

Tegualda's Reversal of Fortune: Chivalric Amerindians in Classical Garb

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In Part Two (1578), Cantos 20.21-21.12, of *La Araucana*, Alonso de Ercilla narrates his encounter with a sympathetic Amerindian widow named Tegualda. While guarding the Spanish fort at Penco during the night, he discovers the grieving woman crouched among the corpses of the Araucanians slain in the recent battle outside the fortress walls. Concerned that she may be a spy, he interrogates her. She begs that he allow her to search for the body of her husband, Crepino. She then begins a lengthy narrative telling how she met Crepino while presiding over an Amerindian athletic tournament a month earlier. She explains that after Crepino overcame Mareguano in wrestling, the defeated native requested a rematch. Crepino agreed to face him a second time and, after seeking Tegualda's consent, defeated Mareguano again. He then won a footrace, and Tegualda declared him the victor of the games. While placing a wreath on his head and a ring on his finger, love seized her, and shortly after the competition they married. Once Tegualda finishes her narrative, Ercilla agrees to help her to search for the body the following morning. When they find the cadaver, Tegualda collapses over it and grieves. Ercilla then sees to it that she is safely escorted back home.¹

In this article, I explore Ercilla's construction of the invented Araucanian characters, Tegualda and Crepino. I argue that in this episode the poet invites the reader to consider the natives from at least two different perspectives. First, they appear as ancients cast in classical garb. Crepino engages in a wrestling match and in a footrace, the kind of athletic competitions that appear in ancient epic poetry, for example in *Aeneid* 5. Furthermore, Ercilla bases the frame story in the present—the search for the cadaver and the depiction of Tegualda mourning over Crepino's body—on the classical model of Argia in Statius's *Thebaid*. Second, the Amerindians behave as if they were courtly lovers in a chivalric romance. Tegualda and Crepino speak with highly stylized rhetoric that repeats the language of Petrarchan love poetry, and Ercilla also bases the native couple on Isabella and Zerbino from Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*. Finally, I examine the significance of

¹ Based in part on the Guacolda episode in Part One (Cantos 13-14), the story of the suffering Araucanian woman becomes a major narrative thread in Parts Two and Three. The stories of Tegualda and Glaura (Canto 27-28) provide a frame for warfare in Part Two. The critics who have examined the Tegualda episode have tended to focus on similar aspects, namely the fact that Ercilla constructs the Amerindian maiden based on European models. Tomás Guevara asserts that Ercilla endows Tegualda and the other Araucanian women with Latin and Italian features: "El clasicismo le llevó a retocar las pinturas de aquellos salvajes con algunos rasgos más latinos e italianos que chilenos" (497). Luis Gadamés expresses surprise that Ercilla does not portray the Araucanian women as barbarians. He seeks a historical justification for the appearance of these noble, exemplary native women: "Para comprender mejor el alma de estas mujeres es menester insistir una vez más en que la barbarie araucana se había elevado, a la llegada de los españoles, sobre un nivel muy superior de las etapas primitivas" (48-49). Lucía Guerra Cunningham writes that through Tegualda, Glaura, and Lauca, Ercilla expresses the flipside of victory—the tragic loss of the defeated. Their stories "ponen en evidencia el reverso de la gloria bélica donde la muerte del enemigo ya no es el índice de la victoria sino la pérdida trágica que es apenas recuperable a través del luto y la memoria" (17). Lía Schwartz Lerner examines chivalry in the episodes of Tegualda and Glaura, and Aura Bocaz offers a structuralist, narratological analysis of the Tegualda story. Juan Diego Vila focuses on the role of the woman in courtier lyric poetry (poesía cortesana) and the Aristotelian tension between history and poetry in the episode. James Nicolopulos examines the criticism of the amorous episodes by readers and writers who upheld the *encomendero* system, especially Pedro de Oña. Finally, Cyrus Moore explores the significance of the episodes of Guacolda, Doña María de Bazán, Tegualda, Glaura, Lauca, and Dido in Ercilla's self-construction, his expression of personal honor, and his stance on empire and tyranny.

Tegualda's reversal of fortune from judge to suppliant and the meaning of the episode's circular nature and metaliterary structure.

Araucanians in Classical Garb

Thebaid 12 serves as Ercilla's primary source for the frame story of Tegualda's search for her husband among the dead on the battlefield.² The Latin poem's final book specifically centers on notions of tyranny and clemency, and it contains the episode of Argia's illicit, nocturnal search for Polynices's body. In Book 12, the women of Argos wish to bury their relatives, but the ruler of Thebes, Creon, has decreed that anyone who attempts to do so will be arrested and executed. Argia, Polynices's widow, and Antigone, the sister of Polynices and Eteocles, disobey his command. After finding and burning the cadavers of Polynices and Eteocles, they are taken captive and sentenced to death, although Argia, at least, appears to be reprieved at the last minute by the arrival of Theseus and his army. Meanwhile, the widows of Thebes's slain men meet at the altar of Clemency in Athens to seek asylum from Creon's tyranny and injustice and to appeal to Theseus for help.

