms with an obvious traditional heritage (stories, fables, similes), easily recognizable by any contemporary reader as *exempla* (though obviously without denying the radical originality of much of their content). The complexity of these forms varies enormously in degree: exegetical difficulty is the norm in many passages, but there is no lack of easy comparisons and stories with very simple plots. In regard to their reading, many Lullian *exempla* constitute channels (even in his Ternary Phase) for expressing the elemental exemplarism that permeates his *mataforas*. However, this is not their only function. These *exempla* can also presuppose the theoretical foundations from the second phase of his Art, such as investigating the presence of divine likenesses in material beings, in order to illustrate analogically their configuration in spiritual reality. They likewise can assist generally in a more conventional illumination of any learned, theological, or moral issue that appears in Lull’s writings.

The presence of exemplary literature is a constant throughout all Lull’s oeuvre and should be considered one more sign of the quest for analogy that guides his thought. In fact, that literature not only coexists with divine exemplarism in Lullian texts but is in some ways its natural projection. The very multiplicity of meanings that the word “likeness” displays in his writings favors such a close connection. Leaving aside the cognitive sense of the term (“likenesses” are the images of perceived objects in the human imagination), it defines as well the echoes of divinity deployed in Creation, the analogies existing between any of its beings, and of course the rhetorical or literary genre that enables their oral or written expression. An obvious thread of continuity exists among these meanings, which at times seem superimposed in Lullian discourse.³⁵ In the *Libre de meravelles*, for example, the protagonist asks a prince, a student of philosophy, how one candle can light another without diminishing its own flame. The prince expounds the relevant arguments, but his master reprimands him for failing to respond “through likeness” (*per semblança*).

35 Johnston, “Semblance of Significance,” 19–77.

The phrase may simply allude to the need for “metaphorical” illustration in the prince’s response, but it possesses a more transcendent sense. He does explain various comparisons, such as parents who produce a child without diminishing their own being, a tree that sprouts without damaging itself, and Christians who convert unbelievers without losing their faith. These examples are not coincidental, but rather occasions arranged by God “for providing some likeness” (*per tal que donen alguna semblança*) of the generation of His Son without any loss.³⁶ Seen thus, many of Ramon Llull’s *exempla* do not seek to create a corpus of clever analogies, but instead claim to reveal them.

8.3.4 *A Lesser Proof? Demonstration in the Lullian Art*

Ramon Llull grants to exemplary literature a central place in his oeuvre while imposing on it certain obligations. Its manifestations appear subject to the thematic limits set by his Art, and their design governed by infinitely more rigorous criteria than those guiding the creation of stories and similes in other authors of his era. Given the need to translate exactly a precedent universal harmony, the labor of finding these *exempla* (the *ars inveniendi exempla*) cannot be a facile or, obviously, random task.

The commitment to this rigor supports the high value attributed by Llull to exemplary literature for demonstrating the “truth” of his Art. Numerous passages in his work insist on the genre’s probative capability, far superior to that conceded in traditional rhetoric. In the *Ars demonstrativa*, Llull declares, though without going further, the aptness of using *exempla* in disputation, assigning to metaphors and likenesses the ability to “answer questions” (*soure questions*) in the realms of instruction or polemical debate.³⁷ This new role for the *exemplum* will also appear reflected in the peculiar reformulation of the Aristotelian hierarchy of argumentation that Llull proposes. He was surely familiar with the doctrine of the four types of proof (syllogism, induction, enthymeme, and *exemplum*) from the *Summulae logicae* of Petrus Hispanus. Echoes of that doctrine appear in texts widely separated in time, such as his *Compendium logicae Algazelis* of 1271–1272 and his *Lectura Artis* of 1304. The latter instance consists of a mere enumeration, in which there is no trace, at least explicitly, of the dual opposition between these proofs (dialectical versus rhetorical, intrinsic versus comparative) that makes the *exemplum*, in Aristotle’s opinion,

36 *Libre de meravelles* 4.20, in *Libre de meravelles: Volum 1 (Llibres I–VII)*, (eds.) Lola Badia, Xavier Bonillo, Eugènia Gisbert, and Montserrat Lluch, NEORL 10:170.

37 Jordi Rubió i Balaguer, “Alguns aspects de l’obra literària de Ramon Llull,” in *Ramon Llull i el lul·lisme*, Obres de Jordi Rubió i Balaguer, Vol. 3 (Barcelona: 1985), 290; Pring-Mill, “L’estructura analògica de l’Art lul·liana,” 250–251.

the least of all these. Even though the four Aristotelian types do appear in later texts, this classification does not seem the one adopted with most conviction by Lull.

In his very important *Ars inventiva veritatis*, Lull proposes another division, more relevant to understanding the place of exemplary literature in his oeuvre: he establishes an opposition between “strict demonstrations” (*demonstrationes propriae*) and those based “on likeness” (*demonstrationes similitudinariae*). The former include three types: from causes, from effects, and “from equivalence” (*per equiparantiam*), the third invented by Lull in opposition to the first two Aristotelian types, and ultimately linked with the *exemplum*, as we will see. Overall, the type that best matches the genre of exemplary literature is demonstration “from likeness,” since this is achieved, literally, through “*exempla*, similitudes, or metaphors.” Here, Lull echoes various familiar rhetorical concepts, such as the need to avoid metaphors that obscure an issue or do not correctly suit it, while assuming the argumentational superiority of strict proofs. Demonstration achieved “from likeness” thus seems simply to prepare or guide the mind toward those others. He reinforces this idea in a later passage, stating that demonstration achieved “from likeness” lacks “necessity.” Yet this passage none the less introduces an important innovation, by admitting the possibility that some comparative forms (perhaps alluding above all to his demanding *mataforas*) might exceed this subsidiary function in order to become “strict” proofs based on equivalence (*per equiparantiam*): “metaphors do not imply necessity, but rather conformity (*convenientia*) and if they imply necessity, they can form part of strict proof, in the category of equivalence (*ad speciem equiparantiae*).”³⁸ As we have said, this last category constitutes a new type, destined by Lull to proving the Articles of Faith, and therefore appears situated at the summit of the hierarchy of arguments that he advocates as a departure from Aristotelian doctrine. The possibility that exemplary literature (or, at least, his *matafora*) sometimes merges with that type of proof lends it an absolutely exceptional status in historical debate about the genre. Thanks to that status, we can understand the real functioning of the *exemplum* in Lullian thought, and also its distance from what remains, for so many other authorities, simply a form of persuasion directed to uneducated audiences.³⁹

38 *Ars inventiva veritatis* 3.7, MOG 5:45: “Et sciendum est, quod metaphorae non inferunt necessitatem, sed convenientiam, & si inferant necessitatem, transeunt in propriam demonstrationem ad speciem aequiparantiae.” See also *Lectura Artis, quae intitulata est brevis practica Tabulae Generalis*, (ed.) Jordi Gayà Estelrich, ROI 20:421–423.

39 Bonner, *L'Art i la lògica*, 298–302, provides an excellent analysis of Lullian categories of argumentation, though without considering the scant demonstrative value traditionally accorded to the genre, which requires further study to appreciate the novelty of

8.3.5 *Traditional Purposes*

Demonstration through Lull's Art, in the context of theological disputation or argumentation, constitutes an essential function of the Lullian *exemplum*, but he also recognizes for the genre other more conventional purposes. In his *Rhetorica nova*, Lull explains its capacity for ornamentation and its value for beginning or amplifying any discourse, assuming thus some of the roles attributed to exemplary literature in classical and medieval treatises. Still, none of his explanations about this role attain the density or interest expressed at the beginning of his *Arbre exemplifical*:

And from the *exempla* that we will provide, one can have instruction for knowing both material and spiritual hidden truths, for preaching, for good mores, and for comfort and friendship with other people. And even more, one can have from them a universal means of understanding many things pleasing to understand and to hear.⁴⁰

This passage thus exceeds the tenor of traditional rhetorical commentaries and proposes a true pragmatics for the genre. The passage affirms the utility of *exempla* read privately in collections or presented orally, whether in sermons or in the more intimate context of friendly conversation. In all these realms, the *exemplum* becomes a means for knowing material and spiritual realities, a purpose that includes the above-cited theological demonstration through Lull's Art, but also exceeds it, achieving as well a more personal dimension through private meditation, as we will see. However, this genre is also a vehicle for transmitting moral instruction and a means for seeking delight, not only in the pleasing character of its content, but likewise in the intellectual exercise of revealing a metaphorical meaning. It is not difficult to perceive here the echo of the triple purpose attributed to exemplary literature by theorists: moral persuasion, illustration, and ornamentation. None the less, this passage insinuates, still more forcefully, surpassing or even transgressing those purposes, given the place that the genre occupies in Lull's oeuvre.

demonstration *per equiparantiam*. See also Jordi Pardo Pastor, "Filosofía y teología de Ramón Lull: la *Demonstratio per aequiparantiam*," *Revista Española de Filosofía Medieval* 9 (2002): 265–274. Johnston, *ER* 112, analyzes other echoes in Lull's oeuvre of this appreciation of the *exemplum* as a form of proof.

40 *Arbre de ciència* 15. Prolog, (eds.) Joaquim Carreras i Artau and Tomàs Carreras i Artau, *OE* 1:799: "e per los exemplis que darem pot hom haver doctrina a conèixer los secrets naturals e sobre natura, e a preïcar e a haver moralitats bones e solaç e amistat de les gents. E encara, en pot hom haver universal hàbit a entendre moltes coses plaents a entendre e plaents a oïr."

8.3.6 *From Moral Persuasion to Illustration*

In his *Liber de modo naturali intelligendi*, Lull explains how one understands the essence of the vices and virtues. A moderate person observes how someone overcome by gluttony eats and drinks, and how this vice causes lies, sickness, and a miserable death. A humble person sees how no one desires to befriend the proud, engrossed in labor, anguish, and pain. A chaste person, finally, contrasts the benefits associated with that virtue (such as preserving marriage) to the evils of lust, which would be too many to tell.⁴¹ It is impossible not to recall, from these simple reflections, the point of departure of so many Lullian stories, which recreate, within a literary mold, the same teachings that daily life offered to the medieval reader.

Of course, moralizing interpretation was the most prevalent framework of all exemplary literature in Lull's era. None the less, that interpretation almost always appears in Lullian *exempla* subordinated (and ultimately, juxtaposed) to the essential goal of such passages: understanding the principles of his Art, and through them, the structure of Creation. For example, in the *Libre de meravelles* and *Arbre exemplifical*, the illustration of the elemental or vegetal realm occurs through some stories with human protagonists, whose plots recreate virtuous or contemptible behaviors. The moral instruction in these stories is logically unequivocal, but that instruction never overshadows their main lesson, which is ontological in character, and so also emphasizes their distance from the *exempla* used by preachers.⁴² Moreover, both works devote, in their journey through the levels of creation, some pages specifically to the realm of the vices and virtues: the *Libre de meravelles*, in its eighth section on humankind, and the *Arbre exemplifical*, in its section devoted to reviewing the contents of the *Arbre moral*. Once again, the stories from these pages illustrate consequences from the whole range of praiseworthy or sinful behaviors. But this illustration is only one more expression of the intention that guides both collections: the orderly explication of all aspects, material or spiritual, in Creation.

In the case of Blessed Ramon, that illustration takes on unique features. Traditionally, exemplary literature made use of natural reality and human activity to shed light on spiritual concepts, following a kind of upward trajectory, inductive in nature, by the mind. In Lull's work, however, the short forms can take their subject matter either from material or spiritual beings, and the method of illumination can also operate downward (deductively), explaining

⁴¹ *Liber de modo naturali intelligendi* 7, (ed.) Helmut Riedlinger, ROL 6:204–209.

⁴² Bonillo Hoyos, "Els exemples," 59, 60, 63, 65, 74, considers the originality of those that he labels, quite rightly, *nova exempla*.

the essence of natural beings from the divine form itself. Founded on the analogical principles of his Art, the *exemplum* thus constitutes a true “heuristic” recourse, that is to say, “a means of making explicit those relationships in the levels of being that would otherwise remain hidden.”⁴³ Without a doubt, the most obvious signs of the singularity of Lullian *exempla* is its redeployment from the realm of moral persuasion (which was traditionally mostly natural) to that of understanding both reality and the Art that explains it. Of course, properly considered, that understanding initiates the true moral path of all humans, according to Lull’s doctrine of “first intention,” toward knowing God through Creation.

8.3.7 *Allegorical Difficulty and the Ascent of the Mind*

Exempla constitute not only tools for uncovering the analogical keys of reality but are also an essential recourse for recalling them. The *Libre de meravelles* recognizes them as such when it affirms the power of likenesses to acquire “knowledge” and to exalt the soul for “remembering, understanding, and desiring.” The latter phrase also reveals the adecuation of *exempla* to the three powers of the soul, which the *Començaments de medicina* also assigns to the *matafora*.⁴⁴ Neither that suitability nor claims for the mnemotechnical qualities of the genre were new, but in Lull’s case they constitute a theoretical basis for making *exempla* resources for meditation as well. Consideration of exemplary texts can constitute the point of departure for a deliberate and profound meditation on the lessons of Creation, which is surely what the already-cited prolog to the *Arbre exemplifical* suggests when it mentions the utility of this genre for acquiring a “universal means of understanding.”

Comprehending the universe (that is, the exegesis of the “book of creatures”) demands true mastery of exemplary methods. Indeed, it is their advances in this mastery that allow the protagonists of Lull’s novels to become truly wise. And, as we will see, this same process of mastery is projected in specular fashion upon the readers, schooling them in managing strategies of exemplarity. Mastering Lullian *exempla* is of course no easy task. His exemplary passages illuminate numerous points of his Art, but by the same measure, understanding these passages requires a certain familiarity with its principles. The analogies established between different planes of reality are truly subtle,

43 Luzón Díaz, “Una aproximación,” 258–259: “un medio para hacer explícitas aquellas relaciones de la escala del ser que, de otro modo, permanecerían ocultas.”

44 *Libre de meravelles* “De la fi del libre,” in *Obres selectes de Ramon Llull (1232–1316)*, (ed.) Anthony Bonner, 2 vols. (Palma: 1989), 2: 391; *Començaments de medicina* 1.5, (ed.) Badia, NEORL 5:48–49.

if not enigmatic, as are the relationships between the narrative subject matter and the allegorical lesson that it shrouds. Lull's esteem for difficulty has been compared to the Augustinian and Thomistic justifications for the obscurity of some biblical passages and, I suspect, probably owes something to the use of parables in the Gospels, and many Lullian stories do appear accompanied by an exposition of their meaning, just as do the parables of Christ.⁴⁵ Yet, there are many other Lullian passages that, despite their complexity, remain suspended within his discourse without any explanation, thus complicating their comprehension by the reader.⁴⁶ Lull himself is aware of this difficulty, since indeed his own characters often request clarification about the meaning of *exempla* expounded by their interlocutors. They even show their confusion about stories seemingly devoid of meaning, as in the often-cited query from the protagonist of the *Libre de meravelles* to a hermit: "Sir ... your *exempla* amaze me, because it seems that they have nothing to do with the purpose of what I ask you." The passage is highly revealing, above all, because the hermit's answer clarifies the rationale for allegorical obscurity, directed always to promoting the "ascent of the mind:"

"Dear friend," said the hermit, "I offer you these likenesses deliberately, so that your mind will rise in understanding, because where a likeness is most obscure, the mind grasps more highly what that likeness comprehends."⁴⁷

This ascent of the mind seems one with all analogical reasoning, that is, with that turn of the mind that "considers different species at one time" (*en .i. temps*

45 See Taylor, "Some complexities," 654–656, who applies as well to Lull's *exempla* the commonplace scheme of the "four senses of Scripture."

46 Arbona Piza, "Los exemplis," 59.

47 *Libre de meravelles* 2.14, (eds.) Badia et al., NEORL 10:149: "Senyer –dix Felix al sant hermità-, molt me meravell de vostros eximplis, cor vijares m'es que no facen res al proposit de que yo us deman. Bell amich –dix l'ermità-, scientment vos faç aytals semblançes per ço que vostre enteniment exalçets ha entendre, cor on pus escura es la semblança, pus altament enten l'enteniment que aquella semblança enten." Arbona Piza, "Los exemplis," 70; Badia, "Literatura alternativa," 16; Hauf, "Sobre l'*Arbor exemplificalis*," 311; Luzón Díaz, "Una aproximación," 259; Taylor, "Some complexities," 653–654; and Llúcia Martín Pascual, "'On pus escura és la semblança, pus altament entén l'enteniment qui aquella semblança entén.' Ramon Lull i el didacticisme científico-teològic del *Llibre de meravelles*," *Randa* 50 (2002): 25–39, are among the many analyses of this passage and of the difficulty of Lullian *exempla* in general. Johnston, *SL* 77–79, and *ER* 52–55, offer a detailed analysis, in the context of Lull's theories of intellection, with references to medieval precedents for the esteem of obscurity.

se gira sobre diverses especies) as suggested already in the *Començaments de medicina*.⁴⁸ Yet, it evidently must be multiplied in those passages that demand a complex exegesis, as in the *mataforas* of the latter work or those “likenesses of high exposition” suggested by the *Libre de meravelles* in a later passage.

Of course, the ultimate goal of the mind’s ascent is devout contemplation of the Creator. In this sense, the protagonist of *Blaquerna* recalls the “words of love and short *exempla*” (in reality, proverbs) of Muslim sufis, forms always requiring exegesis, which makes them elevate simultaneously the mind and devotion. The *Libre de contemplació* already develops this value of allegorical discourse for contemplation and prayer, inspired by that “moral exposition which is called *rams* in the Arabic language” (*esposició moral la qual és apellada en lengua aràbica “rams”*).⁴⁹ In light of all this, one understands the spiritual and mystical connotations of all the images of “ascent” employed by Ramon Llull to suggest the intellectual process of exemplary literature. These images do not simply allude (not even principally) to the intellectual or heuristic height of the truths known thanks to *exempla*, but indicate the place of these truths in the loving and affective trajectory that leads the soul to its Creator.

