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## Teaching Incest in Medieval Literature, Culture and Law

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# TEACHING INCEST IN MEDIEVAL LITERATURE, CULTURE AND LAW

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As Editor of this journal I do not normally offer contributions to these pages other than my “Del director” column and an occasional book review as assigned and edited by another member of the senior staff. But this Cluster on The Riddle of Incest has a back story that may be of interest to those who teach courses that embrace social issues and the history of sexuality.

Starting over a decade ago at the College of William & Mary, the Program in Medieval & Renaissance Studies, for which I served as Director during the 90s, began to offer periodic multi-section one-credit courses on topics that invited shared expertise and multiple disciplinary perspectives. Each section met for eight weeks with some common readings and others selected from the research area of the instructor. We inaugurated our series of one-credit topics courses in 1992 with Patrick Geary’s *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages*, for a course titled The Theft of Relics –jokingly billed as “Body Snatching in the Middle Ages”– and designed sections on relics and pilgrimage (taught by our medieval historian), Byzantine icons and relics (taught by a colleague in Religious Studies), the evolution of the reliquary as an art historical object (with an art historian as instructor), and my own section on relics and medieval spirituality.

As the core of this undergraduate experience, we always read a major recent book on the subject and invited the author to campus for the standard public lecture and luncheon discussion with faculty, but also for a private catered breakfast for the author and the students enrolled, informal sessions which no faculty member could attend. Finished books have a false air of closure to them. Working scholars know the mess that’s left in our offices, the side topics we silenced for the sake of finishing the project, the leads we dared not follow quite

yet, the cherished theses abandoned as we assembled documentation for an argument that changed as we worked. The breakfast interview was the uncensored peek into the workshop when students got to privately ask an author what she found that surprised her, what she left purposely omitted, where her own expertise ran aground, where a later complementary article or even second book would balance the picture, what other researchers would have to take up.

Patrick Geary did an excellent job of launching this series and other guest authors who came to campus –John Boswell for a course on *The Abandonment of Children*, E. Ann Matter on *The Song of Songs in the Middle Ages*, Edward Peters for *Inquisition*, James Tabor who helped us teach *The Book of Revelation: From Rome to Waco*, Alison Weber for *Women and Mysticism: Teresa of Ávila*– all embraced the format and gave us brilliant lectures and prompted challenging conversations.

In the Spring of 2002 we resolved to prepare another interdisciplinary course on *Incest in Medieval Literature, Culture and Law*. It was not a casual decision: a few years earlier we had talked about mounting a course on suicide in literary and cultural studies and eventually, well, chickened out. The material to read and discuss was certainly rich and intriguing and the interdisciplinary approach provided a calming distance and professionalization to an inherently disturbing topic. But how would undergraduates react? Could we handle their unpredictable emotional responses? What if some tried to harm themselves because we filled their imaginations with terrible possibilities or somehow validated the dark fears that already haunted them?

Teaching incest was not going to be much easier, so we started more programmatically, with a faculty seminar the preceding May. Campus participants included a clinical psychologist, a physician from the student health center and an anthropologist, as well as faculty from literature and history.<sup>1</sup> It seemed crucial that the Counseling Center staff were kept in the loop in case they started to notice a spike in campus conversations about incest reflected in their clients' voiced concerns. Campus clinical psychologists were invited to brief the teaching faculty and reacquaint themselves on issues that might arise and they helped us decide against the use of a "safety contract" sometimes employed when conducting seminars on suicide, basically a

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank the sensitive and insightful contributions of faculty and staff at the College of William and Mary, including Michael Blum, John Conlee, June Henderson, Virginia Kerns, Monica Potkay and Carina Sudarsky-Gleiser. My William & Mary colleague Elizabeth Barnes, who edited *Incest and the Literary Imagination* (Gainesville: UP of Florida, 2002), also contributed at a later stage.

promissary note that no one in the group will attempt to harm him- or herself during the run of the course.

The instructional faculty felt that in this instance requiring students to sign a safety agreement would only enhance possible tensions about studying incest. We did open the course with an admission that this could be a troubling subject for some in the class and that we would commit ourselves to discussing it respectfully, not knowing what each individual might be bringing to the table or deliberately keeping quiet. And we affirmed that it was understandable for everyone studying a subject like this to start to review their own life experiences and wonder “Did that count?” Only one student reported a spin-off problem we had not anticipated: guilt by association. A young man in my own section mentioned to his roommate that he was taking a course on incest and the other youth pulled back in embarrassment saying, “Dude, I didn’t know that was an issue with you”.

