

Donne ferme:
Refusal and Self-Possession
in *Decameron* 1.5 and 4.1

A common, but underappreciated, theme binds the pages of Boccaccio's *Decameron*: fourteenth-century women's troubled status as both person and property. The author's critique begins early, in the Proem, where he writes of the constricted space women are forced to occupy most of their lives, "nel piccolo circuito delle loro camere racchiuse" (Proemio.10). When women in the text step outside of that space, moving about and making decisions, their gestures of self-fashioning implicitly enact diverse approaches to a sense of agency.¹ But what about women who stay in place? What about women who do not leave the home at all? The stories of the Marchioness of Monferrato and Ghismonda in *novelle* 1.5 and 4.1, respectively, provide critical approaches to these questions. Constrained in place and immobilized, the stories' central characters are nevertheless able to produce space, heterotopian space, all on their own and, most importantly, from within the home, the body and the realm of social reproduction.

My intention is to consider how women's stasis, refusal and assertions of subjectivity are figured spatially in these texts and throughout the *Decameron*. Of course, Boccaccio's text has a great number of female characters who have a clear sense of self, are capable of being independent and are willing to take matters into their own hands. My focus here is specifically on what we might consider a kind of nascent self-possession that was inherently transgressive for women in the fourteenth-century context. If we consider female characters who are essentially and syntactically rendered as the

¹ Considerations of women's agency abound in contemporary criticism regarding the *Decameron*, particularly due to the innovative scholarship of Teodolinda Barolini, Marilyn Migiel, Roberta Morosini, Michael Sherberg and others.

property of men, like Ghismonda and the Marchioness, their embodied acts of self-possession take on a profound quality of radical disobedience. I am particularly interested in the way in which their assertions of agency emerge from within that person/property status, a conflicted dynamic of value and non-value that creates what Leopoldina Fortunati describes as a “specific and irresolvable contradiction” (10). In a diegetic (and historical) context where gender relations are founded upon this dynamic and the subjugation of women, critical engagement with *novelle* 1.5 and 4.4 reveals a paradox of power held and expressed by women in the *Decameron* that necessarily emerges from that contradiction.

When I refer to self-possession, I am considering the root of the word: an ability to hold, occupy and own the self that is fundamentally paradoxical. In regard to spatial production, my argument refers specifically to Michel Foucault’s definition of spatial heterotopias and Bertrand Westphal’s description of transgression in *Geocriticism: Real and Fictional Spaces*. Transgression, according to Westphal, is a process that “accompanies movement and motive” but is less attributable to individual responsibility and more like “continental drift, the shock of geological plates” (46). The motivated transgression of women’s movement in the *Decameron* is, for this reason, inherently collective, and Roberta Morosini’s study of the “hybrid” Mediterranean in Boccaccio’s text illuminates that expansiveness through a geopolitical lens. In “What a Difference A Sea Makes,” Morosini asks to what extent mobility might be “only an illusion” for some women travelers, but nonetheless an opportunity for awareness and transformation (72).² At the same time, Westphal’s theory leads us to a conception of transgression that happens under the surface and is even more permanent as a result, like the shifting of continents. Stasis, firmness and immobility are more dynamic than they seem, especially if we evaluate transgression from below, not above. Most importantly, interconnectedness is key to any refusal’s significance; the transgression of just one woman in one *novella* is never isolated or spontaneous.

Michel Foucault offers further clarity on this spatial logic of transgression. In his discourse on heterotopias, he defines them as

² Morosini’s spatial insights on mobility, gender and hybridity in the *Decameron* are what have inspired this essay, especially in regard to my engagement with Westphal and the notion of transgressivity.

actual places that contrast the ‘no-placeness’ of utopias: real and culturally embedded locations that simultaneously reflect, contest and reverse the relations they represent. Examples abound: cemeteries, theaters, museums, libraries, bath houses. Specifically, Foucault distinguishes “crisis heterotopias,” sacred or forbidden spaces reserved for individuals in crisis (adolescents, menstruating women, the elderly) in “so-called primitive societies,” from “heterotopias of deviation,” such as prisons and psychiatric hospitals, which emerge in so-called modernity (179). Yet regardless of origin or function, heterotopias are “designed into the very institution of society” even when they are “utterly different” from all the emplacements that are represented [*réfléchis*] by them (178).

As a briefly sketched and deliberately fragmentary concept, Foucault’s idea of the heterotopia becomes increasingly slippery the more one engages with it. Peter Johnson’s critical genealogy of the term illuminates the absolutism that troubles Foucault’s formulation, as he “sets heterotopias against a backdrop of a static of whole ‘society’” (793). One could posit, for instance, that almost anything might be described as a heterotopia. I find, however, that this is a strength of the concept: an analytical difficulty that encourages spatial, dialectical thinking. Part of the unsettling joy of heterotopias lies in realizing just how broadly the concept applies and embracing the “discontinuity and changeability of existence” (794) it makes visible.

If we consider the space created by the *brigata* after their departure from plague-stricken Florence, Foucault’s notion of the garden as “a sort of blissful and universalizing heterotopia” comes vividly to mind. Thinking heterotopically allows us to see the “other” spaces created by women in the *Decameron* as distinct from utopias, *loci amoeni* or ordinary places. A utopia is, definitionally, a no-place; a *locus amoenus* recalls at once an “antico *topos* greco-romano [...] in cui il processo di *imitatio* ebbe luogo” (Bregni 12) and, as Aldo Scaglione puts it, a “compromise” between city and wilderness, “between reason and the forces of the subconscious” (64). The heterotopia refuses these characteristics by simultaneously mirroring, distorting, unsettling and inverting other social spaces. Rather than applying the concept axiomatically as a label for spaces that are radically other, I adopt a heuristic approach. In the *Decameron*, heterotopias, especially those shaped by women, emerge as dy-

namic and contested sites, though not entirely separate from society, even in their deviance. Elsewhere, Foucault remarks that the Middle Ages are characterized by their “hierarchized ensemble of place” (176). If we read women’s refusals in the *Decameron* as collective, rather than merely individual acts of transgression, their re-configuration of social space disrupts that hierarchy. Still, we would be mistaken to view these heterotopias as wholly emancipatory sites of resistance. What heterotopian thinking ultimately reveals is the dynamism of the critical instabilities and tensions generated by women’s frictional engagements with space in the *Decameron*.