8.3.8 *Delight and Verbal Aesthetic*

The prolog to the *Arbre exemplifical* suggested the capacity of an *exemplum* to transmit “many things pleasing to understand and to hear.” This work thus associates the act of understanding *exempla* with what we might consider a dual pleasure, in so far as understanding the beautiful analogical design of the universe follows from the delight derived from the allegorical deciphering of a passage. For its part, the concluding mention of “things pleasing to hear” may be appealing, in a much more modest way, to the actual ludic and pleasurable dimensions of the plots in some stories, that is, to the delight found in the simple act of telling and hearing stories, which that prolog invokes when referring to the capacity of the genre to promote comfort and friendship with other people. In this respect, Lullian exemplary literature does engage the tradition that extends from oriental storytelling to the narratives of Chaucer, Boccaccio, or Don Juan Manuel, although it does so with undeniably unique features: fundamentally, the subordination of delight to didacticism and, based on this,

48 *Començaments de medicina* 1.5, (ed.) Badia, NEORL 5:48–49.

49 *Libre de contemplació* 352.7, (eds.) Sancho and Arbona, OE 2:1181. On this passage, see: Colom Ferrá, “Ramon Llull y los orígenes,” 42, and Badia, Santanach, and Soler, “Ramon Llull,” 408–410. Compare also *Blaquerna* 99, (eds.) Soler and Santanach, NEORL 8:426–427. See also Díaz, “Una aproximación,” 263, and Jaume Medina, “Oscuridad y elevación del entendimiento en la obra de Ramon Llull,” *Revista de Lengüas y Literaturas Catalana, Gallega y Vasca* 14 (2009): 255–259, on the concept of elevating the mind in Llull’s works.

the sacrifice of all ornamental detail in favor of the precise communication (though sometimes cryptic) of the transcendent message in its passages.⁵⁰ The guidelines that direct the composition of Lullian *exempla* are the same that govern his entire work. Ramon Llull, far from writing “literature,” simply adopts literary expression in order to communicate truth.⁵¹

Thanks only to these premises can we grasp something implied throughout Llull’s work, namely the value accorded to the *exemplum* as a means for adorning discourse. Traditional rhetoric and grammar unanimously recognized this value, making the *exemplum*, in those arts, a “figure of thought” and sometimes a trope. It is obvious that Llull knew these traditions, and so we see the special place that the genre occupies among the expressive recourses in his *Rhetorica nova*. However, it is also evident that the value of Lullian *exempla* as ornament has little to do with these traditional tenets. Their value results, in effect, from his peculiar concept of style, specifically, as traced in the path of that “homology between the discursive and metaphysical orders” upon which Blessed Ramon bases all beauty in human discourse.⁵² The Lullian short genres aspire only to translating, in their rhetorical simplicity, the nuances of divine beauty unfolded throughout the universe, apart from and prior to any discursive manipulation. It is this aesthetic reading of Creation that infuses every passage, endowing them of course with a transcendent beauty, but minimizing

50 Hauf, “Sobre l’*Arbor exemplificalis*,” 322–331, analyzes the *Arbre exemplifical* in this regard, noting the distance between the stories of Llull and those of Boccaccio and Chaucer, among others. Lúcia Martín Pascual, “Huella del *Calila e Dimna* en la literatura catalana medieval,” in *Énoncés sapientiels et littérature exemplaire: une intertextualité complexe*, (ed.) M.S. Ortola (Nancy: 2013), 93, and Josep A. Grimalt, “Notes sobre les fonts del *Llibre de les bèsties* de Ramon Llull,” *Randa*, 48 (2002): 39, also observe the same tendency toward didacticism and lack of ornament in Llull’s versions of stories from *Kalila wa-Dimna*.

51 On this aspect of Llull’s work, see: Jordi Rubió i Balaguer, “L’expressió literària de Ramon Llull,” in *Ramon Llull i el lul·lisme*, Obres de Jordi Rubió i Balaguer 3 (Barcelona: 1985), 300–314; Lola Badia, “Ramon Llull i la tradició literària,” *EL* 28 (1988): 121–128, and “Literature as an ‘ancilla artis’: the transformation of science into literature according to Robert Pring-Mill and Ramon Llull,” *Hispanic Research Journal* 10 (2009): 18–28; and Pring-Mill, “Els recontaments,” 314–317.

52 *Ramon Llull’s New Rhetoric: Text and Translation of Llull’s “Rethorica Nova,”* (ed.) Mark D. Johnston (Davis, Calif.: 1994), xxii. On the general relationship between language, beauty, and exemplary forms, see: Mark D. Johnston, “*Affatus*: Natural Science as Moral Theology,” *EL* 30 (1990): 3–30 and 139–159; Josep E. Rubio, “L’estètica en Ramon Llull: una qüestió epistemològica,” *Tesseræ* 2 (1996): 73–80; Ignasi Roviró i Alemany, “De la bellesa sensible a la font de la bellesa: la bellesa en Ramon Llull,” in *Actes del Simposi Internacional de Filosofia de l’Edat Mitjana: Vic-Girona, 11–16 d’abril de 1993* (Vic: 1996), 389–395; Johnston, *ER* 83–116; and Luzón Díaz, “Una aproximación,” 264–265.

at the same time the possibility of any other aesthetic esteem. The section on beautiful *exempla* in the *Rhetorica nova* begins by alluding to the rhetorical value of various divine *exempla*: the display of likenesses of the Trinity in creatures, in the Incarnation, and in the Passion of Christ. These *exempla* possess an intrinsic beauty, and only that beauty adorns the words of a speaker and in turn, penetrates “the imagination, memory, and intellect of the listeners.” In short, an *exemplum* is beautiful only in so far as it constitutes the translation of an innately beautiful reality.⁵³

8.4 Plots, Forms, Contexts: Exemplary Material for Creating a Corpus

8.4.1 *A New Exemplary Literature*

Apart from any other consideration, the originality of Lull's exemplary writing is apparent in a simple, but rather unusual, fact: most of the *exempla* that appear in Lull's writings are his own creations. In this sense, we could say that his writings subvert the usual relationship between *exempla* and their discursive context. Many authors do incorporate traditional (usually anonymous) *exempla* in their own discourses, adding ultimately some personal details. In the case of Ramon Lull, the requirements of his works end up generating an exclusive corpus of narratives, definitively linked with the name of their author. The originality of Lull's Art requires this new literature, just as it demands a new logic, a new medicine, or a new astronomy. Just as occurs with the treatises devoted to these genres, the exemplary literature of Blessed Ramon is deliberately alternative, to the point of constituting a kind of *contrafactum*, an inversion of their readings.⁵⁴

Of course, this does not mean that some stories from other sources do not appear in the Lullian oeuvre. The most obvious case, and most studied by critics, involves the contents of his *Libre de les bèsties*. Nine or ten of its stories already appear in *Kalila wa-Dimna*, while others derive from *Sendebâr* and the *1001 Nights*. There are several other stories from other sources in other texts by Lull. None the less, these examples seem little more than exceptions in the immense Lullian corpus. The *Libre de les bèsties* itself includes numerous original stories, and these dominate almost completely the narrative flow of the

53 *Rhetorica nova* 2.4.1–3, (ed.) Johnston, 15–16.

54 Badia, “La literatura alternativa,” 11–14; Bonner, *L'Art i la lògica*, 332–336; and Badia, Santanach, and Soler, “Ramon Lull,” 395–409, all address the profound significance of this deliberate alternative.

Libre de meravelles, as before in *Blaquerna* and later in the *Arbre exemplifical* and *Rhetorica nova*.

8.4.2 *The Inspiration for the “Original” Exempla*

The division of the Lullian exemplary corpus into two main sections—one represented by those few stories from other sources and one corresponding to his very many original stories—can serve as a simple point of departure for understanding the quantitative importance of the latter in Lull’s work. But such a division runs the risk of simplifying to excess the relationship of Lull’s stories with tradition, and this, essentially, for two reasons. First, because (as we will see later regarding an Oriental fable) the traditional narratives cited undergo an obvious manipulation through incorporation into the texts of Blessed Ramon, where they appear without any mention of their provenance. Second, because the stories that we confidently classify as “original” at times reproduce ancient literary motifs, combining them and giving them a new look that ultimately obscures their origins.

A good example of the latter appears in the story of the “evil astrologer” included in the *Arbre exemplifical*.⁵⁵ This tale tells the story of a king, upset and sick because an astrologer had foretold his death within the year. To improve his state of mind, another king sends him, as a gift, a maiden who nourishes herself with poison. The astrologer cannot believe that this is possible, since it contradicts his learning and also because the maiden was born under the sign of Aries, with a hot and moist complexion, the opposite of the poison. Having verified this marvel, the king realizes that astrology is not always right, which offers him some small comfort. In the end, his predicament is only resolved thanks to the intervention of a wise knight, who realizes that the astrologer is plotting the death of the king with his false prophecy. The knight asks the astrologer if he knows the time of his own death, and immediately beheads him in order to demonstrate the error of his predictions. All this suggests that we are faced with an original Lullian story. But, as Lola Badia has shown, its novelty results from the fusion of two independent traditional motifs. The theme of soothsayers unable to foresee their own death is as old as the *Aeneid*. The legend of the poison maiden appears in the famous “Letter of Aristotle to Alexander the Great,” disseminated in the West after the 12th century in *Placides et Timeo*. There, an enemy king presents Alexander the Great with a maiden nourished on poison, who kills anyone who kisses her. Aristotle uncovers the deception

55 *Arbre de ciència* 15.3.10, (eds.) Carreras i Artau and Carreras i Artau, *OE* 1:814. Badia, “La literatura alternativa,” 17–21; Marsan, *Itinéraire espagnol*, 38; and Cabré, Ortín, and Pujol, “Coneixer e haver moralitats bones,” 154–157, offer useful analyses of the story.

and saves the king, who beheads the unwelcome maiden. Lull seems to have adapted this legend to create his story. But, curiously, he displaces the motif of conspiracy against the king (and the punishment for that conspiracy) onto the figure of the astrologer. The mention of the maiden loses the negative connotations found in its original, embedding itself in the main plot (concerning the false prophecy) with secondary functions: demonstrating to the king the inability of astrology to explain all phenomena and, perhaps also, demonstrating to the student of Lullian science the ignorance of the astrologer himself, since the sign of Aries is not “hot and moist,” as he claims, but rather hot and dry.

8.4.3 *Levels of Imitation*

Without a doubt, identifying this type of partial debt constitutes a challenge to Lullian scholarship. The trail, more or less deep, of traditional motifs can be traced in various stories from the *Arbre exemplifical* or the *Libre de meravelles*, and extends as well to other Lullian genres, such as his miracles of the Virgin. It is true that, in contrast with the desire for historicity that the genre traditionally displays, most of Lull’s miracle stories are decidedly fictitious and original. But, for this same reason, they are enormously interesting for understanding a question related to Lull’s manipulation of sources, namely the existence of very diverse levels in his exploitation of traditional material (and therefore, in the degree of originality of Lull’s own passages).

Some of the miracles that appear in the *Libre d’Ave Maria* display a slight debt to contemporary literature. Such is the case with the last of this series, in which a monk, the preacher *Ora pro nobis*, finds in a cave a shepherd living with a woman kidnapped from her husband. The monk tells them a “specular” *exemplum*, in which a certain shepherd, living in sin with a woman, dreams of how the Virgin records in a book the woman’s name along with all those for whom she will pray to God, but omits the name of the shepherd. After hearing this *exemplum*, the shepherd repents and does penance, while the woman returns to her home, trusting in the Virgin, and accompanied by the monk. They soon find her husband, asleep beneath a tree, and armed for vengeance. The husband dreams that they hang him for murder, and that a horrible demon snatches his soul, protected by Mary. After this dream (again, “specular”), he awakens and hears *Ora pro nobis* from the monk and his wife, kneeling before him. Finally, the husband pardons his wife, and both live in chastity for the remainder of their days.⁵⁶ The miracle displays a certain convergence of Marian and hagiographic motifs. The book written by the Virgin obviously relates to the Book of Life containing the names of the elect. Supernatural visions, for

⁵⁶ *Blaquerna*, 2.66, (eds.) Soler and Santanach, NEORL 8:300–303.

their part, are commonplace in collections of *exempla* as well as in Marian miracle stories, which also include frequently the motif of the dispute over a soul between demons and angels. Yet, despite all this, it seems absolutely impossible to find a specific source or any story really similar, overall, to this Lullian miracle.

Another story, better known to medieval readers, appears as an episode of the *Libre d'Ave Maria* that recounts how a shortage of wheat affects abbot Blaquerna's monastery to the point of endangering its charity for the poor.⁵⁷ Blaquerna visits the farm, tended by a brother devoted to Our Lady. He offers to provide wheat for the monastery throughout the year, placing his trust in Mary. The brother sends all the wheat in his silo to the abbot, and greets the Virgin with *Ave María, gratia plena*. At first the silo remains empty, prompting his doubts, but soon it miraculously refills, and subsequently satisfies all the needs of the monastery. Later, Blaquerna discovers the monk's special devotion to the phrase *Gratia plena*, and orders construction of a cell with this name to honor the Virgin. The traditional inspiration of this chapter is not difficult to discern: the miracle of the replenished wheat appears in the 6th-century *De gloria martyrum* of Gregory of Tours, from which it passes into numerous Latin and vernacular collections.⁵⁸ The story appears highly modified in Lull's text, which includes no trace of the original beneficiaries of the event (monks of a monastery in Jerusalem, ordered built by the Virgin over a synagogue sold to the apostles), ascribes it instead to various fictional characters, and utilizes it to illustrate symbolically the meaning of a phrase from the *Ave Maria*. However, readers of the *Libre d'Ave Maria* would see that Lull's story was inspired by a specific miracle, well-known in the Marian literature of the era.

The debt to a specific miracle is even closer in a passage incorporated by Lull into his *Arbre exemplifical*. Following an allusion to the concept of hope, Ramon introduces a miracle story, set in England, about a young man who seeks to go on pilgrimage to a famous shrine of the Virgin, but his mother is opposed, fearing that the relatives of a knight killed by her husband might take vengeance on their son. The young man rebukes his mother for her lack of hope and undertakes his journey, commended by her to the care of Our Lady. At a stop on the way, enemies seize him, cut off his hands, and pluck out his eyes. The young man manages to reach the shrine and, coming before the Virgin, imagines that his mother has failed in her hope. But his suspicion is unfounded: upon hearing news of the horrible attack, his mother refuses to

57 *Blaquerna*, 2.62, (eds.) Soler and Santanach, NEORL 8:283–285.

58 Bétérous, "Ramon Lull et le renouvellement," 44.

believe it, trusting in the protection of Mary. Finally, she travels to the shrine, where she finds her son uninjured, as she had expected.⁵⁹

This story clearly recalls the plot from one of the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* of Alfonso X the Wise, which recounts a miracle, known from oral sources, that features a mother and her son, though set in France. In it, the young man sets out on pilgrimage to the sanctuary of Our Lady of “Albeza,” located in Catalonia (or perhaps in Aragon), though without mention of the mother’s fear of their enemies. On his journey, enemies seize him and one of them plucks out his eyes and cuts off his hands. Nonetheless, other pilgrims manage to carry him to the sanctuary, trusting that Mary will heal him there. In this case, the news leaves the mother very troubled, “turned blacker than pitch or coal” (*mais ca pez / tornou negra nen que carvon*), but she goes to Albeza and begs God to heal her son. Finally, the Virgin restores his hands and causes him to grow lovely little new eyes, “like those of a partridge” (*come de perdiz*).⁶⁰

Of course there are obvious differences between the *cantiga* of Alfonso X and Lull’s miracle story. Besides the enigmatic geographic relocation of the incident, Ramon Llull performs other subtle transformations in the story, designed to emphasize the conflict between hope and despair that justifies its insertion in his text. In these modifications, Llull disregards the emphasis on historicity that the miracle displayed in the tradition, redirecting its plot into the realm of fiction. Yet nonetheless, the miracle still remains perfectly recognizable. Any reader could perceive its obligatory debt to a source, oral or written, connected in some way with the *cantiga* of Alfonso X. Only with difficulty can we accept this Lullian passage as an “original” miracle tale. In all honesty, we must recognize that it moves in a vague realm, which obviously lacks absolute respect for sources, but is still not the realm of creating *ad hoc* a new plot.⁶¹

It is precisely the disparity that Llull displays in manipulating his sources that betrays the insufficiency of a simple opposition between stories from others and his own stories within his work. In this respect, it seems much more appropriate to propose a kind of gradation, which ranges from exploiting a handful of traditional fables and miracle stories (always presented with some

59 *Arbre de ciència* 15,3,13, (eds.) Carreras i Artau and Carreras i Artau, *OE* 1:815–816.

60 Alfonso X el Sabio, *Cantigas de Santa Maria* 146, (ed.) Walter Mettman, 3 vols. (Madrid: 1986–1989), 2:127–130.

61 Ysern, “*Exempla* i estructures exemplars,” 49, indicates the impossibility of finding in medieval *exempla* collections exact sources for the stories of the *Libre de les meravelles*, while offering a suggestive number of parallels and partial echoes. Marsan, *Itinéraire espagnol*, 200–203, 215–217, 220–221, 245–248, 361–362, 379–382, 388–394, 411, and 461–464, merits attention from Lullian scholarship in this regard for placing many of Llull’s stories in relation to similar narratives from diverse traditions.

variations) to creating a much greater number of passages almost without precedents (or with very vague antecedents): a gradation, in any case, that includes infinite intermediate stages, in which his and others' elements fuse in variable proportions, and without apparent awareness of their difference. If one tenet guides the redaction of each and every Lullian story, it is, in effect, creative freedom. The writings of Ramon Llull are not faithful slaves of received texts, nor do they serve a gratuitous (and also anachronistic) quest for originality. The imagination of their author moves between both extremes with complete ease, unafraid to utilize known motifs and plots, and never hesitating to transform them according to his whim.