Our entire program design was shared in advance with our special guest author, Elizabeth Archibald (*Incest and the Medieval Imagination*), whose sensitive and informative presentations –to faculty, students enrolled in the formal course on Incest in Medieval Literature, Culture and Law, even to the entire staff of our Counseling Center– were models of professionalism and welcome good humor.

This one instance of a challenge for the classroom is in a small way representative of the fierce mandate of our field. Medieval studies embrace a heady array of topics that challenge and upset, from alternate models for marriage to institutionalized violence. It’s precisely the historical distance of the periods we study that offers us the advantage of examining troubling content at arm’s length and with detachment, and seeing how our own culture confronted perennial issues in surprisingly different ways. Our stewardship of higher education in its most challenging areas of inquiry is a showcase of the power of the Humanities to scrutinize evil and good as defined in other times and in cultures we claim as our own.

In consultation with Emily Francomano, the Guest Editor of this Critical Cluster on The Riddle of Incest in Medieval Iberia, we would like to offer three Appendices that our readers may find helpful in their own research and teaching.

The first Appendix offers a repertoire of Hispanic tales that deal with the incest theme, many of them discussed in greater detail in the articles in this Critical Cluster.

The second Appendix is offered for those contemplating teaching about incest –or any sensitive topic that undergraduates might find emotionally challenging. It offers a set of guidelines for class management that may provide an extra measure of responsible planning and openness. These guidelines were developed by college faculty who taught our seminar on Incest in Medieval Literature, Culture and Law and I include *in italics* reflections specific to the course on medieval incest taught at the College of William & Mary in 2003.

A concluding Appendix gives a reference bibliography on incest in classical and medieval studies, broader in nature than that contained in any of the individual articles in this Cluster.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **MEDIEVAL IBERIAN NARRATIVES OF INCEST**

This short checklist only includes the most prominent tales from the Iberian Middle Ages which contain incest themes, whether merely threatened, narrowly averted, or fully completed. The Iberian tradition seems to reflect the general European tradition amply documented by Elizabeth Archibald that ranks father-daughter incest the most reprehensible, mother-son incest as also sinful but more likely to be explained by feminine sentiment, and brother-sister incest the least troubling of all. The high frequency with which girls who lacked the means to secure an honest marriage drifted into prostitution, and the routineness with which men availed themselves of women trapped in that state of life, meant that the risks of unwitting and involuntary incest was fairly high outside the village context. And even within villages, the ritualized practice of the abandonment of children who were then raised by other families produced not uncommon instances of siblings finding themselves attracted to one another and escaping incest only through the invocation of the communal memory. The formal proclamation of the bans of marriage in advance of blessing any union allowed the elders who knew of the true if hushed-up relationships of everyone in the community to inform concern parties before things went too far.

Any examination of the literary landscape of a period needs to check itself against the religious ideals of its times and the legal injunctions that tried to channel human conduct. Both of their currents are surveyed by authors in this Cluster: Paul Brian Nelson for the former and Teresa Catarella and Louise Vasvári for the latter. But there is far

more work to be done on both fronts. Relevant passages from the *Siete partidas* and other law codes of the period reveal some of the legal reflections of the period but many other sources need to be considered. Working mostly from municipal charters, Heath Dillard points out repeatedly the control that fathers routinely exercised over their daughters' sexual fates, also expressed in Visigothic law and in the *Fuero Juzgo* as his *potestas de coniunctione* or nearly absolute right to decide her marriage, and therefore sexual partner. Lacking a father's consent, "the daughter was punished for elopement by disinheritance or worse, and the unapproved husband could be outlawed as an abductor" (41). Such intimate authority could slip into dominance or blackmail, extorting for himself the favors a girl could not grant anyone else.

