IDEAS OF THE SELF IN MEDIEVAL ENGLISH LITERATURE

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Abstract

This thesis asks the question, what is meant by the term 'self'? If
'self' exists in literature, how is it constituted? Is a 'self'
constructed or inherited, mysterious or public, unique or shared ?
A body of recent writers have directed incisive critical attention
to the nature of the 'self'; in particular Colin Morris and R. W.
Hanning have done much to dispel any notion that a sense of 'self'
only develops with fifteenth century humanism. This thesis is in-
debted to such critics and seeks to extend an interest in the 'self'
to Romances of the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. In so doing
it charts some of the ways in which a 'self' can be articulated in
different genres and in the different media of script and print.

The Introduction argues that medieval notions of 'self' should be
separated out from, can become visible in relation to, modern ideas
of character. It then examines a range of medieval vocabulary for
describing the 'self'. Having set some guidelines for a discourse
of 'self', Chapter One expands the parameters of the discussion to
look at the specific use of 'blood' and 'heart' in Malory's Morte
d'Arthur. It then examines how a major medieval mode of writing -
allegory - presents the 'self'. Chapter One closes with a discussion
of how Chaucer, in the Wife of Bath's Tale, utilises the methods and
vocabulary at his disposal to generate debate on the 'self'. The
Introduction and Chapter One both licence and outline the focus of
the thesis. The following chapters examine in detail the presentation
of the 'self' in specific texts.

Chapter Two discusses early Romance, taking into account manuscript
context and questions of audience to argue that the romances:
Chevalier Assigne, Sir Gowther, Emaré and Sir Isumbras, articulate a
notion of 'self' as 'open'; which notion is in accord with the process
of writing in a manuscript form.

Chapter Three, by way of contrast and comparison to the Romances,
examines early and late versions of the Life of St. Margaret, con-
centrating on the exemplariness of 'self' and the importance of a
'spiritual genealogy'.

Notions of genealogy and kinship are further taken into account in
Chapter Four, which touches upon ideas of kinship as expressed in Sir
Degaré and Malory's 'Tale of Sir Gareth'.

In conclusion, Chapter Five examines the sixteenth century printed
texts of the Romances discussed in Chapter Two, arguing for a gradual
shift away from an 'open' towards a 'closed' self. A move from process
to preservation which corresponds to change in methods of production
from script to print.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

DNB   The Dictionary of National Biography, edited by Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee (Oxford, 1917-).

ELH   English Literary History

JEGP   Journal of English and Germanic Philology

Med Aev   Medium Aevum

Med et Hum   Medievalia et Humanistica

Med Studs   Medieval Studies

MLR   Modern Language Review

Mod Phil   Modern Philology

Neuphil Mitt   Neuphilologische Mitteilungen

NLH   New Literary History

N&Q   Notes and Queries

OED   Oxford English Dictionary, edited by James Murray and others (Oxford, 1933 repr. 1961)

PMLA   Publications of the Modern Language Association of America

PQ   Philological Quarterly

RES   Review of English Studies

Spec   Speculum

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INTRODUCTION

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Section One: Theories of Character

Medieval notions of self need to be separated out from modern ideas

of 'character'. Medieval notions of self become more visible when

viewed against recent critical writing on character. Modern re-

evaluations of character offer the reader new ways to approach medi-

eval literature and enable us to find appropriate methods of reading

medieval texts - without necessarily offering the reader a precise

key.

At face-value the term 'character' may be said to be one with which

we are at ease; it forms part of our 'everyday dealings with the

world', something which we constantly operate.[1] On closer inspection

'character' proves to be a slippery notion. David Mills pin-points

the difficulties, in the instance of medieval drama, which critics

face when they apply the term to medieval texts:

> As a critical term 'characterisation' is not much over a cen-
> tury old...twentieth century critics have the familiar problem
> of using a term with nineteenth century overtones to analyse
> the drama of the Middle Ages.[2]

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[1]   Patrick Gardiner, 'Sartre on Character and Self-Knowledge', <u>NLH</u>,
      IX (1977-78), 65-82 (p. 66).

[2]   David Mills, 'Characterisation in the English Mystery Cycle: a
      Critical Prologue', <u>Medieval English Theatre</u>, 5 (1983), 5-17 (p.

The term character can carry with it 'unnecessary baggage'.[3] Conditioning the reader to analyse a text with character as a focus can encourage laziness in that reader since his activity in creating character and meaning is elided.[4] To read a medieval text as if it were a nineteenth century novel is to miss the point of the text, to misrepresent it. Why then keep the term 'character' , why look at it ? As a term it may be a barrier to our reading of a Middle English work but also a springing-off point. The term 'character' is useful as a control-mechanism and provides us with methodologies against which to chart a medieval discourse of self. As a literary term, 'character' does not appear in Middle English. Middle English possesses the term 'carecter' which refers to a 'symbol marked or branded on the body: also _fig_ an imprint on the soul'. It is similar in meaning to 'carecte' which refers to a symbol marked upon something or somebody, a letter or a scar...'.[5]

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5). A similar point is made in David Lawton, Chaucer's Narrators, Chaucer Studies XIII (Cambridge, 1985), p. 1.

[3] Thomas Docherty, Reading (Absent) Character: Towards a Theory of Characterisation in Fiction (Oxford, 1983), p. xii.

[4] Docherty, p. xiii. Elided to the extent that 'the activity of the reader actually erased'.

[5] The Middle English Dictionary, edited by Hans Kurath and Sherman M. Kuhn (Michigan 1954-); 'carecter' p. 56. There are only two references for the term 'carecter'; one in the Wycliff Bible the other in William of Shoreham's 'De Uncione Extrema' in, The Poems of William Shoreham, edited by M. Konrath, EETS (London, 1902), pp. 39-45 (p. 43 1. 1205). Although the MED describes these as figurative uses the Oxford English Dictionary, (Oxford, 1933 repr. 1961), 'character' II p. 280 'figurative senses' does not include Shoreham but places him under I 'literal senses'. There is apparent here an interesting lack of agreement over what constitutes the meaning and use of the term 'carecter'.

In the nineteenth century the novel generated a tradition of charac-
ter- based analysis and concern. A prime example is to be found in
Henry James. In his Preface to The Spoils of Poynton he remarks
of the protagonist:

> She planted herself centrally, and the stroke as I call it, the
> demonstration after which she coud n't (sic) be gainsaid, was
> the simple act of letting it be seen she had character.[6]

We can see texts as provoking the questions 'what' to be and 'how'
to be. This 'what' and 'how' also necessitates a role for an audience.
If in a nineteenth-century novel information is supplied by the text,
in many medieval texts the audience must engage with the text and
supply it themselves. A different code is activated between audience
and text. In Emaré the 'heroine' is introduced sporadically as 'a
lady fayr and fre' (22), daughter of an Emperor, an only child and
'semely' (25, 43 & 48). Any idea of what Emaré is has to be constructed
through the reader's engagement with the text.

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[6] I do not wish to suggest that 'character' has a uniform meaning
in Victorian literature but that it was a dominant and influential
factor. Thomas Hardy subtitled The Mayor of Casterbridge, 'A
Story Of A Man Of Character'. James, reviewing Mrs Gaskell's Wives
and Daughters, concentrates on her delineation of character, even
describing the novelist's own genius as 'a peculiar play of her
personal character'. See Henry James, 'Preface to the Spoils of
Poynton' in, The Art of The Novel, Critical Prefaces by Henry
James with an Introduction by Richard Blackmur (London, 1935),
p. 127 and see also pp. xiv-xv for comment on James' persistent
requirement that his fictions possess a central character with
particular intelligence. Thomas Hardy, The Life and Death of the
Mayor of Casterbridge: The Story of a Man of Character
(Macmillan, 1974). Henry James, Notes and Reviews with a Preface
by Pierre Chaignon de la Rose (New York, 1921 repr. 1968), p.
155.

John Bayley, in the 1960's, continued the nineteenth century tradition of seeing character at the very centre of fiction: 'So much depends on what is meant by character...' and 'it is the characters...who make possible...success'.[7] Bayley also makes an interesting connection between character and self: '"Character"...is what other people have, "consciousness" is ourselves.'[8] A distinction which, despite Bayley's assertion of the centrality of character, recalls Sartre. For Sartre, as Gardiner paraphrases him:

> Character concepts are notions we impose on our fellow beings, enabling us to describe and label them as if they possessed certain stable properties or dispositions of the kind we are accustomed to associate with material things or substances[9]

Sartre cannot judge his own self because in so doing he would be judging a past to which his present is not subject. For Sartre there is no character but a 'project of oneself'.[10]

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[7]   John Bayley, The Characters of Love: A Study in the Literature of Personality (London, 1960 repr. 1962), p. 8. For an opposing view see Martin Price, Forms of Life: Character and Moral Imagination in the Novel (New Haven, 1983), p. 45 'characters exist for the sake of the novels rather than the novel for the sake of the character'.

[8]   Characters of Love, p. 33.

[9]   Gardiner, p. 69.

[10] Jean-Paul Sartre, being and Nothingness: and Essay on Phenomenological Ontology, translated by Hazel E. Barnes (London, 1969 repr. 1976), p. 552. In Bayley's terms (p. 8.) 'we are perpetually anxious about what we are becoming ... awareness of ourselves has become an awareness of change'. These preoccupations he sees as one of the reasons why the notion of 'character' has been devalued; 'characters it seems are no longer objects of affection'.

Roland Barthes, similarly, proposes that the 'I' of a text is always new, even if repeated and even if interlocuters suppose the 'I' to be homogenous and stable; 'the "I" of the one who recounts is no longer the same "I" as the one that is recounted'.[11] This usefully contrasts with the Jamesian and biographical approach. Writers such as Sartre and Barthes help the reader move away from mimetic character-based reading by foregrounding the discontinuity and artifice of self.

The problem is not seen as a new one by R. A. Lanham:

> The Western self has from the beginning been composed of a shifting and perpetually uneasy combination of homo rhetoricus and homo seriosus, of a social self and a central self.

A Platonic view will emphasise the serious central self which gives man an identity out of time, whilst an Aristotelian will see man as role-player who exists for the present.[12] Leo Bersani radcally opposes this split self by positing a 'coherent, unified describable self...[as] the premise of most Western Literature from Medieval allegory to twentieth century fiction'.[13] Greenblatt similarly focuses only on one side of the self in his account of self-fashioning, or homo rhetoricus. His claim that 'in the sixteenth century there ap-

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[11] Roland Barthes, 'To Write: An Intransitive Verb ?' in, The Structuralists: From Marx to Levi Strauss, edited by Richard T. and Fernande M. de George (New York, 1972), pp. 155-163 (p. 162).

[12] Richard A. Lanham, The Motives of Eloquence (New Haven and London, 1976), p. 6. For a full discussion see his Chapter One.

[13] Leo Bersani, A Future for Astyanax: Character and Desire in Literature (London, 1978). p. 214.

pears to be an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process'.[14] need not however imply absence of self-consciousness before the sixteenth century. Some fourteenth and fifteenth century courtesy books, for instance, deliberately set out to instruct one how to fashion one's self to advantage - how to role-play. As Diane Bornstein argues, most medieval English courtesy books teach numerous skills which have 'little to do with morality' but a lot to do with self-advancement.[15] By selective imitation of the behaviour of others 'ye shal your self best auaunce'.[16]

Notions of self and character in the Middle Ages are not simple. There is much critical apparatus to apply to the literature of the Middle Ages but its use must be advised. Character should not always be separated out from action, from that which surrounds it.[17] Structuralist and Formalist analyses prove useful in moving away from a foregrounding of character, placing action, happenings, character

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[14] Greenblatt, p. 2.

[15] Diane Bornstein, <u>Mirrors of Courtesy</u> (Hamden, Conn., 1975), p.79.

[16] Bornstein, p. 79. Quotation cited from Caxton's <u>Book of Curtayse</u>, edited by Frederick J. Furnivall, EETS (London, 1868). p. 13, printed by Caxton 1477-8. See also J. Nicholls, <u>The Matter of Courtesy: Medieval Courtesy Books and the Gawain Poet</u> (Cambridge, 1985), especially Appendix B for an annotated list of Courtesy books in Latin, French and English.

[17] For the usefulness of critical views of all ages see D. R. Howard, <u>The Idea of the Canterbury Tales</u> (London, 1976), p. 5 where he argues that we should not dispose of 'erroneous' critical views but use them to help us focus our own.

and setting on an equal basis.[18] Tzvetan Todorov and A.J. Greimas argue against a simple application of a psychologising urge to all literary texts and Todorov's analysis of the Sinbad story allows us to see how close character and action can be:

> Sinbad likes to travel (character trait) ---> Sinbad takes a trip (action): the distance between the two tends toward a total reduction.[19]

In answer to the question 'what is character ?' Todorov answers 'a character is a potential story'. If there is no story there is no character. 'Narrative equals life; absence of narrative death'. Todorov and Greimas thus bring to our attention a whole body of literature which is plot-centred, and remind us we do not always have to focus on character as distinct from action. A text is not the life story of a character but a 'unique' yet 'permanent' spectacle.[20]

Finding the term 'character' inadequate Greimas developed his actantial theory.[21] A narrative consists of subject vs object, where

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[18] See, for a recent example of such approaches to character, Seymour Chatman Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film (Ithaca, 1978), p. 19.

[19] Tzvetan Todorov, The Poetics of Prose, translated by Richard Howard (Oxford, 1977), p. 68.

[20] Todorov, see especially pp. 70 and 74. And, p. 69 'A character trait is not simply a cause of action nor simply its effect: it is both at once'. For a full discussion, see Todorov's chapter 'Narrative Men'. See also Chatman's account of Tordorov pp. 113-114. A.-J. Greimas, Structural Semantics: An Attempt at a Method, edited and translated by Daniele McDowell and others (Lincoln, USA, 1983), p. 198.

[21] Structural Semantics; in the Introduction we are reminded not to privilege the actantial theory over the rest of Greimas' work - it is a part of it - not the whole. See p. xli.

the subject is desiring; sender vs receiver, in a relation of know-
ledge; and helper vs opponent in a relation of power. This can be
expressed diagrammatically:

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sender  ----->  |object|  ----->  receiver
                    ↑
                    |
helper  ----->  |subject| <-----  opponent
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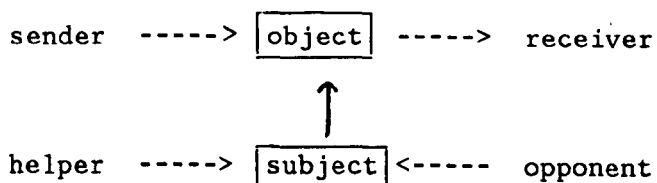
By using such a model we can see characters as part of a system and
are freed from the urge to psychoanalyse or biographicise them. In
Greimasian terms, two characters can be one actant, or one character
contain two actants.[22]

Against this background Evelyn Birge Vitz re-evaluates the Life of
Saint Alexis[23] and in so doing she demonstrates the strength and de-
liberately points out the weaknesses of Greimasian analysis. In her
view, the application of Greimasian terms is useful but the simple
recognition of a subject- object relationship, governed by desire,
in a medieval text is not sufficient. She argues these things must
be defined further; it is not always clear what is meant by desire,

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[22] For a full discussion of the actantial theory see Greimas espe-
cially Chapter X, 'Reflection on Actantial Models'; and Fredric
Jameson, The Prison House of Language (Princeton, 1972), pp.
124-5.