8.4.4 *Variations on a Fable*

Another sign of this freedom in treating material is the different appearance that the same plot can take on in different Lullian texts. Not infrequent, in fact, is the repetition of some *exempla* in texts distant in time. The best-known of these recounts the failed attempt by a Christian preacher to convert a sultan, an anecdote with historical resonances repeated on at least seven occasions by Llull; we will return to it later. For now, it may prove more useful to stop along the route among Llull's texts at one of the stories derived from *Kalila wa-Dimna*: the fable of the monkeys, the firefly, and the bird. The evolution of this fable allows us to understand well Llull's process of rewriting exemplary material, as well as the previously noted liberty that guides his adaptation of stories obviously derived from other sources. This story figures in four of the author's works, scattered across two decades: *Blaquerna* (completed in 1283), the *Libre de les bèsties* (definitely prior to 1287–1289), the *Arbre exemplifical* (1295–1296), and the *Rhetorica nova* (1301).⁶²

In the version from *Kalila wa-Dimna*, a troupe of monkeys tries to build a bonfire on a firefly, confusing it with an actual fire. A bird seeks to advise the monkeys of their error. This prompts the intervention of another character, which is a man in the Arabic version most widely circulated and in its Castilian translation, but one of the monkeys in the Latin translation of John of Capua and in the ancient Indian *Panchatantra*. This man (or monkey) attempts to dissuade the bird from its pious intention. The bird nonetheless approaches

62 *Blaquerna* 2.52, (eds.) Soler and Santanach, NEORL 8:245; *Libre de les bèsties*, in *Libre de meravelles* 7.42; (eds.) Badia et al., NEORL 10:263; *Arbre exemplifical*, in *Arbre de ciència* 15.3.8, (eds.) Carreras i Artau and Carreras i Artau, OE 1:813; *Rhetorica nova* 2.4.13, (ed.) Johnston, 21. Armand Llinarès, "Les singes, le ver luisant et l'oiseau: Note sur l'utilisation répétée d'une même fable dans l'oeuvre de Lulle," *Romania* 108 (1987): 97–106, and Hauf, "Sobre l' *Arbor exemplificalis*," 314–319, offer relevant analyses.

the monkeys who, annoyed by its advice, kill it. The fable thus teaches the risk of attempting to correct those who accept no advice: a lesson summarized in the unfortunate end of the well-intentioned bird, but perhaps also insinuated in “specular” fashion in its own behavior, since it ignored the prudent advice of the man (or other monkey). The match with the framework story of *Kalila wa-Dimna* is perfect: the fable is narrated by Kalila, the prudent jackal, to Dimna, the ambitious jackal, to lament the scant impact that the former’s warnings have had on the latter. Of course, this effort seems to have little effect on the obstinate Dimna, thus repeating, within the framework story, the universal value of its lesson.

This specific narrative frame disappears in Lull’s texts. In the *Rhetorica nova* the story appears on its own. In the rest of his works it appears always spoken by characters, although their identities vary enormously, along with the intention for which the fable is told and the consequences of that telling in the framework story. In the *Arbre exemplifical*, the fable forms part of a series of linked *exempla*, and is recounted by an executioner, in response to a story told by a king, although it is difficult to determine its ultimate meaning in this context. Its function is much more transparent in *Blaquerna*, where the squire who serves Narpan (an evil and unruly knight), recounts the story to the protagonist, the virtuous Blaquerna, so that the latter will cease attempting to reform the behavior of their master. But the fable, true to its purpose and lesson, has no effect: Blaquerna, trusting in his spiritual weapons, refuses the advice of the squire and continues in his mission. In the *Libre de les bèsties*, the story appears in the mouth of a rooster, who expresses before the lion, the king of beasts, his fear about the excessive responsibility implied in becoming a member of his royal council. This time the story does bear consequences, although these are contrary to what its teller expects: the fable provokes the ire of the lion, who understands that it compares his behavior to that of the stubborn monkeys, and the clever fox exploits that ire in order to execute the rooster. Thanks to the latter’s unjust death, the framing story not only confirms the validity of the fable’s lesson, but also constitutes an almost exact echo of its plot.

Equally interesting are the variations that these same texts offer in their presentations of the story. To begin with, there exists a series of details shared by all four Lullian versions, but unknown in the best-known versions of *Kalila wa-Dimna* (the Arabic, the Castilian, or the Latin by John of Capua). These details are, essentially, the specification of a limited number of monkeys, the identification of the species of the protagonist bird, and the replacement of the wise counselor (man or monkey) with a second bird:

	<i>Kalila / Directorium</i>	<i>Blaquerna</i>	<i>Libre de les bèsties</i>	<i>Arbre exemplifical</i>	<i>Rhetorica nova</i>
Obstinate characters	Group of monkeys	Two monkeys	One monkey	Two monkeys	Two monkeys
First advisor	A bird	A parrot	A parrot	A dove	A dove
Second advisor	A bird or monkey	A crow	A crow	A magpie	A crow
Consequences	Killed	Killed	Killed	Killed and eaten	Killed and eaten

It is likely that Ramon Llull introduced these modifications in the first of his versions (included in *Blaquerna*), and that the three later redactions emanated from it. However, I would not reject other solutions. One should remember that the second text, with regard to chronology (the *Libre de les bèsties*), displays a much greater overall debt to *Kalila wa-Dimna*, since it includes eight or nine stories from the latter work. The insertion of these materials in the *Libre de les bèsties* poses numerous problems. Hence it is possible, in the specific case of the fable of “The monkeys, the firefly, and the bird,” that Ramon Llull abandoned the version present in the oriental collection in order to use the version of the very different story that he himself had prepared in *Blaquerna*. However, it would not be incongruous to consider the existence of a text prior to *Blaquerna*, where the fable existed with the established modifications, a text composed by someone else or by Ramon Llull, and used as the source both for this story alone in *Blaquerna* and for the group of oriental materials utilized in the *Libre de les bèsties*.

Apart from this, collation of the four Lullian versions of the story allows recognition of various individual differences, which are further testimony to the expository freedom that we noted originally. For example, the well-meaning counselor is a parrot in the case of the first two works (*Blaquerna* and the *Libre de les bèsties*), but in the *Arbre exemplifical* and somewhat later in the *Rhetorica nova* they come to be a dove. This suggests, I believe, the existence of a special filiation between these two works, corroborated through another fact: in both, the monkeys end up eating the unfortunate protagonist, a detail without equivalent in either the original Oriental version or in Llull’s first versions. Other variants conform somewhat less to the supposed linear temporality of these four versions. For example, the character who attempts to dissuade the bird (a crow in *Blaquerna* and in the *Libre de les bèsties*) is replaced in the *Arbre exemplifical* by a magpie (*garsa*), but the *Rhetorica nova* does not repeat

this innovation, returning instead to assigning this role to the crow. We cannot know the reasons for this “relapse” to the contents from the two earlier versions of the story. In this light, the version from the *Rhetorica nova* constitutes a kind of transition (at least formal, if not chronological) between the redaction in the *Libre de les bèsties* and that from the *Arbre exemplifical*, the latter a version that, despite its date, appears the most removed from the others. It is probably unnecessary to draw more inferences from this handful of variants. The intertextuality of Lullian works is indeed a very complex matter. We do not know, in fact, to what degree Lull worked from his previous versions of the story or relied on his memory for each of its new expositions. All that is really certain is that none of these four works displays a literal, exact copy of a previous version.

Lull's redaction of exemplary literature seems to rest in an easy balance between expressive stability and creative freedom. On the one hand, the purpose of his stories appears absolutely determined by the interests and theoretical assumptions of his Art. On the other, their themes and plots display unlimited variety. In this respect, the specific redaction of these passages allows no subjection to the authority of a received text, whether someone else's or even his own. Contemporary stories thus appear as a simple point of departure for creating a rigorously “new” exemplary corpus, one surprising not only for the daring in some of its plots, but also for the very magnitude of its material dimensions. Through Lull's writings parade hundreds and hundreds of stories and analogies, the product of a feverish creativity maintained throughout his literary production. That activity also appears projected upon Lull's own characters: the protagonists of his novels, and even those of his own stories, become tellers (and implicitly, authors) of unusual *exempla*. The generative mechanism for new passages is thus reinforced from within his fictions, in a specular process that ultimately and inevitably involves the reader. Lull's readers are, in effect, invited to create their own exemplary repertoires. For this task, Lull's stories stand as models, but also as source material, capable of re-creation and adaptation by his readers, just as their author did with *exempla* drawn from other sources.

8.5 Forms: Typology and Terminology

Thanks to the modeling function described above, readers of Lull's exemplary literature find there a guide to the types of genres that they can adopt in creating their own material: an implicit typology of exemplary forms, shaped by Lull over several decades of practice and effort. This typology does not strictly

coincide with that which dominates exemplary production in his era, where, as we have seen, there coexists forms like the historical *exemplum*, the Marian or hagiographical miracle story, the verisimilar story, the animal fable, and the comparison. These forms are only the foundation upon which Lull erects a far more audacious literature. Many Lullian passages do seem to correspond to the conventions of some of these categories, but many also exceed them, posing for scholars a taxonomic challenge. Thus, any attempt to classify this complex corpus is necessarily inadequate and perhaps unfair. Still, I think that, for purely didactic reasons and as a basis for further considerations, it can be useful to distinguish in Lull's exemplary literature several basic narrative forms: the verisimilar *exemplum*, the Marian miracle (both fictitious and verisimilar in Lull's peculiar formulation), the animal fable, and the "artful" *exemplum*. To these we should add comparative and descriptive forms (that is, those lacking a narrative plot), which range from simple similes, based on human or natural activities, to more ambitious comparisons, developed from the theory of the elements and the strict principles of his Art, the latter forms attaining an extreme degree of complexity in the *metafora* analyzed already.

8.5.1 *Forgetting History*

Be this as it may, the first and most striking impression made by review of Lull's exemplary corpus is the evidence of a lack: the nearly absolute absence of historical *exempla*. This is rather surprising given the importance attained by this genre in contemporary literature and preaching. Indeed, in this tradition the term *exemplum* resolves its general meaning into a more limited definition, one reserved for designating exclusively the narration of true events.⁶³ The latter definition has become widespread in some modern scholarship, leading critics to exaggerate wrongly the "exceptionality" of Lull's own fictitious *exempla*.⁶⁴ In any case, Lull himself seems to acknowledge the importance of the historical *exemplum*. In *Blaquerna*, he recounts the case of a messenger who joins a group of pilgrims to Santiago, telling them "*exempla* ... stories from

63 Le Goff, Brémond, and Schmitt, *L'exemplum*, 38, offer the best-known modern definition of *exemplum* in this limited sense, with reference chiefly to the *exempla* collections of the era: "a brief story presented as true and intended for insertion into a discourse – generally a sermon – to persuade an audience through a useful lesson" ("un récit bref donné comme véridique et destiné à être inséré dans un discours – en general un sermon – pour convaincre un auditoire par une leçon salutaire").

64 Badia and Bonner, *Ramón Llull*, 118–119, along with Ysern, "*Exempla* i estructures exemplars," 26, note the disparity between this modern definition and Lull's "ahistorical" *exempla*, although this disparity is due chiefly to the highly limited character of the modern definition.

the Old and New Testament ... and the deeds of the apostles and of emperors taken from chronicles" (*exemplis ... stories del Vell Testament e del Novell ... fets qui son passats dels apostols e dels emperadors segons que son scritys en les croniques*); his *Articuli fidei christianae* mentions the "books and deeds of the Romans" (*libris et gestis Romanorum*); finally, the *Rhetorica nova* recalls the utility of memorizing "the deeds of those glorious men ... that are constantly recited so that their examples will be imitated" (*gesta gloriosorum virorum qui ... ad hoc continue recitantur ut eorum imitentur exempla*).⁶⁵ The latter text also includes historical *exempla* concerning Alexander the Great and an unnamed emperor. We already know that the *Rhetorica nova* is an exceptional work, given its openness to those exemplary genres most familiar to its readers. But apart from this concession, classical anecdotes do not seem to suit Lull's tastes, nor do biblical stories. In the absence of a systematic search, the inventory of these in Lull's oeuvre seems limited to brief allusions to the virtues of John the Baptist, Mary, Christ, or the apostles. All these stand alongside those *exempla* from the *Rhetorica nova* that recount the Passion and death of Christ, which perhaps again express a kind of concession to his readers.

Apart from these, some Lullian stories certainly possess a historical background, although this seems deliberately blurred, to the point that these passages become hidden within Lull's own inventions. A passage from the *Disputatio fidei et intellectus*, for example, reproduces the well-known story of the encounter between Saint Augustine, engrossed in trying to understand the mystery of the Holy Trinity, and a child struggling to send all the water in the sea through a hole. This passage constitutes a brief incursion by Lull into the realm of hagiographical *exempla*, but its appearance confirms the strange relationship between its author and this genre: the passage does not name the saint and the sea becomes "a great river" (*unum magnum flumen*).⁶⁶ There is no better proof of Lull's distance from the standards that governed citation of historical *exempla* in his era. The same text displays, as it happens, an identical profile in another *exemplum*, mentioned above. In it, a Christian convinces a Saracen king of the error of his religion, but cannot demonstrate to him with necessary reasons the truth of the Christian faith, provoking the king's ire. This *exemplum* reproduces a true anecdote (the failed attempt to convert a sultan by a Dominican, sometimes identified as Ramon Martí), but the absence of precise details in Lull's account brings it closer to the realm of a fictional story.

65 *Blaquerna* 4.88, (eds.) Soler and Santanach, NEORL 8:397–398; *Articuli fidei christianae* (Strasbourg: 1651), 956; *Rhetorica nova* 3.1.3., (ed.) Johnston, 35. Colom Ferrá, 40–41, and Rubió i Balaguer, "Alguns aspects," 294–295, analyze these passages.

66 *Disputatio fidei et intellectus* 1.8, (ed.) Walter Euler, ROL 23:233.

As we noted, Llull tells this same story in six other texts. In the *Libre de meravelles* the story appears as a “likeness” (*semblança*), a name also accorded there to made-up stories. In *Blaquerna*, the anecdote is integrated into development of its novelesque fiction, included by the “historical” sultan himself in a letter addressed to the “fictitious” protagonist, now Pope Blaquerna.⁶⁷

It is not easy to establish a single reason for this Lullian distancing from “history.” Some have insisted on his dislike for stories from Roman history, evident in the prolog to his *Libre de sancta Maria*. There, the allegorical character Praise recalls the Romans’ love for the common good as a model for the new Christianity. But these words are countered by Prayer, who demystifies the value of the *exemplum*, saying “it is unnecessary for you to cite the example of the Romans” (*No cal que tragats exempli dels romans*), recalling that the same love moves the Tatars, a people “without faith, laws or learning” (*sens fe e sens lei e no han ciència*).⁶⁸ The rejection of ancient *exempla* has been linked to Llull’s “anti-classicism,”⁶⁹ but should doubtless be understood in the broader context of Llull’s rejection of “authorities” (*auctoritates*) as a recourse of argumentation: authorities are susceptible to arbitrary and improper use (as in the case of the *exemplum* of the Romans cited by Praise) and are worthless in the face of the objective, universal, and unquestionable character of Llull’s Art.⁷⁰

In any case, there is no lack of more practical reasons for Llull’s preference for fictitious types of exemplarity. In contrast with the limited number of plots provided by historical materials, fictional stories offer infinite possibilities for finding the arguments suited to any occasion (something recognized long

67 *Libre de meravelles* 1.7, (eds.) Badia et al., NEORL 10:117–118; *Blaquerna* 4.84, (eds.) Soler and Santanach, NEORL 8:379; compare *Disputatio fidei et intellectus* 1.1, (ed.) Euler, ROL 23:226. Bonner, *Obres selectes*, 1:60 and 1:94, discusses Llull’s mentions of this anecdote, as does Harvey Hames, “Through Ramon Llull’s Looking Glass: What was the thirteenth-Century Dominican mission really about?” in *Ramon Llull i el lul·lisme: pensament i llenguaatge. Actes de les jornades en homenatge a J.N. Hillgarth i A. Bonner*, (eds.) M.I. Ripoll and M. Tortella (Palma: 2012), 51–74. Bonner, *L’Art i la lògica*, 15, notes Ruiz Simon’s assertion that the protagonist of this event could not be Ramon Martí (as Longpré proposed), but rather was André de Longjumeau. Rubió i Balaguer, “Alguns aspects,” 291–292, and Luzón Díaz, “Una aproximación,” 260–261, discuss Llull’s rejection of hagiography.

68 *Libre de sancta Maria* Prol.16, (ed.) Andreu Caimari, OE 1:1157.

69 Badia, “No cal que tragats exempli dels romans,” and Badia and Bonner, *Ramón Llull*, 121, offer excellent analyses of this anti-classicism and of this passage.

70 Badia, “Literatura alternativa,” 16, and Johnston, *ER* 114, suggest how this conception of Llull’s Art as the only authority explains: his scant citation of Holy Scripture, of Patristic or Scholastic authorities, and of Greek or Arab authors; his rejection of hagiography as scarcely authoritative for non-Christian audiences; and his characteristic “ahistorical” descriptions of reality.

before by Aristotle).⁷¹ In this respect, Lull's aspiration to endow these forms with a complex metaphorical reading also finds a more inviting context (and a more defined tradition) in invented *exempla*: here, it is precisely the quest for a determined allegorical meaning that determines the definitive configuration of their composition, molding each and every detail of their arguments.

8.5.2 *A Verisimilar Universe*

In large measure, the space traditionally accorded to historical *exempla* is occupied in Lull's work by verisimilar *exempla*, that is, by narratives of fictional events featuring human beings (kings, nobles, merchants, bishops, monks, hermits), set in the spaces both real and symbolic (the court, the city, the wilderness) where a good many medieval novels take place. Verisimilar *exempla* are not lacking in *Blaquerna*, in the compilations from his Ternary Phase, or in his Marian works; they practically monopolize the narrative flow in the *Libre de meravelles*, with the exception of the *Libre de les bèsties*, where the genre alternates with the fable. Some of the stories from the *Libre de les bèsties* are clearly inspired by Oriental tales, which must constitute, moreover, one point of reference for Lull's theoretical conception of the genre. It was not, of course, the only one. The oriental collections seem to favor too frequently stories about cunning and deception (especially in marital life), and these are not the primary focus of Lull's verisimilar *exempla*. As mentioned already, their complex allegorical projection undoubtedly owes much to the practice of Gospel parables. As for their plots and protagonists, as well as for the gallery of virtues and vices that they illustrate, these stories seem to reproduce above all the tone of historical *exempla*. Perhaps aware of the preeminence that the latter enjoyed within the panorama of contemporary literature, Lull devises a parallel fictitious universe, in the end still recognizable to his readers. He begins with a few structural elements, often employed in historical *exempla* (stories of loyalty and treason among lords and vassals, the dialectic between the quest for virtue and the quest for honors and wealth), molding and combining them to produce a huge corpus of narratives, one with minimal variations in plot, but sufficient for adaptation to the specific context where they appear and to the interpretation (often complicated) that they seek to impart.