Traditional folktales, mostly gathered after the medieval period during the post-Romantic era and even more insistently during the rise of systematic ethnographic field work carried out at the end of the nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth, also document many stories of incest. There is a modern prosified version of the "Delgadina" story adopted from a ballad source.<sup>2</sup> And from Puerto Rico we find the story of "Los tres trajes": father-daughter incest temporarily thwarted by obstacles invented by the girl who then flees from her perverse suitor. This tale interestingly finishes by flirting with mother-son incest when a possessive parent tries to take credit when the lovesick youth is cured by his beloved's gift of food.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Number 46 in *Cuentos populares españoles*, edición de José María Guelbenzu (Madrid: Siruela, 2006), 166-67; but in this case Guelbenzu notes that "el cuento «Delgadina» procede de un romance, recogido por Luis Cortés Vázquez en sus *Leyendas, cuentos y romances de Sanabria* [3ª ed., Salamanca: Gráficas Cervantes, 1992], que me he permitido convertir en cuento" (378).

<sup>3</sup> Number 11 in *Cuentos folklóricos latinoamericanos. Fábulas de las tradiciones hispanas e indígenas*, Ed. John Bierhorst (NY: Vintage Español, 2003), 58-62. The editor takes his anthologized version from J. Alden Mason, "Porto-Rican Folklore: Folk-Tales". Editado por Aurelio M. Espinosa. *Journal of American Folklore* 38 (1925): 572-74. Another tale of averted incest in the same anthology is Number 77, "El monstro de siete cabezas", 238-44, taken from Howard T. Wheeler, *Tales from Jalisco, Mexico* (Philadelphia: American Folklore Society, 1943), number 57.

Another folktale, the dark "El hombre del saco", recounts the abduction of a frail girl by a sinister, bogeyman figure who confines her in a sack and makes her perform at his demand. This story turns predatory sexual behavior into an offence punished by both nature and society. The offense is displaced outside the family in this version, a family strangely comprised of only a mother and older sisters with no mention of a father other than lumped casually as "los padres", so the sole reference to masculine agency belongs to the villain who could be abusive husband or other relative. Cf. Number 2 in *Cuentos populares españoles*, 27-29. Guelbenzu copies this story from José Antonio Sánchez Pérez's *Cien cuentos populares españoles* (2ª ed., Palma de Mallorca: José J. de Olañeta, 1995) first published in 1942.

Brother-sister incest appears in a thinly veiled form in the Guatemalan tale “Juan María y Juana María”.<sup>4</sup> The lovers are the children of nameless *amigos* who “se querían mucho” and whose equally nameless wives oppose the marriage of their children. The nearly identical names of the besotted youths insinuate that they were more than *primos espirituales* (the parents seem to have been at least *compadres*) but as siblings and even facing mirrors. They pledge their mutual faithfulness in a letter written in blood and leave home only to be imprisoned for unspecified offenses, perhaps the incestuous attraction itself. The lad attracts the attention of a passing noble daughter who frees him from his incarceration and moral impasse and the strangers promise to wed. The boy’s “sister”, however, is unhinged by this threat and emerges as a phantasm draped in shroud and chains to slay him on his wedding night before being carried off herself by demons.

Finally, the two volumes by Harriet Goldberg that offer motif-indexes of the traditional Spanish folktale and ballad on the Aarne-Thompson model are excellent resources, hopefully to be complemented by a third volume still forthcoming in the same MARTS series at the University of Arizona.

#### DOÑA URRACA, DAUGHTER OF FERNANDO III AND SISTER OF ROYAL PRINCES ALFONSO, SANCHO AND GARCÍA

In the mostly lost epics dealing with the Cerco de Zamora and in the subsequent ballad tradition there were frequently accusations of Urraca threatening her family members that she would have to resort to prostitution because they had “disinherited” her. Among thirteenth-century historians, both Christian and Moor, there are also references to a clandestine –or even open– incestuous relation between Urraca and her brother Alfonso VI who had exiled the Cid, Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar.

Johannes Aegidius Zamorensis (Fray Juan Gil de Zamora, OFM). *De preconiis hispanie*. Estudio preliminar y edición crítica de Manuel de Castro y Castro, OFM. Madrid: U de Madrid, 1955. pp. 189-90: “Ut subveniatur sibi, et precipue per filios, consigueneos et propinquos, iure propinquitatis prohibita fuit fornicatio cum soluta....”

<sup>4</sup> Number 29 in *Cuentos folklóricos latinoamericanos. Fábulas de las tradiciones hispanas e indígenas*, Ed. John Bierhorst (NY: Vintage Español, 2003), 122-23. The editor takes his anthologized version from Adrián Recinos, “Cuentos populares de Guatemala”. *Journal of American Folklore* 31 (1918): 472-73.

pp. 249-72: Urraca, filia Fernandi I

p. 344: "Exhibeatis vos Iheu [IV Regnum 9:30] incestuosis..."