The *Thebaid* episode's nocturnal setting, spectral landscape, and descriptions of sound are all aspects that Ercilla repeats in *La Araucana* 20-21.³ Furthermore, the themes of loss, suffering, justice, and clemency that appear in the story of Argia reappear in Ercilla. Statius's poem focuses on notions of kingship, tyranny, and civil discord—themes upon which Ercilla reflects throughout the three volumes of *La Araucana*. The *Thebaid* also serves as an ancient example of an epic whose author creatively imitates Vergil, Ovid, and Lucan.⁴

Argia and Tegualda both lose their husbands in warfare, and they both risk their lives to return to the battlefield and search for the cadavers. Both episodes take place at night, and in each

² Menéndez Pelayo writes that "Tegualda, buscando en el campo de batalla el cadáver de su esposo, trae en seguida a la memoria el bello episodio de Abradato y Pantea en *La Cyropedia*, de Xenofonte" (305). María Rosa Lida seems to have been the first to affirm in 1942 that Tegualda is reminiscent of Argia in the *Thebaid*. Moore suggests that the episode and the sources upon which it is based reformulate two archetypes found in ancient epic and tragedy: "The framing of Tegualda's search for her husband's corpse is based on ancient models, the most frequently cited being Xenophon's Pantheia and Statius's Argia. These figures combine two older themes, one involving the right to burial, found in Priam's embassy to Achilles and Antigone's defiance of Creon, the other that of the loyal wife, exemplified in Homer's Penelope, whose name appears in many subsequent defenses of women, including Ercilla's" (83). Though there are similarities between Tegualda and Pantheia, there is not enough evidence to affirm that Ercilla is imitating Xenophon. Pantheia mourns her husband's death in battle and begins to make preparations for his burial. When Cyrus attempts to console her much as Ercilla tries to assist Tegualda, Pantheia refers to herself as a fool, complaining that she is partially responsible for his death since she urged her beloved Abradatas to befriend Cyrus in the first place. Like Pantheia, Tegualda is determined to join her husband in death. Exhibiting a noble and stoic demeanor, both wish to perish together with their husbands. However, while Ercilla convinces Tegualda to refrain from fulfilling her death wish, Pantheia and her chambermaids commit suicide.

³ Argia exclaims: *redde mihi. tuque, oro, ueni, si manibus ulla / effigies errantque animae post membra solutae, / tu mihi pande uias, tuaque ipse ad funera deduc, / si merui* (270-74) [O Polynices, come to me, I pray— / if ghosts may take on form and spirits / wander when they abandon carnal substance, / show me the way to reach you! Guide me to / yourself, if I am worthy!].

⁴ In the poem's concluding lines, Statius refers to the future legacy of his own poem and praises Vergil's *Aeneid*: *uiuere, precor; nec tu diuinam Aeneida tempta, / sed longe sequere et uestigia semper adora. / mox, tibi si quis adhuc praetendit nubila liuor, / occidet, et meriti post me referentur honores* (12.816-19) [So thrive, I pray, / but do not envy the divine *Aeneid*. / Follow well back. Always adore her traces. / If any envy clouds you, it will fade; / when I am gone due honor will be paid]. Ercilla admires the love poetry of Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto, and Garcilaso (see footnote 10).

there is an ominous sense of danger.⁵ Argia must be careful because she is worried that she may be arrested, and she hurries out of concern that birds of prey and beasts will destroy the corpse before she has the opportunity to give it a proper burial:

*Interea funus decrescit, et uncis
alitibus (non hos potius?) supponimus artus.
et nunc me duram, si quis tibi sensus ad umbras,
me tardam Stygiis quereris, fidissime, diuis. (12.212-16)*

[Meanwhile your body rots! Is it not better / that my own limbs should feel hooked claws of birds? / My loyal husband, if among the shadows / you still have feelings, you must be complaining / to Stygian gods that I am late, uncaring.]

Status expresses Argia's concern that scavengers will devour Polynices's body before she reaches it. In an ironic and macabre inversion during the Tegualda episode, Ercilla writes that when he first notices movement among the dead during his sentry duty, he believes that a beast is feasting upon the Araucanian corpses:

La noche era tan lóbrega y oscura
que divisar lo cierto no podía,
y así por ver el fin desta aventura
(aunque más por cumplir lo que debía)
me vine, agazapado en la verdura,
hacia la parte que el rumor se oía,
donde vi entre los muertos ir oculto
andando a cuatro pies un negro bulto. (2.20.27)

Among the carnage, Ercilla discerns a dark shape that seems to move about on all fours. In the passage, he transforms through poetic invention the predatory beasts that Argia fears will disfigure the corpse into the woman herself. The metamorphosis of what Ercilla first presents as a repulsive predator into an idealized, noble Araucanian spouse introduces ambiguity and surprise into the scene and offers two diametrically opposed perspectives of the Amerindian that coexisted during the sixteenth century: the native as a subhuman barbarian on the one hand and as a member of a kind of native American nobility on the other.⁶ The poet resolves the tension and seems to mock the former perspective by opting to portray Tegualda in a noble fashion and in classical garb as an Araucanian version of Argia, an ancient model of feminine strength and conjugal fidelity.

Ercilla later recalls the threat of carnivorous animals when Tegualda voices her fear of predatory dogs and birds in the following octave:

⁵ *Cum tamen illa grauem luctu fallente laborem / nescit abisse diem: nec caligantibus aruis / terretur... / nemorumque arcana (sereno / nigra die) ... / somnosque ferarum / praeter et horrendis infesta cubilia monstris (230-36).* [Argia's grief / made her oblivious of heavy hardships / and unaware of evening. Gloomy fields / were nothing terrible, nor did she stop her search.../ through secret forests that are dark by day, / ...past sleeping beasts, foul caves of bristling monsters]. Status describes the night as dark and silent: *modo nox magis ipsa tacebat, / solaque nigrantes laxabant astra tenebras (253-54)* [The night itself was silent / the sole lights in the dark and gloom were stars].