[23] Evelyn Birge Vitz, 'La Vie de Saint Alexis: Narrative Analysis
and the Quest for the Sacred Subject', PMLA, 93 (1978), 396-408.
For another critique of Greimasian technique see Fredric Jameson
The Political Unconscious (London, 1981), pp. 122-123 where he
locates as a blind spot in Greimas the 'problem of the
character...the incapacity to make a place for the subject'.

subject and object.[24] For example, in the <u>Life</u> God is the subject of the text, but so is Alexis:

> Without Alexis... we would simply have a theophany... And without God as subject ... we cannot have a saint.[25]

As Vitz goes on to suggest, these two are not the only subjects; the reader and Alexis family are, too, although the family can also be seen as 'opponent':

> The line between who is and who is not to be thought of as subject is clearly a fine one, and indeed arbitrary.[26]

Vitz finishes her analysis of the subject in the <u>Life</u> with up to six possible subjects through using the Greimasian model as a 'tool',[27] concluding that we must 'expand to a considerable degree the notion of subject'.[28] It is possible to speak of actants as in the Greimasian system, but, as Vitz asserts, one of the 'crucial features' of medieval narrative is that it 'reminds us constantly that the story, with its human characters and events, is not a closed and watertight system'.[29]

I have tried to outline the major swings in the debate over 'character' and 'self'. Although there are many approaches to an idea of

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[24] Vitz, p. 397.

[25] Vitz, p. 400.

[26] Vitz, p. 405.

[27] Vitz, p. 405.

[28] Vitz, p. 406.

[29] Vitz, p. 406.

'self' in medieval literature, no one approach can be comprehensive enough to be entirely satisfactory. Moreover, the plethora of interpretations of the term 'character' make it unwieldy to use. In the next section, I will concentrate on a select number of terms to see how notions of self can be expressed in Middle English vocabulary.[30]

Section Two: Vocabulary

The bewildering array of approaches to literary figures may be attributable, in part, to a level of confusion in English critical language. French maintains a distinction between 'la personalité' and 'le personage' whereas in English it is easy to drop from 'an analysis of the functionings of a verbal construct' to an analysis of a full, but merely inferred 'moral and mental constitution'.[31] As John F. Benton remarks, 'though there is a perfectly good Latin word for "self"...there is no medieval word which has anything like the meaning of "personality"'. However, from the twelfth century onwards he discerns a growing and heightened concentration on a 'collective

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[30] Medieval writers, while not having the critical apparatus outlined above, did have alternatives. The practice of rhetoric is beyond the scope of this thesis but for a detailed discussion see Richard D. Lanham, The Motives of Eloquence (New Haven, 1976) and James J. Murphy Rhetoric in the Middle Ages (Berkeley, 1974).

[31] Dennis Walker, 'The Psychological Realism of Fictional Characters: Another Perspective', Neuphil Mitt, LXXXVI (1985), 337-342 (339). The lexical confusion occurs between OED senses II 1 and II 17.

language of awareness'.[32] Caroline Bynum wishes to substitute the word 'self' for 'individual' when speaking of medieval texts,[33] but Colin Morris, replying to her article and taking up the issue of terminology again in 1980, points up the difficulty of approaching medieval texts with modern categories of vocabulary; problems of interpretation are not solved simply by substituting one term for another - 'self', for example, for 'individual'. As he says, one may use all the terminology available, so that 'it would perhaps be more accurate to speak in the plural of discoveries of the individual' rather than of a single 'discovery'.[34] Morris and Bynum offer valid ways of reading medieval fictional constructs and it is this plurality I wish to retain. We are used to such terms as: 'personality', 'identity', 'selfhood', 'psyche', 'individual', 'unique', 'singularity', 'originality', but many of the terms we freely use in discussing fictional agents and medieval texts do not appear in Middle English. For example the words listed above do NOT occur in Malory's fifteenth century _Morte d'Arthur_.[35] The MED has only one reference to

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[32] John F. Benton, 'Consciousness of Self and Perceptions of Individuality' in, _Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century_, edited by Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable (Oxford, 1982), pp. 263-295 (p. 284).

[33] Caroline Walker Bynum, 'Did the Twelfth Century Discover the Individual ?', _Journal of Ecclesiastical History_, 31 (1980), 1-17.

[34] Colin Morris, 'Individualism in Twelfth-Century Religion: Some further reflections', _Journal of Ecclesiastical History_, 31 (1980), 195-206 (p. 206).

[35] This becomes clear when checking through Tomomi Kato, _A Concordance to the Works of Thomas Malory_ (Tokyo, 1974); Anne Ferry makes a similar point in the introduction to her _The Inward Language: Sonnets of Wyatt, Sidney, Shakespeare, Donne_, (Chicago, 1983), although she is interested in later writers than those dealt with in this thesis.

'personality', meaning 'the quality or fact of being a person', and it was not until the seventeenth century that 'idiosyncrasy' in its sense of 'a mental constitution peculiar to a person', appears in English.[36] We need, then, to be careful about the assumptions we make when reading medieval texts. For example, we constantly speak about the 'heroes' and 'heroines' of Romance but the terms are really seventeenth and eighteenth century ones.[37] As terms they carry with them basic assumptions which we project on to the text: the hero is the centre of a text. By referring to a hero as such, he is by definition at the centre of the text. What other terms are available to us which do not carry the connotations of 'hero' ?

The problem is three-fold. Words we often use are notable by their absence from medieval works. Words we use carry with them a cargo of meaning inapplicable to Middle English writing. And, finally, terms in Middle English often carry a meaning now lost to us. The more we take into account technical, or specialised, sense of words,

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[36] MED p. 849. a 1425 Select English Works of John Wycliff, edited by Thomas Arnold (Oxford, 1871), Vol II, Sermon XXV, p. 296 'Al þe personalite of a man stondeþ in þe spirit of him'. Also OED 2 p.21.

[37] MED p. 684 records 'hereos' as a noun, lovesickness, a malady of lovers induced by an imbalance of humours. See also OED 'hero' senses 1-5 pp. 245-46. For a full account of how this comes about through scribal emendation in the thirteenth century, where 'eros' becomes 'heros' 'ereos' or 'hereos' in manuscripts dealing with love-sickness, see Mary Frances Wack, 'The Measure of Pleasure: Peter of Spain on Men, Women, and Love-sickness', Viator, 17 (1986), 173-196 especially p. 178. See also, Morton W. Bloomfield, 'The Problem of the Hero in the Later Medieval Period' in, Concepts of the Hero in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, edited by Norman T. Burns and Christopher Reagan (London, 1976), pp. 27-49.

the more our reading of medieval texts should be illuminated.[38] With this in mind I will now look at a few pertinent examples of change in meaning which chart shifts in a perception of self. This survey is necessarily selective and limits itself to some of the more interesting changes in lexis.

CONDITION An example of a term now unfamiliar to us 'condicioun' had a wide range of meaning in the medieval period. It can be simply 'A situation or state; circumstance of life or existence' - poverty or childhood for example.[39] Or 'Status...in a society' such as 'free' or 'high born'.[40] The illustration given by the MED is Chaucer's 'General Prologue' line 38 where he promises to 'tell...al the condicioun' of the pilgrims. However, through telling the reader the pilgrim's 'status' and 'situation' a great deal more is implied. This leads us on to MED sense 3 a as 'personal character, disposition' and 3 b 'a trait of character or behavior (sic), a personal characteristic; also an attitude, habit or manner'. The OED goes further in sense II 11 a[41] suggesting that condicioun could also mean 'mental disposition, cast of mind; character, moral nature; disposition, temper' and II 12 'nature, character, quality'.

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[38] For examples of the technical meanings of words which are now lost to us see David Burnley, A Guide to Chaucer's Language (London, 1983), especially pp. 143-7. And J. A. Burrow, 'Henryson: "The Preaching of the Swallow"', Essays in Criticism, 25 (1975), 25-37.

[39] MED sense I a pp. 492-3.

[40] MED I b pp. 492-3.

[41] OED, p. 786.

This suggests that under the one term there might be an interesting system for seeing the self. Different uses of the term are reflected in Malory's <u>Morte d'Arthur</u>. Lancelot has a 'condicion that he used of custom to clattir in his slepe' (805). This is simply a habit of his, it does not identify him as Lancelot but it is a part of him. Similarly Gawain has a 'condicion' (1049) to like apples; this adds nothing to our knowledge of him but it is a vital part of the action he is involved in in the 'Poisoned Apple' episode.[42]

Condicioun can, however, cast a value judgement on a particular figure. Bors is full of 'humilite' (973) and so 'one of the worthyest knyghtes of the worlde and of best condicions'. On the other hand King Mark is 'vylaunce' (582) and Dynadan 'loves nat his condisions' (583). Some parts of one's condicioun are beyond control - such as talking when asleep , or liking apples; others may be a product of personal volition. Gareth avoids his brother Gawain because of his 'condusions' (360); Gawain is 'vengeable' - is this by choice or by inherited nature ? Chaucer provides us with examples of the use of the word condicioun to mean something that one suffers, in the 'Clerk's Tale' lines 701-703.

> But ther been folk of swich condicion
> That whan they have a certein purpos take,
> They kan nat stynte of hire entencion

They are at the mercy of their own purpose and this purpose may well affect others who are at the receiving end of that purpose.

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[42] Another example is found in the Haute Prynce who 'had a condission that he loved no fysshe' (668).

Troilus is 'formed so wel that Kynde it nought amenden' (V 11. 829/9), and is as 'trewe as stiel in ech condicion' (V 831). In the 'Cannon Yeoman's Tale' again there is a reference to being 'trewe...of condicioun' (1039); in this case it refers to a 'false channon' (1022).

Returning to Malory, both Gawain and Tor are formed out of good blood,[43] or good stock, but where Tor is described in these words:

> there is nat in this londe a better knyght than he is, nother or bettir condycions, and loth to do ony wronge and loth to take ony wronge (131).

Gawain turns his inheritance into vengeance. King Arthur refuses to break his promises where King Mark is false, so that 'kynge Arthur and kynge Marke were never lyke of condycions' (1173). A decision to behave in a particular way will alter ones condicioun, but at the same time it can be something out of a person's control. It refers to the constructed and knowable self as well as to the self that is formed by inheritance or nature.

PERSON   Not until 1659, however, does the OED record 'person' in a philosophical sense as meaning 'a self-conscious or rational being'.[44] Deriving from the Latin, 'person' meant a mask or mouthpiece for actors to sound through - per sonare.   According to James W. Carlsen Latin persona 'assumed extensions in meaning and function'; as early as the time of Cicero the term incorporated definitions

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[43]   For a discussion of 'blood' and 'heart' in Malory see Chapter One.

[44]   OED II 3 p. 724.

'ranging from inner elements of self (true) to external qualities of self (mask)'. For Carlsen there is a relationship between elements of self which are 'true' and those which are 'mask'.[45] Mary Hatch Marshall points out that a theatrical sense of 'person' deriving in this way from 'mask' was well known in the Middle Ages through Boethius' writings, glossed in the ninth century by John the Scot, disseminated through Trinitarian literature and through dictionaries.[46]

'Person',in the sense of a part played, first appears in English in the Ancrene Wisse:

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[45] James W. Carlson, 'Persona, Personality and Performance' in, Studies in Interpretation, vol 11, edited by E. M. Doyle and V. Hastings Floyd (Amsterdam,1972-3), pp. 221-232 (pp. 224-26) Although the OED p. 724 'Person' is 'generally thought to be related to L (sic) personare...but the long o makes a difficulty. The sense "mask" has not come down into English'. Either view may be correct but the former at least offers us a way in to reading allegorical works.

[46] Mary Hatch Marshall, 'Boethius' definition of Persona and Medieval Understanding of Roman Theater', Spec, XXV (1950), 471-82. On the Trinity, Saint Augustine, On the Holy Trinity, edited by Philip Schaff, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Series, Vol III Grand Rapids, 1956). On p. 10 the Introduction points out the importance the doctrine of the Trinity: 'The doctrine of the Trinity is the most immense of all the doctrines of religion...Take out of the New Testament...the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and there is no God left.'. Also Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae edited by Thomas Gilby (London, 1964). Vol VI, q1a,27-32. OED 'person' V, p. 724. For an opposing view see A. C. Lloyd, 'On Augustine's Concept of a Person' in Augustine: A Collection of Critical Essays, edited by R. A. Markus (New York, 1972), pp. 191-204. who argues (p. 197), that De Trinitate in no way depends upon using the same word for theological and everyday descriptions of persons - although person can be applied to both. He concludes that generally the Augustinian conception of person was the concept of one's own mind.

Eft up on oðer half pellican þis fuhel haueð an oðer cunde. þe
hit is aa leane. for þi as ich seide. dauiþ   eueneð him þer
to in ancre persone. In ancre steuene. Similis factus sum
pellicano solitudinis. Ich am pellican ilich þe wuneð bi him
ane. Ant ancre ah þus to seggen & beon ilich pellican and þehit
is leane.

(... the pelican has another characteristic, that it is always
thin. Therefore David compares himself to the pelican, as I
have said, as if he were an anchorite. With an anchorite's
voice he says: 'I am become like to a pelican in the
wilderness,' 'I am like a pelican which lives alone'. This is
what the anchoress should say, and, too, she should be like the
pelican in its leanness).[47]

The excerpt from the <u>Ancrene Wisse</u> forms an example of the interplay

of 'mask' and 'truth', or <u>homo rhetoricus</u> and <u>homo seriosus</u>. The

excerpt suggests that one of the ways to achieve a stable self is by

adopting a number of rôles. These stand in relation to one another;

OED I 1 a p. 724 reminds us that 'strict dramatic use' does not appear

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[47] <u>Ancrene Wisse</u>, edited by J. R. R. Tolkien, EETS (London, 1962),
p. 67. 11. 20-25. <u>The Ancrene Riwle</u>, translated by M.B. Salu
(London, 1955), p. 57. OED sense I 1 p. 724. However, when this
was compiled there did not exist the Microfiche <u>Concordance To
Old English</u> (Newark, Delaware, 1980), edited by R. L. Venezky
and A. di Paolo. In this there appears to be a reference to
'person' dating from 925; a grant of King Aethelstan to the
minster at Beverley. This to be found in the <u>Cartularium
Saxonicum</u>, 3 Vols (London, 1885-9 repr. New York and London 1964),
item 644. However, on closer inspection, this proves to be a
metrical version of a charter in much later English. A second
version replaces 'person' with 'parson'; this would bring it
closer to OED II 2 c, p. 724 'a man or woman of distinction or
importance'. The predecessor of 'person' in Old English may have
been 'had' but it is difficult to ascertain the exact status or
meaning of this word. With regard to a theatrical sense of person
I am indebted to Jocelyn Price, 'Theatrical Vocabulary in Old
English', parts I & II in, <u>Medieval English Theatre</u>, 5 (1983),
58-61. and 6 (1984), 101-125. One may also note in the
<u>Concordance</u> a number of references for 'persona', 'personae',
'personam' and 'personis' all of which are to Aelfrich's <u>Grammatik
und Glossar</u>, edited by J. Zupitza. (Berlin, 1880 repr. 1966).
As far as I can see, this grammatical use of person is always
translated as 'had' and its variants.

in early English, in the sense it is used now as 'dramatis personae'.