Abu Bakr ibn al-Sayrafi, Moorish historian.

**See articles by Teresa Catarella and Erik Eckman in this issue.**

**STEPMOTHER TRIES TO SEDUCE HER ADOPTED SON (PARALLELS MODEL OF THE WIFE OF POTIPHAR AND JOSEPH IN GENESIS 39: 1-20)**

*Libro de los engaños de las mujeres [Sendebār]*. Stepmother and son; resembles wife of Potiphar story

*Libro de los engaños de las mujeres [Sendebār]*. Edición de María Jesús Lacarra. Madrid: Cátedra, 1989.

*Libro de los exemplos por a.b.c.* by Clemente Sánchez de Vercial (c.1429-1438?), compilation of 460 *exemplos* with some 546 exemplary tales. Ejemplo 172, Cuento de la madre que no pudo corromper a su hijo y lo denunció como violador a la justicia, pero éste pidió ayuda de San Andrés. Ed. crítica por John Esten Keller. Vocabulario etimológico por Louis Jennings Zahn. Madrid: CSIC, 1961. Reimpresión Madrid: Ars Libris, 2000.

**See article by Paul Brian Nelson in this issue.**

**LA VIRTUOSA DAMA QUE PECA CON SU HIJO**

*Cantigas de santa Maria* by Alfonso X el Sabio (hacia 1270-80). Cantiga 17, text in Galician-Portuguese, semi-independent miniatures in the *Códice rico* copy.

*Libro de los exemplos por a.b.c.* de Clemente Sánchez de Vercial (c.1429-1438?), compilación de 460 *exemplos* (apartados) con 546 historias ejemplares. Ejemplo 274, "La señora de Roma", texto en castellano. Ed. crítica por John Esten Keller. Vocabulario etimológico por Louis Jennings Zahn. Madrid: CSIC, 1961. Reimpresión Madrid: Ars Libris, 2000.

*Recull de Eximplis*, §276, Catalan, The incestuous union of mother and son with her being denounced by a devil in the form of a cleric. Other Latin versions of same tale:

*Dialogus miraculorum* by Caesarius of Heisterbach (German), dist. 2, chapter 11<sup>5</sup>

*Speculum historiale* by Vicente de Beauvais (French), 18b, 8, chapter 93

<sup>5</sup> Caesarius of Heisterbach (ca. 1180-ca. 1240). *The Dialogue on Miracles* [1220-1235]. Trans. H. von E. Scott and C.C. Swinton Bland, with an introduction by G.G. Coulton. London, G. Routledge & Sons, Ltd., 1929.

*Scala coeli*, num. 257

*Gesta romanorum*, §13<sup>6</sup>

**See article by Paul Brian Nelson in this issue.**

**AN INCESTUOUS UNION WHICH ENGENDERS A MONSTER**

*Amadís de Gaula*, a union between a father (who is a giant) and his daughter which produces Endriago: Libro II, cap. 73.

**KING ANTIOCO RAVISHES HIS DAUGHTER AND PREVENTS ANYONE  
FROM MARRYING HER BY IMPOSING AN IMPOSSIBLE TEST;  
APOLONIUS, KING OF TYRE, IS DRAWN TO DAUGHTER HE HAS  
NEVER KNOWN AS AN ADULT**

*Libro de Apolonio*, anonymous Castilian poem in *cuaderna vía* from mid thirteenth century, with two more Castilian versions of the story of *Apolonius of Tyre* edited by Alan Deyermond.

See pertinent sections of Elizabeth Archibald, *Incest and the Medieval Imagination*, and Isabel Lozano-Renieblas, *Novelas de aventuras medievales: género y traducción en la Edad Media hispánica*.

**ABANDONED MOTHER TAKES CONSOLATION IN HER OWN BELOVED SON**

*El conde Lucanor* by don Juan Manuel, Ejemplo 36, The merchant who abandons his pregnant wife and returns years later to find her in bed with a youth (their son) whom she fondly call “husband” out of pining for her lost husband.

**THE MOTHER WHO SLEEPS WITH HER LOST SONS AFTER THEIR  
EMOTIONAL REUNION**

*Libro del caballero Zifar*, anonymous (ca. 1320), Castilian, Capítulo 94 (in the edition of Cristina González, 210; in the edition of Jesús Cañas Murillo, 181-82).