⁶ See Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda's *Demócrates segundo: apología en favor del libro sobre las justas causas de la guerra*. See also: Giuliano Gliozzi's *Adamo e il nuovo mondo: la nascita dell'antropologia come ideologia coloniale: dalle genealogie bibliche alle teorie razziali (1500-1700)*, especially pages 294-305.

Que no es bien que las aves carniceras
 despedacen el cuerpo miserable,
 ni los perros y brutas bestias fieras
 satisfagan su estómago insaciable,
 mas cuando empedernido ya no quieras
 hacer cosa tan justa y razonable,
 haznos con esa espada y mano dura
 iguales, en la muerte y sepultura. (2.20.75)

Both Statius and Ercilla refer to the very real fear of a loved one's disfigurement due to scavengers. Both poets also seem to suggest that the administration of funeral rites is a basic, universal right—a ritual that separates civilized humans from barbarians and from animals. While Argia is denied permission to bury Polynices and may face her own execution for disobeying Creon's decree, Ercilla assists Tegualda in locating Crepino's body, and offers her safe passage back to her homeland. The scene underscores the clemency that Ercilla affords the enemy camp. In the passage, Tegualda also reveals her desire to die in the face of loss. If Ercilla will not allow her to administer proper burial rites to her husband, she asks that he kill her so that the couple may be united in death. Though not indifferent to pain, the thought of her own death does not appear to frighten Tegualda. Such passages aid in the construction of the Amerindians along the models of classical stoicism.

In *Thebaid* 12, Argia discerns her husband's purple cloak before discovering his body. She notices the pattern that she wove herself, and the Latin poet describes the confusion of bloody and purple hues and the grief that seizes Argia.⁷ The detail of the cloak's purple hue mixed with blood underscores Polynices's royal lineage. Statius insists on the strength of the marital bond and on the pathos of the scene by mentioning that Argia once wove the garment herself. He thus juxtaposes Argia's memory of hitherto conjugal devotion with her current state of despair.⁸ Statius writes that when she finally descends the body in the dust, she nearly faints: *fugere animus uisusque sonusque, / inclusitque dolor lacrimas; tum corpore toto / sternitur in vultus animaque per oscula quaerit / absentem* (12.317-20) [She felt faint; her sight / and hearing failed; great grief obstructed tears. / She lay across his face and searched for breath: / none issued from his mouth]. Overwhelmed with sorrow, the sounds and the spectral landscape that Statius previously portrayed suddenly become distorted for Argia. She then checks for signs of life by kissing Polynices's face and begins a lengthy lament structured by a series of rhetorical questions (12.322-43). Ercilla rewrites the passage in Statius in the following octave:

⁷ Another parallel between the Tegualda episode and *Thebaid* 12 appears in the manner in which Argia seeks Polynices's corpse: *Sola per offensus armorum et lubrica tabo / gramina, non tenebras, non circumfusa tremescens / concilia umbrarum atque animas sua membra gementes, / saepe gradu caeco ferrum calcataque tela / dissimulat, solusque labor uitasse iacentes, / dum funus putat omne suum, uisusque sagaci / rimatur positos et corpora prona supinat / incumbens, queriturque parum lucentibus astris* (12.283-90) [She made her way / through heaps of armor, over blood-slick grass, / and she was not afraid of flying groups / of ghosts or shades or spirits that bemoaned / their missing limbs. Her sightless steps ignored / weapons and swords she walked on. Her sole care / was not to tread on dead bodies, any one / of which might be, she thought, her husband's corpse. / The faint stars gave her light enough to see / the faces of prone bodies she upturned. / She studied and scrutinized the dead.].

⁸ The blood-soaked garment also recalls Thisbe's bloody veil in Ovid's tragic depiction of Pyramus and Thisbe in *Metamorphoses* 4.55-166. Pedro de Oña rewrites the episode of Pyramus and Thisbe in the episode of Tucapel and Gualeva in *Arauco domado* 6.106-8.34; 12.46-90.

La mísera Tegualda que delante
 vio la marchita faz desfigurada,
 con horrendo furor en un instante
 sobre ella se arrojó desatinada;
 y junta con la suya, en abundante
 flujo de vivas lagrimas bañada,
 la boca le besaba y la herida,
 por ver si le podía infundir la vida. (2.21.8)