An interplay of 'truth' and 'mask' continues in the fifteenth century;

Malory, who in this case seems representative of fifteenth century

usage, frequently uses the term 'person'. In the early books espe-

cially he presents Arthur in his 'person' as King. Igrayne is accused

of being a traitor to the 'kynges person'. Arthur, when preparing

to trounce the Emperor Lucius, commands his servants to bring him his

horse, armour and 'all that longith to my person'.[48] In this way he

presents himself as King, reminding himself and all other witnesses

that he is not and will not be subject to Lucius. His use of 'person'

predicates his existence as King and as particular 'self', that is

as King Arthur, not simply as playing a role of King, but in possession

of those qualities which make him, uniquely, King Arthur. Malory,

as well as being heir to 'person' as used in the Ancrene Wisse also

had new fourteenth century meanings available to him. Person as 'The

living body of a human being either (a) the actual body as distinct

from clothing etc, or from mind or soul, or (b) the body with its

clothing and adornment as presented to the sight of others...'.[49] This

extends the links possible between inner and outer, internal and ex-

ternal presentation of self. The OED records another sense for person

as new in the fourteenth century; 'The actual self or being of a man

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[48]   The Morte d'Arthur, edited by Eugène Vinaver, second edition, 3
       Vols (Oxford, 1967), p. 48. For the idea of the King's two persons
       - one descended from grace and the other through genealogy -
       Elizabeth T. Pochoda, Arthurian Propaganda (Chapel Hill, 1971),
       p. 73. and Ernst H. Kantorowicz, The King's Two Bodies: A Study
       in Mediaeval Political Theology (Princeton, 1957).

[49]   OED III, 4 a p. 724.

or woman; individual personality'.[50] This seems to me to suggest a growing interest in the way 'person' can be used, and a concomitant interest in the relation of physical and conceptual notions of self.[51] In Malory's fifteenth century text one of the most elaborate expressions of self occurs in the 'Tale of the Knight with Two Swords'. This section of the Morte d'Arthur forms a very good example of the nexus of meanings collected around the term 'person' and the ways in which different medieval readers interpreted them. Person' refers not only to a King's but to anyone's outward presentation of self and, more importantly, the relation of such outward presentation to the self as a whole:

> Worthynes and good tacchis and also good dedis is nat only in
> arrayment, but manhode and worship [ys] hyd within a mannes
> person, and many a worshipfull knyght ys nat knowyn unto all
> peple (63).

Here Balin locates himself in virtue and in his 'person'. The Winchester manuscript does not have Caxton's addition of 'ys hyd' so it reads 'manhode and worship within a mannes person'.[52] Caxton has changed the sense of Balin's words so that there is a hidden inner self. The Winchester presents a more open self. The self in the

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[50] OED, III, 5 p. 724. Tauno F. Mustanoja, A Middle English Syntax pt I (Helsinki, 1960), p. 148 notes from the late thirteenth to the late fifteenth century the use of the phrase 'his own body' as an 'emphatic equivalent of "himself"'.

[51] This relationship has been well documented by Jill Mann, '"Taking the Adventure": Malory and the Suite du Merlin' in, Aspects of Malory, edited by Toshiyuki Takamiya and Derek Brewer (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 71-91 and her 'Malory: Knightly Combat in Le Morte D'Arthur' in, The New Pelican Guide to English Literature, vol I, edited by Boris Ford (Harmondsworth, 1982), pp. 331-39.

[52] The Winchester Malory: A Facsimile, with an Introduction by N. Ker, EETS (London, 1976), f.23 r.

latter may or may not be adduced, in Caxton the self is a secret which would have to be revealed. This passage evidently interested later readers. An unknown sixteenth century hand has added, in the margin, a drawing of a face with the words, 'vertue and manhode ys hyed wythin the bodye' written in its hat.[53] This supplies us with a third reading in which the self is said to be hidden in the flesh. Validation for this reading is found in Balin's earlier speech to the damsel, also on f. 23r, which is marked by a pointing index finger in the margin. It is in this speech that Balin locates himself in his heart 'mysemeth in myne herte to spede ryght welle' (63). The text deliberately raises the question of what makes a self, whether it is explainable or expressible. 'Person' is not confined to meaning clothing or simple appearance. Sir Kaynolde can say of a knight Kay's armour:

> mysemeth by his persone hit is sir Launcelot other sir Trystrams other sir Pelleas.[54]

It is the external presentation of himself that allows Kaynolde to make this appraisal of the knight, not just the knight's clothing. He is 'bygger' than Kay not in the sense of physical appearance but in that he is more intensely knightly than Kay; more himself - even if neither we nor Kaynolde know his name. The term 'person' is more freighted than a simple inner/outer split. The meaning of the word 'person' was a debate kept alive by secular texts such as these and the term is flexible and wide ranging one, not a closed subject.

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[53] Winchester Facsimile, f.23r. See also Malory, pp. 63 & 305.

[54] Malory, p. 276

SELF This term seems to refer, from Cynewulf to the sixteenth century, to coherence of being; to show beyond doubt that the reference is to that which is mentioned and no other. The first OED reference is to Cynewulf:

> Nu is þam weorce þearf
> þaet se Craeft3a cume and se Cyning sylfa
> And þonne 3ebete...[55]

In Malory there are only three references to the word 'self'. If we see a lack here, it is because of a twentieth century interpretation of 'person' and 'self'. We often divide our selves into an external façade and an inner 'self' (that which is irreducibly us) behind it. This is not supported in Middle English lexis. What one 'is' extends through the 'person'. It is only in the seventeenth century and beyond that it would seem that we begin to value a state of disparity and describe it in such terms as:

> A secret self I had enclos'd within
> That was not bounded with my clothes or skin.[56]

Anne Ferry notes that the most common meaning of self in the sixteenth century 'included the whole human creature, body and soul together' but it is also in this century that a sense of better or worse self,

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[55] OED A 1. p. 409. <u>Cynewulf's Christ</u>, edited by Israel Gollancz (London, 1892), 11. 10-12; also 1. 134. OED also cites Byrhtferth, The Pater Noster, The Lambeth Homilies, <u>Ancrene Wisse</u>, <u>Cursor Mundi</u>, and Langland, with this usage continuing into the sixteenth century.

[56] OED C 3. p. 410. 'That which in a person is really and intrinsically he (in contradistinction to what is adventitious)'. Traherne, <u>Poetical Works 1636?-1674</u>, edited by B. Dobell (London, 1903 repr. 1906). p. 51 'Nature' 11. 19-20.

and compounds such as 'self-centred' appear. In Old English the re-

corded number of compounds is thirteen but in Middle English the only

survival is 'self-will' and its cognates.[57] Correspondingly, in

Malory, as I will argue later, the self is not inside the person.

One can have inner emotions or perform private acts but these form a

part of the self. We do not see the private or inner as that which

is essentially the self - it is a part of the self.[58]

Finally, two examples of related, though not key, words.

IDENTITY   This term supports the view that it is the way in which

things connect which is of interest in medieval views of the self.

The MED has no entry for 'identity' except in the sense of 'identi-

cal'.

> lyche as þe furst precept...
> perteyneþ to þe fader ryght so þys Iplyght
> perteyneþ to þe son of idemptical myght. [59]

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[57]   Ferry, p. 39. And OED, p. 411. OED gives numerous examples of
       modern cognates of which here are but a few examples; for full
       comments and documentation see full citation in the OED. 'self-
       centred', OED 2 p. 415 as 'persons, their activities etc: centred
       in oneself...independant of external action or influence', first
       reference is 1764. 'Self-knowledge' as knowledge of one's char-
       acter or capabilities, first reference 1613. 'self-hood' as
       'personal individuality' first reference 1649; and as 'one's
       personality' 1854, OED p. 420. The listings for 'self-will',
       however, run through from Anglo Saxon to Lydgate, meaning 'of
       one's own accord, 'one's own will' and 'wilful or obstinate per-
       sistence in following one's own will or desire'.

[58]   For its use in Malory see examples on pp. 595, 1048 and 1228.
       Also OED D 2 p. 411. One can be out of one's self. The earliest
       reference cited is 1450.

[59]   MED p. 19. 'idemptical...sam_, iden.. al' c. 1475. Magnificencia

Personality in the sense of 'that quality or assemblage of qualities which makes a person what he is, as distinct from other persons; distinctive personal or individual character...' does not come into use until 1795.[60] More common, according to the OED, is the use of identity as expressing a sense of similarity, sameness.[61] This idea of likeness to others is developed by Caroline Bynum who suggests that the discovery of the individual twelfth century went 'hand in hand' with the emergence of the group.[62]

Ecclesie, edited by Henry Noble MacCracken in, PMLA, 24 (1909), 687-98, ll. 11-13.

[60] OED 'Personality' 2 a p. 727.

[61] OED, sense 1 p. 19.

[62] Bynum, p. 15. The idea of the self as part of that which surrounds it is discussed by Karl Joachim Weintraub, The Value of the Individual: Self and Circumstance in Autobiography (Chicago, 1978), p. 55 it is 'proper for a medieval writer to view his self as a prolongation of itself with its surroundings, an integral part of its enveloping world' which includes the group around it. Natalie Crohn Schmitt, 'The Idea of a Person in Medieval Morality Plays' in, The Drama of the Middle Ages: Comparative and Critical Essays, edited by Clifford Davidson, C. J. Giankaris and John H. Stroupe (New York, 1982), pp. 304-315 also comments on the way in which medieval people constantly participated in what they perceived around them. Jerzy Peterkiewicz goes as far as to define identity as a 'thought process' brought about by levels of identification between the self and others, in 'Cast in Glass and Shadow', NLH, 5 (1973-74), 353-61 (p. 356). This is unlike a modern conception of self as something with a 'frontier, our personalities divided from each other as our bodies visibly are', Morris, p. 1. It was commonplace to think of man as a microcosm, see for example The Cosmographia of Bernardus Silvestris, edited and translated by Winthrop Wetherbee (New York, 1973); the Didascalion of Hugh of St. Victor, edited by Jerome Taylor (Columbia, 1961 repr. 1968); M.-D. Chenu, Nature Man and Society in the Twelfth Century, selected edited & translated by Jerome Taylor and Lester K. Little (Chicago, 1968), pp. 29-34. For Isidore of Seville's diagrammatic representation of the mind and the universe see E. Brehaut, Isidore of Seville: an Encyclopaedist of the Dark Ages (New York, 1912 repr. 1964), pp. 62-63.

INDIVIDUAL   This supports my earlier argument that self in the Middle

Ages was not divided up in the way we might now distinguish 'inner'

and 'outer', in that we find it occurring as meaning 'single, indi-

visible', not 'original' or 'idiosyncratic' in the way we might use

it. Ferry refers to the 'virtual absence of the word individual' and

points out that 'individuality' was not in use until 1645 'and then

with the meaning of inseparability'. There is only one reference to

'individual' in the MED ,'To the laude And glorie of the hye and

indyuyduall Trynyte', i.e. 'indivisible Trinity'.[63] In the OED 'in-

dividuality' sense 3, 'The aggregate of properties peculiar to an

individual...individual character' and 3 b p. 224.   'Idiosyncrasy;

strongly marked individual character' do not occur until the seven-

teenth century. As an 'individual personality' it is first referenced

in 1775 in Johnson's letter to Mrs Thrale July 26:   'Here sit poor

I, with nothing but my own solitary individuality.'[64]

To conclude, it would appear that Middle English presents a different

idea of the self from that which one might assume from using modern

vocabulary. Looking at a medieval term such as 'condicioun', and then

at 'self', 'person', 'individual' and 'identity', reveals that it

is the connections between 'inner' and 'outer', 'self' and 'group',

'truth' and 'mask' which are foregrounded in Middle English. A self

is not hidden away behind a false exterior so much as readable through

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[63]   MED p. 164. c 1425 The Book of the Foundation of St Bartholomew's
     Church in London, edited by N. Moore, EETS (London, 1923), p.11,
     1.3. Also, Ferry, p. 34.

[64]   OED 4 b p. 224.

externals. It is not something cut off from that which surrounds it but extends towards those surroundings. The phrase 'own self' as an emphatic marker creeps in in the fifteenth century but only becomes prevalent in the sixteenth.[65] Having concluded a selective, but broad based, survey of pertinent vocabulary, Chapter One seeks to substantiate the claims of the Introduction by a close examination of the terms 'blood' and 'heart' in Malory.

The following chapters move beyond this 'theoretical' approach to look at individual texts and in this way I hope to extend the discussion begun in the Introduction. In some texts it is difficult to pin down a central figure in others there clearly is such a one, albeit one who might undergo frequent re-definition. The focus may even shift to the external audience of the text. Other texts present us with a single figure who undergoes radical changes in different redactions of the same story. I shall suggest that the earlier texts I deal with represent an 'open' notion of the self which is free to shift and change, whilst the later ones tend towards a more 'closed' self. Rather than seeking to define a single notion of what a self in a medieval narrative should be, this thesis seeks to explore some of the ways a self could be manifest in some very diferent types of narrative.

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[65] Mustanoja, p. 148.

As can be seen from the Introduction, the self in the Middle Ages had different boundaries from those we might draw:

> There is no reason to assume that medieval accounts of the sense of body - space and personal territory - of the location of inner and outer - will be the same as our own.[71]

To look at the terms 'blood' and 'heart' one must bear in mind an inter-relation of physical and non-physical; the words 'blood' and 'heart' negotiate, as I will argue, between various aspects of the 'self'. They have an interlocking significance which Malory takes advantage of throughout the Morte d'Arthur Discussion of Malory's use of these terms is followed by an account of the ways in which allegorical writing portrays the extent to which the 'self' is co-terminus with the body. Chapter One closes with a discussion of Chaucer's 'Wife of Bath's Prologue' and 'Tale', in which the problem of what constitutes the 'self' is set.

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[71] Jocelyn Price, '"Inner" and "Outer": Conceptualising the body in Ancrene Wisse and Aelred's de Institutione Inclusarum' in, Medieval English Religious and Ethical Literature: Essays in Honour of G. H. Russell, edited by G. Kratzmann and J. Simpson (Cambridge, 1986), pp. 192-208 (p. 195). For accounts of medieval psycho-physicality see Franz Gabriel Alexander and Sheldon T. Selesnick, The History of Psychiatry (New York, 1966); Steven Medcalf, 'Inner and Outer' in, The Later Middle Ages, edited by Steven Medcalf (London, 1981), pp. 108-171; George Sidney Brett, A History of Psychology, vol II Medieval and early Modern Period (London, 1912-1921); Norman Cohn, Europe's Inner Demons (London, 1975), especially pp. 67-68.

Section One: Malory's use of 'blood' and 'heart'

To begin with, blood is an undeniably physical feature; in scenes of carnage it sticks to shields and swords (as do brains), and in the Tale of Arthur its grotesque viscosity serves to obscure the person of Arthur:

> And kynge Arthure was so blody that by hys shylde there myght no man know hym, for all was blode and brayne that stake on his swerde and on hys shylde (34).

The purely physical side of blood can also be seen in Gawain's first fight; in scenes where the horses move through pools of blood up to their fetlocks and later when it spoils Gawain's fashionable clothes, 'thou al bebledis this horse and thy bryght wedys' (230).[72] Blood when it is shed is hot and fresh (625), as when Tristram fights Elyas, and the spilling of it conveys a sense of wasted vitality. Blood runs and flows (111-112), and can also burst with force out of the body. This contrasts vividly with old dried blood, which is wholly distasteful and a sign of the death of the self, of everything most vital, signifying a static lack. Alexander the Orphelin inherits his father's bloodied shirt, a powerful sign of his father's death/murder. Alexander never manages to revenge his father's murder and instead meets the same fate - death at King Mark's hands. The bloodied shirt thus looks back to the father's death and forward to the son's. Blood becomes a sign of the similarity between father and son which extends to the connections of their lives and deaths.[73]

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[72] Malory, pp. 36, 106, 210, 276, 451, 959.