8.5.3 *Imagined Miracles*

Marian miracle stories enjoy a more modest presence in the work of Ramon Lull. The contexts most favorable to this genre are the *Libre d'Ave Maria* and the lengthy *Libre de sancta Maria*, while it occasionally appears as well in other

⁷¹ *Rhetoric* 2.21 1393–1394.

works, such as the *Arbre exemplifical*. (The role of Mary in Lullian discourse is necessarily related to the importance of the Incarnation, which is critical to both his religious apologetic for unbelievers and to his notions of likeness.)⁷² In all these writings, the Lullian miracle story assumes its own new contours, which distance it enormously from the conventions of the genre. The poetics of medieval miracle stories consists, as is well known, in the defense of the historicity of the events presented. These passages abound in signs of authenticity and, in their Latin versions, appear subjected to an extraordinarily faithful transmission of their literal text; vernacular translations reproduce more freely these literal contents, but always with a respect for the history constantly invoked in their sources. By contrast, Ramon Llull imposes on the genre an unprecedented departure, by offering a whole gallery of imagined miracles, although these might be inspired, in a more or less remote way, by some traditional motifs. All these passages are integrated into the special literary universe that supports these works: in the *Libre d'Ave Maria*, for example, Llull manages to transform the novelesque characters that parade through this work into beneficiaries of intervention by Our Lady. The *Libre de sancta Maria* offers in turn a different structure, but equally distant from conventions of the genre. Here the miracle stories appear narrated by its characters comprise the framing dialogue of the text, in order to illustrate complex theoretical issues, related to Llull's doctrine of "first and second intentions," that is, the need for all people to conduct their affairs according to the true intention of their creation, loving and praising God, rather than according to other secondary purposes. Thanks to this subordination to Llull's theory of "intentions," the material in this work adopts a more elevated intellectual tenor than traditional miracle stories. They consist of "theological" miracle stories, in which the absence of spatial and temporal details accentuates their character as simply "hypothetical cases" invented solely for the reader's reflection (although this does not prevent two of these examples from being incorporated into a conventional collection of miracle stories in the 15th century). Their intellectual tenor also distances them from the miracle stories that comprise the *Libre d'Ave Maria*, but this perhaps matters least. What is important to note is that in both texts, Llull manages to elaborate, using traditional materials, an entire series of new miracle stories. Obviously, these miracles are presented as mere literary fictions that imitate and replace historical truth, in the same terms with which their verisimilar stories seek to replace and copy the similarly historical material

72 Robert D. Hughes, "Speculum, Similitude and Signification: the Incarnation as Exemplary and Proportional Sign in the Arts of Ramon Llull," *SL* 45–46 (2005–2006): 3–37.

disseminated in contemporary *exempla* collections. *Exempla* and miracle stories share, in effect, conventions of verisimilar narration (in a Christian sense, of course, that accepts occasional divine interventions), despite the unavoidable distance that separates the two genres in their traditional postures: thus, while the creation of human examples typical of the verisimilar *exemplum* was a constant in storytelling of the era, the manipulation of miracles about the Virgin Mary, their “invention” by any author, must have seemed, in the eyes of their readers, a truly daring novelty.⁷³

8.5.4 *A Universe of Fables*

In Lullian texts, the world of verisimilar fiction lives harmoniously with the world of animal fables, just as in Oriental collections of stories. As we know, one of these collections, *Kalila wa-Dimna*, is the source for several of the fables of the *Libre de les bèsties*. But this brief text also includes original fables by Llull, just as *Blaquerna* does before, and the *Arbre exemplifical* and the *Rhetorica nova* do later. All these passages (his own and others’) observe the conventions of the genre established in the Oriental tradition and in Aesopic literature. In a fable, animals possess some human capabilities (especially speech) and assume diverse social and moral behaviors, according to the diversity of traditionally defined roles. However, none of this prevents the genre from adopting, in the work of Blessed Ramon, some unique features: upon entering Llull’s writings, the Oriental narratives lose many embellishments, which noticeably obscure their moral lessons. This, of course, minimizes the distance between stories from other sources and Llull’s original fables, and so from other exemplary genres included in his work.⁷⁴

8.5.5 *A Lullian Universe*

Many Lullian stories do not have human or animal protagonists, but rather, the characters in these narratives are personifications corresponding to the most diverse realities treated in the theoretical pages of Llull’s Art: realities

73 Aragüés Aldaz, *Ramón Llull y la literatura ejemplar*, offers a more detailed analysis. See also, especially: Bétérous, “Ramon Llull et le renouvellement;” Viera, “*Exempla* in the *Libre de Sancta Maria*;” Joan Santanach i Suñol, “Dos exemples de Ramon Llull inclosos en un recull de miracles,” *Randa* 55 (2005): 7–13; and David Barnett, “The Sources of a Fifteenth-Century Catalan Collection of Marian Miracle Stories,” in “*Gaude Virgo Gloriosa: Marian Miracle Literature in the Iberian Peninsula and France in the Middle Ages*,” (eds.) J.C. Conde and E. Gatland (London: 2011), 116–118.

74 Llúcia Martín Pascual, “Algunes consideracions sobre la relació entre les faules del *Llibre de les Bèsties* de Ramon Llull i l’original oriental,” *Catalan Review* 11 (1997): 92–93, and Taylor, “Some Complexities,” 657–658, analyze this aspect.

drawn from both the eternal world of God and from the material and spiritual realms of Creation. The words and deeds of these characters, determined by their interactions in the universe and by their respective positions in the scale of being, present us with a new – and above all, profoundly harmonious and coherent – exemplary mode. The most conventional characters in these stories are probably personifications of the vices, virtues, and spiritual faculties (Justice, Mercy, Greed, Wrath, Memory, Understanding, and so forth), that is, of entities with known precedents in medieval allegorical literature. However, in Llull's case these acquire new features, thanks to their specific functions in his complex theological system. These characters coexist in his stories with other logical and theological entities, again universal in nature, but bearing a precise meaning within the architecture of his Art. Such is the case with his Divine Dignities, his Correlatives, and other essential concepts (Goodness, Eternity, Truth, Difference, Contrarity, Beginning, End, Generation, Corruption, etc.). As a result, Llull's stories ultimately personify all manner of abstractions: the square, the circle, the triangle, the past, present, and future, day and night, speech, vision, hearing, etc. These are uncommon in exemplary literature of his era, but integral to the explication of Creation proposed by Llull, which also requires other more material characters. Among these are objects traditionally endowed (or not) with symbolic value (the sword, the shield, the crown, the oven), just as are any beings in all levels of Creation. There are beings drawn from the celestial and sublunary realms, surprising as protagonists in a story: Lord Saturn, Lord Aries, the sun, gold, the emerald, the rose, the pumpkin, lettuce, and even the cold-sore.

The nature of these characters definitely exceeds traditional usage in this genre in favor of establishing Llull's own original, fictive, and even extravagant, universe. It is clear that the plots in these narratives resemble those of verisimilar stories or fables (with examples of friendship and hatred, loyalty and treason, vice and virtue), just as all these share with fables the recourse to personification. But it is perhaps precisely the "humanization" of these unusual entities that enhances their air of unreality, signaling clearly the singularity of their invention within the vast panorama of medieval story.⁷⁵ A term like "fable" therefore seems rather inadequate for these stories featuring the four elements, or plants and stones, just as the traditional concept of the allegorical *exemplum* cannot account for the function and meaning of stories featuring

75 Badia, "Literatura alternativa," 16–17, and Luzón Díaz, "Una aproximación," 261 examine these consequences of Llull's personifications. Hauf, "Sobre l' *Arbre exemplificalis*," 324–325, provides an exhaustive listing of these characters (and their "humanized" behaviors) in the *Arbre exemplifical*.

the Divine Dignities and the Correlative Principles. On the other hand, such Lullian *exempla* seem designed according to these principles and seem to demand a common name, which would recognize their profound coherence, based on Lull's theoretical principles. For this reason, the most appropriate name is probably that of the "artful" *exemplum*, as proposed already, but understood as "artful" because, even if all types of *exempla* in Lull's work pertain to illustrating his Art, in the case of the singular stories under consideration it is his own Art that generates, almost mechanically, an entire universe of narrative plots.

In this respect, the "artful" *exemplum* always arises from a specific context: in the text of the *Arbre exemplifical*, from illustrating the theoretical contents of the *Arbre de sciencia*. Still, Lull obviously anticipated some of its most unusual stories in *Blaquerna* (for example, the debate between the palm, pine, and fig trees) and in the *Libre de meravelles* (the allegorical story featuring Wisdom, Madness, Love, and Devotion), and this genre also appears notably in the later *Rhetorica nova*, a text guided, as we will explain later, by an effort to anthologize and to integrate every type of exemplary form.

8.5.6 *On the Margins of Narration: From Simile to Metaphor*

The Lullian oeuvre also brings together other exemplary forms distinguished by their lack of narrative action. Such is the case with the simile, dedicated to illustrating an abstract concept based on some natural quality or on an aspect of human activity. In general, these similes have a conventional tone that combines their simplicity with an obvious effort at ornamentation, and so are different from other comparative passages employed according to more demanding theoretical assumptions. Among these are the various comparisons intended to explore in detail both the affinities and the differences among beings. These include, of course, the *mataforas* from the *Començaments de medicina*, based on rigorous application of elemental exemplarism. Despite the huge distance between these diverse forms, all of them exhibit Ramon Lull's unshakeable faith in analogy as a tool for comprehending Creation. Its presence is therefore traceable from his first writings to his late sermons but may seem somewhat obscured in his novels (and definitively eclipsed in the *Arbre exemplifical*), thanks to the preponderance of exemplary narratives in these texts. Similes nonetheless return with vigor in the *Rhetorica nova*, where they display a more conventional appearance, by drawing some of their arguments from bestiary and lapidary literature. This is hardly surprising. In the *Rhetorica nova*, the presence of the simile reveals again not simply Lull's enthusiasm for this genre, but also a tribute to the place that it occupies in the encyclopedic literature of his era.

8.5.7 *Terminological Freedom*

The typology presented here should be understood as a provisional paradigm. There obviously exist many unclear boundaries between these genres, just as there exist passages that seem to exceed them and so deserve a new label. Still, despite these limitations, simply listing these categories allows us to understand the skillful balance between tradition and innovation that supports Lullian exemplary literature. Lull both accepts and refuses points of reference for traditional genres, in so far as he respects some basic forms (such as the simile or fable), subtly oscillates between one and another (such as the verisimilar story, inflected with plots from the historical *exemplum*, or such as the Marian miracle stories, conceived as a fictional *contrapunctum* to the traditional miracles circulating in his era), and proposes a largely new genre (the “artful” story, based on converting the principles of his Art into literature). Taken together, the genres preferred by Lull manifest an obvious partisan position in favor of some of the basic uses of exemplarity defined in contemporary rhetorical theory, to the detriment of others: fiction over history, allegorical over literal interpretation, and illustrating abstract realities over simply exhorting to virtue. In light of these three preferences, we can understand his abandonment of the historical *exemplum*, traditionally limited to the literal presentation of an exclusively moral lesson.

Lull’s knowledge of the principles of exemplarity (and their free adaptation for his literary purposes) can be appreciated as well in the realm of terminology, which is worth reviewing in detail. In his era, terms such as *exemplum* and similitude display an obvious debt to rhetorical theory. To begin with, the two terms (along with some others, such as *comparabile* or *homoeosis*, the latter of grammatical origins) can be understood as synonyms, used indifferently to define any brief comparison deployed within any oral or written discourse. Of course, contemporary theorists exploit other more specific terms in order to delimit each of the forms included in this very broad genre. Thus, rhetorical and grammatical treatises provide various more or less familiar names to recognize the specificity of the historical *exemplum* (*historiae narratio*, *historia certa*), of the fabulous (*fabella*, *apologatio*, *apologus*), and of the verisimilar *exemplum* (*exemplum verisimile*), as well as of the comparison or simile (*collatio*). The problem, recognized by classical and later theorists, is that this parceling out of the exemplary territory typically involves as well use of the two major terms of exemplarity (*exemplum* and *similitudo*), conceived not as synonyms, but rather as the respective designations of two different forms. Their distinction is a commonplace in rhetorical treatises, to the point of appearing often in the concise formula “the difference between an *exemplum* and a similitude is ...” (*inter exemplum et similitudinem hoc interest ...*). Very often,

this formula attempts to divide the entire range of exemplary literature into two great opposing categories. We need not exert ourselves in understanding the disputes generated by this attempt; it is sufficient to recall that the boundary between the *exemplum* and the similitude underwent vast shifts. Since Quintilian, it was common to assign the name *exemplum* to all exemplary forms of narrative character (whether historical, verisimilar, or fictional), reserving the name *similitudo* for descriptive or atemporal comparisons (that is, *collationes*). This is not, however, the only solution to the problem, even though many recent studies, aware or not of its origins, have based on it their own definitions of both categories. Other ancient authors in fact restrict the term *exemplum* exclusively to narrating historical events (as we indicated above), while extending *similitudo* to all other forms (narrative or descriptive). There are also those who assign the latter term to any form endowed with metaphorical or allegorical meaning, in contrast to the *exemplum* always directed toward the literal presentation of paradigms of virtue. As will become clear, the existence of these divergent views makes it impossible to assign univocally many exemplary forms (the verisimilar *exemplum* and the fable, to begin with) to one category or another, given their alternating participation in the characteristics assigned to both.

In addition, this proliferation of criteria opposing the *exemplum* and the similitude is not completely unjustified. The dissemination of the two solutions cited above, to the detriment of that given by Quintilian, may be motivated within Christian culture as an attempt to confirm the precision of biblical terminology: in the Gospels, the Greek term *parabola*, traditionally translated into Latin as *similitudo*, designates the passages employed by Christ in his preaching, which can be both narrative and descriptive, but are always in fact fictional and metaphorical.⁷⁶ Curiously, and perhaps not completely by coincidence, the features of Gospel parables are exactly those that underlie the exemplary paradigm adopted by Lull: his *exempla* are narrative or descriptive, as we have seen, but almost always metaphorical and non-historical.

In any case, Lull's position regarding these exemplary forms is alien to the terminological hair-splitting cited above. The use in his texts of Latin terms such as *exemplum* and *similitudo*, along with their vernacular equivalents (*exempli*, *eximpli* or *exemple*, on the one hand, and *semblança*, on the other) is in fact very loose, though without becoming really erratic or aleatory. These terms often occur together in his work without a specific value, although perhaps with a tangential relationship to rhetorical usage, as in the phrases

76 Aragüés Aldaz, "Deus concionator," 23–66.

“give an example” or “exemplify” (*donar exempli* or *exemplificar*).⁷⁷ When employed as technical rhetorical terms, *exemplum* and *similitudo* are simply synonyms, and appear endowed with a generic value, capable of embracing all forms of comparison. This broad definition (common traditionally, as noted already), is what the term *exemplum* clearly invokes in the title of the *Arbre exemplifical* and in the subtitle *pulcra exempla* from the *Rhetorica nova*. In Llull’s two novels, the Catalan terms *exempli* and *semblança* also possess this generic value, alternating without conflict as synonymous expressions. The first of these terms seems to predominate in *Blaquerna*, although the second is not uncommon, and both, ultimately, can serve to designate the same passage in the text. This happens also in the *Libre de meravelles*, which perhaps displays a slight statistical advantage for the term *semblança*.⁷⁸

Even so, the *Libre de meravelles* hides within itself an even more surprising terminological usage, apparently unnoticed by scholars. The alternation between the two terms breaks off practically in the middle of the seventh section, the celebrated *Libre de les bèsties*, where the Catalan term *exempli* clearly overwhelms *semblança*, which almost disappears in this section. Of course we should recall the relative autonomy of this little work (perhaps composed previously) within the totality of the novel, but the reasons for this sudden shift in terminology surely lie elsewhere, perhaps in the origins of the narratives included here. Thus, where the passages of Llull’s own invention appear unlabeled in the *Libre de les bèsties*, or under the vague designation of “similitude” (*semblança*) or *exemplum* (*exempli*), the latter term is applied almost invariably to name the stories taken from Oriental sources. The use of the term *exempli* in this little work thus seems to reflect Llull’s awareness of the presence of these stories in the literature of his era, and the predominance of this term (or its equivalent from other languages) in the collections that disseminated them. Once the *Libre de les bèsties* ends, the novel resumes its habitual usage, that is, it is filled with verisimilar stories of Llull’s own invention, gathered without distinction under either of the two main terms that run throughout the history of exemplarity: *exemplum* or *similitudo*.

77 For example, *Libre d'intenció* 5.27, (ed.) Galmés, ORL 18:59. Arbona Piza, “Los exemplis,” 56, discusses the variant spellings of *exempli*.

78 *Libre de meravelles* 2.14, (eds.) Badia et al., NEORL 10:149, and *Blaquerna* 30, (eds.) Soler and Santanach, NEORL 8:260–261, illustrate the dual application of these terms to the same passage. Arbona Piza, “Los exemplis,” 56 and 60; Rubió i Balaguer, “Alguns aspects,” 290, and Pring-Mill, “Els recontaments,” 310, stress the equivalent use of these terms.

8.5.8 *Lullian Taxonomies*

Besides these uses of terminology, Ramon Llull includes in his works other reflections regarding exemplary literature, which help us to understand his vision of the external and internal boundaries of the genre. In the *Rhetorica nova*, Llull proposes an interesting classification of the passages included in the section titled “beautiful exempla” (*pulcra exempla*): “Beautiful *exempla*,” he states, “arise from two subject matters, since they deal either with natural or moral affairs” (*pulcra exempla sunt ex duplici materia, quia vel sunt de rebus naturalibus aut de rebus moralibus*). For their part, “natural affairs are either spiritual (like God and the angels) or corporeal (like the heavens, earth, and animals),” (*res autem naturales, aut sunt spirituales – ut deus et angeli – aut corporales – ut celum, terra, et animalia*) while “moral affairs are also twofold, since they deal either with virtues, or by contrast, with vices and sins” (*similiter res morales sunt duplices, quia aut virtutes aut sunt econtra vicia et peccata*).⁷⁹ Llull’s taxonomy recalls the tenor of other more or less contemporary classifications, but despite its simplicity and perfect symmetry, readers might find difficult its application to the passages included in the section on *pulcra exempla*. If the distinction between natural and moral affairs refers exclusively to the plot or content of the passages, then perhaps only five of these (examples of Christ’s passion and of a hypocritical bishop, along with three animal fables) pertain to the second category, since they seem to be the only ones offering stories about praiseworthy or blameworthy behavior. The rest of the passages instead take for their subjects the structure of Creation, whether treated in comparisons to the natural world or in more complex passages based on principles from Llull’s Art. On the other hand, if we decide to apply Llull’s taxonomy not to the subject, but to the intention or lesson of these stories, then we must consider practically all of the passages in this section to be “moral” *exempla*, with the exception of its first two, which seek to explain in general terms the “natural” design of all creatures in the image and likeness of God.⁸⁰

With regard to Llull’s conception of the boundaries of genre of the *exemplum*, it is also worth considering the contents of the *Arbre exemplifical*, the most copious repertory of *exempla* that he provides in his Ternary Phase. As it happens, many of the nearly 450 illustrative passages included in this text are simply proverbs. These constitute Llull’s first major contribution to the genre of proverbs, although his interest in sententious and aphoristic forms is evident already in 1290, coinciding with his overhaul of the demonstrative

79 *Rhetorica nova* 2.4.0, (ed.) Johnston, 14.