My spatial approach identifies Ghismonda and the Marchioness’ actions as troubled but generative affirmations of self-possession that are expressed from within and underneath. Furthermore, considerations of their refusal, immobility and spatial production can reimagine our conception of self-possession itself. Given my focus on refusal, I additionally aim to construct my argument unconventionally, engaging critically with the subversion I discuss instead of attempting to address the topic of feminism in the *Decameron* with illusory objectivity. The violence suffered by the women of that period was not intrinsically the result of submissive acceptance. I am not arguing that the optimal path towards social change is ‘turning the other cheek’ and ‘changing things from the inside,’ or that women in the *Decameron* exemplify how “only non-violence can conquer violence” (Cervigni 452). I also refuse to delineate Boccaccio’s myriad of narratives as definitively ‘feminist’ or ‘non-feminist,’ although the *Decameron* is certainly a rich and dynamic text that invites feminist criticism. My hope is that this essay can fulfill what Sharon Kinoshita and Jason Jacobs describe as a necessary re-attunement to the “polyphony” (185) of the *Decameron*’s contentious, tumultuous and vibrant historical world.

I intend to focus on the tensions produced by women’s subversive refusals of subjugation in Boccaccio’s text. Considerable historical and anthropological studies on Europe in the Middle Ages have pointed out that men traditionally exercised power in the public sphere and that women, who generally lacked authority, sometimes exercised “limited, but significant power in the private sphere” (Fleming 32). As we see in the *Decameron*, however, women’s assertions of agency are sometimes able to shape events in both public and private spheres of society. *Decameron* 1.5 and 4.1 are notable

examples of stationary and constrained female characters who decidedly assert their self-possession in the private sphere in order to articulate and externalize their agency. First, I argue that the Marchioness in 1.5 structures her self-actualization inside a frame of immobility. Left at home while her husband is “oltremare” and characterized only through this absent figure, she cleverly refuses the King’s advances and verbally asserts her own agency (and the agency of all women). While the story of Ghismonda in 4.1 is considerably more famous, I focus on her burial request as an understudied but deeply significant and public reclamation of the body as a contested space. A number of double-edged potentialities reveal themselves within both narratives, structured by the constraints of Boccaccio’s depicted feudal world but independently producing tensions and fractures beneath the surface. Grasping these texts together shows that freedom and constraint are definitionally entangled, that self-possession of men in the *Decameron* are defined by the dispossession of women, and that women can empower themselves and destabilize this framework uniquely because of their position in it.

Stationary Refusal

In Fiammetta’s narration of 1.5, the plot revolves around its protagonist, the tactful Marchioness of Monferrato who successfully rejects the King of France’s intention to seduce her while her husband, the Marquess, is away at sea. The tale has received relatively little critical attention, yet existing scholarship reveals it as a rich site for examining female rhetorical agency. Salvatore Luongo reads the Marchioness as a “soggetto virtuoso, assennato e soprattutto estremamente attivo” (72), whose rhetorical skill drives the plot. For Luongo, the *novella*’s parodic deformation of its oft-analyzed subtexts exemplifies Boccaccio’s “rinnovamento delle forme narrative” (84), a formal renewal that one could argue mirrors the transgressions of its female protagonist. Michelangelo Picone, for instance, highlights the Marchioness’ direct rhetorical confrontation with the King as an element of the plot that distinguishes Boccaccio’s adaptation, moving beyond the strategy of postponement to “affrontamento diretto e immediato [...] sul comune terreno dell’abilità linguistica e retorica” (91). Dante della Terza’s reading additionally

notes how the interrelationship between Fiammetta's story and Dioneo's preceding tale form a "chiasmus" (135). As a response to Dioneo's suggestive provocation in 1.4, Fiammetta's use of the key word *forza* in her preamble signals her intent to highlight the Marchioness' clever retort to the King's advances as evidence of language's "impressive power to transform human behavior" (136). Brittany Asaro affirms this emphasis on linguistic affect, noting Boccaccio's use of *amor de lonh* — the King's infatuation through hearsay — as a reinforcement of language's transformative force (99).

Yet these readings overlook the tale's emphasis on action, not just words. The rhetorical duel between the Marchioness and the King begins, after all, with deeds before speech. Like Melchisedech in 1.3, the Marchioness is able to recognize a trap laid out for her right away when the King invites himself over for dinner. Her foresight displaces words that might otherwise ensnare her. By planning carefully, cleverly and proactively, she disrupts the hierarchy of power that frames her interaction with the King. In the preamble, Fiammetta states that the Marchioness "reprime il folle amore del re di Francia" with her "leggiadre parolette" (1.5.1). The verb used to explain the effect of the Marchioness' elegant way of communicating, *reprimere*, already evokes a spatial association: an act of squashing, repressing or containing something. In other words, the King crosses a boundary, and she checks him.

Still, despite being the one who propels the plot and prompts the *mise-en-scène* of the story, the Marchioness is first characterized through stasis. Fiammetta begins by describing the Marquess of Monferrato's military prowess abroad while his wife, the Marchioness, remains similarly unnamed as "sua donna" (1.5.6), primarily interpellated by her husband's title and political position. This kind of backstory is not uncommon. In the *Decameron*, we can easily observe a theme of women who wait for men to return from various travels. The subject, for instance, inspires the wager in 2.9 regarding the fidelity of merchant wives. Bernabò is tricked into believing that his spouse back home, Zinevra, has been unfaithful to him because (ironically), "le femine sono più mobili" (2.9.15). In the Marchioness' case, her husband is overseas participating in the Crusades as "gonfaloniere della Chiesa" (1.5.5). While men in the *Decameron* travel long distances and adventure constantly, women are contrastingly permanent fixtures, protecting the home and

(sometimes) their chastity. But at the same time that the Marchioness' character is filtered through her husband's description, their parallel construction subtly sidelines him:

fu per un cavalier detto non esser sotto le stelle una simile coppia
a quella del marchese e della sua donna: però che, quanto tra'
cavalieri era d'ogni virtù il marchese famoso, tanto la donna tra
tutte l'altre donne del mondo era bellissima e valorosa. (1.5.6)

With the comparative conjunction “quanto” in “quanto tra' cavalieri era d'ogni virtù,” we become aware of a scale of exceptionality wherein the Marquess' paragon of virtue “tra' cavalieri” pales next to the Marchioness' beauty and valor that outshine “tutte l'altre donne del mondo.” The bait-and-switch of a story that begins with a focus on the male characters but primarily describes the actions of the Marchioness comically individuates her. The narrative zone of Marchioness is open, coherent and detailed. Her husband and the King seem cursorily defined in comparison.