[73] Other bloody cloths in the text have an accusatory function - they

The powers of blood extend beyond the body and affect others. The fresh blood of one's opponent can heal a knight's wounds - blood here is an agent of change. Garlon's blood will heal a knight he has grievously wounded (84); Lancelot must get a part of Gylberte the Bastard's sword and his bloody winding sheet in order to heal that knight's opponent. Later in the 'Grail' the blood of a maiden can heal, and can be linked into Christological senses of Christ's healing blood, because of its purity. Her blood is pure, because she is pure in her self and that essence of self extends beyond her body to change others.[74]

Blood is a family identifier.[75] In 'Madness and Exile', Lancelot fights under the arms of Cornwall but because of his actions on the field Dynadan guesses he is of Bor's blood 'wyche bene knyghtes of the nobelyst proues in the worlde' (516). Blood indicates that the qualities which make one a knight are inheritable and that a part of the self is shared by all members of a blood-group. Sir Torre, os-

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    too are signs. Guinevere's bloodstained bed is used as 'proof'
    of her infidelity to Arthur. Blood as 'personification', MED 4 a
    p. 988 does not appear usual in Middle English between c 1390 and
    a 1475. The first reference is found in Chaucer's Prioresse's
    Tale 1. 1768 'mordre wol out...the blood out crieth on your
    cursed dede'. Although 'blood' as 'bloodshed...responsibility
    for death' MED 4 b p. 988 is much more frequent.

[74] For theological usage of 'blood' MED 5 p. 988, Christ's healing
    blood is a commonplace.

[75] MED 6 p. 988 lists numerous examples of 'blood' as indicating
    family from c1200-1500, including belonging to a specific lineage
    but 6C c p. 989 as meaning 'offspring, son, daughter' has only
    two examples (one in Cleanness, the other in the Cursor Mundi)
    implying that 'blood' tended to be a term applied to wider kinship
    groupings and such a specific use as 6C c was unpopular.

tensibly the son of a cowherd, mysteriously shuns cows in favour of tournaments. He is actually the son of King Pellinore and so, by virtue of his blood, given to knightly deeds.[76] Agglovale and Percivale refuse to remain at home not out of pique but because '..we be comyn of kynges bloode of both partis. And therefore...hyt ys oure kynde to haunte armys and noble dedys' (810). Blood is an imperative; during the Siege of Benwick it is the blood of the knights within the castle that prompts them to fight Lancelot's enemies. Blood is described as a stiffening agent in their veins which prevents them from being idle. As Galyhud says to Lancelot, 'Sir, here bene knygytes com of kyngis blod that woll nat longe droupe and dare within thys wallys' (1212). Blood is indicative of the links between people and shows the quality of a person. Lamerak in bed with the Queen of Orkney is drenched in her blood as her sons behead her, 'the bloode that he loved passyng well' (612). It is her qualities, her self, as represented by her blood, that he loves.[77] Blood, then, establishes a family and as well as this it identifies the qualities of that family. Marhalt will fight with Tristram once he knows Tristram's blood, and hence his qualities (379). Blood becomes, to an extent, reputation - certain things are expected of blood. Individuals can oppose their blood-reputation but never overturn it. Gawain and his brothers are

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[76] Peter R. Schroeder, 'Hidden Depths: Dialogue and Characterization in Chaucer and Malory', PMLA, 98 (1983), 374-87 (p. 375). '[Malory's] technique of presenting character from the outside through action and dialogue, allows him to suggest, though perhaps unwittingly, some of the latent ambiguity and inscrutability of human behaviour'.

[77] This is an instance of an horrific inversion of MED 2 b p. 987 'A living being a creature, a person' which was current in Middle English; MED lists seven examples between 1325 and 1450.

called 'the grettyste distroyers and murtherars of good knyghtes that is now in the realme of Ingelonde' (691). They are 'shame' to their 'grete blood' (691). This blood and its reputation appear inviolable, a stable medium against which they are measured and found wanting.

The use of blood helps clarify a sense of who the knights are in relation to each other. Lancelot's madness, his being out of his mind and physically absent, is a loss to Bors and also a lack of a part of Bors and his kin, because Lancelot is the 'beste knyghte of our blood' (808). The text emphasises this for the audience through Bor's speech of nine lines at this point, which uses 'blood' three times:

> seyde sir Bors, 'that ever sir Launcelot or ony of hys bloode
> ever saw you [Guinevere], for now have ye loste the beste knyght
> of oure blood...'Alas!' seyde sir Bors, 'what shall we do that
> ben of hys bloode?' (808).

To be of someone's blood is to have a likeness, to share values (1087). Lancelot's danger, trapped in Guinevere's room in 'Slander and Strife' is shared by all those of his 'blood', who intuitively leap naked out of their beds clasping their swords. An injury to Lancelot is one to all of of his blood (1169). Arthur in losing Lancelot loses all of Lancelot's blood 'for I [Arthur] may nevermore holde hem togydirs with my worshyp' (1183). Or as Ector declares to Palomides 'wyte thou well there is nother thou nothir no knyght that beryth the lyff that sleyth ony of oure bloode but he shall dye for hit' (687). Break the bond of blood and disaster befalls. In the mourning castle by the Humber Palomides finds a city in distress; their king trusted not his own blood but on two, adopted, scheming strangers (712).

This shared nature, split between many knights of the same blood who act as a whole, works horizontally as well as vertically. As well as a sense of characteristics passing <u>down</u> a genealogical line, they pass <u>across</u> from one member of a blood group to another. This 'natural' bond does not require consciousness of blood relation to operate. Gawain is courteous to Gareth, his 'proffer com of his bloode' (295), whilst Lancelot's kindness to the young Gareth is greater since he is not related to Gareth. Lancelot's behaviour is seen as superior to Gawain yet his reaction is a learned convention, that of 'jantylness'. What we consider 'natural' for Lancelot is a convention that has gained a privileged position by being internalised. He is 'jantyl' both by 'blood' and by volition, which combination is superior to Gawain's unconscious reaction.[78] An individual's relationship to his blood involves him, in Malory, in a web of defining mechanisms.

In the 'Grail' the basis for definition by blood is enlarged and the question of what is natural, foregrounded. It is a book in which the customs and ideals of the Round Table are being forgotten because of individuals; Arthur is so pleased to see Lancelot at Court that he forgets his custom of waiting for an adventure before eating (855). Lancelot, when he is asked to knight Galahad, needs to ascertain whether 'thys desyre [commyth] of hymselff' (854). In this book, the individual is plotted against different co-ordinates, different types of blood lines. Galahad is introduced to court as of 'kynges lynage

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[78] I am indebted to Brian Glover for help with this. For the relation of nature and nurture in <u>Cleanness</u> see Brian Glover, 'Wisdom and the Work of Metaphor in <u>Cleanness</u>', unpublished MA (Liverpool, 1982).

and of the kynrede of Joseph of Arimathy' (859), whilst the Court 'wyst nat frome whens he come but all only be God' (861). Human lineage and spiritual are linked not opposed. Lancelot may be an earthly sinful knight but his blood-link with the perfect Galahad is stressed, as are the qualities they share. In Guinevere's words:

> I dare well sey sothely that sir Launcelot begate hym, for never two men resembled more in lyknesse. Therefore hit ys no mervayle thoughe he be of grete proues (865).

Galahad is of the 'hyghest lynage' partly because he is descended from Lancelot; Lancelot is of the eighth degree from Christ and Galahad of the ninth 'Therefore I dare sey they be the grettist jantillmen of the worlde' (865). Human lineage and spiritual, secular and divine codes of value do not simply descend but inter-sect, inter-relate. Lancelot is nearer to Christ in terms of lineage but Galahad is closer to Christ in terms of quality; he is more like Lancelot than Lancelot is himself. redemptive time is of paramount importance in this book. The temporal takes place as part of the overall plan of creation, part of a larger sphere belonging to God's scheme. Galahad operates in redemptive time as the hermit explains to him (882). The sense is of a continuous present rather than of a descending time scale, an area in which Christ has shed his 'herte blood' to save mankind (967).[79] In this area Galahad is nearer to Christ than Lancelot; the qualitative overthrows the linear. Galahad is the same as Lancelot

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[79] MED a p. 716 'thought to be more essential to life than blood elsewhere', twenty-one references a1225-a1500. b 'all that one is or possesses', three references only.

and as Joseph, but different; of the same blood and qualities as his forebears but unique.

For other knights, to be one of the elect seems to involve a shedding of blood ties, if looked at from the perspective of one not involved in the Queste. Percivale's aunt singles him out as a specific example: 'Synes ye departed from your modir ye wolde never se her, ye founde such felyship at the table Rounde' (906). But as I have already shown, it is blood which provides the impetus to leave one's 'natural' environment and seek the convention of 'felyshyp'. Lancelot, as the greatest exponent of the Round Table, internalises such conventions and they are held up as virtuous - as in 'The Tale of Gareth' - and it is virtuous living which links the earthly and spiritual Round Tables. In the Grail quest he is reminded that some of his aptitudes 'beaute, bownte, semelynes and grete strengthe' are given by God and 'woll litill avayle [him] and God be agaynste [him] (897). Ideally his blood and his spiritual inheritance should work together, and it is in Galahad's death we see the two locking together most perfectly. Galahad aligns himself with the spiritual inheritance of the Grail, the bloody spear and the bleeding Christ of the resurrection and in a vision Joseph tells Galahad he has:

> resembled <me> in to thynges: that thou hast sene, that ys the mervayles of the Sankgreall, <and> for thou hast bene a clene mayde as I have be and am (1035).

Their blood relationship is not mentioned; they are like one another through qualities not descent. Yet Galahad emphasises his link with his blood by insisting that the Grail knights 'salew me unto my lorde sir Launcelot, my fadir...' (1035).

Blood in Malory is a freighted term, and the more so if one remembers that it retains its mundane usage, it can simply be the blood of animals (278). It is not only the range of meaning, but its structured use which gives the term its power. Blood emphasises the connections between selves and the way qualities extend beyond individual bodies. Blood is both a physical reality and a metaphor for that which is beyond the physical; it is an indice of the self.

'Heart' forms a nucleus for a different yet related set of meanings. As well as public attributes and shared blood-reputation the knight has a core of individuality, and often in Malory this is expressed in terms of the heart. Although linked with blood[80] the heart has further significance. Bor's brother may be beaten and bleeding (960), but his tormentors cannot get at what is really him for he is 'grete of herte'. One could argue this means merely courage but the heart is more than just the seat of courage. When we first meet Balin (63) he is a prisoner knight and poor, but seeing adventures 'reysed his herte' ie his spirits; the heart is the seat of his joy. In Balin's case there seems no possibility that he can return to active knightly pursuits, but in 'hys herte...[he is]...fully assured to do as well as ony' (63). The heart is a metaphor for a 'self'. Time and again knights refer not to 'I' but to their hearts; for example 'carefull is myne herte' (215), 'grevyth so my herte' (188). They locate

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[80] MED 2a a p. 709 'the conscious self, the true self as opposed to outward persona; the centre of psychic and sensitive functions'. MED on the whole works with a sense of a strict opposition between inner and outer, which I do not always find to be the case in the texts I examine.

themselves in the heart which in turn is within their body and in its

turn the heart is a container for capacities.

The heart thinks, 'Thou shalt lyve for ever, my herte thynkes' (222);

it is the site of deliberation, '...in hys herte he wyste nat what

to do with hym' (409); it speaks and councils, 'Whan Sir Bors sye that

he must fyght with his brothir...he wyst nat what to do; so hys herte

counceyled hym nat therto' (970). An active entity, it has the po-

tential for revolt. Bors says 'I mervayle...That my herte or my bloode

wolde serve me' (1083).[81] The heart is also suffering and passive;

it receives sorrow, 'hit were the moste sorow that ever cam to hys

herte' (1079).[82] The heart is capable of many things.[83] Generating

and receiving, the term 'heart' comes closer than 'blood' to the

modern word 'self', which articulates and debates within itself. When

Lancelot says 'I may well fynde in myne herte...' (348), to forbear

fighting Gareth, it is with the force of 'within his self', what is

peculiarly him as an aspect of his blood. The heart recognises things

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[81] MED 4 a and 4 c p. 713 lists other contemporary examples of the
      heart as thinking and remembering. Malory's use is not unusual
      so much as elaborate.

[82] Evelyn Birge Vitz, 'Inside/Outside: First Person Narrative in
      Guillame de Lorris' Roman de la Rose', Yale French Studies, 58
      (1979), 148-164 (pp. 153-154), describes the lover thus: 'In so
      far as there is any interiority...it is located in the body, in
      the guts, rather than in the mind...', a contrast to modern
      'mentalistic' psychology.

[83] For an examination of the active use Chaucer makes of 'heart' in
      Troilus and Criseyde, S. L. Clark and Julian N. Wasserman, 'The
      Heart in Troilus and Criseyde: The Eye of the Breast, The Mirror
      of the Mind, The Jewel in its setting', Chaucer Review, 18
      (1983-84), 316-27. Both Malory and Chaucer make very precise use
      of their terms.

which pertain particularly to a self. Lancelot, in the Grail Quest, is told to withdraw from Holy places which words '...wente to hys herte, tylle that he knew wherefore he was called [wretch]' (895). People are exhorted 'hertaly' (693), as well as being thanked with 'all...herte' (141), and the young Gryfflett is rewarded the accolade of having a 'myghty herte' (48).

Malory's use of 'blood' and 'heart' in the Morte d'Arthur evinces an interest in what is the self's alone, and what is shared; what is inherited through blood and through grace. Malory appears to be representative of fifteenth century use (he presents no unusual sense of words not found in the MED), but what is most interesting is the way in which he keeps in play both the idea of the integrity of self and the existence of the intrapersonal.

Section Two: Allegory

The relationship of the intrapersonal and an integrity of self is fully explored in one of the major medieval modes - allegory. Two allegorical works have been selected, The Parlement of the Thre Ages and Sawles Warde, as examples of how an 'I' can be constituted, what relations it bears to other presences in the text, and whether it corresponds in any way to modern notions of inner and outer self, of man with defined frontiers.

Evelyn Birge Vitz, analysing the first person narrative of Guillame de Lorris' Roman de la Rose, argues that allegory has a tendency to

'turn things inside out'; this habit of playing with internal and external forces is 'significant because it bears on the very notion of a clear distinction between "I" and "you"...the hero meets up with characters who may well, but also who may well not, represent part of his own psychology', or a part of someone else's.[84] Faculties are not assigned to a particular person but are conceived of in 'supra-individual terms'.[85] This does not happen only in allegory, but allegory provides a striking example of particular ways of portraying the self.[86] The self may not even be located in a particular 'inside' but as 'the place where [it] wants to be at any given moment'.[87] Or, as Maureen Quilligan suggests, once the reader can no longer ascertain who the main 'character' is, then something else becomes the subject.[88] Concerned with process and patterning, rather than with defining one truth, allegory offers a flexible mode of shaping the self.

(a) <u>The Parlement of the Thre Ages</u>.[89] In the prologue to this text, the narrative 'I' is strongly identified with the landscape.   His

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[84] Vitz, <u>Inside/Outside</u>, p. 154.

[85] Vitz, <u>Inside/Outside</u>, p. 155.

[86] As Gay Clifford, <u>The Transformations of Allegory</u> (London, 1974), p. 5 remarks, allegory is a mode which subsumes many genres.

[87] Vitz, <u>Inside/Outside</u>, p. 156.

[88] Maureen Quilligan, <u>The Language of Allegory: Defining the Genre</u>, (Ithaca, 1979), p. 201.