80 Johnston, *ER* 306–307, notes some similarity between Llull’s scheme and that proposed by John of Garland in his *Parisiana Poetria*.

methods of his Art. In 1296, the year of completion of the *Arbre de sciencia*, Lull brings forth his first compilation of proverbs alone, the *Proverbis de Ramon*, followed by the selection of proverbs in his *Rhetorica nova* and the compilation *Mil proverbis* [Thousand Proverbs], still from his Ternary Phase, and finally the collection *Proverbis d'ensenyament* [Proverbs of Instruction], from the post-Art phase in his work.⁸¹ The very rich development of this genre in the *Arbre exemplifical* evidently represents the fruit of a true literary “discovery” by Lull, announced in the prologue to this text, where he asserts his intention to divide its *exempla* into two parts, “namely, into stories and proverbs” (*recontaments e proverbis*).⁸²

This presentation of the proverb as a “part” (or better, “type”) of *exemplum* is as ambiguous as it is fundamentally disconcerting. Rhetorical tradition had established a clear boundary between these two genres, and Lull’s awareness of that boundary in fact underlies his separate presentation of both genres in their respective chapters from the *Rhetorica nova*. This awareness appears as well within the *Arbre exemplifical*: in this text, the series of proverbs always bear a heading with this term, while its stories do not appear with the title “tales” (*recontaments*), but instead directly under the term *exempla* (*exemplis*), which tacitly assumes the more restricted conventional use of this name.

Of course there is no lack of precedents for conflating these genres and the terminology of each form. In Arabic and Hebrew, the terms *mathal* and *māshal* designated without distinction any kind of brief didactic passage: similes, stories, proverbs, or famous sayings. Likewise, in the West, the term *exemplum* and its vernacular equivalents could occasionally designate a saying or proverb, as occurs in numerous texts of wisdom literature (many of Oriental derivation),⁸³ in some 13th-century copies of the *Disciplina clericalis*,⁸⁴ or in the oeuvre of Don Juan Manuel. In the 14th century, Francesc Eiximenis very specifically gave the term “brief *exempla*” (*exemplis breus*) to proverbial sayings, in order to distinguish them from *exempla* in the strict sense. Finally,

81 See Francesc Tous Prieto, “La forma proverbi en l’obra de Ramon Lull: Una aproximació,” M.A. thesis, Universitat de Barcelona-Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Barcelona: 2010) and “Breus proposicions que contenen molta sentència: els proverbis lul·lians i les ‘formes sentencioses,’” *SL* 51 (2011): 77–98. Hauf, “Sobre l’*Arbor exemplificalis*,” 308, analyzes the placement of proverbs in the *Arbre exemplifical*.

82 *Arbre de ciència* 15. Prol., (eds.) Carreras i Artau and Carreras i Artau, *OE* 1:799: “los exemplis que proposam donar volem departir en dues parts, ço és a saber, en recontaments e proverbis.”

83 As in *El Libro de los Doze Sabios*, ch. 30, (ed.) John K. Walsh, *Anejos del BRAE* 29 (Madrid: 1975), 102.

84 Le Goff, Brémond, and Schmitt, *L'exemplum*, 55.

Llull himself refers, in his *Blaquerna*, to certain proverbial forms employed by Muslim sufis with the label “short *exempla*” (*exemplis abreujats*).⁸⁵ This broad terminological usage, combined with Llull’s usual laxity in deploying technical vocabulary, suffices to justify assimilating proverbs and *exempla*, two genres often combined in contemporary literature and ultimately directed, in Llull’s oeuvre, to the single goal of illustrating his Art.⁸⁶

Nonetheless, it is possible that the design of the *Arbre exemplifical* offers additional reasons for the convergence of these two genres. First, we should not forget that some series of proverbs appear in the text inside of various tales told by their protagonists. The section on branches illustrates this well: it offers fourteen stories, usually presented as *exempla*, but with the second, third, and seventh labeled as “proverbs” (*proverbis*).⁸⁷ The latter three offer, nevertheless, a structure similar to the others, including narrative activity that could legitimately qualify them as tales. Their only real difference consists in their inclusion of a series of proverbs, placed in the mouths of characters or, in the last case, written on the door of a palace as rules that should govern the behavior of a monarch.

The integration of proverbs within this text – that is, their presentation as an exemplary form – may also have originated in another way, related to the possibility of reading them as the seed or as the condensation of a complete tale. Rhetorical doctrine had already established this “reversibility” between *exempla* and sententious forms, understood as different expressions of the same lesson. The very first of the *exempla* in the *Arbre exemplifical* confirms this. At the beginning of this passage, Ramon states a proverb: “Fire wants its heat to be good in water so that its goodness be very strong, and so water told air to remember its weakness” (*Lo foc vol que la sua calor sia bona en l’aigua per ço que la sua bonea haja gran virtut; e per ço dix l’aigua a l’air que la membràs en la sua malaltia*). When his interlocutor cannot grasp the meaning of the proverb, Ramon explains it, precisely through a tale, in which air lies suffering from its love for fire and from the dryness caused by fire. Water suggests that air draw near to it, but air prefers to suffer in pain rather than to betray its like and beloved. This gloss by Ramon in the form of a story illustrates the generic

85 Hauf, “Sobre l’*Arbor exemplificalis*,” 307 and 310, reviews the usage of Don Juan Manuel, Eiximenis, and Llull’s *Blaquerna* 5-99, (eds.) Soler and Santanach, NEORL 8:426–427.

86 Luzón Díaz, “Una aproximación,” 259–260, analyzes this laxity, noting details from Rubió i Balaguer, “Alguns aspects,” 290; Ysern, “*Exempla* i estructures exemplars,” 48; and Hauf, “Sobre l’*Arbor exemplificalis*,” 307.

87 *Arbre de ciència* 15.4, (eds.) Carreras i Artau and Carreras i Artau, OE 1:817–826.

essence of the proverb, conceived thus as the minimal statement capable of replacing and in some way substituting for a story or tale.⁸⁸

In light of this opening passage, one might imagine that Llull conceives the *exemplum* as something formed by combining a tale or story and a proverb. The very ambiguity of the prologue, where Llull speaks of dividing the text's *exempla* in two "parts," might suggest this, but it is not necessary to go so far: stories and proverbs do appear as two alternative exemplary modes, though potentially affiliated.⁸⁹ In this respect, the duality of the first *exemplum* in the *Arbre exemplifical* is exceptional and, arguably, deliberately exceptional. Llull surely seeks only to demonstrate from the outset of his text the nature of these two exemplary genres, and the close relationship that they can embrace. Subsequently, both genres usually appear on their own.

None of this prevents the text from displaying some signs of their genetic relationship. Many Lullian proverbs exhibit, for example, the form of a dialogue among several characters, thanks to an initial dramatic illusion. Only the brevity of these passages qualifies them as proverbs, since their content differs little from any tale or story in the text. The respective deployment of *exempla* and proverbs for expounding Llull's Art ultimately results in minimizing their generic boundaries. This thematic and formal affinity between *exempla* and proverbs thus favors their joint compilation in the work, and their conception as two possible varieties of *exempla*. By the end of the *Arbre exemplifical*, its reader realizes what Ramon Llull has demonstrated in the first of its passages: many of the proverbs can be read as the kernels of tales or stories, and many of the tales or stories can likewise be converted easily into proverbs. The text tacitly invites traversing the path from one form to the other, as one more facet from the exercise of the exemplary strategies proposed to the reader in the prologue. Toward this end, the *Arbre exemplifical* suggests the sensation of an incomplete text, of a repertory *in fieri*.

8.6 Exemplary Metamorphoses: Discursive Contexts and the Evolution of the Lullian Exemplum

8.6.1 *The Insertion of Passages*

If anything characterizes medieval exemplary literature, it is its protean character and capacity for adaptation to the most diverse discursive con-

88 *Arbre de ciència* 15.1, (eds.) Carreras i Artau and Carreras i Artau, *OE* 1:799; see also the analysis by Pring-Mill, "Els recontaments," 309–317.

89 Cabré, Ortín, and Pujol, "Coneixer e haver moralitats bones," 140–141.

texts. The means of inserting *exempla* into texts are thus almost innumerable. Ramon Llull practices many of these, although scholars have perhaps not noticed sufficiently their variety and the familiarity with contemporary literature that this reveals.

Medieval collections of historical *exempla* (both rhetorical and homiletic), typically juxtapose passages, grouping them in large thematic chapters (corresponding to the vices and virtues or other moral and philosophical concepts) and ordering them either alphabetically or logically (according to some system of similar or opposing themes). The two major compilations created by Ramon Llull (the very extensive *Arbre exemplifical* and the brief selection of *pulcra exempla* from the *Rhetorica nova*) reproduce this scheme, at the same time that they depart from it, thanks to the nature of their contents (which largely consist of fictional *exempla*) and to their peculiar arrangement, dictated by various routes through the hierarchy of Creation. Other Lullian series of *exempla*, like the *mataforas* that comprise the final chapter of the *Començaments de medicina*, present a scheme far removed from this compilatory tradition.

In the medieval era, historical *exempla* also occur subordinated within a discourse, appearing occasionally to illustrate some theoretical question. This occurs in didactic texts from many diverse disciplines, but of course in sermons, typically adorned (perhaps more in oral delivery than in writing) with this brief genre. Tracing this “discontinuous” or “occasional” appearance of *exempla* in the works of Ramon Llull would be an endless labor. Passages of this type abound both in his later homiletic works (although most of them correspond there to simpler types of comparison) and in his legal and medical treatises. The sections of “questions” (*qüestions, quaestiones*), examples or problems provided for a reader’s practice, that typically conclude the theoretical expositions of Llull’s Art yield, in this respect, more than a few surprises. These sections again offer a refuge for series of *exempla* (like the analogies that conclude the *Liber de lumine*) and intermittently display incipient forms of a story. Examples that merit special notice in this regard are the questions proffered in Llull’s works on law, sometimes posed about hypothetical situations invested with a certain narrative element. Of course, for this Blessed Ramon benefits from the long tradition of a genre (the “legal case”) teeming with connections to medieval storytelling.

The many modes of medieval fiction provide very diverse models for the insertion of narratives. Some appear juxtaposed in a manner similar to that from collections of historical *exempla*, although with a much freer arrangement, as in Aesopic texts or, to a certain degree, in the *Disciplina clericalis*. Others appear in discontinuous fashion, subordinated within texts more complex in nature. Hence, stories occasionally adorn the speeches of the protagonists

in some novels, a scheme that Ramon Llull especially adopts in *Blaquerna*. Contemporary stories develop some more daring narrative purposes, based on a curious balance between the weight of the *exempla* and the narrative frame that encloses them. This clearly occurs in texts such as *Kalila wa-Dimna* or *Sendebar*, where the stories ultimately modulate the development of the actual outcome of the main story. Among Llull's writings, the *Libre de meravelles* comes relatively close to this scheme. It would thus be unfair to see this work as a novel sprinkled with stories, like *Blaquerna*: the numerous stories in the *Libre de meravelles* not only adorn its debates, but also define and construct its plot, guiding the intellectual journey of its young protagonist, Fèlix. The influence of these schemes is even more evident still in the *Libre de les bèsties*, the section of the novel that inherits, as we have seen, part of the plot of *Kalila wa-Dimna* and so all the force that intercalated stories bear in that work. These stories define not only the intentions of their animal protagonists, but also their fortunes and fate in the lion's court. This debt to oriental storytelling can also explain the practice, in the entire *Libre de meravelles*, in *Blaquerna*, and in the *Arbre exemplifical*, of some complex techniques for successively subordinating new stories (the so-called method of "Russian dolls" or "Chinese boxes"), which he undoubtedly would have known from *Kalila wa-Dimna*.

Certain other medieval narrative techniques for inserting stories also have more modest echoes in Llull's work. The so-called process of *enfilage* (weaving or braiding) of stories, in which these succeed one another (that is, coordinated, unlike the schemes for juxtaposition and subordination mentioned already), shaping the plot in a work of fiction. The *Libre d'Ave Maria*, woven from a stream of events occurring in the monastery of abbot Blaquerna, loosely reproduces this scheme. But traces of it also occur at various points in *Blaquerna* and the *Libre de meravelles*.⁹⁰ In both novels, some episodes from the main story constitute brief exemplary scenes, as stories "staged" by their characters for teaching others. These "eye-witness" *exempla* complement, at a higher narrative level, the lessons recounted by these same characters. These passages imply not only an expansion of the novel's possible exemplary readings but assume as well acceptance of another purpose for these brief forms: they are

90 Viktor Shklovski, *Sobre la prosa literaria* (Barcelona: 1971), 119–124, discusses these modes of inserting stories and narrative strategies in medieval storytelling. María Pilar Palomo, *La novela cortesana* (Barcelona: 1976), 33–44; Ventura De la Torre Rodríguez, "El relato intercalado en la *Historia de los siete sabios de Roma*," in *El relato intercalado*, (eds.) M. Smerdou Altolaquirre and M. Bonsoms (Madrid: 1992), 67–75; and María Jesús Lacarra, *Cuentística medieval en España: los orígenes* (Zaragoza: 1979), 47–75, review the Hispanic tradition.

not only subordinate to the main plot of the work, but also to a large degree construct it in successive vignettes.⁹¹

Likewise, some scenes of obvious literary inspiration occasionally appear inserted at the beginning of Lull's theoretical writings. This happens in the *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria* and various works of theological debate, inaugurated often by the meeting of several characters in an idyllic setting, as in the *Libre del gentil i dels tres savis*, *Disputatio fidei et intellectus*, or the *Phantasticus*.⁹² Of course, these scenes bear only a tangential relationship to the exemplary forms that occupy us here, but both one and the other constitute a haven for the constant literary enterprise of their author, once he has abandoned his major novelizing projects.

Study of the mechanisms for inserting stories, and certainly of the discursive contexts in which they appear, remains an incomplete chapter in scholarship on Blessed Ramon. It is surely necessary, since it is clear that the choice of a particular type of exemplary literature conditions (and in turn is conditioned by) the nature of each context. The path of development of Lullian *exempla* is thus also the history of the works that enclose it.⁹³

8.6.2 *Early Works: The Passion for Comparison*

Thus, Lull's first forays into the territory of exemplary literature seem to correspond with the use of brief comparisons in the heart of his theoretical discourse. These forms can be found in the monumental *Libre de contemplació* (1273–1274?), a text preceding Lull's Art that includes the seeds of many of his future philosophical and literary positions. It is a comprehensive encyclopedia, carefully structured with numerical symbolism, and based on an analogical conception of the cosmos, the symbolic reading of the "Book of Creation." This text does include some complex allegorical constructions. Overall, however, it draws inspiration from simple similes and comparisons, following Lull's broad stylistic preference for parallel and dual constructions. These comparisons abound especially in the beginning of the text's third book, devoted to all the exemplary lessons available from observation of the natural world and from human occupations (clergy, princes, physicians, sailors, minstrels, painters, etc.) Despite their brevity, these passages transcend their esthetic function

91 Badia, Santanach, and Soler, "Ramon Lull," 433–435, analyze examples.

92 Colom Ferrá, "Ramon Lull y los orígenes," 39–40, and Rubió i Balaguer, "Alguns aspects," 292–293, discuss these examples. Roger Friedlein, *El diàleg en Ramon Lull: l'expressió literària com a estratègia apològica* (Barcelona and Palma: 2011) offers a global analysis of Lullian dialogue.

93 Aragüés Aldaz, *Ramón Lull y la literatura ejemplar*, offers more detailed treatment of the following review of Lullian exemplary literature.

in order to insinuate tentatively the profound harmony that exists among all levels of Creation.

The recourse to comparison is also one of the rhetorical keys to the *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria* (1274–1276), written at the beginning of Llull's Quaternary Phase. This recourse embraces none the less forms and purposes that are ultimately very diverse. Many passages collate the practice of knighthood with other professions in medieval society, especially the clergy, who become a mirror for knights. These comparisons accord a precise and transcendent meaning to the principles and duties of knighthood, but many of them certainly lack the metaphorical distance and expressive purpose that seem essential to rhetorical similes.⁹⁴

A more suggestive conception of exemplary literature appears in the contemporary *Doctrina pueril* (1274–1276), destined by Llull for educating his own son (and by extension, any young audience) in the fundamentals of Christian belief and other areas of knowledge. As a theoretical precept, it recommends providing “beautiful *exempla*” at the beginning of a speech, if one wishes to “speak rhetorically” (*Si tu, fils, vols parlar per retorica, dona bels aximplis de beles cozes al comensament de tes paraules*),⁹⁵ His desire to provide a text accessible to non-expert readers fills it with this type of exemplary passages, such as some very brief Gospel *commemorationes* (regarding the poverty of Christ, Mary, and the apostles), as well as a considerable range of similes. These generally consist of simple, even naive, comparisons drawn from daily life, but still endowed always with unmistakable plasticity. For example, the body of Christ bled out in the Passion and Crucifixion is comparable to a “jar so broken that it could not hold even a drop of wine” (*enaxí con empola qui es ten forment trencada que no y pot romanir gens de vi*).⁹⁶ These passages thus popularize some of Llull's essential principles and seem to proliferate especially in certain chapters of the work. For example, in the chapter dedicated to Understanding or in the chapter devoted to the Sixth Beatitude. The latter abounds in comparisons between the material and spiritual worlds, while also implicating, in an increasingly profound way, the son whom the text addresses, by inviting him to consider the feelings of his own mother: “Beloved son, if your mother delights in seeing you, who are mortal and come from nothing ... how much more you

94 Mario Ruffini, “Lo stile del Lullo nel *Libre del Orde de Cavaylerie*,” *EL* 3 (1959): 51–52, notes that these passages more properly pertain to the so-called *comparatio per collationem* rather than to the *similitudo* in a strict sense.