Framed by her home and the social obligation of a meal she must prepare for a man of higher status, the Marchioness uses these conditions to structure her refusal. When the King of France hears about the Marchioness and her beauty, he plans for his armada to embark at Genoa and contrives a visit to her home, betting that her husband's absence will “mettere a effetto il suo disio” (1.5.7). The Marchioness has no illusions about his intentions. She graciously accepts when the King invites himself over for a meal, but plans a feast of only chicken meat as a way to both concede to his excessive demands and defuse his advances. Palma Pina notes that the King's desire for a meal is a thinly veiled metaphor for his “intent to conquer, possess, and devour” (151) the Marchioness. Although the King is more powerful, more mobile and very capable of imposing his desires, the Marchioness acts upon her limited domestic authority and silently operates from within her home and immobile status as the wife of a powerful man “oltremare” (1.5.5). The sequence of actions she takes to plan the feast occur ‘inside’ that position:

La donna, *savia e avveduta*, lietamente rispose che questa l'era somma grazia sopra ogn'altra e che egli fosse il ben venuto. E appresso *entrò in pensiero* che questo volesse dire, che uno così fatto re, non essendovi il marito di lei, la venisse a visitare; *né la 'ngannò in questo l'aviso*, cioè che la fama della sua bellezza il vi traesse. Nondimeno, come valorosa donna dispostasi a onorarlo, fattisi chiamar di que' buoni uomini che rimasi v'erano, a

ogni cosa opportuna con lor consiglio fece ordine dare, ma il convito e le vivande *ella sola* volle ordinare. E fatte senza indugio quante galline nella contrada erano ragunare, di quelle sole varie vivande divisò a' suoi cuochi per lo convito reale. (1.5.9-10, emphasis mine)

First, the Marchioness reflects within, “entrò in pensiero,” to surmise the King’s intentions. She is aware of her position and does not kid herself, “né la ’ngannò in questo l’aviso,” with any delusions about her beauty. These words, among others, indicate a specifically intrinsic process of discernment. When the Marchioness summons the remaining servants in the castle to begin preparations for the dinner, she reserves all decisions about the order and content of dishes for herself, “ella sola” (1.5.10). Every hen in the countryside is brought into the castle, the King’s room is furnished and the dinner table is set, all to construct a social reality and produce a theatrical space she can control.

Finally, the moment of truth arises. Sitting at the table for course after course of chicken dishes, the King finally asks, “Dama, nascono in questo paese solamente galline senza gallo alcuno?” (1.5.14). He means to inquire if the Marchioness’ country has only hens and not a single “cock,” or “gallo.”³ At this point, the Marchioness becomes certain about her read of the situation. She responds to the King’s question with a curt “no,” and haughtily adds that women, however, are “fatte qui come altrove” (1.5.15). In her case, speaking truth to power means voicing the reality of power’s covert function. If the Marchioness’ home is a stage for the King’s consumption, her witty reply effectively closes the velvet curtain. The same word-of-mouth *amor de lonh* that sparked the King’s desire becomes a framework for the Marchioness’ refusal. Suddenly, it seems that the King is the vulnerable one. He can no longer hide behind metaphors and is forced to reckon with the meaning of his own words, flatly rejected and regarded from a distance. Marilyn Migiel signals the import of their interaction, writing that “for the very first time in the *Decameron*, a woman uses her signifying abilities to achieve what she desires [...] freedom from unwanted sexual attention” (39). In essence, the Marchioness recognizes the metaphorical space in which she has been placed and operates from

³ Salvatore Luongo notes that, surrounding the question’s sexual connotation, the word “gallo” is additionally a stand-in for ‘Frenchman’ as in, “appartenente al popolo dei Galli” (81).

within it to convert that metaphor to direct meaning, denying any possible open-endedness. Like being placed on a stage for consumption and effectively closing the curtain, the Marchioness maintains codes of power and hospitality while reinforcing division. She does not refuse to play a part but creates a heterotopic space where she can play a part that enacts refusal.

At the same time, however, there are limitations to the Marchioness' use of figurative language. Migiel argues that the Marchioness produces a message about women and difference (women are fundamentally the same even when dressed differently, like roast chickens in different sauces), but by mapping women onto "alimentary and bestial semantic fields" (40). Metaphorical equations of women, food and animals perhaps deny the same subjectivity the Marchioness aims to affirm. She is, also, ultimately maintaining her virtue as a faithful, honorable woman. That said, the Marchioness heterotopically inverts the King's imposition onto her space (the home, Genoa, the dining room, etc.) by unveiling his metaphor and limiting its implications. One could argue, as Migiel does, that the Marchioness' refusal situates the female speaker as "someone who may not use figurative language to talk about sex" (40), but we might also interpret her use of the verb *fare* (as in, "fatta qui") as a statement that produces a sexual metaphor equal to the King's. In 2.9 and 5.10, for instance, the verb is a pointed metaphor that structures sex as work, activity and deed (Barolini 301).

The Marchioness' refusal to engage carries an explicitly spatial and geographic meaning. Her response warns the King that he ought to act 'here' just as he would elsewhere. The words she speaks aloud simultaneously maintain social boundaries and cross spatial ones. Her desired freedom from manipulation is posited as a shared desire held by other women, in other places, not just her own home. In this way, the Marchioness operates both within and beyond the parameters of her position. Despite her lesser status and stationary function as a wife-at-home, the Marchioness establishes herself as an instructive force with a kind of mobile agency. The King constructs an excuse to visit her home and she acquiesces but constructs the space he will enter. When he tries to overstep a boundary, the Marchioness harnesses him back into the controlled space she has also been made to occupy. Her refusal does more than just evade seduction; the Marchioness' refusal affirms and extends the

agency of women outside herself, her home and her locale. Ultimately, the King decides to depart earlier than planned and thanks the Marchioness for the “onor ricevuto da lei” (1.5.17) as he leaves. How can we interpret this ‘received’ honor that the King figuratively takes with him to Genoa? The Marchioness’ words firmly stand in place but have an impact that travels. Most importantly, the idea that women are ‘made’ “come altrove” (1.5.15) raises a number of questions that merit further discussion: questions about gender, the enclosure of marriage and family and the social construction of reputation.