[89] The Parlement of the Thre Ages, edited by M. Y. Offord, EETS (London, 1959). The only complete version of the text occurs in MS Additional 31042 which, according to Gisela Guddat-Figge, <u>Catalogue of manuscripts Containing Middle English Romances</u>

actions are seemingly determined by it '...I went to the wodde my werdes to dreghe' (3). He places himself among a busy yet peaceful landscape where each thing acts according to its kind; birds sing, men arise with the day-light, and foxes return to their lairs. The man blends in with this natural landscape, by covering himself with leaves. However this action also separates him out from the landscape, because he has a motive, he is a hunter with intent to turn the noble hart into a 'coloppe for a kynge' (33). The 'I''s relation to the natural world is one of dissimulation. Accordingly his hunting dog (nature harnessed by nurture) is concealed by a tree whilst the man hides; suddenly the natural world is hostile, actively so in that gnats bite the hunter's eyes. The landscape takes on another dimension along with the 'I'; it is there for the man's amusement, it is his 'layke' (49). As the stag can be physically butchered and changed into a chop, the man can be fragmented for the external reader in terms of his intent.

The nature/nurture analogies continue in the account of the hunt which follows. The action of shooting the hart, although - and because - skilled, disperses the landscape in that its occupants flee leaving the 'I' alone a master of the scene - a distinct and discrete entity with his hound. Man is both one with and master of his surroundings. The sharedness of the opening has changed for both man and hart. The latter can not rely on his habitat to protect him or absorb him, in-

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(München, 1976), pp. 159-62 is a 'religious miscellany' which forms a companion volume to the Lincoln Thornton manuscript which I discuss in Chapter Two, pp.73-74.

stead it betrays his position within it: 'The breris and the brakans were blody by-ronnen' (62). Now man and hart define one another - because the hart is a good catch and requires such skills as the man exhibits, then his success in killing the hart renders him superior. That he spends much time and effort in dismembering the hart in its turn renders the animal a superior beast. The ritual and elaborate dressing of the carcass is a triumphant moment for both; it is a celebration of worth. Yet the stag also 'prefigures that inescapable point at which all men become prey to time and mortality'.[90] The stag is a crystallization of all that has already occurred in the text; a mixture of fear and confidence, vitality and death, at home in but alienated from his world. Its death and rude transformation into a 'coloppe' raises the issue of what becomes of man after death; is he too a bag of bones and meat ?[91] This prologue is no more 'about' nature than it is a personal outpouring of experience;[92] it is concerned with the relation of self and environment and prefigures the subject of the central body of the poem - the ways in which a self can be defined through age and death, or find existence outside the temporal and physical. Contemplating his temporal success, the 'I' is vouchsafed

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[90] Philippa Tristram, Figures of Life and Death in Medieval English Literature (London, 1976), p. 86.

[91] V. J. Scattergood, 'The Parlement of the Thre Ages', Leeds Studies in English, ns XIV (1983), 167-181 (p. 172), sees the death of the stag as introducing the subject of the poem. I would rather say that it encapsulates it.

[92] For a critique of reading nature openings in this way see, Andrew J. Howell, 'Reading the Harley Lyrics: A Master Poet and the Language of Conventions', ELH, 47 (1980), 619-645.

a vision of his own and mankind's oscillation between decay and re-
generation.

The dreamer sees three men, Youth, Middle Age, and Elde, arguing.

The dreamer has already given an account of his own hunting, now Youth

gives his of hawking. The dreamer dreams of glorious Youth and the

Youth dreams of hawking, love-talk and romance. There is no clear

distinction between the two.[93] Elde, as much a Youth reflects   the

dreamer. Elde repeats the phrase used by the dreamer to introduce

his dream: 'Bot will ʒe hendely me herken ane hande-while' (267).

As the dreamer declared he would 'neuen [the] names' of Youth, Middle

Age and Elde, so Elde will 'neuen...the neames' of the Nine

Worthies.[94] Distinctions between all of the figures present begin to

dissolve further with Elde's speech. He has been Youth and Middle

Age. He was 'ʒonge in [his] ʒouthe and ʒape of his dedys' (270).[95]

Like Middle Age, Elde has had gold and houses and plough-lands. All

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[93] The question of distinguishing these figures is a vexed one.
Scattergood gives a good summary of critical attention and himself
sees the Ages as distinct figures, although he agrees that Elde
incorporates the other two. Beryl Rowland, 'The Three Ages of
the Parlement of the Thre Ages', Chaucer Review, 9 (1974-75),
343-52 believes Youth to be an irresponsible hedonist; whilst
Thorlac Turville-Petre, 'The Ages of Man in the Parlement of the
Thre Ages', Med Aev, XLVI (1977), 66-76 offers a wider view than
Rowland's over-all and sees Youth in a wholly favourable light.
For a full discussion of the notion of the ages of man see J. A.
Burrow, The Ages of Man: A Study in Medieval Writing and Thought
(Oxford, 1986).

[94] Compare 1. 267 with 'And ʒe will ledys me listen ane hande-while'
(106), and 11. 270 & 108.

[95] Cf 1. 134 ' and therto ʒonge and ʒape and ʒouthe was his name'.

the figures participate in one another and each contain shades of the others. Thus Elde can warn:

    Make зoure mirrours bi me, men bi зoure trouth-
    This schadowe in my schewere schunte зe ne while   (290-291).

Elde is not offering a reflection of himself, nor of each individual figure, but a shadow of all. They are all within him and he is a potentiality in all others. It is not a question of reflections so much as one of participation. All the figures exist in one another. Elde is the father of Middle Age who is the father of Youth. Looked at another way, Youth comes before Middle Age and Elde and so is the father of both. The description is circular. The 'sothe' the dreamer offered at the start of the description is not a straightforward naming and containing, one but a process of extension.[96] This 'montage effect' presents quick changes of perspective and interpretation for the reader; rather than an attempt to baffle, this process communicates subtle variations in the ways a self can be articulated.[97] The extension continues through Elde's account of the Nine Worthies who exist a pattern or image of modes of being transmitted through time.[98] Elde is Elde not because he is that and no other, but because

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[96] On mirror imagery see Herbert Grabes, The Mutable Glass: Mirror-Imagery in Titles and texts of the Middle Ages and English Renaissance, translated by G. Collier (Cambridge, 1982), p. 45 'The mirror-metaphor suggested itself in particular for writings which were intended as a comprehensive presentation of a larger reality' and '...mirrors in the Middle Ages, and in England up to the seventeenth century, were almost without exception convex: reflection and reduction (re)presentation and compression formed here a double analogy between mirror and book'.

[97] For the 'montage effect' and its purpose see Robert Worth Frank jnr., 'The Art of Reading Medieval Personification Allegory', ELH, 20 (1953), 237-50.

[98] Scattergood, p. 175 comments that in literary criticism of this

he has been attacked by Elde. Elde as an external force has attacked and undermined him; and it has transformed his appearance, blighted his faculties and through 'sorowe of heart' (283 & 286), exposed him as Elde. Inner and outer become exchangeable terms, or states; death knocks at Elde's door as an external entity coming towards Elde. But Elde cannot locate Death 'I ne wot wiche daye ne whare ne whatte to do aftire' (294); Elde cannot look out at death because degeneration and decay arise from within as well as from without. The suddenness of realisation of one's senility can have the force of an external attack.[99] The physical is a metaphor with psychological dimensions.

The hunt of the Prologue mirrors the action of the main body of the poem; in both, the boundaries of the self are dissolved and re-drawn in ways which juggle the meaning of inner and outer, physical and non-physical. At this point the dreamer awakes to find it is still May but the sun has set; this time reference which seems concrete may well not be. Has one day passed or many ? The day of the text may also stand figuratively for a lifetime; opening with the dawn of youth it closes with the setting sun of Age for dreamer and audience to-gether. Identity shifts and changes through time in an inevitable

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text, 'the Nine Worthies are usually cited to fortify arguments that death takes everyone' and he also sees them as destroying pride and love. D. V. Moran, 'The Parlement of the Thre Ages: Meaning and Design', Neophilologus, LXII (1978), 620-633 gives a full account of the popularity of the Nine, suggesting their presence in the text implies an aristocratic audience. See also M. Y. Offord, pp. xl-xliii.

[99] Langland's account of Elde presents a similar view of death The Vision of Piers Plowman, edited by A. V. C.Schmidt (London, 1978), XX, 11. 83-198.

process of regeneration and decay; but the Nine Worthies offer hope of stability in their timeless identity.

Scattergoood throughout emphasises the temporality in the text, arguing that 'the dream about death's inevitability and unexpectedness alerts the poacher to a revelation of who and where he is'.[100] I would also emphasise the part played by the external audience in this realisation of self or rather, selves since the text stresses relationship rather than distinct identity. As Maureen Quilligan puts it, the reader is made aware of 'allegory's deft manipulation of its readers into a pattern of self-defining self-consciousness about the nature of language's power to shape us into what we are.'[101] Physical and non-physical, temporal and eternal are intertwined and the self is capable of extension in ways which do not correspond to an opposition of these notions.In the same way, the text ends balancing the claims of life and death, the tension neatly held in the blowing of the bugle which could be of this world or the next.[102]

(b) <u>Sawles Warde</u>.[103] An earlier text than <u>The Parlement of the Thre Ages</u>, it addresses itself to the constitution and regulation of the

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[100] Scattergood, p. 176.

[101] Quilligan, p. 20. See her last chapter for a fuller discussion of the way in which allegory can push the reader into self-definition.

[102] Turville-Petre, p. 75.

[103] <u>Sawles Warde</u> in, <u>Early Middle English Verse and Prose</u>, edited by J. A. W. Bennett and G. V. Smithers, second edition, Oxford, 1968). The text is found in three manuscripts: MS Bodley 34 which comprises the Lives of Katherine, Juliana and Margaret plus <u>Hali</u>

self through the use of an extended account of the 'Castle of the Body' device.[104]

The chief figure in the text is, at first, a lord and owner of a house into which a thief attempts to break. Lord and house are separate entities and differentiated by genre; however, 'þis hus...is seolf þe mon' (8-9). Further, the house/man is inhabited by an ill assorted couple, Wit and his wife Will.[105] In this opening passage there are some dramatic alterations of perspective taking place. Firstly the house is a precious object, outside of the man; it is something external which he guards from the thief in the night. Secondly the house is internalised, an external object signifying internal treasure. Thirdly, the house is that which encompasses and encircles treasure. Inner and outer are not states cut off from one another, as is further indicated by the introduction of household servants - the inner and

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Meiðad followed by Sawles Warde; MS Royal 17 A in which Sawles Warde is followed by the Lives of the three saints and the beginning of þe Oreisun of Seinte Marie; MS Cotton Tiberius D 18 which opens with the Ancrene Wisse, Sawles Warde, and Hali Meiðhad followed by þe Wohunge of Ure Lauerd and a Life of Katherine. For a discussion of manuscript and audience context see Elaine Hutchins, 'An Investigation of Sawles Warde and its Context', unpublished MA (Liverpool, 1984). Saint Margaret will be discussed in detail in a later chapter. All references will be to Bennett and Smithers; I am also grateful to Bella Millett and Jocelyn Price for use of their forthcoming edition.

[104] For other examples of the Castle of the Body see C. L. Powell, 'The Castle of the Body', Studies in Phil, 16 (1919), 197-205.

[105] Hutchins, p. 5 is unable to trace any examples of Will as a feminine personification earlier than Sawles Warde. Randolph Quirk, 'Langland's Use of "Kind Wit" and "Inwit"', JEGP, 52 (1953), 182-188 (p. 182), describes Wit in Middle English as broadly grouped with wisdom but with senses as low as 'acumen'. The author appears to be dramatising in a striking way an already current relationship between Wit and Will.

outer wits. As Ruth Harvey points out, the inward wits especially negotiate between external and internal realities; they stand at a point of intersection of the two. The 'borderline of unbodily and bodily was [medieval thought] difficult to define'[106]

The treasure is 'monnes sawle' (30), which appears to be a description unique to this text.[107] 'Monnes sawle' is under attack from both inner and outer forces. Four helpers surface to guard the house/body and its treasure. Warschipe, Gastelich Strengð Meað and Rihtwisnesse - four cardinal virtues. Warschipe as doorwarden is strategically placed at the inter-section of inner and outer. Like <u>Ancrene Wisse</u> the 'movement is away from...any view that considers the world separable from the self. It is a movement towards a view of human experience that emphasises the continuity of internal and external experience.'[108]

Warschipe's actions show this clearly. She sends into the household, Fearlac, who is 'of feorren icumen' (63) yet he is well known to her.

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[106] E. Ruth Harvey, <u>The Inward Wits: Psychological Theory in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance</u> (London, 1975), pp. 2-3.

[107] Hutchins, p. 19 'Neither <u>De Custodia</u>, nor the fourteenth century translation of the Latin text found at the end of Dan Michel's <u>Ayenbite of Inwyt</u>, names the treasure...as specifically being man's soul...However in <u>Sawles Warde</u> the presence of the soul inside the house is crucial and its significance is gradually unfolded and revealed...'.

[108] Linda Georgianna, <u>The Solitary Self: Individuality in the Ancrene Wisse</u> (Cambridge Mass, 1981), pp. 141-42. Hutchins, p. 16 remarks that the author has specifically chosen the rôle of doorwarden for Warschipe against other possible 'symbolic attributes of book, mirror, snake, dove or sieve...in keeping with his castle of the body allegory'.

He is both sent in from the outside and has arisen from the inside.
He is both remedy and response. The household listens to Fearlac and
are not only house-hold domestics but forces larger than this.   They
are not only servants/faculties in man, and not only is each man en-
gaged in fighting vice, but the notion of personal or individual
battles merges into the greater than personal; a universal battle of
eternal life or eternal damnation. There is no main character here,
but an exposition of the relationship between man, men and, in its
largest sense, environment.   The subject shifts and the outcome of
such a battle becomes the main concern.

Fearlac outlines the fate of the damned for whom the problem of per-
ception and interpretation do not, unfortunately for them, exist.
Hell is absolute horror experienced directly and with no end.
Imagistic dissolves which have taken place earlier in the poem are
here mirrored in their opposite - the fixity of Hell exists through
a horrifyingly continuous physical dissolution of the body:

> Ant ful wel ha iseoð , ham to grisle ant to grure ant to echen
> hare pine, þe lað e helle-wurmes, tadden ant froggen, þe freoteð
> ham ut te ehnen ant te nease-gristles, ant snikeð in ant ut
> neddren ant ant eauroskes, nawt ilich þeose her ah hundretð siþe
> grisluker, et muþ ant et earen, ed ehnen ant ed neauele, ant
> ed te breoste-holke as meað en i forrotet flesch, eauerȝete
> þickest. þer is remunge i þe brune ant toð es hechelunge i þe
> snawi weattres.   Ferliche ha fluttteð from þe heate into þe
> chele, ne neauer nuten ha of þeos twa hweð er ham þuncheð wurse,
> for eið er is unþolelich. Ant i þis ferliche mong þe leatreð
> urh þe earre derueð þe mare. þet fur ham forbearneð al to colen
> calde, þey þich ham forwalleð að et ha beon formealte, ant eft
> acwikieð anan to drehen al þet ilke ant muchdeale wurse a wið
> öuten ende. Ant tis ilke unhope is ham meast pine, þet nan naueð
> neauermare hope of nan acouerunge, ah aren sikere of euch uuel
> to þurhleasten i wa from worlde into worlde aa on echnesse.
> Euch aþrusme oð er, ant euch is oð res pine, ant euchan heateð
> oð er ant him seoluen as þe blake deouel; ant eauer se ha i þis
> world luueden ham mare, se ha þer heatieð ham swið ere; ant eið

er cursed oð er ant fret of þe oð res earen, ant te nease alswa
(107-127).