Tegualda's agony mirrors Argia's in an almost identical fashion. Like Argia, Tegualda collapses across her dead husband and begins to kiss his face. Similarly rejecting death, she searches for signals of life and tragically attempts to revive him by kissing his mouth and the bullet wound. She too expresses her grief through a condensed series of rhetorical questions in which she ponders life's injustices.⁹ The fact that Crepino's body has been penetrated by a bullet ["el sangriento cuerpo helado, / de una redonda bala atravesado" (2.21.7.7-8)] is perhaps the most noteworthy difference between the analogous passages. Through this detail, Ercilla not only reminds the reader that the warfare that he depicts in his poem differs from the combat that appears in ancient epic. He draws the reader's attention to the unevenness of the war between the Spanish and the Araucanians—an aspect that he tended to gloss over in Part One. Such references to Spain's technological superiority become more frequent in Parts Two and Three. They indicate the poet's ethical questioning and his burgeoning awareness of the ambiguous nature of Spanish heroism in the Chilean campaign. By contrast, they aid in the heroic construction of the natives who appear capable of resisting the Spanish and of inflicting harm upon their enemy despite their military disadvantage. Ercilla's appropriation of Statius's story of Argia in a New-World context serves to humanize and ennoble the Araucanians by equating both their technology and their conduct with the military expertise and honorable behavior of the ancients in classical epic. In his rewriting of Statius, Ercilla casts himself as a benign Creon who offers the Amerindian version of Argia pardon and safe passage. The poet exemplifies human decency, allowing the dead to be properly buried. What Ercilla does not elucidate, however, is whether or not he is an exception within the Spanish camp. It is not clear how the rest of the Spaniards would behave in a similar situation.

Chivalric Models

⁹ "¡Ay cuitada de mí! —decía—, ¿qué hago / entre tanto dolor y desventura? / ¿Cómo al injusto amor no satisfago / en esta aparejada coyuntura? / ¿Por qué ya, pusilánime, de un trago / no acabo de pasar tanta amargura? / ¿Qué es esto? ¿La injusticia a dónde llega, / que aun el morir forzoso se me niega?" (2.21.9).

While the primary ancient model for Tegualda is Statius's Argia, the chief Renaissance model for the Araucanian widow is Ariosto's Isabella.¹⁰ The narrative thread of Isabella's vicissitudes repeatedly picks up and breaks off between *Orlando furioso* 12 and 30. She is a Saracen princess from Galicia whom Orlando frees from a group of thieves. Before her rescue, Isabella tells Orlando the story of how she ended up in captivity. She explains that she met and fell in love with Zerbino, the son of the King of Scotland, at a tournament that her father held in Baiona. Following the encounter, Zerbino returned to Scotland and sent his closest friend, Odorico, to Spain to retrieve her. During the voyage northward, however, they were shipwrecked, Odorico attempted to rape her, and she fell into the hands of bandits. After Isabella finishes her story, Orlando rescues her and sees to it that she and Zerbino are reunited. Zerbino punishes Odorico for his betrayal before engaging in a duel with Mandricardo over the sword, Durindana. During the fight, Mandricardo injures Zerbino, and he dies in Isabella's arms. A hermit comes to her aid and helps her to transport the body to a convent where she intends to become a nun. When Rodomonte attempts to rape Isabella, however, she tricks him into killing her in order to retain her chastity.

In Part One's final canto, Ercilla had mentioned his admiration for the love poetry of Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto, and "el Íbero," presumably Garcilaso. In the Tegualda episode, he specifically channels the poetic voice of Petrarch's *Canzoniere* and recreates the feudal, chivalric world of the *Orlando furioso* in Chile.¹¹ In Tegualda's dialogue with Ercilla and especially when she describes meeting Crepino in her backstory, Tegualda uses the formal, refined language of chivalry to express herself. The episode gives Ercilla the opportunity to insert fictional characters into the poem's narrative, to include high style love poetry in his epic, and not only to humanize but also to ennoble the Amerindians.

Ercilla rewrites a passage in *Orlando furioso* 13 when Tegualda introduces herself:

Yo soy Tegualda, hija desdichada
del cacique Brancol desventurado,
de muchos por hermosa en vano amada,
libre un tiempo de amor y de cuidado;
pero muy presto la fortuna, airada
de ver mi libertad y alegre estado,
turbó de tal manera mi alegría
que al fin muero del mal que no temía. (2.20.37, emphasis mine)

De muchos fui pedida en casamiento,
y a todos igualmente despreciaba (2.20.38.1-2)

Tegualda first expresses her royal lineage ("hija del cacique Brancol"), then mentions her former freedom and carefree existence prior to meeting Crepino, and finally laments her unexpected

¹⁰ Lía Schwartz writes: "Se ha señalado que el episodio de Tegualda y Crepino...se inspira parcialmente en la historia de los amores trágicos de Isabella y Zerbino...María Rosa Lida ya ha señalado el recuerdo de Argia, la mujer de Polynices...Se puede mencionar también el paralelo con la historia de Abradatas, el rey de Susa que se une a las fuerzas de Ciro y muere en la lucha con los egipcios, y su mujer Panthea, en la *Ciropedia* de Jenofonte. Panthea, como Tegualda, llora sobre el cadáver de Abradatas y luego se suicida en prueba de fidelidad amorosa. Sirve de marco al relato la llegada de Tegualda al campamento español y el llanto sobre el cuerpo de Crepino" (620).