**FRENCH TALE OF A CASE OF INCEST BETWEEN FATHER AND DAUGHTER**

*El Victorial*, Libro II, capítulo 62, 1431-1453, Castilian

The Duke of Guiana (or “Guyena”, formerly Guyenne, now in the Département of Gironde, capital Bordeaux) is unhinged by the

<sup>6</sup> *Gesta Romanorum*; or, *Entertaining moral stories; invented by the monks as a fireside recreation, and commonly applied in their discourses from the pulpit: whence the most celebrated of our own poets and others, from the earliest times, have extracted their plots. Translated from the Latin, with preliminary observations and copious notes, by Charles Swan. [1894] Rev. and corr. by Wynnard Hooper. New York, AMS Press, 1970.*

death of his wife and takes comfort in his daughter who seems a perfect replica of the deceased wife. The Duke resolves to forego a normal remarriage in favor of publically take the girl as his bride, and forcibly kissing her hands in sign of betrothal. Shamed by the sinful advances of her father, the daughter has a servant cut off the hands that were kissed and in retribution the father casts her onto the seas in an empty boat. The Virgin restores her hands and aids her in achieving marriage to a prince of England.

Díaz de Games, Gutierre, ca. 1379-ca. 1450. *El victorial; crónica de don Pero Niño, conde de Buelna, por su alférez Gutierre Díez de Games*. Edición y estudio por Juan de Mata Carriazo. Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1940. pp. 177-82. [BN-Madrid, MS 17648]

—. *El Victorial. Crónica de Pero Niño, conde de Buelna, por su alférez Gutierre Díez de Games*. Ed. Rafael Beltrán Llavador. Salamanca: U de Salamanca, 1997.

*The Unconquered Knight; a Chronicle of the Deeds of Don Pero Niño, Count of Buelna, by His Standard-bearer Gutierre Diaz de Gamez (1431-1449)*. Translated and selected from *El Vitorial* by Joan Evans. London, G. Routledge & Sons, Ltd., 1928.

#### **TRADITIONAL ROMANCES THAT DEAL WITH INCEST COMMITTED OR AVOIDED**

*Romances de Silvana*, about a father who seeks carnal union with his daughter, but the mother strategically replaces her in bed to save the family from dishonor and sin

*Romances de Delgadina*, a daughter who resists, or in some versions succumbs, to the insistent pretensions of her father; the girl's mother and sisters may refuse to help her in her plight; Delgadina reproaches both parents before she dies

*Romances de Tamar*, raped by her brother; based on the biblical story in II Samuel, 13

*Romances de don Bueso y la hermana cautiva*, in which a knight falls in love with a captive Moorish girl only to discover that she is his lost sister, taken prisoner in an earlier raid; he restores her to the family *Romancero*. Ed. Paloma Díaz-Mas. Estudio preliminar de Samuel G. Armistead. Barcelona: Crítica, 1994.

*Romancero*. Ed. estudio y notas de Michelle Débax. Madrid: Alhambra, 1982.

**See article by Sarah Portnoy on Delgadina in this issue, including a modern Cuban version of the *Romance de don Bueso y la hermana cautiva*.**

**STORY OF KING OF HUNGARY AND HIS DAUGHTER**

*Historia del rey de Hungría*, Catalan romance novel, published by Bufarull in 1857.

Incest between father and daughter based on the French tale *La manekine*.

See article by Emily Francomano in this issue.

## APPENDIX 2

### TEACHING SENSITIVE TOPICS

#### **Steps for introducing material in class and managing discussion**

**Content Disclosure** – Make an honest disclosure of where you’re going with this topic and how you hope to approach it within context of the course and using whichever applicable methodologies.