The overwhelming finality of this section is countered by the cardinal
virtues' realisation that they can withstand the fiend through their
shared powers. These interlocking abilities are both their own and
from God; i.e. both internal and external strength. In their recog-
nition of frailty comes their power. Of all the paradoxes in Sawles
Warde this theological commonplace is the one shown most simply to
work: their recognition of strength and weakness is followed by si-
lence and stillness in the text and the arrival of Fearlac's opposite,
Liues Love. The potentially baffling becomes an affirmation of
value.[109]

Into this calm flies the 'freoliche ant leofliche' figure of Liues
Luue, 'murðes sonde' (235 & 246). More than Fearlac he comes from
outside the house/man in which the soul, God's treasure is locked.
He is sent by God because:

> iblescede God iseh ow offruhte ant sumdel drupnin of þet Fearlac
> talde of deað ant helle   (249-50).

Yet he is also an internal response, he is 'munegunge of eche lif'
(246). Heaven, as described, is a place where interpermeability is
carried to its pinnacle in the person(s) of the Trinity, the 'hali
þrumnesse Feader ant Sune ant Hali Gast, þreo untodealet' (263-4).

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[109] Clifford, p. 105 in modern allegory ambiguity moves towards doubt
and denial of possibility of meaning independent of, but shared
by, author hero and reader. Pre eighteenth century allegory used
ambiguity to generate certainty, conviction and affirmation of
value.

It is also a place of orderly hierarchies, of stable ranks where the self has undergone a re-formation so that it can share more perfectly with God:

> Ha seoð i Godd alle þing, ant witen of al þet is ant wes ant eauer schal iwurðen, hwet it beo, hwi, ant hwerto, ant hwerof hit bigunne.(334-6).

Bliss is shared to the extent that no one 'heorte' can contain it:

> Forþi seide ure Lauerd to þeo þe him hefden icwemet: <u>Intra in gaudium</u> etc. 'Ga' quoþ he, 'into þi Lauerdes blisse. þu most al gan þrin, ant al beon bigotten þrin, for in þe ne mei hit nanesweis neomen in' (353-57).

Physical barriers, mental and chronological are all broken through and distance is no longer a problem since it no longer exists: 'hwer se eauer þe gast wule, þe bodi is anariht'; with the little finger heaven and earth may be moved (363). The ultimate sign of this is the Trinity. The self dissolves only to re-confirm itself. The measure needed on earth is translated into the measurelessness of Heaven.[110]

As in the <u>Parlement of the Three Ages</u> the possibility of constituting the self in different ways, which are not limited by the body or by individual identity as 'character', are enlarged upon. The self as presented in allegorical writing is capable of infinite extension and portrayed in ways which play with the idea of inner and outer without using them as opposites. Man is both distinct from and identifiable with that which is around him; he is both <u>homo rhetoricus</u> and <u>homo seriosus</u>, disjunctive yet a stable and constant entity. Always

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[110] For a parallel issue concerning 'measure' and 'measureless', see <u>Piers Plowman</u> the Lady Mede epsisode, I-IV, especially III 230-58.

changing, or having the potential to change but also constantly re-flexive. The notions of the self which are to be found in these allegorical writings form part of the literary heritage that was available to a writer such as Chaucer. In his 'Wife of Bath's Tale' he consciously uses a number of different ways of defining the self and exploits their flexibility in an ironic view of self-hood.[111]

Section Two: The Wife of Bath's Tale[112]

Transactions, exchanges between one state and another, are vital to the 'Wife of Bath's Tale'. The 'Prologue' and 'Tale' are constructed around the notion of bargain and transaction; does one own one's identity or is it tradeable? Does it belong to one's ancestors , to one's spouse, to one's self ?. None of the authors I consider were the first to debate the issue of where nobility lay; whether it was inherited through blood or whether it is located in one's deeds. There exists a whole tradition of debate in this area as McGill Vogt has shown.[113]

These questions are taken up in the Wife of Bath's tale very much in terms of bargain and exchange. The husband is the debtor of the wife,

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[111] I am not claiming that Chaucer knew the allegorical works I have just described, merely that they are representative of a tradi-tions to which he would have had access.

[112] All references are to The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, edited by F. N. Robinson, second edition (Oxford, 1979).

[113] George McGill Vogt, 'Gleanings for the History of a Sentiment: Generositas virtus, non sanguis', JEGP, XXIV (1952), 102-24.

the wife owns the husband's body and not he. In four marriages the
Wife has economic control as her husbands have yielded to her their
goods; but in return she keeps them 'blisful' and 'glad' (220/22).
Each possesses the other; when bargaining breaks down, as with the
fifth husband, to whom Alisoun gives both body and good, so does her
identity, in that Jankyn is free to define Alisoun in a way unac-
ceptable to her, as one in a line of fictional 'wikked wyves' (685).

Throughout, the Wife implies that no one person has sole possession
of knowledge; access to definition is denied and interpretation en-
couraged by the use of the term 'glos' (26,119,509). Neither Saint
Paul nor the Wife can wholly define a person through their marital
status and Alisoun holds up male interpretations of women as just
another series of illusions. In her eyes they are attempts to lock
women into false identities, they try to make women into objects
circumscribed by external attributes; women are performers, either
in bed or in public. Jankyn's efforts to circumscribe her are thwarted
by Alisoun's re-instatement of the bargaining ethos:

>'O! hasstow slayn me, false theef?' I seyde
>'And for my land thus hastow mordered me?'   (800-801).

Alisoun herself is the arch-dissembler and her 'entente is nat but
for to pleye' (192); she is producing a 'fantasye' (190). The pos-
sibility of identifying a stable self crumbles, leaving behind a
strong sense of the tradeability of the self and its attributes. The
'Wife's Tale' is the only one of the Canterbury Tales to emphasise
and make such a sharp distinction between body and good.   In the
'Cannon Yeoman's Tale' a foolish priest offers his 'body and good'

to one who tricks him into believing he can turn base metal into silver.[114] In Chaucer's _Boece_ a discussion of 'soverayn good' runs through Book III; and in the 'Parson's Tale' goods of soul are distinguished from goods of fortune and goods of body.[115] Goods of body are 'heele of body, strengthe, delivernesse, beautee, gentrice, franchise'. A more usual distinction found in Chaucer is that between body and soul.[116] The logical conclusion of this distinction is the ultimate spilt in death and the use of 'body' to refer to corpse.[117] The distinction between body and good in the 'Wife's Tale' is unusual. Alisoun has already indicated in the Prologue that a split between

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[114] 'Cannon Yeoman's Tale', 1. 1289.

[115] 'Parson's Tale', 11. 450-5. These are the only references to 'body'and 'good' together in the _Canterbury Tales_ apart from the 'Wife of Bath's Tale' and 'Prologue'. I have been unable to trace a specific tradition for these distinctions. Kate O. Petersen, _The Sources of the Parson's Tale_ Radcliffe College Monographs 12 (Boston, 1901), identifies Chaucer's sources as the _De Poenitentiis et Remissionibus_ in the _summa_ of Raymond of Pennaforte and, for the section on the seven deadly sins, the _Summa Vitiorum_ of Peraldus. As reproduced in Petersen pp. 41-42 Chaucer is very close to the Latin. Germaine Dempster, 'The Parson's Tale', in _Sources and Analogues_ pp. 733-760 follows Petersen in remarking that Chaucer's sources are the 'De Poenitentiis et Remissionibus' in the _Summa_ of Raymond of Pennaforte and, for the section on the seven deadly sins, the _Summa Vitiorum_ of Guilelmus Peraldus. But, on p. 724 she remarks, 'for much of what Chaucer has there is in Peraldus no parallel either close or remote...' although his work is thirteen times as long as Chaucer's. Dempster, therfore, suggests intermediary sources amongst the 'vast late thirteenth and fourteenth-century Latin and Vernacular literature of religious manuals'. S. Wenzel in his article 'The Source of Chaucer's Seven Deadly Sins', _Traditio_, 30 (1974), 351-78 (p. 361) suggests two such, but for the 'superbia' section sees no parallel except with Peraldus.

[116] For example, The 'Physician's Tale', 1.43; The 'Pardoner's Tale', 1. 940; The 'Parson's Tale', 11. 725-730.

[117] For example, The 'Second Nun's Tale', 1. 548; The 'Clerk's Tale', 1. 571.

body and good can be useful; women are seen in terms of possessions or as bodies with possessions and her own marriages have been built on a system of exchanges of bodies and goods. The trade between body and good is progressively shown to be one in a system;the text continues to invite the reader to gloss and play with the equations it offers. The Wife is our exemplar in this matter as she tries to explain away her actions in terms of Astrology:

> Alas! Alas! that evere love was synne!
> I folwed ay myn inclinacioun
> By vertu of my constellacioun   (614-16).

Alisoun feels a need to define herself by externals, but the more definitions she generates the further away she disappears.[118] Interpretation piles up with fixity denied.[119]

In connection with this, the presence of glosses in many of the manuscripts of the Canterbury Tales is vital. In the Ellesmere Manuscript glosses and text are given equal importance on the page; both have illuminated capitals.They have been planned together and written,

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[118] Mary Carruthers, 'The Wife of Bath and the Painting of Lions', PMLA, 94 (1979), 209-222. (p. 216), argues that as a wealthy widow she has to explain why she marries a penniless clerk, but I feel this is not an adequate explanation of Chaucer's presentation of the Wife.

[119] Anthony C. Spearing, 'Chaucerian Authority and Inheritance' in, Literature in Fourteenth Century England: J. A. W. Bennett Memorial Lectures, edited by Piero Boitani and Anna Torti (Tubingen, 1983), pp. 185-202 (p. 198), 'Chaucer's ... withdrawal of authority for both the tales and from their interpretation , amount to what might be called a de-authorization of the whole work.' And, p. 202 it is Chaucer's 'poetic descendants' who put upon Chaucer the role of 'Father' whilst Chaucer himself remained sceptical of authority and inheritance.

probably, in the same hand.[120] The text of the <u>Canterbury Tales</u> is

thus larger than that which the modern reader receives.[121] The Wife

of Bath's 'Prologue' is one of the 'most richly glossed sections of

the <u>Tales</u> in the largest number of manuscripts'.[122] Glosses fall into

three types: 'indexing marginalia' such as <u>nota bene's</u> and pointing

fingers; 'explanatory' which are less frequent, often Latin, glosses

of difficult words; Latin commentary which provides source material

and analogous passages.[123] This mass of material serves as a support

to my argument that fixity is always deferred. The Wife plunders

Jerome and argues against him, Jerome in turn uses Scripture to argue

against Jovinian. Much of the glossing for the 'Prologue' and 'Tale'

supplies Jerome's text.[124] The Wife, Chaucer, the reader(s) are all

engaged in an exchange of word and text, point and counter-point.

The text is a literary reflection of its 'theme' of transaction. It

is erroneous to privilege one text/reading against another. It is

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[120] Graham D. Caie, 'The Significance of the Early Chaucer Manuscript
Glosses (with special reference to the 'Wife of Bath's Pro-
logue')', <u>Chaucer Review</u>, 10 (1976), 350-60.

[121] The Ellesmere glosses are reproduced at the foot of each page in
the <u>Facsimile and Transcription of the Hengwrt Manuscript with</u>
<u>Variants from the Ellesmere manuscript</u>, edited by Paul G. Ruggiers
with an Introduction by Donald C. Baker A. I. Doyle and M. B.
Parkes (Oklahoma, 1979). A full list of glosses appears in <u>The</u>
<u>Text of the Canterbury Tales</u>, by (sic) John M. Manly and Edith
Rickert (Chicago, 1940), vol III, pp. 496-54. Glosses are not
generally reproduced in tandem with a text.

[122] Caie, p. 350. The other heavily glossed piece is the 'Man of Law's
Tale'.

[123] Charles A. Owen jnr., 'The Alternative Reading of the <u>Canterbury</u>
<u>Tales</u>: Chaucer's Text and the Early Manuscripts', <u>PMLA</u>, 97 (1982),
237-50. N. F. Blake, <u>The Textual Tradition of the Canterbury</u>
<u>Tales</u> (London, 1985), pp. 177-78.

[124] Owen, p. 241.

not purely the case that the 'character' of the Wife desperately tries

and fails to subvert the 'authority' of Jerome,[125] but that all

readings are subject to question. As David Lawton points out, in the

Canterbury Tales the reader is not always presented with one 'speaker'

so much as a 'tone', a 'complex and multiple play of voices'.[126] There

is no need to privilege one 'voice' or one 'character' over the other:

'questions about tone, not questions about persona are the most in-

teresting questions in Chaucer criticism.' The text is a 'mosaic' of

voices and texts.[127]

Hengwrt, earlier than but by the same scribe as Ellesmere,[128] is not

as heavily glossed as Ellesmere, but it offers evidence of later an-

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[125] Examples of reading the Wife this way can be found in Katherina
M. Wilson, 'Chaucer and St. Jerome: The Use of Barley in the "Wife
of Bath's Prologue"', Chaucer Review, 19 (1984-85), 245-51 (p.
249); D. W. Robertson jnr., Preface to Chaucer (Princeton, 1962
repr. 1969), pp. 317-31; Douglas Wurtele, 'Chaucer's Canterbury
Tales and Nicholas of Lyre's "Postillae litteraliset moralis super
totam Bibliam"' in, Chaucer and the Scriptural Tradition, edited
by D. L. Jeffrey (Ottawa, 1984), pp. 89-107 (p. 104).

[126] David Lawton, Chaucer's Narrators, Chaucerian Studies XIII
(Cambridge, 1985), p. 4. A similar view is expressed by H.
Marshall Leicester, 'The Wife of Bath as Chaucerian Subject' in,
Studies in the Age of Chaucer, 1 (1984), 201-210 (p. 202), 'the
subject ...is the continually shifting vector product of all the
forces in play at the subject site'.

[127] Lawton, p. 7 who draws on Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination: Four
Essays, edited by Michael Holquist (Texas, 1981), p. 69. A good
example of the type of criticism Lawton deplores is to be found
in Barbara Gottfried, 'Conflict and Relationship, Sovereignty and
Survival: Parables of Power in the "Wife of Bath's Prologue"',
Chaucer Review, 19 (1984-85), 202-224 (p. 204), the 'disjointed'
account of the Wife in the 'Prologue' is evidence of the 'diffi-
culty of capturing her 'rich complexity' in the 'contrived format'
of the 'General Prolgue'.

[128] Blake, pp. 58-59; M. L. Samuels, 'The Scribe of the Hengwrt and

notation by 'other early hands' which suggests 'scholarly users', and 'fifteenth century readers'.[129]

Glosses and other additions such as these do sometimes focus on the figure of the Wife. Manuscript MS Dd 4 24 contains 'far more original glosses than Hengwrt or any other early manuscript'.[130] Blake argues that the scribe was 'sufficiently interested in the Wife and in the relationship between the sexes', to add passages which increase her sexual and tyrannical appearance.[131] This offers a different type of engagement with the text than that identified by Baker, Doyle and Parkes:

> Since different interpretations occur in copies produced by the same scribes it seems more likely that the scribes were following different commissions than that they were responsible for the different interpretations themselves.[132]

Some additions seem to be the result of editorial procedure in the ordering of the tales. For example MS Laud 739, MS Royal 18 C II and MS Barlow include a link between the Merchant's and the Wife's tales, in which the Wife replies to the Host's request for a story:

> Sir ost quod she so god my soule blis
> As I fully þerto wil consent
> And fully it is mine holly entente
> To don ȝow alle disporte þat I can
> I con not rehersen as þis clerkes can

Ellesmere Manuscipts of the <u>Canterbury Tales</u>', <u>Studies in the Age of Chaucer</u>, 5 (1983), 49-65.

[129] Hengwrt <u>Facsimile</u>, p. xxxiv and xlvii.