¹¹ "Amor de un juicio rústico y grosero / rompe la dura y áspera corteza, / produce ingenio y gusto verdadero / y pone cualquier cosa en más fineza. / Dante, Ariosto, Petrarca y el Ibero, / amor los trujo a tanta delgadeza / que la lengua más rica y más copiosa, / si no trata de amor, es desgustosa" (1.15.2).

change of fortune and her current state of despair. Tegualda's lyric voice is reminiscent of Petrarch's *Canzoniere* 3 and 23. In the former, Petrarch describes how the speaker compares the act of falling in love with captivity: "Era il giorno ch'al sol si scoloraro / per la pietà del suo fattore i rai, / quando i' fui preso, et non me ne guardai, / ché i be' vostr'occhi, donna, mi legaro" (1-4). In the first stanza of *Canzoniere* 23, Petrarch depicts love as a loss of liberty: "Nel dolce tempo de la prima etade / che nascer vide et anchor quasi in herba / la fera voglia che per mio mal crebbe, / perché cantando il duol si disacerba, / canterò com'io vissi in libertade, / mentre Amor nel mio albergo a sdegno s'ebbe" (1-6).¹² Tegualda's words also echo the story that Isabella tells to Orlando:

Isabella sono io, che figlia fui
del re mal fortunato di Gallizia.
Ben dissi fui; ch'or non son piú di lui,
ma di dolor, d'affanno e di mestizia.
Colpa d'Amor; ch'io non saprei di cui
dolermi piú che de la sua nequizia,
che dolcemente nei principi applaude,
e tesse di nascosto inganno e fraude.

Già mi vivea di mia sorte felice,
gentil, giovane, ricca, onesta e bella:
vile e povera or sono, or infelice;
e s'altra è peggior sorte, io sono in quella. (13.4-5)

Isabella similarly provides her royal lineage as a princess ("figlia fui / del re mal fortunato di Gallizia") and then refers to her travails with love ("Colpa d'Amor"). She compares her former prosperity ("felice / gentil, giovane, ricca, onesta e bella") to her current, unhappy state as a miserable captive ("vile e povera or sono, or infelice"). Both Isabella and Tegualda bemoan the ravages of fortune. Tegualda's narrative begins and ends with analogous reflections on the volubility of Fortuna:

Ayer me vi contenta de mi suerte
sin temor de contraste ni recelo;
hoy la sangrienta y rigurosa muerte
todo lo ha derribado por el suelo (2.20.73.1-4)
[...]
he aquí mi libertad y breve gloria
en eterna amargura convertida. (2.20.74.3-4)

The Araucanian widow's initial and final meditations on fortune give her story a coherent theme and a circular artistic structure. They reflect the cyclical nature of the *rota Fortunae* that also characterizes Isabella's experience and seem to constitute a kind of metapoetic discourse that

¹² See Rivero (1979) and Vicente Lledó-Guillem's article: "La transformación de Petrarca en el amor de Tegualda en *La Araucana*" (2004).

points to Tegualda's fictional existence—a character pieced together from Statius and Ariosto and whom Ercilla places into a poetic genealogy of paragons of female virtue.¹³

The passage's antithetical nature that juxtaposes the speaker's felicitous youth with her current sorrow not only evokes the story of Isabella but also recalls Petrarchan lyric. Tegualda in her youth enjoys freedom from love. She scorns the advances of suitors. Ercilla creatively combines in Tegualda both Petrarch's feminine object of desire, Laura, and Petrarch's own masculine lyric voice.¹⁴ Ercilla initially presents Tegualda as unattainable and later expresses her love for Crepino much as the lyric voice in Petrarch evokes his love for Laura. That Tegualda provides an analeptic narrative within a frame story in the present allows Ercilla to construct her as Petrarch's beloved *in vita* as well as a kind of feminine Petrarch who mourns the loss of a loved one *in morte*. By allowing the Amerindian widow to embody, albeit temporarily, the untouchable loved one and to adopt the masculine voice of the *Canzoniere*, Ercilla empowers and ennobles her twofold.

Tegualda's thirty-three octave story (2.20.40-72) of her encounter with Crepino at an athletic contest constitutes an augmented rewriting of the tournament in which Isabella and Zerbino meet in *Orlando furioso* 13.6-8. Ariosto writes that knights from many nations visited Isabella's homeland to joust: "Mio padre fe' in Baiona alcune giostre, / [...] cavallieri a giostrar di piú paesi. / Fra gli altri (o sia ch'Amor cosí mi mostre, / o che virtú pur se stessa palesi) / mi parve da lodar Zerbino solo" (13.6). After observing Zerbino during the tournament, Isabella describes him as the most handsome and valiant of all the barons present ["Zerbino di bellezza e di valore / sopra tutti i signori era eminente" (13.8.1-2)]. These features caused her to fall so deeply in love with him that she claims that she no longer belonged to herself: "fui presa del suo amore; e non m'avidi, / ch'io mi conobbi piú non esser mia" (13.7.3-4). In Tegualda's narrative, Crepino, like Zerbino, is a foreigner whose prowess, gallantry, and chivalric language during an Amerindian tournament of athletic games cause her to fall in love with him. The fact that Zerbino and Crepino's names are phonetically similar further suggests that Ercilla wished to advertise his casting of the Araucanian spouse on the Scottish prince in Ariosto.¹⁵

Ercilla writes that the Amerindian tournament takes place in a verdant setting by a placid stream and that the natives treat Tegualda with utmost dignity. The poet depicts the Araucanian maiden enveloped in an aura of power and prestige as though she were a princess from a medieval chivalric romance who presides over knightly games. Tegualda describes the preparations for her grand entrance at the tournament: "por orden y artificio estraño, / la larga senda y pasos enramaron,

¹³ At the beginning of Canto 21, Ercilla compares Tegualda to a series of illustrious women from Antiquity: "¡Cuántas y cuántas vemos que han subido / a la difícil cumbre de la fama! / Iudic, Camila, la fenisa Dido / a quien Virgilio injustamente infama; / Penélope, Lucrecia, que al marido / lavó con sangre la violada cama; / Hippo, Tucia, Virginia, Fulnia, Cloelia, / Procia, Sulpicia, Alcestes y Cornelia" (2.21.3). Ercilla lists fourteen models of virtue and chastity in his most elaborate defense of women—another one of the numerous catalogs in Part Two. The list presents primarily mythic women. Iudic (Judith) is from the Old Testament, while the other women appear in literary (i.e. Penelope, Camilla, and Dido) and historical (i.e. Lucretia and Cornelia) texts from Antiquity.