Enclosed Refusal

Novella 4.1 is one of the more famous stories in the *Decameron*, and for good reason. The tragic love story between Ghismonda and Guiscardo and the insidious love of Ghismonda’s father Prince Tancredi of Salerno make for a riveting plot that is dense with imagery and symbolic significance. Not only does the *novella* come just after Boccaccio’s authorial defense in the introduction to Day Four; the story exemplifies the very conditions that inspire the *Decameron*’s stated goal of consoling women in love. The feeling of being stuck in one’s room is only one dimension of the threat of violence that pervades a world where “patriarchal authority reigns uncontested” (Ferme 147). And although all of the characters in Ghismonda’s tale face tragic consequences, the story articulates the central theme of Day Four, that “love, as part of nature, cannot be stopped by human will” (Levenstein 325).

Some of the most-cited scholarship on 4.1, however, centers on Tancredi’s motivations. Tobias Foster Gittes’ reading of Day Four in the *Lectura Boccaccii* series, for instance, surveys the existing critical debate in order to reject the long-standing, somewhat myopic, hypothesis that Tancredi’s violence is motivated by an incestuous desire for his own daughter. Gittes finds this to be a caricaturing reduction and argues instead that Tancredi’s cruelty is the product of anxieties surrounding aging and threatened authority. It is “premeditation, not passion” that is the hallmark of Tancredi’s method, a carefully scripted *intermezzo* in a drama crafted to “reassert control over his child’s social and erotic life” (32). Turning to Ghismonda, Gaia Fiorinelli reads the tale through Aristotle and the *Nicomachean Ethics*, showing how 4.1’s heroine generates a sense

of agency on the ethical plane. In the words Ghismonda uses to express her love as a conscious decision, she recalls the technical, rhetorical language often denied to women in other narratives and sublimates it “come il frutto di una *electio*, ovvero di un ‘diliberato consiglio’ che è esito di ragione” (214). Olivia Holmes, in the recently published *Boccaccio and Exemplary Literature: Ethics and Mischief in the Decameron*, ultimately situates the tragedy in an ideological clash between models of nobility: Tancredi’s fixed, hereditary class identity versus Ghismonda’s “stilnovistic definition of nobility as dependent on character and conferred by love” (159). As a result, Holmes argues, the tale’s lesson emerges less as a warning against feeling and more as a critique of attempts to “suppress and control” it. Finally, while many critics have taken an interest in the various spaces of the *novella* (Ghismonda’s bedroom,⁴ the *grotta* that Guiscardo enters to meet her⁵ and the garden below⁶), comparatively little has been said about the burial that occurs in the story’s final moments. When the two lovers are buried together, their side-by-side interment is the result of a request that comes from Ghismonda and is fulfilled by her grieving father. This dark, enclosed and heterotopian space imagined by the text produces spatial and temporal meaning that transcends traditional interpretation.

There are three obvious and principal locations in *Decameron* 4.1: Ghismonda’s bedroom in the palace, the garden beneath her bedroom window and the *grotta*, a small hidden cave that leads to a secret stairwell. The garden evokes the social life of the palace, one that exists beyond Ghismonda’s room and contrasts the enclosure of Ghismonda’s private chambers.⁷ The *grotta*, on the other hand, is a rock orifice, obscured by wildly growing brambles and plants. When Ghismonda, tired of her status as an unmarried widow retained by her father, pursues a relationship with her father’s page, Guiscardo, she invites him to meet her there. The long-forgotten *grotta*, with its barred gate and “spiraglio” (shaft) covered in weeds,

⁴ See Wallace’s spatial reading of Ghismonda’s *boudoir* (54-56).

⁵ See Cottino-Jones for her analysis of the *grotta* and *giardino*’s function as images that represent conflicting forces of the *novella* (70-79).

⁶ See Levenstein for a reading of the garden of 4.4 and the garden where the *brigata* tells stories on Day Four (320-28).

⁷ Cottino-Jones, through this reading, evaluates the gardens in the *novelle* and frame story of the Fourth Day as ambiguous symbols that represent love’s fulfillment, escape and destruction (78-79).

suggests that Ghismonda's independence and sensuality have been similarly neglected. Guiscardo's leather-clad descent into the *grotta* suggests a not-so-indirect symbolism, possibly even "straight metaphor" (Almansi 141). At the same time, the *grotta's* unrestricted growth foils the image of a carefully arranged palatial garden. Marga Cottino-Jones notes that the *grotta* and *giardino* evince conflicting forces in the *novella*: "love based on personal rather than social criteria [...] in opposition to a rigidly structured society denying individual freedom of choice" (70). Ghismonda's bedroom, with its two entrances from the *grotta* and *giardino*, as a result becomes an "intermediate realm" (Wallace 55). When the lovers consummate their relationship, they are at once inside and outside the public domain of courtly society. Eventually, Tancredi stops by for a visit in Ghismonda's room, somewhat suspiciously decides to hide there, "come [...] si fosse nascoso" (4.1.17), and falls asleep. He wakes to the sounds and sights of the couple having sex, opts to remain hidden until they are done and then escapes through the window to climb down to the garden. This moment is an important point of discourse, especially given the often illicit function of windows throughout the *Decameron*: the married woman in 3.3 invites her lover to climb up to her window; in 4.2 Friar Alberto escapes through the window; and Rossiglione's wife in 4.9 throws herself out of a window after being tricked into eating her lover's heart.⁸ Considered together, the window, the *giardino*, the *grotta* and the *boudoir* all figure transgressive desire as intrinsically spatial.

Hovering outside these clear diegetic emplacements, however, is a tomb, mentioned only in the last sentence of the text:

Così doloroso fine ebbe l'amor di Guiscardo e di Ghismonda, come udito avete: li quali Tancredi dopo molto pianto e tardi pentuto della sua crudeltà, con general dolore di tutti i salernetani, onorevolmente amenduni in un medesimo sepolcro gli fé seppellire. (4.1.62)

The story's path to that tomb is marked by conflicts of possession. Guido Almansi notes that Tancredi and Ghismonda are characterized as mutually dependent from the early paragraphs of the *novella* (137). Ghismonda remains unnamed until much later on

⁸ Guido Almansi also argues that Tancredi's leap from the window is an indirect representation of the character's physical arousal, in alignment with the story's intimation of his incest (144).

and her character is initially shaped by her father's power and identity, similar to the Marchioness of Monferrato in 1.5. The framed characterization of 4.1, in a similar vein, emphasizes the strength of their relationship. As much as Ghismonda is filtered through the description of her father's love as "tanto teneramente amata" (4.1.4), Tancredi is also described in relation to his daughter and "l'amor che egli le portava" (4.1.5). But when Tancredi catches Ghismonda's lover in the *grotta* and awkwardly castigates Guiscardo for what he has done to his "cose" (4.1.22), this censure gives the impression of a complaint about property damage, syntactically bound to Tancredi's identity. Tancredi, almost crying, tells his daughter's lover:

Guiscardo, la mia benignità verso te non avea meritato l'oltraggio e la vergogna la quale nelle mie cose fatta m'hai, sì come io oggi vidi con gli occhi miei. (4.1.22).