[130] Blake, p. 133.

[131] Blake, p. 136.

[132] Hengwrt <u>Facsimile</u>, p. 194.

And right anoon she hath hir tale bygone.[133]

While a rather different response is found in the link between the 'Squire's Tale' and the Wife of Bath, in MS Lansdowne alone:

> Explicit fabula Armigeni
> Incipit prologus Uxoris de Bath
> Than schortly answearde the wife of Bathe
> And swore a wonder grete haþe
> Be goddes bones I wil tel next
> I wil nouht glose bot saye þe text.[134]

The writer of this would, presumably, agree with a more recent reader of the Wife, L. Besserman, who outlines in Chaucer a general awareness of fraudulent glossing and attributes to him a measure of 'respect' for the Wife's 'literal exegisis'.[135] Interest in the Wife of Bath really dates from after the sixteenth century; not until after 1750 did the Canterbury Tales out- strip Troilus and Criseyde in popularity.[136] References to the Wife in the fifteenth century are, compared with those to Troilus and Criseyde, scanty. She appears in Lydgate's 'The Wives Answer To Criticism' as part of a 'disguising' at court:

> And as for oure partye þe worthy wyff of Bathe
> Cane shewe statutes moo þan six or seven...
> How wyves make hir housbandes wynne heven.[137]

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[133] William McCormick and Janet E. Hesseltine, The Manuscripts of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales: A Critical Description of the Contents (Oxford, 1933), pp. 23-24.

[134] McCormick and Hesseltine, p. 275.

[135] L. Besserman, 'Glosynge is a Glorious Thyng: Chaucer's Biblical Exegisis' in D. L. Jeffrey, pp. 65-73 (pp. 66-67).

[136] Caroline F. E. Spurgeon, Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism and Allusion 1357-1900 (London, 1914-24), pp. lxxvi-lxxviii.

[137]
   Spurgeon, vol I, pp. 35-36. 'Lydgate's Mumming at Hertford', reproduced by E. P. Hammond, Anglia, XXII (1899), 364-74 (p. 371). The Wives continue the debate over who should have mastery and claim it for themselves: 'Be long tytle of successyoun ffrome wyff

The Wife is portrayed as a shrew in the anonymous <u>The Chaunces of the Dyse</u> and in Hoccleve's <u>Dialogus Cum Amico</u>;[138] although in the <u>Tale of Beryn</u> she graciously aligns herself with the Prioresse and suggests a stroll in the herb garden and a quiet drink before dinner.[139] Verbal echoes of her words from her 'Prologue' and 'Tale' occur in the dialogue between the lecherous Pardoner and Kit the tapster suggesting that it was not her 'character' so much as the 'voices' in the text which influenced the writer.

In the sixteenth century her tale was used in courtesy books such as John Bossewell's <u>Workes of Armorie</u> dated 1572:

> But nowe yet heare what M. G. Chaucer, oure noble poete of thys Realme doth write touching gentlenes of birthe, in hys taile of the Wife of Bathe...[140]

It is the argument within the tale which is of interest rather than her supposed 'character'.[141] As regards portraiture, only two manuscripts have any 'considerable number' of pictures of the

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to wyff' (p. 372). The King, with Reason as a guide, gives judgement in favour of the Wives.

[138] Spurgeon, vol I, pp. 45-46; p. 33.

[139] <u>The Tale of Beryn</u>, edited by Frederick J. Furnivall and W. G. Stone (London, 1887).

[140] Spurgeon, vol I, p. 108. This text remains inedited.

[141] Francis Lee Utley, <u>The Crooked Rib: An Analytical Index</u> (Columbus, 1944), gives numerous references to the Wife of Bath in other texts but these are again allusions or possible echoes of an idea of her rather than appearances of the Wife.

pilgrims;[142] whilst, in contrast, in the nineteenth century, portraits

of the Wife had rival followings.[143]

Twentieth century reaction to the Wife is just as diverse; the fixity

with-held in the 'prologue' proliferates in literary criticism.[144]

The close of the 'Prologue' contrast with the wildly contrasting views

of the Wife I have outlined above, instead it reaches as status quo:

'we fille acorded by us selven two' (812). The holding of

'soverayntee' (818) carries with it responsibilities and obligations.

Alisoun and her husband are thus not opposed, but linked to one an-

other in a reciprocal system. The one self exists to inform the other

and vice versa. The Wife's 'Prologue' occupies a space between

damnation and perfection with regard to the marital state as outlined

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[142] Manly-Rickert, vol I, p. 561 although more may have existed at
one time.

[143] Florence H. Ridley, 'Chaucerian Criticism: The Significance of
Varying Perspectives', Neuphil Mit, LXXXI (1980), 131-141 gives
a fascinating account of nineteenth century reaction to the
Canterbury pilgrims.

[144] A useful summary of approaches to the Wife can be found in Robert
J. Meyer, 'Chaucer's Tandem Romances: A Generic Approach to the
Wife's 'Tale' as Palinode', Chaucer Review, 18 (1983-84), 221-238.
Most recently Louise O. Fradenburg, 'The Wife of Bath's Passing
Fancy', Studies in the Age of Chaucer, 8 (1986), 31-35 views her
as a battleground of capitalist and feudal presentation of
interiority; which view may be modified by David Aers, Chaucer
(Brighton, 1986), Ch. 2 'Chaucer's representations of Society 'who
remarks on p. 15: 'Chaucer's writing is marked by an openness
to many...contradictory forces..'. Extreme examples of the type
of blurring of available meanings of 'character' which I have
already discussed in the Introduction, result in readings of the
Wife as a schizophrenic - a view held by Beryl Rowland, 'Chaucer's
Dame Alys: Critics in Blunderland?', Neuphil Mitt, LXXIII (1972),
381-95. Martin Puhvel, The Wyf of Bath and Alice Kyteler - a Web
of Parallelism', Studia Neophilologica, LIII (1981), 101-106
reads Alice Kyteler from Kilkenny as a 'real life' possible pro-
totype for the Wife.

in the 'Parson's Tale'. On the one hand sex as merchandise, partic-
ularly outside marriage, is a sin:

> right as a marchant deliteth hym moost in chaffare that he hath
> moost avantage of, right so the fend deliteth in this ordure
> (850).

On the other hand the Parson's description of the perfection of mar-
riage is couched in terms of a union of heart and body (919-920).

The 'prologue' raises questions of how to exist in relation to in-
herited ideas of 'self' such as those in Jankyn's book or in Jerome
who:

> comes down hard on the married state, and in both his later
> apologia [for the adversus Jovinianum] and in certain epistolae
> restates an unyeilding preference for virginity over
> marriage.[145]

The Wife is stuck in an impossible position trying to negotiate be-
tween an abstract ideal of virginity and the practical state of being
a wife; that is, she must trade-off 'self' as dictated to by two
conflicting traditions. The virgin of the 'Tale' continues this
problem in raising issues of the relation of the abstract and the
real, inherited self or self as manipulated by others. What is her
virginity 'worth' in Jerome's terms ? We do not know if it is chosen,
in the spirit of the ideal, or a practical reality, accident of
chance.

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[145] Douglas Wurtele, 'The Predicament of Chaucer's Wife of Bath: St
Jerome on Virginity', Florilegium, 5 (1983), 208-36 (p. 209).

The 'Tale' elaborates on the patterns of glossing set up by the 'Prologue' and goes deeper into fantasy in that it is set in Arthurian times in the realm of 'fayerye' (857-9) where the hapless maiden is summarily raped by a passing knight. In none of the analogues is rape the start of the tale.[146] Once raped, she vanishes from the story; her physical integrity parallels her identity and once that integrity is breached, she no longer exists. The relation of virginity to identity is an idea already current in the text; as in the 'Prologue' to the 'Tale' when the Wife mentions that virgins 'liketh hem to be clene, body and gost' (197). The knight's physical violence - 'by verray force he rafte hire maydenhed' (88) - is 'oppressioun' of the basest sort; because he has destroyed that which the maiden stands for. The maiden represents a notion that the self can be whole, can operate as part of a system (virginity exists in relation to marriage and widowhood) without necessarily becoming a commodity. Equally, the knight exists outside of a system of exchange since he represents oppression and imposition. The fate of those outside the world of bargain and exchange is in the one case rape and the other death. In the 'Prologue' Alisoun's existence was threatened by a lack of bargaining; Jankyn's fictionalising of her as a wicked woman, his attempt to freeze her into a 'character' was also presented as op-

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[146] W. F. Bryan and Germaine Dempster, editors, Sources and Analogues of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales (Chicago, 1941), pp. 224-264. There appears to be a growing legal concern over rape in the fourteenth century; in the first half of that century prosecutions for rape were uncommon whilst 1360-99 'numerous convictions' occurred; Robert J. Blanch, '"Al Was This Land Fulfild of Fayerye": The Thematic Employment of Force, Wilfulness, and Legal Conventions in Chaucer's "Wife of Bath's Tale"', Studia Neophilologica, LVII (1985), 41-51 (p. 43).

pression. What the 'Tale' and the 'Prologue' appear to be suggesting is that the self outside the system is unlikely to survive; Chaucer has used a Romance notion of fluidity of self and turned it into the imperative of the market place.

In order to save his skin the knight must find the answer to the question - what is it that women desire most ? To find the answer he is driven to promise an old hag that he will do whatever she wants. Only in Chaucer does he make this promise without knowing what it is she requires - marriage.[147] The oath is un-negotiable, he must marry the old hag once she has given him the answer to the question and saved his life. His plaintive cry, 'taak al my good and lat my body go' (1061), recalls the 'Prologue' where Alisoun rather more pragmatically declared to one of her husbands 'Thou shalt nat bothe, thogh that thou were wood/Be maister of my body and of my good' (313-314), turning her misfortune into a bargaining weapon. It also recalls the rape, the knight's assault on the body of the maiden was equally an assault on all of her not just her flesh. The knight's attempt at splitting body and good results in a ripping away of his fictional identity as knight, as 'gentil', whilst Alisoun's juggling of body and good serves to re-enforce her identity. The knight's problem is not only having to marry an old hag, it consists in being discovered as himself.

The old hag is seeking a quality, love, which does not slot neatly into a category of 'body' or 'good' but negotiates between the two.

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[147] Sources and Analogues, pp. 224-264.

In her final soliloquy she expands upon the importance of personal qualities whilst the knight speaks more in terms of inheritance.[148] He sees himself in relation to his 'nacioun' (1068), fearing the hag's appearance, her body, will shame him and his 'nacioun'.[149] The knight uses 'nation' in a modern sense and tries to make it work in reverse. Constance in the 'Man of Law's Tale', among a strange nation, submits to her fate - 'Ther nys namoore but "farewel faire Custance"!' - (319), but through her adventures gains a powerful self. The knight, instead of becoming clearly defined against a strange nation, tries to blur himself with his own 'nacioun' and foist upon it, spuriously, his own sense of disworship. The knight's claims that the hag will shame his nation are exaggerated; the hag patiently reminds him that 'he is gentil that dooth gentil dedis' (1170), and that nobility is not 'annexed to possessioun' (1147); it clings to neither body nor good but derives from Christ, from virtue.[150] By the time the hag has stopped speaking the knight is defined as poverty-stricken; the manliness and gentility he lays claim to belong to others. The answer

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[148] The choice she offers the knight (always fair but untrue or always ugly but true) is more complicated than the choice in the available analogues. Chaucer's Hag's choice is a qualitative one whilst in the sources the question is a simple one of fair by day or foul by night; it is a matter of public versus private appearances.

[149] In the Chaucer Concordance 'nacioun' appears to have the same sense as modern 'nation'; it is often applied to other peoples, for example, the 'Man of Law's Tale', 'strange nacioun' and 'barbre nacioun' (268, 281). The Concordance contains eight references in all. To belong to a nacioun is to share characteristics as well as customs, as in the House of Fame where the dreamer sees Juno who has 'yhated al thy lyf/Al the Troianysshe blood' destroy 'al the Troian nacioun' (198-208).

[150] Cf Boece, Book III, p. 346.

he gave the court in 'manly voys' (1036) were a woman's words, not his. The fame belongs to his ancestors and their qualities are 'strange thyng to [his] persone' (1161).[151] The strong and well defined oppressor of the start of the Tale has suffered a total collapse.[152]

The hag's words seem true, they encapsulate the feebleness of the knight. But is her view of life any more true than the illusion it replaces? The hag carefully avoids a warning in the analogues to this section:

> Dames eneurt e dameiseles,
> Mais ne se fie trop en eles,
> Qu'il l'en pourrait bien meschoeir,
> Car nus trop bien n'est bons a voeir.[153]

The values the hag preaches are ideals which often prove unworkable; her arguments are seductive rather than wholly acceptable in the

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[151] Neville Coghill, 'Chaucer's Idea of What is Noble', Presidential Address to the English Association (London, 1971), p. 7. 'Gentilesse', is part of a 'familiar cluster [of words] that stems from and begins with the letters G-E-N- gentle, generous, generative, genius, generic, gender, genealogical and so forth that are all related to the Latin word gens, a family. Here, then at its physiological origins lay the popular fallacy that there was something hereditary in being a gentil...'.

[152] For a discussion of the 'Tale' as being concerned with an interiority wider than the individual see Jocelyn Price, 'Geoffrey Chaucer', in The Arthurian Encyclopaedia, edited by Nicholas J. Lacey (New York, 1986), pp. 97-98.

[153] Sources and Analogues, p. 268, Roman de la Rose. Also omitted is the outright condemnation in both the Roman de la Rose and Dante's Convivio of the degeneracy of a noble line; there is nothing worse than a noble line with dissolute progeny.

tale.[154] By giving the hag sovereignty, an opposite of oppression, the knight transforms the hag into fairness; what sort of fairness is left open as we have re-joined the world of exchange and bargain. The hag's arguments have been concerned with denial of worldly things yet here she agrees to satisfy all the knight's worldly appetites.[155] It could be that the hag enchants the knight into thinking she is wholly fair. She is 'good and trewe/As evere was wyf, syn that the world was newe' (1243-44). Eve deceived her husband and the Wife runs rings round hers. As long as the knight is satisfied it does not matter; as he says 'I do no fors.../For as yow liketh it suffiseth me' (1234-5). Chaucer has constructed a play on 'self', which constitutes asking if it exists at all.

The Wife of Bath's Tale testifies to a concern about the composition of the 'self' and plays with notions of heredity and individuality available at the time. Chaucer uses the options open to him only to undermine them. For Carruthers, 'The real seriousnes [of the text]

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[154] Theodore Silverstein, 'The Wife of Bath and the Rhetoric of Enchantment: or How to Make a Hero See in the Dark', Mod Phil, 58 (1960-61), 153-173 sees the hag's Christian views as inapplicable to the Romance world she inhabits.

[155] Robert S. Haller, 'The Wife of Bath and the Three Estates', Annuale Medievale, VI (1965), 47-64 especially pp. 55-58. Blanch sees the Wife as manipulating legal terminology to produce a spurious system of order. D. C. Green, 'The Semantics of Power: Maistrie and Soverayntee in the Canterbury Tales', Mod Phil, (1986), 18-23, suggests that the Wife conflates the usual meaning of both these words. In Chaucer 'soverayntee' usually refers to something 'inherent in certain roles...it reflects the divine order'; 'maistrie' is used of 'individual power that can be won'. The Wife blurs this in remarking 'And whan that I hadde geten unto me/ By maistrie the soverayntee' (817-18); definition succeeds definition.

lies precisely in its refusal to succumb to the blandishments of "th'olde days of King Arthour"'.[156] But are the propositions made about the 'self' in this version of a Romance world really the only ones possible, does a 'self' in a Romance world have to be a 'fantasye' or succumb to 'blandishments' ? In Chapter Two I will discuss in detail some notions of the self in Romance.