95 *Doctrina pueril* 78, (eds.) Joan Santanach i Suñol, NEORL 7:191. See also Jordi Rubió i Balaguer, “La *Rhetorica Nova* de Ramon Llull,” in *Ramon Llull i el lul·lisme*, Obres de Jordi Rubió i Balaguer 3 (Barcelona: 1985), 208.

96 *Doctrina pueril* 8, (ed.) Santanach, NEORL 7:34–35.

should delight in seeing God, the Father and Lord of all that is" (*Amable fil, si la tua mare ha gran delit en veer tu, qui est mortal e est vengut de no-re (...) quant mes tu pots aver major pler en veer Deu, qui es par-e senyor de tot quant es*).⁹⁷ In this way, the text attains a familiar, almost intimate, tone, in keeping with this simple and tender use of similes. However, this kind of familiar reference also acquires a somewhat more transcendent meaning in the chapters on the Joys of the Virgin, where Lull invites his son to imagine his own crucifixion and resurrection, and then the reactions of his mother – converted into another Mary – in those circumstances.⁹⁸

Greater complexity, and with a higher theoretical import, appears in another text from the same era, the *Libre dels àngels* (1276–1283?). Various similes appear in this work, illustrating the condition of the angels – both good and bad – with the properties of the sun and fire, or directly, of the four elements. The most interesting passages are surely those that illustrate the speech and conversation (*lucució*) of angels with images derived from human speech (an issue related to Lull's theory of *affatus*). Just as an evil person speaks with someone equally evil in order to express evil intentions, and both agree to do something wrong, so the bad angels communicate spiritually in order to realize evil deeds. Similarly, just as people cannot speak to each other without hearing themselves (or employing sign language), so the soul and an angel cannot communicate unless the latter comes very close to the former.⁹⁹ The sophistication of some of these comparisons belongs to a very different context than that represented by the simple similes from the *Doctrina pueril* or the *Libre de l'orde de cavalleria*. They are now very close to the transcendent conception of analogy reflected in the *Començaments de medicina*, where, as we have seen, Ramon Lull designs a new exemplary form, the *metafora*, capable of translating the complex principles of elemental exemplarism in an exact and rigorous way.

8.6.3 *Under the Sign of the Novel: Blaquerna*

Elemental exemplarism also permeates other exemplary forms, from simple comparisons to passages endowed with more or less developed narrative action. However, the emergence of the latter types cannot be separated from Lull's novelizing experiments. The choice of the novel and the recourse to these exemplary forms are products of the same literary vocation, of the same esteem for imagination and writing fiction.

97 Ibid. 42, (ed.) Santanach, NEORL 7:108.

98 Ibid. 48, (ed.) Santanach, NEORL 7:122.

99 *Libre dels àngels* 2.4 and 6.2, (eds.) Miquel Tous Gayà and Rafel Ginard Bauçà, ORL 21:334–342 and 374.

The first of these novels is the *Romanç d'Evast e Blaquerna*, at once a "sermon-novel," mirror of society, and Christian utopia, a work that demonstrates the fertile adaptation of very diverse readings and literary traditions. It embraces many motifs from the chivalric novel, applied in a plot with obvious hagiographical features. The use of exemplary forms thus constitutes one more projection of the exemplary nature that the novel as a whole displays, while demonstrating neatly, at the same time, the place that these short forms have found in oral culture and in religious writings throughout the 13th century. In this respect, the number of passages that allude to the use of *exempla* and comparisons by a wide range of characters is very significant. Most of these *exempla* do not appear in the novel, but it is not difficult to guess the features that Lull imagines for them, if we consider the character of his own *exempla* that he includes in the novel.

The exemplary discourse in *Blaquerna* still manifests considerable respect for the conventions of the genre. The text does include some brief exemplary mentions of historical events, usually from the Gospel. Still, as we know, the narrative flow of this work appears dominated by the fable and the verisimilar *exemplum*. The work includes at least five fables. With the exception of the fable about the monkeys and the firefly, which we have already considered, the rest of these fables seem to be the author's own compositions, though clearly preserving traditional traits. Verisimilar *exempla* are somewhat more abundant, although this model includes the most diverse examples, some of which seem to reproduce themes and arguments of oriental origin (and so closer to those of fables). Story-like features appear in the tale of the blind man, pursuing a rabbit, but led off a cliff by his own guide-dog,¹⁰⁰ or that of a man who drowned rather than travel five days to find a safe route across water.¹⁰¹ On the other hand, some stories seem created by Lull in imitation of plots from collections of historical *exempla*, such as those that revolve around the opposition between Christian virtue and sin. In *Blaquerna* the recourse to verisimilar *exempla* provides an excellent compromise for reconciling Lull's enthusiasm for novelty with respect for traditional exemplary literature. The themes and plots in these stories would not have seemed strange to a reader familiar with contemporary collections of historical *exempla* or other anecdotes. Moreover, it is obvious that precisely this kind of *exemplum* fits most naturally in the context of a Lullian novel, constructed upon a verisimilar plot.

100 *Blaquerna* 2.54, (eds.) Soler and Santanach, NEORL 8:253.

101 *Ibid.* 4.87, (eds.) Soler and Santanach, NEORL 8:390.

8.6.4 *The Verisimilar Exemplum and Dialog: The Libre de meravelles*

Fèlix or the *Libre de meravelles* constitutes Lull's most deliberate foray into this world of verisimilar fiction. As in *Blaquerna*, that world defines the main plot of the novel, now somewhat more schematic, by focusing on the learning process of its protagonist, Fèlix, in a series of dialogues. Most of the stories incorporated into that plot correspond in turn to the model of the verisimilar *exemplum*. Nonetheless, in the *Libre de meravelles*, these stories occupy a central place, constructed with the rhetorical tool most often used by its characters to show the structure of reality. No fewer than five hundred stories enhance the dialogued plot of the work.¹⁰² In this regard, the composition of the novel reveals an unprecedented creative effort.

The presence of these stories, moreover, constitutes only one more among the various facets of exemplarity in the text. It is not just a matter of *exempla* contributing to explicate metaphorically the structure of Creation, but rather the universe itself constitutes, at all levels, reflections of its Creator. Seen thus, the *Libre de meravelles* is both a novel and a peculiar kind of encyclopedia.¹⁰³ The lessons learned by Fèlix unfold in ten books corresponding to God, the angels, heaven, the four elements, plants, stones, animals, humans, paradise, and hell. The text traverses the various levels of existence. Throughout this journey, the education of Fèlix occurs through conversation: with the exception of the seventh book (the *Libre de les bèsties*) the text proffers a series of dialogues between its hero and the wise men encountered along his journey. At the end of his journey, Fèlix shares with them his accrued wisdom.

The text thus appears to pour out in its discourse, in a quest for wisdom, and in fulfillment of that quest. This context enables the circulation or interchange of *exempla* between Fèlix and his interlocutors. He occasionally poses questions about Creation throughout the narrative, but more often, it is the wise men who proffer their answers or illustrate them through stories. This exchange of information is not always simple or linear in nature. Many of the *exempla* are difficult to interpret, and the dialogues are full of doubts and requests for clarification, contextualization, or correction. Some of the stories therefore serve to clarify a previous story; others simply to justify a personal view, a position in a debate. Thus, if its plot is what justifies the appearance

102 Bonillo Hoyos, *Literatura al "Libre de Meravelles,"* 107–128, offers a highly useful list of the *exempla* in the text.

103 Bonillo Hoyos, *Literatura al "Libre de Meravelles,"* 37–50; Martín Pascual, "Algunes consideracions," 27; and Luzón Díaz, "Una aproximación," 265–266, analyze the dual novelistic and encyclopedic dimension of the text. Fernando Domínguez Reboiras, "Una lectura del *Libre de meravelles* como *ars praedicandi*," *Caplletra* 43 (2007): 131–160, reads it as a manual of preaching.

of the intercalated stories, the latter frequently appear to guide that plot, demanding responses from its characters, and the introduction of new stories. All of which clearly serves to confirm the central role of exemplary literature in the narrative construction of the novel.

Any reader would, in effect, perceive the presence of these stories as the chief literary contribution of this text. At times, the *Libre de meravelles* in fact appears to consist simply of a narrative repertory, built up almost entirely from verisimilar *exempla*, or even apparently relying on just one book (the *Libre de les bèsties*), which accentuates its autonomy within the work as a whole. The stories in the *Libre de meravelles* are populated with kings (often wise men) and knights (not always virtuous), with monks and hermits, with townspeople and philosophers. Some of their stories seem directly derived from Oriental sources, like the story of the king and the false alchemist, already present in the Arabic work of Al-Yawbarī a century before Lull, and later enjoying considerable popularity. Likewise the story of the blind man who recovers a thousand coins with another thousand that he does not have, a story related to known oriental moral fables about safeguarding treasure, documented early in Arabic tradition and later disseminated widely, both orally and in writing.¹⁰⁴ Still, many *exempla* from the *Libre de meravelles* best recall the tone of anecdotes from contemporary collections of historical *exempla*. Scholars have connected stories from the first book with *exempla* in the *Dialogus Miraculorum* or the *Alphabetum narrationum* of Arnold of Liège, and more broadly, other sections of the novel with other contemporary texts. Lull's debts to these works are, in any case, always partial. They reveal both his knowledge of that literature, and his definitive advances over it.¹⁰⁵ Building upon the foundation of collections of historical *exempla*, Lull devises a parallel repertory of fictional anecdotes, an original collection of verisimilar *exempla*.

The *Libre de meravelles* also shares with these collections of historical *exempla* a decided moral intention. Still, we should not forget that the didacticism of Lull's text appears guided once more by his theory of "first intention," and therefore that these moral teachings are only comprehensible within the framework of a more ambitious program, that of illustrating all features of

104 Marsan, *Itinéraire espagnol*, 388–394 and 461–464, analyzes both of these; on the second, see José Luis Agúndez García, "Cuentos populares andaluces (XXII)," *Revista de Folklore* 326 (2008): 60–72, and Fernando de la Granja, "Nunca más perro al molino," *Al-Andalus* 39 (1974): 431–442.

105 Ysern, "Exempla i estructures exemplars," analyzes these in the first book of the text, and Bonillo, *Literatura al "Libre de Meravelles"*, 98–107, in other sections. Giuseppe E. Sansone, "Ramon Llull narratore," *Revista de Filología Española* 43 (1960): 86, emphasizes the distance between Lull's version and those in contemporary compilations.

Creation as means for knowing God. Toward this end, the stories recounted by the wise men in Lull's novel always treat human events, though often doing so to explain metaphorically the nature of angels, animals, plants, or stones. This lends to the text a strange, paradoxical tenor, which inverts contemporary exemplary conventions. Medieval readers were accustomed to understanding the moral and social conflicts that afflict humans through comparisons made to the natural world, through *exempla* taken from the spectacle of Creation. The *Libre de meravelles* proposes the opposite approach: metaphorically illustrating all levels of existence through dramatization of the most diverse situations involving humans.

8.6.5 *The Realm of the Fable: The Libre de les bèsties*

The *Libre de les bèsties*, the seventh of the books constituting the *Libre de meravelles*, possesses an exceptional character, for many reasons. Modern scholars have often suggested the possibility of the text's composition prior to the rest of the encyclopedic novel and its subsequent interpolation into it.¹⁰⁶ Whatever the circumstances of its composition, what remains indisputable is the enormous distance between the overall purpose of the *Libre de meravelles* and that of this little work, which fuses social criticism with political utopia to construct a guide to good government. This sense of autonomy is confirmed by examining its narrative methods. The basic structure of the *Libre de meravelles* actually breaks down in the *Libre de les bèsties*. The protagonist, Fèlix, appears only at the outset of this strange section, becoming thereafter a mere spectator of this long fable featuring animal characters. It recounts the efforts of the animals to choose a king (the lion), the election of a series of counselors (among which the ox plays a leading role), and the plotting by a fox seeking power (Na Renart), who is ultimately executed. All these animals occupy, in some way, the space reserved to Fèlix and his masters in the rest of the *Libre de meravelles*, assuming all of their abilities: the capacity for reflection (which allows them to share some of the best-known principles of Lullian thought),¹⁰⁷ the constant recourse to dialogue, and the incorporation of a whole gallery of stories that, conceived as a means of debate and of transmitting instruction, enhance the exemplary value of the book with further nuances of meaning.

106 See, among others, *Le livre des bêtes*, (ed.) Armand Llinarès, 12–16, but compare the opinion of John Dagenais, “New Considerations on the Date and Composition of Lull's *Libre de les bèsties*,” in *Actes del Segon Col·loqui d'Estudis Catalans a Nord-Amèrica* (Yale, 1979) (Barcelona: 1982), 132–135.

107 Grimalt, “Notes sobre les fonts,” 41, notes that the protagonist, Na Renart, mentions Lull's doctrine of “first intention;” cf. *Libre de meravelles* 7.37, (eds.) Badia et al., NEORL 10:223.

The animal plot of the *Libre de les bèsties* does not simply interrupt the narrative thread that the *Libre de meravelles* maintains before and after this section, but also effectively rejects what has been its founding principle: verisimilitude. This seeming betrayal also affects the other intercalated stories, given the presence among them of numerous fables. Along with these fables, the *Libre de les bèsties* includes a considerable number of *exempla* featuring human characters, whose presence in the mouths of animals clearly assumes a curious “inversion of reality.” However, it cannot be said that events in which animals converse or tell stories would have seemed strange to Llull’s readers. On the contrary, many of them would have found in these events a world more familiar than the one that fills other passages from the *Libre de meravelles*. The *Libre de les bèsties* simply reproduces a literary model well-known in its era, though born centuries before in the East.

This undisguised debt to oriental storytelling constitutes one final indication of the distance between this text and the other sections of the *Libre de meravelles*. The general plot of the *Libre de les bèsties* constitutes, as we know, an adaptation of the organizing story from an Arabic collection of tales, *Kalila wa-Dimna*. Many of the stories intercalated in Llull’s little text also clearly constitute adaptations of stories from Oriental sources. One verisimilar tale seems based on part of the main plot of *Sendebâr*. Another story has its origin in the *Thousand and One Nights*. Nine or ten of its stories appear, with more or less variation, in *Kalila wa-Dimna*, but only one of these constitutes a verisimilar story. The remaining stories correspond instead to the model of the fable or, at least, feature animal protagonists, although on occasion these appear endowed with human powers, such as speech. It is more difficult to identify which specific versions of these oriental stories Blessed Ramon manipulates in the composition of his text. With regard to *Kalila wa-Dimna*, Llull may have had access to the Arabic original, to the Latin translation by John of Capua, or (less probably) to the Castilian version produced under the auspices of Alfonso X. In any case, and as indicated already, it seems necessary to suppose that the appearance of material from *Kalila wa-Dimna* in the *Libre de les bèsties* was the product of an intermediary text, from which would have derived as well one of the fables in *Blaquerna* (the monkey and the firefly). That text may well have been a modified translation of *Kalila wa-Dimna*, or a miscellany of Oriental material (as some scholars have suggested), from the hand of Llull or another.¹⁰⁸

108 Llinarès (ed.), *Le livre des bêtes*, 19, suggests such an intermediary compilation. See also, regarding the doubt about the version of *Kalila wa-Dimna* closest to Llull’s text: Llinarès, “Les singes, le ver luisant et l’oiseau,” 98–99; Martín Pascual, “Algunes consideracions,”

In addition, to stories of oriental provenance Llull also joins no lesser number of original *exempla*, fifteen in all, among which figure eleven verisimilar *exempla*, three fables, and one allegorical story. Despite its mix of original and non-original *exempla*, the *Libre de les bèsties* displays an absolutely uniform and harmonious tone, the fruit of a kind of formal and thematic convergence between one passage and another.

8.6.6 *New Paths: The Arbre Exemplifical*

The onset of the Ternary Phase of Llull's Art in 1290 establishes a new context for his exemplary literature. As indicated at the outset of this study, it is difficult to evaluate exactly the consequences of this shift. Obviously, the replacement of elemental exemplarism by his "intrinsic" demonstrative model (born from application of his theory of "correlatives") necessarily implies some displacement of analogical and metaphorical methods. But we have seen that elemental exemplarism continues to thrive as an alternative method of illustration, in support of which Ramon Llull recommends the use of metaphors and other comparative devices in the founding text of his Ternary Phase, the *Ars inventiva veritatis*. Moreover, exemplary literature is also able to accept the new tenets of his Art, just as it is able to continue supporting in general the clarification and dissemination of any scientific or ethical subject treated by Llull.

At the same time, the Ternary Phase witnesses a change in orientation in the writings of Blessed Ramon, resulting in abandonment of his novelizing experiments, with a few exceptions, such as the "Vagaries of Love" (*Accidents d'amor*), a sentimental story included in the later *Arbre de filosofia d'amor*.¹⁰⁹ But this abandonment does not seem to have occasioned an immediate decline in his production of *exempla*. To the contrary, the latter remains one of the only arenas in which Llull can pursue his taste for literature, forcing acknowledgment of an obvious paradox: if composing novels has enabled the emergence of the Lullian *exemplum*, their rejection favors its consolidation as an essential recourse for disseminating in literature the tenets of his thought, something that becomes evident above all in the *Arbre exemplifical*, composed in his Ternary Phase. The evolution of Llull's writing surely needs reinterpretation in the light of this increasing faith in the value of the exemplary genre. This evolution is a quest for the literary expression best-suited to his Art: an expression that has its first attempts in the comparisons from the *Libre de contemplació*, which

101–106; Martín Pascual, "Huella del *Calila e Dimna*," 85–86; Grimalt, "Notes sobre les fonts," 42–45; and Hauf, "Sobre l' *Arbor exemplificalis*," 314–315.