¹⁴ Tegualda's lyric voice is reminiscent of Petrarch's *Canzoniere* 3 and 23. In the former, Petrarch describes how the speaker compares the act of falling in love with captivity: "Era il giorno ch'al sol si scolaro / per la pietà del suo fattore i rai, / quando i' fui preso, et non me ne guardai, / ché i be' vostr'occhi, donna, mi legaro" (1-4). In the first stanza of *Canzoniere* 23, Petrarch depicts love as a loss of liberty: "Nel dolce tempo de la prima etade / che nascer vide et anchor quasi in herba / la fera voglia che per mio mal crebbe, / perché cantando il duol si disacerba, / canterò com'io vissi in libertade, / mentre Amor nel mio albergo a sdegno s'ebbe" (1-6).

¹⁵ Zerbino and Crepino are both three-syllable names ending in -ino. Linguistically, Zerbino can be converted into Crepino through metathesis (/zer/ becomes /cre/) and the transformation through assimilation of the labial consonant /b/ into /p/.

/ pareciéndoles malo el buen camino / y que el sol de tocarme no era dino” (2.20.41.5-8). Such is the natives’ esteem for her authority that the organizers construct archways and boughs above the path that leads to her seat. Ercilla explains that the greenery in the arches provides shade lest the sun’s rays reach her skin. The Araucanian pavilion here is reminiscent of the bower in chivalric romances. Such details contribute to Tegualda’s presentation as royalty and help to develop the episode’s peculiar mixture of Amerindian rusticity and high style.

Tegualda presides over the games from a privileged seat: “Llegué por varios arcos donde estaba / un buen compuesto y levantado asiento, / hecho por tal manera que ayudaba / la maestra natura al ornamento” (2.20.42.1-4). The elevated throne underscores her status, power, and nobility and creates a starker contrast with her fall from happiness and her current, miserable state. Ercilla juxtaposes her initial untroubled demeanor at the beginning of the athletic contests [“ora los altos árboles miraba, / de natura las obras contemplando; / ora la agua que el prado atravesaba, / las varias pedrezuelas numerando, / libre a mi parecer y muy segura / de cuidado, de amor y desventura” (2.20.45.3-8)] with her surprise after a sudden outburst of quarrelling among the contenders seizes her attention [“un gran alboroto y vocería [...] / se levantó entre aquella compañía / que me sacó de seso y mi sosiego” (2.20.46.1; 3-4)]. Tegualda’s distracted, carefree thoughts suddenly focus in on the dispute. Ercilla’s description of the athletes’ seizure of her hitherto wandering attention foreshadows the passion that will later grip and consume her when she notices Crepino.

While Ercilla constructs Tegualda as if she were a medieval European princess from a romance of chivalry, he depicts Crepino as a chivalric knight who contends not only for material prizes but also for the lady of the tournament’s affection. In his first spoken exchange with Tegualda, he presents himself as her undeserving servant willing to devote the rest of his life to her: “Señora, una merced te pido, / sin haberla mis obras merecido” (2.20.51.7-8). He adds: “como tu siervo natural me ofrezco / de vivir y morir en tu servicio” (2.20.52.3-4). So courteous is Crepino that he offers Mareguano, whom he has just defeated in wrestling, a rematch. He comes to speak to Tegualda in order to seek her approval. While listening to Crepino’s humble and noble plea, the Araucanian maiden falls in love with him:

Sentí una novedad que me apremiaba
la libre fuerza y el rebelde brío,
a la cual sometida se entregaba
la razón, la libertad y el albedrío. (2.20.61.1-4)

A new emotion invades the royal maiden. Ercilla depicts the internal experience of love in terms of deprivation—a loss of reason, of freedom, and of free will. Tegualda’s individual, inner loss will later transform into the very real loss of her beloved husband as a result of the war. The poet at times uses the political language of conquest (“libre,” “rebelde,” “sometida,” “libertad”) to portray the act of falling in love. But he considers love and war not as analogous but as antagonistic. The Tegualda episode constitutes a poignant example of the suffering brought on by war.

The scenery and objects in Tegualda’s story hold special narrative significance—not only the bowery arches and raised throne but also the two prizes that the maiden offers Crepino. She places a “guirnalda” (wreath or crown) on his head after he wins the wrestling rematch, and she gives him a ring when he triumphs in the footrace. The tournament thus constitutes a kind of simulacrum of a wedding ceremony. The description of the couple’s first encounter at the athletic

games already contains images of marriage. The circularity of the crown and the ring denote an unbroken bond. However, their symbolism is ironic since Tegualda spends little more than a month with her husband before the war provokes his untimely death and cuts short her marital bliss. The two objects' circularity corresponds to the episode's structure that begins and ends in an identical fashion with references to fortune and indicates its self-contained nature within the narrative.