*In the interdisciplinary course on Incest in Medieval Literature, Culture and Law (four sections co-taught by three faculty members), we each gave some background of how our Program in Medieval & Renaissance Studies tries to explore interdisciplinary issues that fall between the cracks of the normal curriculum, especially in social history, with examples from other courses we’ve taught, such as Women and Mysticism, The Abandonment of Children, Inquisition, etc. Incest is a persistent theme in literature, religion and law, but in medieval times a subject that differed in many ways from modern concerns exclusively about psychological harmful sexual activity between those who are closely related, genetic consequences, and child abuse.*

**Distance from Topic** – Explain how you want to keep this study and discussion at arm’s length for everyone’s comfort.

*Medieval and Renaissance Studies can always use its primary sources to establish a temporal distance, for instance noting that the now almost total conflation of incest and child abuse in the popular imagination is barely a century old. Prior to about 1900, there is very little talk about the sexual abuse of children, and in the Middle Ages none at all. Incest legislation starts as an experiment in social engineering to help consecrate the sacramental quality of marriage in opposition to merely feudal, tribal or commercial alliances. But distance can also be established by sharpening any specific professional lens: economists might conduct research about prostitution as a black market commodity that only slowly moves from barter to a cash transaction without getting into a denunciation of the treatment of women in a patriarchal society.*

*And historians of royal prerogatives might discuss incest prohibitions as a check on unbridled concentration of wealth and power in a self convergent clan.*

**Parameters of Content Issues & Exclusionary Markers** – Announce limits of what you’ll cover and what you’re not going to address and why or why not.

*In the section on Incest in Medieval Literature, Culture and Law, each instructor gave opening statements about the different ways one could look at incest and which ones we’re not exploring in this course: e.g., that there would not be any sort of comprehensive coverage of anthropological perspectives, feminist approaches, rape as violence, genetic counseling, what happens to the children of incestuous unions, etc. We stated that we would try to talk about incest as part of the medieval imaginary and discover what sort of symbolic value it had in terms of religious or dynastic performance, confirmation of power differential, common excuses/rationales offered for this sort of behavior when it did happen, communal consequences of individual transgressions, and the spiritual importance given to acts of incest including among those only related through baptismal sponsorship as godfathers and godmothers.*

**Consensus Breaks** – Pause every now and then (and not just when things get heated, or it will look like sending the emotionally invested parties into a “time out”) to ask “Okay, at this point everyone please take a moment to jot down and then share with the group any basic statement about this material on which we could all agree at this point in our study.”

**Instructor’s attitude toward material** – Share *why* you think this is a worthy research topic, how you started your specific inquiry, and what you think it can reveal within the confines of your professional discipline (literary or cultural studies, anthropology, religious studies, psychology, etc.).

**Instructor’s relative authority in this area** – Admit what you know and how you’ve tried to systematize your research in this area; also what bibliography you’ve read to broaden your perspectives beyond the range of your disciplinary approach. If all of your background reading has been in canon law, the spiritual kinship of vowed religious, and medieval legislation concerning inheritance rights, it’s okay to let everyone know that up front.

**Who has different or complementary expertise and how to contact them** – Provide a short list of resource people who can help students explore this issue from different angles they may want to explore for their own research or out of personal curiosity.

*Faculty teaching *Incest in Medieval Literature, Culture and Law* prepared a script for the first day when we all made sure we said something like “A course on incest may start you thinking about incidents from our own life or what you heard about the experiences of others. It’s okay to want to talk to a clergy person or someone in the Counseling Center about specific incidents with yourself or others close to you and to ask ‘Does that “count” as incest?’” We also gave a roster of faculty who has been part of the preceding faculty seminar and talked about their areas of expertise and research interests.*

**Deciding on Professional Guidance or a Safety Contract** – Before teaching a course containing a prolonged consideration of sometimes truly disturbing material such as incest, torture, rape or suicide, the instructor might want to have a session or two with colleagues or trained campus clinicians who can talk about their professional experience and what students are likely to bring to these topics.

*Asking students to sign a “safety contract” may help them take their responsibility to themselves and each other more seriously, and we let our own students know that –in the case of the course on *Incest in Medieval Literature, Culture and Law*– even before we started to design the multi-section course, we met for a week-long Faculty Seminar to survey the anticipated target readings and coach each other on classroom possibilities and scenarios. In addition to the four participating medievalists, there was a physician from the Student Health Center, a deeply experienced clinical psychologist from the Counseling Center, and an anthropologist interested in transcultural expressions of the incest taboo. We had talked about using a safety contract for the *Incest* course, a sort of signed agreement that anyone who finds him- or herself troubled by the discussion, or by memories of incidents from their own past or episodes that others have shared with them, promises to go to the Counseling Center to sort out their feelings. In the end, we decided that presenting a safety contract would be more likely to exacerbate the anxiety level instead of relieving it.*

### APPENDIX 3

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