There are other stories in the *Decameron* where fathers discover their daughter's sexuality (like Andreuola in 4.6, or Currado Malaspina, who discovers his daughter *in flagrante* with Madama Beritola's son in 2.6), but the absence of any religious moralism in Tancredi's speech emphasizes the element of ownership that troubles his dynamic with his daughter. When Tancredi speaks to Ghismonda in her room, his possessiveness is further reflected in their conversation and conceived spatially.

Ghismunda, parendomi conoscere la tua virtù e la tua onestà, mai non mi sarebbe potuto cader nell'animo, quantunque mi fosse stato detto, se io co' miei occhi non l'avessi veduto, che tu di sottoposti a alcuno uomo, se tuo marito stato non fosse, avessi, non che fatto, ma pur pensato; di che io in questo poco di rimanente di vita che la mia vecchiezza mi serba, sempre sarò dolente, di ciò ricordandomi. (4.1.26)

The Prince confesses to being tormented by the image of his daughter "sottopost[sta]," literally "underneath" a man who (adding insult to injury) is of a lesser social status.

Ghismonda refuses that dynamic but remains aware of the feudal social conditions that flatten her subjectivity. In her first response to Tancredi, she clearly states an awareness of her position,

having a somewhat agented, but fragile, social status like other widows in the *Decameron*.⁹ While she lives a life of “diligatezze” (4.1.5) and has long accepted her father’s slowness to remarry her, Ghismonda still desires a full life without subjugation. This desire is not unlike the expressed wish of Bartolomea (2.10), who desires only what might be considered “a woman’s lot” (Barolini 298) but is unhappy with her marriage to her repressive husband, Ricciardo di Chinzica. Tancredi takes Guiscardo prisoner and Ghismonda grieves but composes herself. Aware of the mechanics of her world, she surmises that her lover is probably already dead. In her confrontation with Tancredi, she begins by calling her father by his proper name, deflating the Prince’s authority. Instead of begging her father to release Guiscardo, she firmly maintains her desire and love for him without apology. Her speech flows logically from the naturalness of human desire to a discourse about nobility, judgment and her belief that all people are equal, “con iguali potenzie, con iguali vertù create” (4.1.39). Finally, after this extensive monologue (4.1.31-45), Ghismonda invites her father to resort to cruelty: “usa in me la tua crudeltà” (44). Ghismonda tells her father:

se tu nella tua estrema vecchiezza a far quello che giovane non usasti, cioè a in crudelir, se’ disposto, usa in me la tua crudeltà, la quale a alcun priego porgerti disposta non sono, sì come in prima cagion di questo peccato, se peccato è; per ciò che io t’acerto che quello che di Guiscardo fatto avrai o farai, se di me non fai il simigliante, le mie mani medesime il faranno. (4.1.44)

Crucially, Ghismonda threatens that either Tancredi will destroy her as he did Guiscardo, or she will do it herself with her own hands. This moment is critical for its reflection and inversion: a premonition of the heterotopia Ghismonda creates. One could argue that Tancredi’s imagined utopia, a no-place where he alone governs the fate of his bloodline, is ultimately realized through its subversion: the essential negativity of Ghismonda’s act distorts his vision with reality. With this, she sends Tancredi away. The additional irony of possession that comes after this speech is that Ghismonda’s rejection “reveals her to be her father’s daughter” (Wallace 57) in practice and personality. When she accepts that her body has a right to desire and is unavoidably within her father’s domain of control,

⁹ The women in 2.2 and 8.4 are examples of widowed women with somewhat affirmed agency through caretaking and their deception of men, respectively.

Ghismonda at once rigidly enacts the logic of feudal aristocracy and actualizes an unshakeable personhood.

Operating with a full understanding of feudal symbols and social structures, Ghismonda is able to exact her willpower and reclaim her subjectivity. Despite (or in response to) the force of Ghismonda's speech, Tancredi has Guiscardo murdered and sends Ghismonda his heart in a golden chalice. She recognizes this symbol, shared between *novelle* 4.1 and 4.9, while immediately and unflinchingly remarking that anything "men degna che d'oro" would have been the wrong choice for Guiscardo's "sepoltura" (4.1.49). This statement already foreshadows the burial request that comes later. Her father's message and choice of vessel has been made well, she notes, before weeping for the first time in the story and filling the cup with her tears. Ghismonda's situation recalls *novella* 4.4, wherein feudal codes of conduct and young love are in conflict. But unlike Gerbino, Ghismonda understands the value of a symbol and acts accordingly. She empties a prepared vessel of poison into the chalice and drinks it without hesitation, then lies in bed to await her death. Just as her father forced her to see Guiscardo's flesh exposed with her "occhi della fronte" (51), Ghismonda knows her father will inevitably find her in bed with her lover's heart just above her own. She lies down beneath her lover once again, "sottoposta," and beneath her father's gaze. By refusing to live on in submission to her father's cruelty, Ghismonda dramaturgically orchestrates a space of discovery that, crucially, emerges from below and beneath. Disempowered, dying and in stasis, Ghismonda sets the stage for her own revolution in an ultimate act of self-possession, embodying the denied self-actualization she most desires. The space she produces is inherently theatrical and similar to the *mise-en-scène* set by the Marchioness of Monferrato. Through deliberate spatial composition, both women reassert power over their public and private lives.

Ghismonda's *mise-en-scène*, however, is fleeting compared to the permanent space she creates through her burial request. Just before she dies, Ghismonda rejects her father's tears and asks him instead, if he has any love for his daughter, that his "ultimo don" be to unite her corpse with Guiscardo's body and to bury them together.

Ma pure, se niente di quello amore che già mi portasti ancora in te vive, per ultimo don mi concedi che, poi a grado non ti fu che io tacitamente e di nascoso con Guiscardo vivessi, che 'l mio

corpo col suo, dove che tu te l'abbi fatto gittare, morto palese
stea. (4.1.60)

In truth, even the phrase “burial request” diminishes the force of Ghismonda’s words that are ultimately a demand. Her statement’s grammatical construction is not a question at all. Instead, what she poses is a conditional sentence with a determinant that has been implicitly pronounced for the characters and the reader: Tancredi’s love for his daughter. That love may be ugly and tormented by possessiveness, but it is a given condition of both the beginning and end of *Decameron* 4.1. Unsurprisingly, Tancredi regrets his actions and has his daughter and her lover buried “onorevolmente amenduni in un medesimo sepolcro” (4.1.62). Michael Sherberg’s brief discussion of this conclusion considers the burial to be the result of Tancredi’s order, one that reasserts his power as “the ultimate arbiter of his daughter’s affective life” (230). This interpretation duly recognizes Tancredi’s authority. However, a more spatially informed reading reveals that Tancredi is the arbiter of his daughter’s *body*, not her life. Ghismonda understands that, in death, her body can be controlled and positioned by her father in ways it never could be while she lived. It is precisely this awareness that lends weight to her final words.