Reversals of Fortune

Though Tegualda is fictional, the context preceding her narrative is among the most realist and autobiographical in the entire poem. The scene that introduces Ercilla's encounter with the Araucanian widow is one of the few episodes that shows the daily life of a Spanish soldier fighting the natives in the New World. After the Amerindian assault on the Spanish fort and prior to meeting Tegualda, the poet offers details about what he eats, where and how he sleeps, and the exhaustion he feels during his routine night watch outside the Spanish fort:

Me cupo el cuarto de la prima en suerte
en un bajo recuesto junto al fuerte; (2.20.21.7-8)

donde con el trabajo de aquel día
y no me haber en quince desarmado,
el importuno sueño me afligía,
hallándome molido y quebrantado; (2.20.22.1-4)

Ercilla presents the reader with a rare glimpse into the daily life of a soldier during the Spanish-Araucanian war—the kind of information one would expect to find in a diary or an autobiography. He continues by describing his disgust at what he must eat and drink:

No el manjar de sustancia vaporoso,
ni vino muchas veces trasegado,
ni el hábito y costumbre de reposo
me habían el grave sueño acarreado.
Que bizcocho negrísimo y mohoso
por medida de escasa mano dado
y la agua llovediza desabrida
era el mantenimiento de mi vida. (2.20.23)

He mourns the plight of the soldier, complaining that he is forced to survive on insipid, unsubstantial rations of black, moldy crackers, bad wine, and rainwater. Other times he receives only two fistfuls of barley mixed with water. He sleeps on the damp, swampy ground and, always prepared to fight, seldom has the opportunity to remove his armor.¹⁶ By focusing on bodily hunger and sleep deprivation, Ercilla merges the epic with aspects of the *carta de relación*, the comic, and the picaresque. The incorporation of realistic elements precedes the episode of Tegualda that draws

¹⁶ “Y a veces la ración se convertía / en dos tasados puños de cebada, / que cocida con yerbas nos servía / por la falta de sal, la agua salada; / la regalada cama en que dormía / era la húmida tierra empantanada, / armado siempre y siempre en ordenanza / la pluma ora en la mano, ora la lanza” (2.20.24).

the poem into the patently unreal world of Ariostan romance. It is a deliberate juxtaposition of the everyday and the fictional.¹⁷

Ercilla's encounter with Tegualda takes place in the silence of the night. After he reflects upon the hardships of life in Arauco, he depicts the landscape outside the Spanish fort as oneiric and ghostly. A noise suddenly interrupts the "gran silencio" that presides over the field of cadavers: "yo que estaba / con ojo alerta y con atento oído, / sentí [...] / un ruido, / que siempre al acabar se remataba / con un triste suspiro sostenido" (2.20.26). In one of the most personal, pseudo-autobiographical adventures of the poem, Ercilla first describes what he perceives visually and then his aural perception, encouraging the reader to live the episode through his eyes as vividly as possible. Later, Tegualda begs Ercilla's permission to continue seeking the body of her husband: "No quieras impedir obra tan pía, / que aun en bárbara guerra se concede, / que es especie y señal de tiranía / usar de todo aquello que se puede" (2.20.31.1-4). Tegualda asks that Ercilla treat her with compassion and that he not behave like a tyrant. Before granting her permission to continue searching for the body, he must first hear her story. Tegualda's narrative can be seen as a kind of legalistic transaction or as a testimony before a judge. Ercilla will allow that Tegualda seek and bury Crepino's body in exchange for her narrative. The Araucanian's speech resembles a lengthy obituary or eulogy, which begins with how she first met her deceased husband, Crepino, describes his noble qualities, and ends in the present with the tragic wife wading through a field of cadavers.

Tegualda's story relates how, after Crepino defeats Mareguano in their wrestling bout, he comes to Tegualda to explain the situation and to request that she decide whether or not they can have a rematch. In the flashback, Crepino and Tegualda replicate the legalistic power relations between Tegualda and Ercilla. In her narrative, Tegualda is the judge who must decide how to proceed, while in the present she finds herself at the mercy of Ercilla. To portray his own inner emotions, Ercilla makes use of a lyric voice similar to that through which the widow expresses her own subjectivity. The poet enacts a double reversal of Tegualda's fate—first, the untouchable, independent Tegualda falls in love with Crepino and becomes utterly dependent on him; second, her authority to preside over the games as judge is transformed into her weak position of inferiority as a suppliant before Ercilla. The peripeteia of Tegualda's experiences exemplify Fortuna's unpredictable volatility.

Tegualda describes Crepino's language of courtly love that places the unworthy male lover as a servant of the exalted lady. Ercilla highlights Crepino's twofold inferiority both as a foreigner and an unrequited lover. Though the poet opens the episode by briefly presenting himself as a kind of stylized picaresque subject, he quickly transfers this position to Tegualda, himself assuming the place of the addressee of the picaresque novel, usually understood as a judge or figure of legal authority.¹⁸ Previously the powerful judge, in the present Tegualda becomes the appellant.

