MEMORY IN THE TROUBADOURIC TRADITION
From the Eyes to the Memory: Amor de Lonh, Passions, Remembrance of Vows and of Love

Who are the Troubadours?
• the Troubadours are poets in the vernacular (not in Latin), active in the feudal court of France and Italy
• The Origins of the word Troubadours is debated in scholarship
  + From the late Latin TROBAR (P. Dronke)
  + From the Arabic (M.R. Menocal)
• The first troubadours wrote in Langue d’Oc (Occitan)
  + Where? South of France
  + When? From late X c. to XIII c.
  + William IX of Aquitaine (also known as William of Poitiers (1071-1126) was the first to produce poetry in the troubadouric style after his return from the first crusade, and this style of poetry developed at his court
  + At the court of his grand-daughter Eleanor of Aquitaine (1122-1204)

Occitaine
- The first land of the Troubadours
  - Courts of Aquitaine
  - Poitiers
  - Provence
  - Later added the courts of Burgundy and Champagne

Who were the Troubadours?
• Troubadouric poetry was composed together with the music, to be sung with music ➔
  CANSO = song
• Music was an integral part of the experience of a troubadouric song, therefore the troubadours were not only poets but also musicians
• There were both male and female troubadours (trobatriz)
• Whatever we know of the troubadours comes from:
  + 1- Official court documents
  + 2- their writing and other people’s writing
  + 3 Razos: short texts describing the lives of the troubadours
The Themes of Troubadouric Poetry

• Love Poetry (as codified by Andreas Capellanus’ the De Amore)
• Feudal language (lady = midons is the liege, the troubadour is her servant)
• Love only outside of Marriage
• Sexual Desire yet Spiritual tension
• Exclusive love – you can love only one lady
• Lady is perfect and sublime
• Amor de Lonh (love from afar)
• Nature is involved and reflects the feelings of the troubadour

Political or Parodic Poetry (Sirventes)
• Political (criticising simony- or political factions)
• Parodies (canzo – pastorells)

The Three Styles of Troubadouric Poetry

• Trobar Clus – Closed Poetic Invention
• Complex and obscure style of poetry- Closed- based on a code of interpretation open only by an elite few. The point is in making the poetry inaccessible – used in sirventes as well.
• Marcabru
• Arnault Daniel
• Trobar Leu – Light Poetic Invention
• Most popular and used way of writing of the Troubadour (especially used by the female troubadours)
• Accessible to a wider audience (though still using senhals- to hide nomen) – considered at times formulaic
• Trobar Ric – Rich Poetic Invention
• an expansion of Trobar clus, which focused on the virtuosic ability of the poet to use a large range of vocabulary and metric forms (used by Arnault Daniel)

William IX D’Aquitaine – Ab la dolchor del temps novel

• Ab la dolchor del temps novel faiis li bosc, e li anchel chanton, chascous en lor lari, segon lo vers del novel chan; adonc extra ben c’om s’ais d’acho don hom a plus talan.
• Equer me membra d’un mati que nos fizes de guerra fi, e que m donet un don tan gran, sa drudari e son anel:
  me las Deus viure tan sia mas manta voe so marcel.

Memory in Troubadoric Poetry

• 1 – Memory of Love (memory of the day in which the poet saw the lady, or of the moment she gave him her ring, or of the passion they shared, memory of how the lovers first loved each other)
• 2 – Memory of a Love far Away (Amor de Lonh)
• 3 – Memory of Vows or Promises (kept or broken)
• 4 – Memory as the result of a process of knowledge that starts with the eyes and arrives to the heart
• 5 – Memory of Time – memory of the spring, of youth, of the days of love
• 6 – Memory of the writer (troubador or troubatriz) to the Lady or the Lord (who is forgetting them, their love, their promises)
• 7 – Memory of the Lady – it enhances the lover, it makes the lover a better person
• 8 – Memory of the times of the Troubadours
Amor de Lonh: Jaufre Rudel – Lanquan li Jorn son Long en May

- Temporal setting: late Spring (long days – birds singing)
- Bring memory of the Love far away

Lanquan li jorn son lorn e may
M'es helbs doua charis d'auzelhs de lonh,
E quan mi say partiz de lay,
Rememba'ns d'un' amor de lonh.
Vau de talan embronx e elis
Si que chans ni flors d'albespis
No-m valon plus que fyvernls gelat.

- Insistence on the word Lonh (far away)
- The lover is like a pilgrim

During May, when the days are long,
I admire the song of the birds from far away
and when I have gone away from there,
I remember a love far away.
I go scowling, with my head down
so much that songs and hawthorn flowers
aren't better, to me, than the frozen Winter.