Although Ghismonda’s relationship was confined to private locales (the *grotta* and the bedroom), her burial with Guiscardo refuses any possible denial and forces transgression into the public sphere. She commits suicide not as a last resort, but because she recognizes that her own death will accomplish the transgressive production of space she desires. Within the tomb, Tancredi’s murder, Ghismonda’s autonomous romantic choices and her philosophy of human equality become permanently observable. Westphal, in his geocritical approach, writes that when transgression is permanent it “becomes a state” (46). The state of transgressivity that Ghismonda produces in 4.1 is deliberately generative and unmovable. The shared tomb with Guiscardo is therefore a physical and psychic heterotopian space where Ghismonda’s conflicted status as property and person is both represented and contested. Foucault specifically describes the cemetery as a highly heterotopian place to begin with, seeing that it exists because of the temporal discontinuity (or, heterochrony) that death constitutes for the individual, a “quasi eternity in which he perpetually dissolves and fades away”

(180). The tomb may be static, but the relation of memory, time and space within it evolves and connects the entire community. While the physical *sepulcro* remains underneath the ground, the cemetery is a space connected to all other emplacements and people in Ghismonda's society.¹⁰ This connectedness is indicated by the text when Tancredi grieves his daughter's death along with "tutti i salernetani" (4.1.62). Capitalizing upon her limited power in the private domain, Ghismonda speaks to Tancredi in her bedroom and requires him to bring that space, with its aforementioned status as a contested, intermediate realm, fully into the public sphere.

The shared tomb is also a socioeconomic refusal. First, while married couples were occasionally buried side-by-side in the Middle Ages, unmarried lovers were not granted this privilege because they had violated religious doctrine (Ferme 154). Ghismonda and Guiscardo's joint burial crosses this boundary set by Church laws and additionally breaches class boundaries: Ghismonda is the Prince of Salerno's daughter and Guiscardo is, in Tancredi's words, a young man of "vilissima condizione" (4.1.27). In 4.9, the story similar to 4.1 told by Filostrato, the people in Guardastagno's and Rosiglione's castles decide to bury the tragic lovers together as well, but this element of the story is possibly motivated by Filostrato's desire to defend hierarchies of space and class. Valerio Ferme argues that because Filostrato's story is deliberately similar to Fiammetta's, this critical difference suggests an argument for common burial as "a privilege" that should only be granted to aristocracy and lovers of equal status (155). The issue of death and burial courses through the *Decameron*. Three of the Day Four stories end with unmarried lovers being buried in the same tomb and in the introduction to the *Decameron*, Boccaccio's description of the plague notes the dissolution of social values, including traditional burial practices. We might understand the element of burial in Fiammetta's story as one that responds to that change. During the plague, the pervasive death and dissolution that ignored class hierarchy reinforced existing cultural shifts toward social mobility (Ferme 157). The story of Ghismonda and Guiscardo takes place before the rise

¹⁰ Foucault notes that up to the end of the eighteenth century, the cemetery was "placed in the very heart of the city, next to the church" (180). While *Decameron* 4.1 does not explicitly reference this, we can assume that the tomb has some kind of physical or metaphorical centrality to the city and people of Salerno.

of Florentine mercantile classes but presciently refuses class signifiers. Most importantly, Ghismonda's burial aligns with her socio-political values, reinforces her opinions about the naturalness of female desire for sex and proactively demands Guiscardo's individuality. Class miscegenation is transgressive in the world of the living, but Ghismonda is more concerned with the nobility of the soul. Her body may be within her father's feudal domain, but her selfhood is not. Within the spatial and social rigidity of burial practice, Ghismonda refuses the equally rigid structures of her father's palace and affirms her own self-possession.

Self-Possessed Refusal

From the frame narrative of the *Decameron* to the stories of Ghismonda and the Marchioness, the body is always a negotiation between subject and object, mobile and immobile, inside and out, self and society. Considering the body itself as a space of transformation is key to understanding the affect caused by women's refusal in Boccaccio's text. Reclaiming the physical body reclaims the social world. Foucault writes that heterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing that "isolates them and makes them penetrable at the same time" (183). This theory brings us to the space produced by women in 1.5 and 4.1, but also Boccaccio's introductory critique that aims to enter the home. His intended reader finds herself in the midst of a project that resists spatial limitations and adopts various positions and voices to imagine women's liberation. The chaos of the plague happens outside, so the changes effected by women of the *cornice* first occur inside and move outward, beginning with their decision to leave Florence. Kristina Marie Olson focuses on this conversation, the stark contrast between the "external raging of the Plague" and "the enclosure of Santa Maria Novella" (47). The limitation, however, is that the porous social and spatial boundaries of the plague are only temporary. Authoritarian control slackens and the *brigata* creates a new society away from the city, only to return and go their separate ways: the men return to their various activities, the women return to their homes. Megan Tomlinson notes that women of the *Decameron* who transgress through travel often only "exchange one man's authority for another," reinforcing the idea of women's position in the home (163). But outside of our typical spatial understanding of transgression

that primarily perceives limits and borders, resistance is possible in the very places we seek to define as “safe, controlled and patrolled” (Wolfreys 3). This brings us to immobile women and *donne ferme*.