109 Badiá, Santanach, and Soler, "Ramon Llull," 403, 465.

is consolidated in the fables and stories of *Blaquerna* and in the far more numerous examples from the *Libre de meravelles*, but that only attains maturity in the new stories of the *Arbre exemplifical*. Badia has insightfully observed that attributing to Lull a rejection of “literature” in his Ternary Phase rests upon a rigid conception of this term, a concept anachronistic and incapable of comprehending the “literary” dimension of Lull’s writing and the role that exemplary forms play in it. Designed as an efficient means for the “transmutation of knowledge into literature,” the *exempla* of the *Arbre exemplifical* effectively constitute the definitive locus of convergence between “knowledge and its pleasing expression” intended by Lull from the beginning.¹¹⁰

The *Arbre exemplifical* and the *Arbre qüestional* constitute the two final books of the *Arbre de sciencia*. Their purpose is to restate, through their respective series of brief forms, the theoretical precepts of the fourteen prior books of this work, which, for their part, attempt to offer a comprehensive review of all knowledge and, at the same time, to render more accessible the principles of Lull’s Art expounded in the *Tabula generalis* of 1293–1294. The instruction provided in the *exempla* of the *Arbre exemplifical* therefore displays a much closer connection with the principles of the Lullian Art, while also adopting the innovations of its Ternary Phase, though still with a notable presence of elementary exemplarism from its previous phase. The narrative foundation of these passages also takes on a new appearance: although the *Arbre exemplifical* certainly includes examples of narrative genres already employed by Lull (fables, miracle stories, and verisimilar *exempla*), the text essentially relies on “artful” *exempla*, created by personifying the gallery of beings found in every material and spiritual level of reality. In addition, these passages adopt without differentiation the form of stories and proverbs, marking thus the onset of Lull’s interest in the latter genre, of great importance in his later writings.

Overall, the most significant innovation in the *Arbre exemplifical* is perhaps its structure: in this text passages appear simply juxtaposed, without any novelizing frame, while also independent of the content that they illustrate. Conceived as an exclusive collection of brief genres, the text nonetheless does not constitute simply an appendix for facilitating comprehension of the teachings in the *Arbre de sciencia*: rather, it displays the character of a true *instrumentum*, a useful repertory of material suitable for readers to employ in their own discourses. Still, none of this should imply that its overall design

110 Pring-Mill, “Els recontaments,” 307–317; Badia, “Literatura alternativa,”¹²; Cabré, Ortín, and Pujol, “Coneixer e haver moralitats bones;” Hauf, “Sobre l’ *Arbor exemplificalis*,” and Badia, Santanach, and Soler, “Ramon Lull,” 459–464.

lacks interest: its procession of *exempla* offers an orderly tour of the analogical structure of the universe, a systematic re-reading of the “Book of Creation.”

8.6.7 *A Look Back: The Rhetorica Nova*

Five years after writing the *Arbre exemplifical*, Ramon Llull offers a new repertory consisting only of *exempla*: the section of twenty-four *pulcra exempla* from the *Rhetorica nova*. Once again, these passages appear here juxtaposed, independent of any fictional frame. And, as in the case of the *Arbre exemplifical*, the exemplary material from the *Rhetorica nova* comprises an orderly survey of Creation, but with the notable difference that the very complex itinerary, in ascending order, from the *Arbre*, here gives way to a brief and simple tour of the scale of being, in descending order.

The *exempla* from this text display, moreover, a kind of compromise or attempt at reconciliation between defending Llull’s own proposals (realized from the long maturation of his literary production and largely unavoidable) and a concession (much more obvious than in his earlier works) to the conventions of the genre and to the expectations of readers familiar with this type of literature. This collection includes, in effect, samples of Llull’s successive efforts and attempts in the world of exemplary forms. It thus collects various passages created to support his Art, whether by reproducing his theory of divine likenesses or by exploring anew the elemental exemplarism found in his work almost from its very beginning. This collection also presents a verisimilar *exemplum* (about a hypocritical bishop),¹¹¹ like those adorning his novels, as well as three fables: two derived from *Kalila wa-Dimna* and already found in his *Libre de les bèsties* (“The crane and the crab” and “The monkey, the firefly, and the bird”) and a third that recalls the main plot of the latter work (the fox conspires to join the council of the lion, the king of beasts, despite the reservations of other characters).¹¹² The three fables, on their own, symbolize to perfection the intersection of storytelling tradition and Llull’s exemplary schemes.

However, as we have said, this text also concedes space to other varieties much more frequent in contemporary sermons. Seen thus, one must recognize the enormous quantitative importance of the text’s similes concerning nature (half of the twenty-four examples) and above all, that many of them display a character very different from that found in Llull’s earlier works. Indeed, the appearance of these similes in the *Rhetorica nova* seems to have resulted, in more than one instance, from consultation of popular bestiaries and lapidaries. Equally significant is the space conceded in this section, even if limited, to

¹¹¹ *Rhetorica nova* 2.4.6, (ed.) Johnston, 17.

¹¹² *Ibid.* 2.4.11–13, (ed.) Johnston, 18–21.

the historical *exemplum*, through its mention of the Passion and Crucifixion of Christ as a model for virtuous people. This Christological lesson is undeniably essential to Llull's thought, but its inclusion in this collection (alongside other classical *exempla* in other sections of the work) perhaps indicates his awareness of the prominence of this genre in the tastes of his readers. Definitively, the discursive context of the *Rhetorica nova*, conceived as a general art of discourse, does not dictate Llull's choice of a single exemplary model, but rather of the genre's openness to all of its forms and possible applications.

8.6.8 *Treatises and Sermons: Exemplary Forms in the Later Work*

Shortly after writing the *Rhetorica nova*, Ramon Llull brought forth the truly analogical monument that is the *Liber de lumine* (1303). Still, many more of his works from this era continue demonstrating the value of the exemplary genre for illustrating and adorning. Mid-way between the verisimilar story and the allegorical story stands the chapter devoted to the "Honor of Love" (*De les honors d'amor*) in the *Arbre de filosofia d'amor* [Tree of the Philosophy of Love] of 1298, a text created to make more accessible, by means of narrative, the contents of the *Art amativa*, a mystical version, in turn, of the *Ars inventiva veritatis* of 1290.¹¹³ Neither is exemplary literature lacking in theological debates, such as the *Disputatio fidei et intellectus* (1303). In this work, Faith and Reason, duly personified, attempt to defend their respective arguments through stories, some already used in Llull's other works, transferring to a separate narrative level the same dispute that sustains the text's frame story.¹¹⁴ Among the more interesting are Llull's juridical works such as the *Ars de iure* (1304) or the *Ars brevis de inventione iuris* (1308). These texts include diverse similes and comparisons but provide a much more accommodating space for brief forms in their final sections, dedicated to *quaestiones*, that is, to examples of practical cases. As we know, these practical cases maintained a productive relationship with storytelling throughout the medieval juridical tradition. In many of the cases from Llull's texts, there appear the same characters and conflicts that inspired the verisimilar *exempla* of the *Libre de meravelles*. Compared to the latter, the *quaestiones* from the *Ars de iure* seem true *exempla* in miniature, although perhaps the reverse perspective might be more appropriate: we know that many of the earlier Lullian stories are nothing more than literary adaptations of sophisticated legal and theological cases.¹¹⁵

113 *Arbre de filosofia d'amor* 6.3, (ed.) Salvador Galmès, ORL 18:197–204.

114 *Disputatio fidei et intellectus* 1.1, 1.5 and 1.8, (ed.) Euler, ROL 23:226, 231, 233.

115 *Ars de iure* 2.2.A-B, (ed.) Jordi Gayà Estelrich, ROL 20:157, 160, and 162; *Ars brevis de inventione iuris*, (ed.) Aloisius Madre, ROL 12:274, 281, 301–302, and 347–351. See Colom Ferrá, "Ramon Llull y los orígenes," 40.

Llull's treatises on sermons confirm, in a theoretical domain, the acknowledged value of the exemplary genre in contemporary preaching. The *Liber de praedicatione* (1304) recommends beginning a sermon by means "of a metaphor, proverb, or *exemplum*" (*per metaphora vel per proverbium vel exemplum*) and illustrates this precept with a lengthy story, adapted from the *Arbre exemplifical*.¹¹⁶ The *Liber de praedicatione* includes, moreover, a *corpus* of one hundred sermons, presented as homiletic models, capable of application ad hoc as needed by individual preachers. A quick review of these hundred sermons reveals how far Llull's homiletics also resorts to linking comparative forms and analogical reflections, not always rigorously grounded in his Art. Finally, exemplary literature also makes an appearance in the *Summa sermonum*, which includes the corpus of homiletic and catechetical material composed by Blessed Ramon on Majorca in 1212–1213, that is, in the post-Art phase of his career.¹¹⁷ It is true that the examples appearing in these texts now demonstrate Llull's neglect of exemplary forms developed as narratives, in favor of assiduously employing more obviously simple forms that are essentially similes. It is useless to seek in these sermons the humor of the fable or the imaginative daring of Llull's "artful" stories. Llull's gradual abandonment of fiction during his Ternary Phase ultimately led him to discard these two exemplary genres. The trajectory of Llull's literary production, his quest for a formula of expression, ultimately "denatures" his own exemplary literature, reducing it to its most profitable types, or perhaps simply to those most comprehensible to his audience. In these late writings, little seems to remain of that "taste for telling" distilled into the *Libre de meravelles* or the *Arbre exemplifical*.¹¹⁸

8.7 Narrative Artifices: Specular Play

8.7.1 *The Plot and Its Stories*

Ramon Llull's production of *exempla* offers an ample space for narrative experimentation, both with respect to the internal design of their sequences and with respect to their "specular" relationship with the discursive frame that surrounds them. All of this is evident in a special (though of course not

116 *Liber de praedicatione* 2.A.1.3, (ed.) Abraham Soria Flores, ROL 31:399.

117 See Lola Badia, "Raimundi Lulli Opera Latina, xv: Ramon Llull i la predicació," *Llengua & Literatura* 3 (1988–1989): 574–575.

118 Badia and Bonner, *Ramón Llull*, 202; Bonner, *L'Art i la lògica*, 297; and Tous Prieto, "La forma proverbi," 28, all discuss the relative decline of exemplary literature in Llull's post-Art Phase, parallel to his abandonment of other forms such as metaphor.

exclusive) way in his novels. A glance at the *Libre de meravelles* discussed above is sufficient. The novel takes shape, as we have seen, through successive encounters between its protagonist and various wise men, from whose dialogs arise hundreds of stories. The structure of these becomes very diverse, although they fundamentally obey two possible models: many take the form of an anecdote (that is, a sequence of actions and conflicts, ultimately resolved), while others are limited to reporting a very brief dialogue between two characters (frequently, a master and his disciple).

In the first model, the plot of the anecdote answers, in metaphorical fashion, the problem posed in the frame story. This happens, for example, in a tale told by a hermit in response to Fèlix's amazement that the world could have been created from nothing. In the story, a king sends a knight to fight at another court. Shortly afterwards, a maiden visits the king and reports the knight's victory. The news, received with enormous joy, is actually an invention of the maiden. The moral of the story is obvious: if the king can rejoice about something that was nothing and non-existent, with far more reason was God able to make the world from nothing.¹¹⁹ The simplicity of this example should not, however, deceive us. Interpretation of the stories can sometimes pose enormous difficulty, usually as a result of the distance that exists between the literal and allegorical levels of a story. It can also be due to a kind of lack of symmetry between the two levels. Obvious cases are those stories with a lesson inferred not from their complete plots, but rather from some aspect of the plot that is perhaps tangential or apparently secondary. There are in fact numerous Lullian *exempla* that require an "oblique" reading for their exegesis, just as there are also many that, far from offering the solution for a problem, serve only to suggest some keys for Fèlix (and the reader) to find the solution on their own.¹²⁰

The *exempla* corresponding to our second model (a brief dialogue between a master and his disciple) are rather diverse. Many of these *exempla* reproduce with absolute symmetry the same situation as the frame story in which they occur: a question from Fèlix to one of his masters prompts the latter's narration of a dialogue story. Even more: at times, a question from Fèlix himself reappears, literally, in the mouth of the disciple in the story, so that the master's response to this answers precisely the question of the novel's hero. The absolute simplicity of these very brief stories, which display a certain underutilization of the recourses of exemplarity, has perhaps not attracted sufficient

119 *Libre de meravelles* 50.6, (eds.) Badia et al., NEORL 10:108.

120 Jordi Gayà Estelrich, "Sobre algunes estructures literaries del *Llibre de meravelles*," *Randa* 10 (1980): 67–68.

emphasis. These stories generally appear naked, with a minimal degree of narrativity, and therefore lack as well any metaphorical value. Their only purpose seems to be displacing, into another narrative level, an answer that could have been offered directly. The characters in these stories are little more than masks, behind which the reader perceives in a transparent way, the voices of the protagonists from the frame story. Apart from this modest function, these characters (and their stories) have no reason to exist.

This shift, into an anecdote, of the problem under consideration in the frame story does sometimes occur with more sophistication. Fèlix asks, in a passage from the first book, how the apostles, so few in number, could convert so many people. Blaqueria answers him with a story: a student of philosophy marvels that one spark of fire is enough to burn as much wood as one wishes, a problem that his master explicates with a very relevant image, that of the apostles who were able to convert masses because inflamed by divinely inspired grace.¹²¹ Thanks to the latter phrase, the story offers a literal and absolutely exact response to the question posed by Fèlix in the frame story, but it does so through a curious circumlocution, since the image of the apostles is, within the level of the story, an ingenious metaphor for illustrating its central issue, the power of fire. Of course this circumlocution is not pointless: both Fèlix and the novel's readers can reverse that metaphor in order to discover within the image of fire a precious comparison to the matter of real interest to them, namely the miraculous missionary effort of the disciples of Christ. There is no lack, in the *Libre de meravelles*, of stories with exegesis that requires a simple reversal or exchange of its literal and allegorical elements. These passages fill the novel with inverted reflections between the frame story and the narrative levels subordinated to it, and thus enable introduction of the allegorizing so desired by its author.

This allegorizing can also color more suggestively these dialogue stories. Toward the end of book three, Fèlix asks a shepherd why the sun seems larger in the morning than at noon. The shepherd tells a story in which a philosopher strolls through a lovely garden after eating in order to promote digestion; there a student asks him the same question posed by Fèlix, and the philosopher explains how morning vapors, thick and undigested because not yet purged by the heat of the sun itself, distort the shape of the sun in the morning. Once again, the answer to Fèlix's question appears explicitly in the mouth of a character from a story, this time without the analogical inversion found in the previous example. The allegorical dimension of the philosopher's story necessarily arises from its own plot, a plot certainly thin, though in no way

121 *Libre de meravelles* 1.12, (eds.) Badia et al., NEORL 10:138.

gratuitous. The philosopher's initial stroll seeking agreeable digestion constitutes a metaphorical referent for illuminating the central question of the tale and its frame story: the undigested quality of morning airs and the need for the sun to purify them.¹²² By means of a very slight complication in their plots, dialogued *exempla* can approximate the anecdotal tales of the first model, with which they often mix and fuse in the course of the novel.

8.7.2 *The Story-within-a-story*

The *exempla* from the *Libre de meravelles* can also attain a much more complex structure, since any of their characters can become, in turn, the narrator of a new story. Ramon Llull manipulates this recourse with complete freedom, which permits the indefinite multiplication of narrative levels in the novel. As a result, the text is full of specular correspondences and echoes, which affirm the careful experimental labor invested in its composition.

Each of the stories introduced successively in the novel seeks, in general lines, to offer the literal or metaphorical answer for a question posed in the immediately preceding narrative level. When these levels multiply, they can give rise once more to a curious play of identities and differences between the respective lessons of each successively intercalated story. This process can nonetheless become considerably sophisticated, to the point of permitting one single story to answer various different questions, posed in successive levels of narration. For example, in the third book, Fèlix formulates for his interlocutor, a shepherd, this question: "Sir, why is the moon larger at some times than at others?" (*Senyer, per que la luna es major en un temps que en altre?*). The shepherd initially marvels at this treatment as "sir" (*senyer*), but then understands that it corresponds to his wisdom, rather than to his appearance or sumptuous dress. From this point, the shepherd's purpose becomes dual: illustrating the recently posed issue of vanity, and at the same time, answering Fèlix's question about the moon. He therefore offers an *exemplum*, which recounts the efforts of a woman to adorn herself and so appear more beautiful, and her husband's opposition to this behavior. However, this *exemplum* includes a new story, told by the husband to his wife and friends, in which the sun one day shines with full splendor upon the moon, which becomes vainly proud, and so the sun decides to conceal its light, placing the earth between itself and the moon. This short tale serves to warn the vain woman in the surrounding story and sheds light, in passing, on the problem posed in the frame story (Fèlix's question about the varying size of the moon).¹²³ Stories like these constitute the

¹²² Ibid. 3.18, (eds.) Badia et al., NEORL 10:161–162.

¹²³ Ibid. 3.18, (eds.) Badia et al., NEORL 10:162–163. See Taylor, "Some complexities," 649.

best example of Llull's ability to manipulate recourses of exemplarity. The very brief intercalated story discussed above ties together and answers the questions posed in two preceding levels of narration, establishing thus a "dialogue" between both levels, upon which it depends not only for its narrative subordination, but also for the ultimate design of its plot.