Jaufre Rudel – Lanquan li Jorn son long en May


Bernart de Ventadorn: When Tender Grass and Leaves Appear

- Born around 1120 – first fell in love and wrote songs for the
  Viscountess of Ventadorn; then after being discovered, left for the court
  of Normandy, and fell in love for Eleanor of Aquitaine and since then he
  wrote for her.
- He uses all the tropes of the troubadours:
  Nature at springtime
  Birds singing (nightingale)
  Love torments the lover
  Endurance of the Lover – love is augmented by the sight
  Secrecy – the power of the words (singing)
  Chiasm: sorrow and pain vs honor and grace
  Tales and Storytelling endanger the secrecy of love
  Time flies (Horace, i, 11)
- Last stanza (Comedy) – the lover send his song to the Lady

Peire d’Alvernhe: Nightingale, for Me take flight

- Part of the golden age of Troubadours. He was active around 1180, he
  was not of noble origins, became probably a canon first, then left the
  church to become a jonglar. He sang at the courts of Castile, Barcelona
  and Toulouse.
- He was a follower of the school of Trobar clus and paid close attention
  to the structure of his poems and his word choices
- His poetry is described as “a flawless joining of sound, rhythm, meaning
  and association… nobility and purity of style. In this technical mastery,
  coupled with a kind of artistic self-consciousness, that lay his innovative
  role (Bonner)
- Poem addressed to the bird. 1st part of the poem (point of view of the
  poet) the task of the bird/song is to remember the poet to the lady, to
  remind him to her
- Mas de mi ll sovenhs – Remember me to her
- 2nd part of the poem (point of view of the Lady) – assures the bird of her
  love for the poet and sends the bird back to him.
Comtessa de Dia: I’m forced to Sing

- Beatriz de Dia: “The Countess of Dia was the wife of Lord Guillem de Petieu, a beautiful and good lady. And she fell in love with Lord Raimbaut d'Aurenga and composed many good songs about him” (Razo)
- Open and Blunt Troubadour Style
- Sensual and not sublimating – uses same tropes as male troubadours – expresses jealousy and sarcasm - knows romances
- She’s forced to sing by her lover's lack of courtesy and mercy
- He lies and treats her disdainfully
- She reminds him of the stories (memory of literature)
- She marvels at his arrogance (pride)
- She reminds him of their love at first
- **E membre vos vos fol comensamens de nost’amor** (Remember how we loved at first)
- She urges him to remember his vows
- **E membre vos de nostres covinens** (Recall our vows)
- Song as Messenger

Arnault Daniel: Now High and Low; Where Leaves Renew

- Known as the master of the Trobar Clus
- Of noble birth, educated in the klers, he abandoned his letters to become a jongleur and began writing a kind of poetry with difficult rhymes, which is why his songs are not easy to be understood or learnt (Razo)
- Uses the tropes of troubadours but with a different style
- Clearly adopts the Aristotelian theory of knowledge
- Eyes ➔ perception ➔ love (memory)
- meta-literary (Love’s book)
- The memory of the lady is enhancing – ennobling and bringing closer to God
- Signs his poem in the congedo

More Troubadours: Arnault de Marueill and Guillem de Cabestanh

- Two conventional troubadours both very good at poetry
- **Fair is to me** starts with the temporal setting (Spring, April / May) and the classical birds (nightingale sings – all the birds sing in their language)
- the lover cannot keep silent the Memory of the Lady
- Memory of happiness and joy with the lady
- last stanza is a typical description of Midons in which the poet sings her praise (Fair Lady - white, full of courtesy, golden brown hair)
- **That Day, My Lady!** Starts with the set up of the initial moment of love (time and day) and the phenomenology of it it (starts with the smile/glance)
- Continues with her fair speech (Rhetoric of Love – Adloquium)
- Remarks the exclusivity of love (the poet cannot love any other lady)
- Reminds the lady of her vows (memory of the vows of love)
- Ends with a final address to the Lady

Guiraut Riquier: Memory of the Troubadours

- Known as the Last of the Troubadours. Born around 1230 and active between 1254-1292. He was in touch with the court of Spain, in particular with Alfonso X, the Wise.
- He sings the end of an era.
- It would be best if I refrained from singing:
- The poet heart is full of sadness
- the poet is born behind his time
- Memory has died (Forgetfulness) – \`Es al plus del tot oblidat
- A double memory of courtly love, and the troubadours but also a Christian memory of God- the new Christians are far removed from God’s commandments and from love
Next Class – Memory in the Imperial Court

• Poetry at the Norman Court of Sicily
• Poetry at the Court of Fredrick II
• readings are already on Classes V2

• Think about how the role of memory changes when Love poetry changes environment
• From a feudal court to an imperial one
• Love becomes more sublimated, more etereal, and the woman becomes like an Angel…
• Memory as still a part of the Aristotelian theory of Knowledge
• Importance of science for love poetry…