In “*Le parole son femmine e i fatti sono maschi*,” Teodolinda Barolini considers issues of female enclosure and escape, paying close attention to the connotations of a woman who is *ferma* rather than *mobile*. Zinevra in 2.9 is a focal point: she counters the notion that women are *mobili*, in the sense of being “fickle, lacking in firmness of will,” and surprisingly counters that notion by literally “becoming mobile” (287). On the other hand, Barolini notes that her *mobilità* ultimately has the goal of returning to immobility when, after transforming into a man, she changes back into women’s clothes and goes home with her foolish and disloyal husband. The limitations of mobile women in the *Decameron* are the source of my focus on comparatively immobile women; Ghismonda and the Marchioness remain physically *ferme* but their firmly mediated refusals are deliberately mobile. Female solidarity and public discourse are derived uniquely from their static and constricted positions. Through a spatial lens, the contradictions of female mobility and immobility in the *Decameron* more broadly reveal a philosophy of gender equity that emphasizes the reality of conflict, not linear progress. Instead of depicting cut-and-dry feminist victories, Ghismonda and the Marchioness embody spatial tension. Their self-assuredness and self-possessiveness should not be misunderstood as perfect affirmations of female independence. While the *brigata*’s literal journey upward into the hills surrounding Florence could be construed as a physical and moral ascent (Smarr 167, cited in Levenstein 320), Jessica Levenstein argues that their dynamic more aptly enacts Boccaccio’s “depiction of a struggle, rather than an ascent.” Even (and especially) within enclosures of the body, home, tomb and society, women in the *Decameron* manage to grasp for their own sense of autonomy.

The significance of 1.5 and 4.1 regarding this struggle only becomes clearer when we consider their position in the frame story and the narrator of both *novelle*: Fiammetta. Marilyn Migiel points out that Fiammetta, like Dioneo, is crucial to the development of a

discourse about gender difference in the *Decameron* (30).¹¹ The *novelle* that both characters narrate on the First Day are notably the first stories to feature sex and innuendo. Dioneo's story (1.4) comes first and recounts the tale of a young woman who is seduced by a monk and abbot at a monastery. After he finishes narrating, the women of the *brigata* gently admonish Dioneo and tell him that such stories should not be told among ladies. Pampinea (the queen of the Day) turns to Fiammetta who will recount the next tale, "che essa l'ordine seguitasse" (1.5.3); 'following suit' in the order of storytellers and also in regard to the need for more appropriate stories. It is interesting that in Pampinea's call for restraint, she verbally affirms her authority over the stories of the Day. When Fiammetta begins her narration, the Marchioness' upheld virtue within her home seems to parallel the enclosed monk's room where the young woman in 1.4 is seduced. The ability to control space is a critical difference between the Marchioness and the acquiescent young woman. Migiel writes that, because Fiammetta's narration is directly in response to Dioneo's, her story becomes a "perlocutionary" (doing) and "locutionary act" (telling) (31).

On the other hand, 4.1 comes after two important moments of friction noted by the author and the *cornice*. First, Ghismonda's story comes after the introduction of Day Four where Boccaccio defends the reality of desire against potential criticisms. Next, 4.1 comes more immediately after Filostrato (the first male king of the *Decameron*) names the Day's theme: love that ends in disaster. Michael Sherberg remarks that this choice turns the Fourth Day into a "day of crisis" (228). Filostrato explains the theme in a way that suggests a personal vendetta. He asserts his power by choosing to inflict the pain he has experienced in love, despite his compliance with courtly love codes. *Novella* 4.1 arises from Filostrato's self-serving and didactic sense of justice that disturbs the happy, pleasant atmosphere created by the *brigata* so far. In this way, we might interpret Fiammetta's story as modeling how people can, unlike Filostrato, engage with their constraints by maintaining an empathetic and unselfish spirit. Throughout Day Four, the women of the *brigata* (and Dioneo who affirms his solidarity) collectively resist

¹¹ Victoria Kirkham also writes that, although it is impossible definitively to pin down the romantic pairs in the *brigata*, "tradition inclines" to see Dioneo and Fiammetta as a couple (9).

the idea of submitting to Filostrato's pleasure, defining it as "antithetical to their own" (Sherberg 229). After Fiammetta's story, subsequent narrators follow her model and reprise certain symbolic details of 4.1: Lisabetta in 4.5 cries over the dismembered head of her lover in a pot of basil, lovers are buried together in 4.7 and 8, Rosiglione's wife is forced to eat her lover's heart and commits suicide in 4.9. At the end of the Fourth Day, Filostrato crowns Fiammetta the queen of Day Five. She states that she will not "deviare da' miei passati" (4.concl.9), implying that Filostrato has. In this statement, Fiammetta intends to right two wrongs, Filostrato's choice of theme and his "abuse of authority" (Sherberg 227). The abuse of power is a larger frame for both 4.1 and 1.5.¹² Like Fiammetta, the women of these stories respect established traditions, but make men with authority aware of their intentions to independently decide what they desire as women.

The self-possession of women in the *Decameron*, however, is not without its nuance. Firstly, the restraint exhibited by Ghismonda and the Marchioness is common to the 'virtuous' women of the *Decameron*. In Dino Cervigno's reading of the story of Griselda (10.10), for example, he argues that her "obedience, tolerance, and submissiveness" are virtues that empower her to resist and transform a male-dominated world (439). The idea that the path to change is women's acceptance of violence proves a difficult pill to swallow, and it is one I refuse to support in my argument. Nonetheless, the agonistic relationship between women in the *Decameron* and concepts of virtue does raise a number of questions. We are required by the text to think about the reasons why women's obedience would be a virtue and to what extent Boccaccio is invested in it. Is Boccaccio's critique of spatial limitation a kind of savior gesture? Does the *Decameron* present the idea that women should accept their place and work on finding virtuous, acceptable paths to independence? Not quite. The stories of Day Four, as a whole, resist this interpretation. Even when lovers are virtuous or want to be married, their respectable goals do not spare them from tragic outcomes. The true key to happy endings in the *Decameron* is good luck and "having the authorities on your side" (Ferme 175).

¹² The stories of Day Five, under Fiammetta's reign, also emphasize the cruelty of patriarchal society. The stories of Day Four may end in tragedy but they feature female characters who love and are loved in return.

The limits of freedom in the *Decameron*, however, are not a result of the author's oversight. Although the women in the frame story leave their rooms and configure a heterotopian society, that revolution is limited by Florentine sociopolitical ideology. This kind of limitation is not a failure of the heterotopian heuristic, but a condition of it. The *brigata* tells stories where people of lower status are intellectual and romantic equals to the wealthy, but the reader is aware that the *brigata* has brought their servants with them when they leave Florence. The female leadership of Pampinea on the First Day moves on to "routine masculine leadership" by Panfilo on the last (Wallace 106). And of course, the ten young people eventually must return to Florence. The women of the *brigata* go back to their houses and become inseparable from Boccaccio's audience of women, confined to the home. Their alternative society cannot last forever, and we must consider this temporary freedom as a deliberate choice of the author. The heterotopias in the *Decameron* create a space where the limitations of real life can be regarded as illusory, socially constructed and subject to transformation. After the text's conclusion, the reader is left to wonder what might be required for more permanent change.