8.7.3 *Mise en Abyme*

Llull's procedures for inserting narratives can also display much more audacious contours. In this respect, one of the most eloquent and delightful chapters in the *Libre de meravelles*, from its fifth book, concerns the decay of trees. Here, two dependent narrative levels, consisting of intercalated examples, are subordinated to the frame story. In the latter, Félix and his interlocutor, a solitary philosopher, observe how a man cuts down a beautiful, but unfruitful, tree. Shortly afterwards they observe a second tree, with many limbs broken from the weight of numerous fruits. Félix asks how a tree can cause its own destruction, and the philosopher responds with his first story, about two brothers who display opposing behaviors. One brother is a bishop, handsome but incapable of fulfilling his duties, like the tree without fruit. The other brother is a knight, who works day and night to maintain justice in a city, to the point of endangering his health, like the tree with fruit. One day, a madman rebukes the bishop for behaving so differently than his brother, which prompts the intervention of a wise cleric, who introduces the second story. The latter establishes, on the one hand, subtle connections with the rural setting of the frame story, and, on the other, with the story of the bishop and his brother in which it occurs. It describes a vineyard that includes two apple trees, one beautiful but sterile, and the other weighted down with fruit. The two trees obviously symbolize the two brothers in the first story, but also recall (or, simply are) the two trees from the frame story. Their reappearance at this deep level within the narrative evokes an obvious surprise, which the story extends by presenting the owner of the vineyard as he orders the removal of the first apple tree (something that ultimately occurs in the frame story). The circular (and potentially infinite) nature of this *mise en abyme* prompts a paradoxical impression on the reader, a strange sensation of irreality. The story thus constructs a narrative mechanism that truly manipulates the boundaries of verisimilitude in a kind of illusionist game, in what constitutes a felicitous transgression of the techniques most common in story-telling of his era.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ *Libre de meravelles* 5.31, (eds.) Badia et al., NEORL 10:197–199. The echoes among the three narrative levels do not end here, as the chapter introduces several more *exempla* and digressions. Badia, Santanach, and Soler, "Ramon Llull," 453–455, offer an excellent

The play of mirrors between the narrative level of the story and that of frame story also takes on very ingenious contours in one of the first scenes from the *Libre de les bèsties*. There, the bear, the leopard, and the lynx, unable to decide between the lion and the horse as their future king, request postponement of the election. The fox, supporting the lion, tells a story in which the canons of a church must choose a bishop but, unable to agree, elect instead a man of weak and lewd character. Faced with this situation, one canon offers a brief reflection, in which the characters, surprisingly, are the animals from the frame story: according to the canon, if the lion ends up as king without support from the bear, the lynx, and the leopard in its election, the lion will despise them. On the other hand, if the horse wins election, but the lion offends him, he cannot defend himself from the lion. The minimal fable told by the canon apparently seeks to illustrate metaphorically the dilemma posed in his church by the unworthy bishop, but the reality is just the opposite: the story of the new bishop is, at best, a vehicle for illustrating metaphorically the risks of electing a bad king in the frame story. It could even be something simpler: a mere narrative illusion (a true mirror-image) astutely devised by the fox in order to offer its literal opinion about the ideal king. Thanks to this story within a story, and by means of a double metaphorical “turn,” the words of the fox return precisely to the same point as the beginning of its speech (an explicit defense of the lion). The latter is the only issue of interest for advancing the narrative: we learn nothing about the subsequent condition of the church that needed a bishop (the story is effectively incomplete), but the bear, the lynx, and the leopard decide, after hearing the fox, to support election of the proposed candidate as their king.¹²⁵ Despite the brevity of this passage, it is impossible not to recognize in it an echo of the careful artifice apparent elsewhere in the *Libre de meravelles*. The exact reappearance of the animals who are main characters of the plot within a lower narrative level – the reflection offered by a human character from a story invented by one of the animals – is indeed surprising. It confronts us once more with a paradoxical circularity, with the vertigo of an impossible *mise en abîme*, thanks to its transgression of narrative logic as slight as it is ingenious.

analysis of the theological, moral, and natural scientific contents of the story. For the concept of “mise en abîme,” see Lucien Dällenbach, *Le récit spéculaire: Essai sur la mise en abîme* (Paris: 1977).

125 *Libre de meravelles* 7.37, (eds.) Badia et al., NEORL 10:234.

8.7.4 *Irreality*

The sensation of irreality in Lullian exemplary literature can occur in other ways, for example, through the actual narrative substance of some passages. This is especially apparent in the *Arbre exemplifical*. The mere presence of “artful” stories situates us within an absolutely odd atmosphere, which manifests fully Lull’s attempt to manipulate and to transgress the boundaries of the exemplary genre. Having broken with all the conventions of traditional storytelling, the “artful” *exemplum* at times offers the appearance of a simple verbal construct or artifice.

The irreality of such stories is apparent even more notably in those cases where entities from the Lullian Art (the vices and virtues, the four elements, the faculties of the soul) engage in dialog within a story, becoming thus narrators of a verisimilar story with human protagonists. Examples of this authentic “inversion of reality” are abundant. The tenth section of the chapter on roots in the *Arbre exemplifical* includes, for example, a story featuring two knights litigating over ownership of a castle. They both bribe the judge, one with a thousand florins and the other only a hundred. Their king, learning of the matter, inquires in his council about the cause of the dispute. A wise man realizes that the knight with a hundred florins was the legitimate owner of the castle and therefore did not want to spend an excessive amount on what belonged to him by right. This true *exemplum* of Solomonic judgement rightly belongs to the lovely panoply of verisimilar stories provided by Lull in this and other works. However, in this case, it is narrated by the allegorical character Dryness in order to excuse its intervention as judge in a dispute between the Rose and the Pepper, opposing one another in an argument over the respective merits of Water and Fire.¹²⁶

The *Arbre exemplifical* houses the most daring and most conventional *exempla*, combining them variously thanks to its obvious proliferation of narrative levels. This text thus opens considerable space for exercising the exemplary strategies already practiced in the *Libre de meravelles*, filling them with specular play and echoes. Especially interesting, in this regard, are certain passages, like the one crafted in the *exemplum* for the branch of Sensation. This story begins with a plot typical of an animal fable, in which a young rat tells her mother of her wish to befriend a kitten playing with a feather, supposing that the kitten would be too young to know the “contrarity” between their respective species. Thanks to this friendship, thinks the young rat, the kitten would not harm it when grown older. The mother responds with a verisimilar story. In it, a burgher kills a knight, and seeks to restore peace among their friends

¹²⁶ *Arbre de ciència* 15.1, (eds.) Carreras i Artau and Carreras i Artau, *OE* 1:802.

by marrying his daughter to the son of the victim; at this point, the wife of the burgher offers a fable, featuring a horse and a lion. These two decide to go on pilgrimage, but at the last moment the horse decides not to go, given the risk of being devoured by the lion if it finds itself without food. The fable causes the burgher to reflect, and he decides not to marry his daughter, remembering that knights are arrogant and “do not forgive offenses” (*no perdonen a fellonia*).¹²⁷ This lengthy passage ends here, without explaining clearly the resolution of the story that initiated it (the young rat and her mother). Such an explanation of course becomes absolutely unnecessary, since the outcome of the fable appears tacitly reflected (and anticipated) in the two stories subordinated within its plot. These three levels of narration essentially reproduce the same story. This multiplication, potentially endless, of one same plot, is the best example of the experimental nature so often displayed in Lull’s *exempla*.

8.8 Narrative Virtuality

8.8.1 Provisional Stories

Ramon Lull’s zeal for experimentation, and the sense of unreality that his plots and narrative structures generate, are inseparable from another feature, mentioned initially in these pages: this is the provisional, almost ephemeral air that some of the stories display inside his works. Most of the stories from the Lullian novels are fictions created *ex professo* in order to illuminate specific questions in a particular moment. This appears to be the function that they serve “within” their fictions. We should not, therefore, imagine that Lull’s characters have heard and memorized these stories in any moment prior to their appearance in the novel: instead, their originality invites us to accept them as the products of his imagination, or perhaps better, of his talent for improvisation.

The existence of these passages begins and ends in a single expression, and that sensation of fugacity becomes even more acute in the case of a work such as the *Libre de meravelles*, as we consider the immense proportions of its exemplary corpus, the dizzying parade of hundreds of stories in the course of its ten books. The very nature of these stories reinforces this impression. A good number of them, as we know, are constructed from a limited number of human scenarios, conflicts, and archetypes, combined in a thousand different ways. This combinatory exercise can be seen as well in the *Arbre exemplifical*. There, the generation of many passages obeys, without disguise, an almost mechanical procedure, yielding the orderly construction of narrative plots based on the

¹²⁷ *Arbre de ciència* 15:3:3, (eds.) Carreras i Artau and Carreras i Artau, *OE* 1:810.

systematic reproduction of the relationships among the beings presented in the *Arbre de sciencia*. There, just as in the *Libre de meravelles*, some stories take on the appearance of mere narrative hypotheses, created to be reformulated over and over, giving rise to new narrative constructions, each as provisional as the one before.

In the *Libre de meravelles*, one story can actually serve two different purposes in two different moments. In the eighth book, addressing the sin of sloth, the hermit who speaks with Fèlix introduces the case of a hospital ruined by the neglect of its administrators and by the inaction of the local bishop and his chapter, to whom a wealthy founder had entrusted its care. This is almost exactly the point of departure for an *exemplum* told by the same hermit in the tenth book, dedicated to the punishments of hell, but in this case the story is much more complex. The story initially begins by recounting the ruin of the hospital due to the neglect of a (single) administrator and of the bishop entrusted with this care. At first, this prompts Fèlix to reflect on the possible eternal condemnation of the bishop, which is the theme of the chapter. However, after this initial reflection, which would seem to end the story, it concludes with two more episodes, without clearly indicating whether the narrator of these additions is the hermit or Fèlix himself (as the syntax of the passage seems to suggest).¹²⁸ The first of these added episodes tells the story of a cleric who, after extinguishing a fire during the night, is unable to rise and attend to a dying man, thus causing his eternal damnation. Even more surprising is the second episode, in which the bishop from the beginning of the story reappears to rebuke the lazy cleric for neglecting the dying man, while the cleric scolds the bishop for neglecting the ruin of the hospital. The latter story establishes a convenient connection between the core of the original *exemplum* and its strange continuation. Above all, however, it affirms the open, provisional character of its plot. The story told by the hermit in the eighth book lacks a fixed ending and if, as it appears, the narrator of its continuation in the tenth book is Fèlix, neither can it be regarded as the property of a single author.

The provisionality of Lull's stories is more than a vague impression: it has clear narrative consequences and calls into question the laws that govern the discursive logic of his stories. In extreme cases, the stories from the *Libre de meravelles* can adopt an almost virtual, simply illusory air. In the first book, Fèlix asks why there are no prophets in the present day, and the answer from Blaquerna consists exclusively of a story: a king sends messengers throughout

¹²⁸ *Libre de meravelles* 10.121, (ed.) Bonner, *Obres selectes*, 2:387–388, where the latter favors this possibility, as does Bonillo Hoyos, “Els exemples,” 66–68. Compare *Libre de meravelles* 8.72, (ed.) Bonner, *Obres selectes*, 2:240, for the first version of the story.

his realm, charged with announcing assembly of a court for honoring his son, for knighting him, and for ceding to him the crown. Once the court is over, the messengers' work is done. The allegorical correspondence of the king, his son, and the messengers with God, Christ, and the prophets is so obvious that Fèlix requires no explanation. Shortly afterwards, Fèlix in fact continues pursuing some questions about the matter, but with exclusive reference to the characters in the story. In one of these, Fèlix asks why the messengers died before the court took place, a question obviously relevant to the prophets, dead before the coming of Christ, but unrelated to Blaquerna's story, in which they simply end their mission after the court assembly, and so are alive both before and after the event. This slight discrepancy betrays the true meaning of this *exemplum* for Fèlix (and for Ramon Llull as well): it is not simply a univocal and immutable literary element, but rather a flexible fiction, capable of reformulation in the evolving course of the requirements of a conversation. The characters in the story likewise lack individuality: they are simply "names" for designating, in a transparent metaphor, the beings of true importance in this conversation from the frame story. The initial story is little more than a pretext, a point of departure for advancing the dialogue, and as such susceptible to betrayal.¹²⁹

8.8.2 *Meta-exemplarity*

The versatility of Lullian stories, their apparently "open" character, is surely the most obvious sign of the "dual" purpose that guides the proposition of these stories in his work. The *exempla* of Ramon Llull seek not only to illuminate metaphorically, for his readers, the principles of his Art or the design of the universe: above all, they aspire to train the reader in manipulating the tools of analogy, that is, in the task of interpreting and elaborating *exempla*.

All this becomes evident in the *Arbre exemplifical*. The structure of this text reflects (in some respect "inverted") the design of the *Arbre de sciencia*. As we know, the latter offers a review of all knowledge by means of fourteen books or thematic "trees" (from the elements to God) each divided in turn into seven sections (roots, trunk, limbs, branches, leaves, flowers, and fruits). The *Arbre exemplifical* is organized into these same seven sections, each capable in turn of division into fourteen parts, one for each of the trees in the encyclopedia. But this final scheme of divisions remains unrealized, since Llull does not develop all of its possible parts nor all of the theoretical possibilities that each part implicates. Llull's focus and desire for brevity make the contents of the *Arbre exemplifical* only a small sample of the material that a full "exemplification of the Art" might yield, as his prologue explicitly indicates, but nonetheless

¹²⁹ *Libre de meravelles* 1.11, (eds.) Badia et al., NEORL 10:134.

a valuable sample for readers to “find new proverbs and new stories, and to extend their knowledge through the vast contents of this Tree” (*doctrina darem com hom se pusca haver a atrobar novells proverbis e novells recontaments, e estendre son enteniment per la gran matèria d'aquest arbre*).¹³⁰ In this respect, the incomplete nature of the *Arbre exemplifical* seems not so much a lack, as an invitation for readers to participate in reflection and in their own metaphorical dissemination of Lull's Art, conceived thus as an open and incomplete endeavor.

That value of Lullian exemplary literature as a model or “paradigm” for the invention of new *exempla* by the reader appears as well in other texts, such as the *Liber de lumine*. This work offers, in effect, a set of exercises designed to guide the mind in the techniques of analogical reflection, and constitutes as well, according to its colophon, an instrument to serve preachers, since it “teaches how to extract and apply likenesses for a purpose, as is obvious from the light of a candle and from those things said thanks to it” (*docet extrahere et applicare similitudines ad propositum, ut patet in lumine candelae et in eis, quae per ipsam dicta sunt*).¹³¹

Nonetheless, it is in the examples from the *Rhetorica nova* where this kind of “meta-exemplarity” appears with the greatest clarity and determination. There, the section on *pulcra exempla* is framed by two commentaries, almost identical, that establish the preferred reading of the passages offered in this light. At the beginning of the series, Lull declares that it seeks to provide the instruction necessary for a speaker to learn how “to take *exempla* and apply them duly ordered in his words” (*exempla sumere et ad verba sua ordine debito applicare*), inserting them “in appropriate places” (*in locis congruentibus*).¹³² The *exempla* proposed, Lull reiterates in concluding this section, provide instruction for anyone to “grant splendour to discourse by narrating beautiful *exempla* and applying them to a suitable purpose” (*conferre decorem narrando pulcra exempla, et ipsa fini verborum cui conveniunt applicando*). In short, they offer, more than a mass of instructions, a true method for “seeking and finding *exempla*” (*exempla inquirere et invenire*).¹³³

8.8.3 *Training in Exemplarity*

The meta-exemplary condition of Lull's stories does not affect only the series or repertoires of *exempla* included in his theoretical writings. In some fashion,

130 *Arbre de ciència* 15, Prol., (eds.) Carreras i Artau and Carreras i Artau, *OE* 1:799.

131 *Liber de lumine* 3, (ed.) Gayà Estelrich, 62.

132 *Rhetorica nova* 2.4.0, (ed.) Johnston, 14.

133 *Ibid.* 2.4.25, (ed.) Johnston, 24.

it is projected upon the *exempla* that adorn his works of fiction, and perhaps only in this light does the design of the *Libre de meravelles* become comprehensible. Both a novel and an encyclopedia, this work seems founded upon the concept of exemplarity, because it not only attempts to make its stories contribute to explaining metaphorically the structure of Creation, but, on the contrary, in this work the universe itself constitutes, in all its levels, an “exemplary” reflection of its Creator. The text thus combines two successive and complementary processes of analogical reading, the ontological and the rhetorical, displaying its hero’s training in their respective techniques, and, at the same time, offering to the reader a model for undertaking both tasks: investigating the likenesses of God in the world and their joyous communication by means of ingenious stories.

This irresistible analogical vocation appears at many points in the text. In a passage from the fourth book, mentioned above, a student of philosophy hears the teachings of his master about the four elements and systematically repeats the lesson “through similitude” (*per semblança*). In response to Fèlix’s question about how one candle can ignite another without decreasing its light, the student abandons this method of exposition and responds literally. As we have seen, this abandonment of the metaphorical method prompts the master’s harsh rebuke.¹³⁴ The tacit agreement to use exemplary forms finally becomes explicit: exemplarity is definitely a language or, better, *the* language of the *Libre de meravelles*.

The entire novel is devoted to teaching Fèlix the use of this language. Fèlix’s entire training is founded on a succession of “heard” and “lived” *exempla*. The context of this training makes full sense of the constant clarifications of his masters about the precise interpretation of their stories, and of the doubts about the correspondence of some likenesses to the matter at hand. But that training also involves a whole series of specular mechanisms, facilitated through the obvious multiplication of narrative levels. Numerous *exempla* therefore reproduce the “gradated” interplay among the stories that define the framing plot of the novel, demonstrating to Fèlix an exact mirror of the training that he undergoes. This mirror surely extends to the readers, who find in the doubts and progress of the novel’s characters (above all, Fèlix himself) a dramatized version of the same initiation in the techniques of exemplarity that they must undertake.¹³⁵

Training in exemplarity thus results from a slow process, which the novel itself carefully unfolds. It is enough to compare Fèlix’s initial, somewhat amazed

¹³⁴ *Libre de meravelles* 4.20, (eds.) Badia et al., NEORL 10:170.

¹³⁵ Ysern, “*Exempla* i estructures exemplars,” 41–42; Johnston, “Exemplary Reading,” 237–245.

and passive, response to the stories of his masters, with the command of storytelling that he demonstrates toward the end of the fourth book. However, the definitive command of this exemplary ability only appears with the teachings of the hermit, his last master, in the final three books of the work. With him, Fèlix becomes accustomed “to understanding one likeness from another” (*entendre un semblant per altre*) and to expounding its deeper meaning.¹³⁶ Only after being “well taught” (*bé adoctrinat*) is the hero able to reverse the most common terms from a dialogue of the frame story, moving from the role of student to that of teacher and becoming, above all, a narrator of similitudes. This occurs in the epilogue to the work, where he arrives at a very distinguished abbey and devotes himself to telling “*exempla* and marvels” (*dels exemplis e de les meravelles*) to its monks, then taking their habit and committing himself to travel the world recounting the *Libre de meravelles*. Death overtakes him before he can do so, but shortly afterwards, another saintly monk who has memorized these *exempla* and marvels assumes his mission. Under the name of the “second Fèlix” (*Segon Fèlix*), this monk travels the world, disseminating the *Libre de meravelles*, “and extending it, according to the marvels that he found” (*e muntiplicà aquell, segons les meravelles que atrobava*).¹³⁷ Exemplarity is thus conceived as an infinite chain, as a storehouse of memory that holds old *exempla* and adds new similitudes to them. Almost virtually, the itinerary and the contents of the *Libre de meravelles* are projected beyond the final lines of the novel, negating any possibility of its end. Thanks to this open ending, the spectacle of Creation offers itself to the eyes of its readers as an unending book of *exempla*, as a true “book of marvels.”

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¹³⁶ *Libre de meravelles* 8.100 and 9.121; (ed.) Bonner, *Obres selectes*, 2:326 and 387.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.* “De la fi del libre,” (ed.) Bonner, *Obres selectes*, 2:391–332.

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