Through the analogy of love and greed, the use of political and legalistic vocabulary, as well as the language of power relations, Ercilla never fully departs from the narrative of warfare. During his foray into the amorous and lyric realms, he merges love and the law, transforming

¹⁷ According to Nicolopulos, the use of this privileged literary discourse of the court of Carlos V relates to "the trajectory of empire and imperial politics throughout Spain's Golden Age" (232). The stylized construction of Tegualda (and Guacolda before her) angered some of Ercilla's readers, like Pedro de Oña, whose wealth relied on the *encomendero* system and who refused to take seriously Ercilla's amorous episodes that endow the natives with tragic and dignified treatment (234). Nicolopulos suggests that Ercilla's portrayal of the Araucanian women is a pointed critique of the *encomendero*'s "rhetoric of bestiality" that characterized the natives as subhuman. Thus the Guacolda, Tegualda, and Glaura episodes can be linked to Ercilla's personal anti-*encomendero* stance situated somewhere between the positions of Las Casas and Sepúlveda, who represent the two extremes of the debate.

¹⁸ For example, the anonymous "vuestra merced" of the *Lazarillo de Tormes*.

Tegualda into a kind of allegory for Arauco. The widow's freedom is first appropriated by Crepino and later threatened by Ercilla.¹⁹ If in fact the episode constitutes a meditation on just war and proper governance, as Moore has affirmed, Ercilla seems to express the following: first, that the plight of the natives is ultimately the Spaniard's responsibility. He exemplifies the duty of conqueror to assist and protect the innocent victims of the war, exercising caution but also clemency and compassion when dealing with the natives. Furthermore, he encourages the Spanish reader to reflect upon proper governance and to disapprove of the tyrannical governors who treat the natives with negligence or cruelty. Finally, he suggests that the Araucanians deserve to be treated justly and that the individual Amerindian protagonists, especially women, are worthy of dignified treatment. Ercilla's self-representation in the poem exemplifies the kind of honorable, humanist, and ethical behavior that he wishes that his compatriots would simulate.

Conclusions

Ercilla's portrayal of Tegualda and Crepino as chivalric ancients in classic garb not only serves to construct the indigenous peoples according to European paradigms by supplying a language of common reference to help the Spanish reader to understand their otherness.²⁰ It offers a means of ennobling and praising the Amerindians. The heroic construction of the natives places *La Araucana* into a genealogy of epic poems beginning with Lucan's *De bello civili* that exalts the defeated side.²¹

The episode of the athletic contest contributes to the narrative circularity of the poem since it provides yet another reprise of an internal prototype that begins in Canto 2 with Caupolicán's election through a competition of strength.²² The native assembly, usually accompanied by an athletic competition, constitutes a narrative thread that runs throughout the poem's three volumes.

¹⁹ Moore states that "the many references in these lines to justice, together with the legalistic quality of such terms as *merced*, *ofendido*, *términos lícitos*, *justo*, and *injusto*, associate her speech with two of the poem's meta-discourses, those of just war and proper governance" (86).

²⁰ Beatriz Pastor observes that Ercilla portrays the indigenous protagonists according to medieval chivalric codes in order to humanize them (369). Rolena Adorno approaches the chivalry of the natives differently: "The epic poets accepted the chivalric representation using it to dramatize the actions of both conquistadores and Indians. Alonso de Ercilla, among many others, superimposed the world of medieval chivalry on the Araucanian warriors even as he described them in terms of unheard of barbarity. He resorted to the chivalric formulation not because he saw the Araucanians as chivalric heroes but because he needed a language of common reference with his readers to communicate his admiration of the Araucanian cultural values of liberty, courage, and the refusal to be conquered" (Adorno 17).

²¹ "The choice between the two models determines whether the subject matter of the *Araucana* is imperial conquest or freedom fighting, whether its heroes are the Spanish conquistadores or the leaders of the Araucanian resistance, whether it takes the side of the winners or the losers. The inclusion of both models allows Ercilla to avoid this choice, to celebrate both Spanish imperialism and the Indians' defense of their liberty. Yet the models are not held in equilibrium: the predominance of the poem's imitations of Lucan over Virgilian elements corresponds to what has made the *Araucana* perennially surprising to its readers: the tilting of its sympathies to the Araucanian chiefs and their desperate struggle" (Quint 159).

²² The tree trunk election in Canto 2 occupies a significant position in the artistic design of *La Araucana*. It is a prototype that initiates a series of later scenes describing Araucanian gatherings—a kind of theme upon which Ercilla introduces numerous variations throughout the poem. In Part One, similar episodes can be found in Canto 3 (the athletic games and festivities following the death of Pedro de Valdivia), in Canto 8 (a gathering after the sack of the Spanish settlement at Concepción), and in Cantos 10-11 (the games and celebrations after the Araucanian victory at Purén). The depiction of Amerindian gatherings in the first volume becomes a repetitive narrative thread that, with each reprise, underscores their winning streak that reaches its apex after the victory at Purén when Lautaro boldly vows not only to expel the Spanish from Arauco but also to invade Spain itself (Canto 12).

Thus, a second narrative thread, the Araucanian maiden's narrative, subsumes one of the poem's other major motifs. The placement of one thread within another endows the Tegalda episode with an innovative metaliterary structure. The scene's artistic design has the effect of emphasizing the circular nature of the poem. Such internal repetitions endow the entire poem with greater cohesion and create new meaning through the juxtaposition of otherwise distant or unrelated episodes. They also offer insight into Ercilla's vision of the Spanish-Araucanian conflict as a repetitive, endless, and cyclical endeavor.

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