When women refuse to be dispossessed, they simultaneously refuse the kind of male self-possession that is defined by women's subjugation. The Marquess of Monferrato is allowed mobility because his wife, the Marchioness, stays at home. Tancredi maintains his love for his daughter, Ghismonda, by restricting her independence. Like other women in the *Decameron*, Ghismonda and the Marchioness have a central but troubled role in the construction of male identity. As such, their refusals highlight critical flaws and instability in the patriarchal system they live in. Through these characters, the reader becomes aware of a profound irony that is the base of gender relations in the *Decameron*. If subjugated women can be so self-possessed when they are required to be inert, complacent, submissive and contained, we understand that staying in place can be a method of holding one's ground. A dynamic force of will can exist beneath the surface of immobility. Reading the refusals of women in the *Decameron* in this way is key to a larger praxis of interpretation. Instead of measuring female agency in the fourteenth century according to contemporary standards, we are presented with the opportunity to truly understand women of the past. And,

perhaps most importantly, we see how their resistance is fundamental to our own.

DANIELLE STEPHENSON

U OF CALIFORNIA BERKELEY

Works Cited

- Almansi, Guido. 1975. *The Writer as Liar: Narrative Technique in the Decameron*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Asaro, Brittany. 2013. "Unmasking the Truth about *amor de lonh*: Giovanni Boccaccio's Rebellion against Literary Conventions in *Decameron* I.5 and IV.4." *Comitatus* 44.1: 95-120.
- Barolini, Teodolinda. 2006. "*Le parole son femmine e i fatti sono maschi*: Toward a Sexual Poetics of the *Decameron* (*Decameron* 2.9, 2.10, 5.10)." In *Dante and the Origins of Italian Literary Culture*. New York: Fordham UP. 281-302.
- Boccaccio, Giovanni. 1980. *Decameron*. V. Branca, ed. Turin: Einaudi.
- Bregni, Simone. 2020. *Locus amoenus: nuovi strumenti di analisi della Commedia*. Ravenna: Longo.
- Cervigni, Dino S. 2013. "Making Amends and Behaving Magnificently: *Decameron* 10's Secular Redemption." *Annali d'Italianistica* 31: 416-58.
- Cottino-Jones, Marga. 1982. *Order from Chaos: Social and Aesthetic Harmonies in Boccaccio's Decameron*. Washington D.C.: University Press of America.
- Della Terza, Dante. 2004. "The Tale of the Marchioness of Monferato (I.5)." In *The Decameron First Day in Perspective*. E. B. Weaver, ed. Toronto: U of Toronto P. 135-47.
- Ferme, Valerio. 2015. *Women, Enjoyment, and the Defense of Virtue in Boccaccio's Decameron*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Fiorinelli, Gaia. 2020. "'Amore è di tre maniere': echi dell'VIII libro dell'*Ethica Nicomachea* nella novella di Ghismonda e nel Boccaccio." *Carte romanze* 8.1: 199-240.
- Fleming, Ray. 1993. "Happy Endings? Resisting Women and the Economy of Love in Day Five of Boccaccio's *Decameron*." *Italica* 70.1: 30-45.
- Fortunati, Leopoldina. 1995. *The Arcane of Reproduction: Housework, Prostitution, Labor and Capital*. J. Fleming, ed. H. Creek, tr. Brooklyn: Autonomedia.
- Foucault, Michel. 1993. "Different Spaces." In *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*. Vol 2 of Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984. J. D. Faubion, ed. R. Hurley et al., eds. New York: The New York Press. 175-85.

- Gittes, Tobias Foster. 2020. "‘A questa tanto picciola vigilia de’ vostri sensi’: Senile Recidivism, Incest, and Egotism in *Decameron* IV.1." In *The Decameron Fourth Day in Perspective*. M. Sherberg, ed. Toronto: U of Toronto P. 22-44.
- Holmes, Olivia. 2023. "Classical and Vernacular Exempla." In *Boccaccio and Exemplary Literature: Ethics and Mischief in the Decameron*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP. 146-73.
- Johnson, Peter. 2013. "The Geographies of Heterotopia." *Geography Compass* 7.11: 790-803.
- Kinoshita, Sharon and Jason Jacobs. 2007. "Ports of Call: Boccaccio’s Alatiel in the Medieval Mediterranean." *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 37.1: 163-95.
- Kirkham, Victoria. 1985. "An Allegorically Tempered *Decameron*." *Italica* 62.1: 1-23.
- Levenstein, Jessica. 1996. "Out of Bounds: Passion and the Plague in Boccaccio’s *Decameron*." *Italica* 73.3: 313-35.
- Luongo, Salvatore. 2013. "La Marchesana di Monferrato tra tradizione e innovazione: ancora sulla novella I.5 del *Decameron*." *Le forme e la storia* 6.2: 71-85.
- Migiel, Marilyn. 2003. *A Rhetoric of the Decameron*. Toronto: U of Toronto P.
- Morosini, Roberta. 2017. "What a Difference A Sea Makes in the *Decameron*: The Mediterranean, A Structural Space of the Novella." *Quaderni d’Italianistica* 38.2: 65-111.
- Olson, Kristina Marie. 2014. *Courtesy Lost: Dante, Boccaccio, and the Literature of History*. Toronto: U of Toronto P.
- Palma, Pina. 2006. "Hermits, Husbands and Lovers: Moderation and Excesses at the Table in the *Decameron*." *Food and History* 4.2: 151-62.
- Picone, Michelangelo. 2008. *Boccaccio e la codificazione della novella: letture del Decameron*. N. Coderey, C. Genswein and R. Pittorino, eds. Ravenna: Longo.
- Scaglione, Aldo. 1963. "The *Decameron*." In *Nature and Love in the Late Middle Ages*. Berkeley: U of California P. 48-82.
- Sherberg, Michael. 1991. "The Patriarch’s Pleasure and the Frametale Crisis: *Decameron* IV-V." *Romance Quarterly* 38.2: 227-38.
- Tomlinson, Megan. 2021-22. "Travel as ‘Transgression’: The Mobility of Women in Giovanni Boccaccio’s *De mulieribus claris* and *Decameron*." *Heliotropia* 18-19: 163-89.

- Wallace, David. 1991. *Giovanni Boccaccio: Decameron*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- Westphal, Bertrand. 2011. *Geocriticism: Real and Fictional Spaces*. R. T. Tally Jr., tr. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wolfreys, Julian. 2008. *Transgression*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.