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[156] Carruthers, p. 218.

Following on from Chapter One, in which theoretical approaches to 'character' and 'self' were outlined, this chapter looks at a group of fourteenth century Romances, Emaré, Sir Gowther, Sir Isumbras and Chevalier Assigne, to see how they focus on the ways a 'self' can be constructed; that is, how specific texts handle notions of 'self'.

Notion(s) of self have received incisive critical attention in recent years. In particular the work of R. W. Hanning and Colin Morris has done much to dispel any idea that a sense of self only developed with fifteenth century humanism.[157] Their approaches are different from that of this thesis. Hanning isolates the 'hero' as the determining factor in Romance; he stresses the importance of the hero's self-awareness and the external audience's identification with the hero, and he refers specifically to a group of twelfth century Romances which do not fall within the scope of this thesis. Colin Morris adopts an encyclopaedic approach to the self, outlining the upsurge in interest in the self in a wide range of areas.[158] My four chosen Romances reflect medieval concern with 'self' and evince a sophisticated awareness of the flexibility possible in articulating the self. They

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[157] Colin Morris, The Discovery of the Individual 1050-1250 (London, 1972). Robert W. Hanning, The Individual in Twelfth Century Romance (London, 1977) and 'The Social Significance of Twelfth-Century Chivalric Romance', Med et Hum, 3 (1972), 3-29.

[158] Morris, p. 158.

possess a central figure but interest extends beyond and around this figure; notions of 'self' do not match entirely with a single protagonist or hero/ine figure. The texts and the notions of self they generate are also fascinating because of the way they play with generic awareness. As Carol Fewster has demonstrated, 'the signals of individual romances imply a homogenous tradition to which [the Romances] can refer in a variety of ways'.[159] My four texts' 'way' is to highlight both the validity of the secular figure and that of the Saint, thus multiplying generic possibilities and constituting a particularly sensitive awareness of the complexity of the self. As the reader moves through the texts he is highly aware of the religious content which content is not simply didactic, nor a mishandling of Romance; it is suggestive. We do not know whether to read in Romance terms or in Hagiographic, and more importantly we are made uncertain as to how far such generic categorisation is appropriate. This affects the composition or construction of 'self'. We may ask, for example, whether Emaré is a failed saint or a failed heroine, or something else entirely. As an attempt to deal with this situation the terms 'secular hagiography' or 'secular saint's legend' have come into being.[160] Ojars Kratins says of <u>Amis and Amiloun</u>:

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[159] Carol Susan Fewster, 'Narrative Transformations of Past and Present in Middle English Romance: <u>Guy of Warwick</u>, <u>Amis and Amiloun</u> and the <u>Squyr of Lowe Degre</u>', Unpublished Phd. (Liverpool, 1984), p. 10. Forthcoming in book form (Cambridge, 1987).

[160] For example see Diana T. Childress, 'Between Romance and Legend: "Secular Hagiography" in Middle English Literature', <u>PQ</u>, 57 (1978), 311-322.

Identifying it as a Romance amounts to asking that it be re-garded in the wrong perspective.[161]

But I would argue that Romance is a broad term, and surviving Romances may not be a true representation of the genre as it existed. Rather than taking my texts out of the corpus of Romance I would argue that they are an example of how Secular Hagiography forms a sub group within Romance.[162] Susan Dannenbaum argues against making a separate category of 'secular hagiography', but I would agree with her reasons for rejecting the title. Isumbras, and romances she identifies as similar, do not 'exemplify the union of religious and secular material in a harmonious and mutually supportive symbiosis.'[163] Such texts examine the ways in which the two value systems clash and interact, how they can be negotiated in terms of a 'self'. Dannenbaum sees Divine intervention as supporting the 'development of the hero's personal drama'.[164] I hope to be able to show that interest extends beyond this single figure, and that the texts construct sophisticated models of 'self'. Although I suggest that the texts form a small group, they each present strikingly different approaches to the con-struction of the self, within a framework which valorises both secular and religious concerns.

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[161] Ojars Kratins, 'The Middle English Amis and Amiloun: Chivlaric Romance or Secular Hagiography ?', PMLA, 81 (1966), 347-54 (p. 354).

[162] A view already convincingly argued by Fewster, p.10.

[163] Susan Crane Dannenbaum, 'Guy of Warwick and the Question of Exemplary Romance', Genre, XVII (1984), 351-74 (p. 351 and fol-lowing).

[164] Dannenbaum, p. 368.

There are two major sources of evidence for the coherence of the texts as a group and for explicit signals of the way they might be read. Firstly manuscript evidence, secondly the Romance openings. First I will deal with the manuscript evidence, then with the openings, and following this each Romance will be analysed separately in detail.

1. Manuscript Context

The texts exist primarily in fifteenth century manuscripts and were later, with the exception of Emaré, printed in the sixteenth century.[165] Chevalier Assigne, Emaré and Sir Isumbras all occur in MS Cotton Caligula A ii; the first two are unique copies. MS Cotton Caligula A ii, according to Ward, is of paper and dates sometime in the fifteenth century.[166] Edith Rickert dates the manuscript 1446-1460.[167] Rickert describes the manuscript as 'plain' and 'workman like' suggesting it was 'copied in some monastery'.[168] F. E. Richardson believes Cotton Caligula A ii to have been 'probably copied in a shop'.[169] Lack of agreement over origin is partnered by an un-

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[165] A list of the contents of the manuscripts discussed in this chapter will be found in the Appendix.

[166] H. L. D. Ward, A Catalogue of Romances in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum, Vol 1 (London, 1883 repr. 1962), p. 180.

[167] The Romance of Emaré, edited by Edith Rickert, EETS (London, 1906), p. x. Her dating is agreed with in the most recent catalogue, Gisela Guddat-Figge, A Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Middle English Romances (Munchen, 1976), p. 171.

[168] Rickert, p. xi.

[169] Sir Eglamour, edited by Frances E. Richardson, EETS (London, 1965). p. xi. There is apparent here disagreement over origin;

certainty over the original audience - religious ? secular ? or both

? On the basis of manuscripts in which <u>Piers Plowman</u> appears, Anne

Middleton has concluded that it is mistaken to split the original

audience into 'clerical' or 'secular', and this appears to be also

the case here.[170] Gisela Guddat-Figge remarks that MS Cotton Caligula

A ii, compiled for family use, is an 'important collection of English

texts: romances, religious lyrics, didactic items. Produced more

carefully than comparable MSS like the Thornton Anthologies...Plain,

unpretentious volume, well used'. The order of items was 'probably

planned', with Romances occurring in the first part of the manuscript:

<u>Eglamour</u>, <u>Octavian</u>, <u>Launfal</u> and <u>Libeaus Desconus</u>. The second part

is predominantly religious and it is here that <u>Emaré</u>, <u>Chevalier</u>

<u>Assigne</u> and <u>Sir Isumbras</u> 'were (deliberately ?) placed'.[171]

The layout of the manuscript raises questions about the ways in which

texts are read. I call the second group of texts 'Romances', but the

placing of these Romances among religious works in Cotton Caligula A

ii calls attention to their religious content. This content has lead

some critics to reject some Romances as 'Romance'. For Dieter Mehl,

the fact that <u>Emaré</u>:

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there is still no consensus over the circumstances of production
of the Auchinleck manuscript which I discuss in Chapter Four.

[170] Anne Middleton, 'The Audience and Public of <u>Piers Plowman</u>' in,
<u>Middle English Alliterative Poetry and its Literary Background</u> ,
edited by David Lawton (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 101-123. Catherine
Jeanne Batt, 'English Literary Response to French Arthurian Cyclic
Romance: Contexts and Perspectives for Reading Malory', unpub-
lished Phd. (Liverpool, 1986), p. 16 cites evidence for ownership
of Romances by religious foundations.

[171] Guddat-Figge, pp. 169-171 (p. 171).

is...among religious works, ... suggests...the poem was, for the compilers of the collection, a legend or a devotional tale.[172]

Chevalier Assigne because of a 'simple religious theme and... lengthy elementary instruction' is an instruction manual for young boys. In an unpublished doctoral dissertation R. E. Stratton supports this view and suggests the Romance was 'intended by the Church' for instruction and was 'conceived with a special audience [of young boys] in mind'.[173]

A collection of texts such as are found in Cotton Caligula A ii encourages the user to exploit the potentiality the manuscript offers. A compendium of religious and secular texts, it opens up a range of uses and users and its catholicity fosters a sense of contextuality. Emaré or Chevalier Assigne can be read both in the light of other Romances and of religious works. Cotton Caligula is a good example of the mixed use manuscripts can be put to. It suggests both private reading, through its inclusion of such things as a prose confession and a long English medical treatise, as well as the possibility of reading lyrics and Romances aloud.[174]

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[172] Dieter Mehl, The Middle English Romances of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries (London, 1969), p. 138.

[173] R. M. Lumiansky, 'Legends of Godfrey of Bouillon' in, A Manual of the Writings in Middle English 1050-1500, edited by J. Burke-Severs (New Haven, 1967), pp. 101-113 (p. 103). R. E. Stratton, 'A Critical Edition of Chevalere Assigne', unpublished Phd. (Mississippi, 1979), p. 21.

[174] Guddat-Figge, pp. 48-51 discusses the topic of a 'Reading or Listening Audience' concluding that Romances were probably both read aloud and studied privately.

A second large manuscript collection is found in Advocates 19.3.1. and, as Phillipa Hardman has shown, it is a very carefully planned set of booklets bound together. Sir Isumbras occurs in quire four and Sir Gowther in quire two; another Romance, Sir Amadace occurs in quire five. Hardman gives the following account of the manuscript:

> These three 20-leaf booklets seem all to have been planned on the same pattern. Q's 2 and 5 each contain a romance tale...and a didactic courtesy poem...In Q 4...the plan was probably the same: a tale of 18 folios followed by a didactic poem of two folios concerning one's behaviour at Mass, very similar in tone to the two courtesy poems.[175]

This too supports an interest in 'self-construction', as I described it in my Introduction. The manuscript provides various rôle models and so fosters contemplation of the self. Guddat-Figge see MS Advocates 19.3.1. as 'light' reading but its audience may well have extended beyond the secular family. There is some, albeit scanty, evidence that its readership included some, possibly female, religious.[176]

It is unusual to find surviving manuscripts where Romances are copied with 'scholarly' or 'scientific texts'[177] but the Thornton manuscript 'makes considerable demands on the theological and, consequentially, Latin education of its readers'.[178] It is a miscellany showing 'some kind of grouping' with ten Romances in the first part together with

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[175] Phillipa Hardman, 'A Medieval "Library in parvo"', Med Aev, 47 (1978), 262-73 (p. 267).

[176] Guddat-Figge, p. 48.

[177] Guddat-Figge, p. 22.

[178] Guddat-Figge, p. 45.

two legends and satire and prophecies. This is followed by 'a group of religious and devotional items in English and Latin prose and verse'.[179] MS Additional 31042 'is generally believed to have been written by the same scribe'.[180] Like the Thornton manuscript, Additional 31042 is a mixture of secular and religious items.[181] Next to the Auchinleck manuscript the Thornton manuscript is 'one of the major sources of Middle English romances of all species'.[182] Both the context of works in the manuscript and the titles of these texts suggest cross referencing between secular and religious texts and audiences. A further point of manuscript evidence which supports a catholicity of origin, audience and use, arises with Sir Gowther in MS Royal 17 B xliii. Gowther ends with the words 'Explicit Vita Sancti', like a Saint's Legend.[183] Sir Isumbras in MS Caius 175 opens with 'Hic incipit de milite Ysumbras' and closes with 'Explicit Sanctus ysumbras'.[184] Moreover in this manuscript it is placed between a life

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[179] Guddat-Figge, p. 140. D. S. Brewer and A. E. B. Owen, in their facsimile of The Thornton Manuscript Lincoln Cathedral MS 91 (London, 1977), p. ix agree that the manuscript was 'put...together with some deliberation'.

[180] The Liber de Diversis Medicinis, edited by Margaret Sinclair-Ogden, EETS (London, 1938 repr. 1969), p. xi. Brewer and Owen, p. vii.

[181] For a description of the manuscript see Guddat-Figge, p. 159-63 and The English Charlemagne Romances, pt II, The Sege off Melayne, edited by Sidney J. Herrtage, EETS (London, 1880, repr. 1979), pp. viii-ix.

[182] Awntyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyn, edited by Ralph Hanna (Manchester, 1974), p. 2.

[183] Six Middle English Romances, edited by Maldwyn Mills (London, 1973 repr. 1982), p. xix. Also Mehl, p. 126.

[184] M. B. Parkes, 'The Literacy of the Laity', in The Medieval

of Richard Coeur de Lion and a Life of St Katherine. The reader is free to play off the religious and secular implications of the text against each other and in so doing is encouraged to explore the relation of each to the other.

This is not to say that texts blur into one another - rather the opposite. In Cotton Caligula both Isumbras and an incomplete Eustace legend occur. In general the Eustace legend group is extremely similar to Sir Isumbras but they form distinct texts as the inclusion of both in this manuscript indicates.[185] These manuscripts are capable of sustaining both a reception as instruction manuals and a sophisticated response to the way in which the texts are laid out and the different generic signals they offer. Moreover as P. R. Robinson says, 'unlike a printed book, each manuscript is unique'[186] Isumbras, Emaré, Gowther and the Chevalier are not fixed 'characters' since they can appear differently in each manuscript; not only are they placed in different contexts but they have been re-worked their scribes:

> each act of copying was to a large extent an act of re composition, and not an episode in a process of decomposition from an ideal form.[187]

World, edited by David Daiches and Anthony Thorlby (London, 1973), pp. 555-577 (p. 566).

[185] Ashmole 61 also includes both Isumbras and a Life of Eustace

[186] P. R. Robinson, 'A Study of Some Aspects of the Transmission of English Verse Texts In Late Medieval Manuscripts', unpublished Phd. (Oxford, 1972), p. 1.

[187] Derek Pearsall, 'Texts, Textual Criticism and Fifteenth Century Manuscript Production' in, Fifteenth Century Studies: Recent Essays edited by Robert F. Yeager (Hamden, Conn., 1984), pp. 121-136 (p. 127).

Ashmole 61 which contains, amongst other items, a version of <u>Sir Isumbras</u>, is a particularly good example of this re-composition. R. K. G. Ginn notes how the scribe, Rate, compiled a manuscript of family <u>exempla</u> and altered his sources to suit his purpose. On the one hand he leaves out passages of doctrinal controversy within religious pieces but on the other he has:

> chosen items which deal with all aspects, normal and abnormal, pleasant and unpleasant, of relationships within the family.[188]

He changes passages within <u>Sir Isumbras</u>, <u>Sir Cleges</u> and <u>Sir Orfeo</u>, to focus more particularly on the family unit.[189] Even in the 'Stans Puer Ad Mensam' Rate adds:

> Yff þou haue A fader þat be of lyfe here
> Honour hym with wyrschype - My counsell I þee gyffe -
> And also þi moder þat is thi faderes fere
> And euer-more after þe better þou schall fare.[190]

This manuscript has another interesting feature, its shape. It is a holster book, and as such suited to oral recitation because the reader is able to concentrate easily on the items he is reciting.[191] It is decorated with drawings of fish and flowers and many of the items end with the signature of Rate; this leads Pamela de Witt to see it as a

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[188] R. K. G. Ginn, 'A Critical Edition of Two Texts of <u>Sir Cleges</u>' unpublished MA. (Belfast, 1967), pp. 83 and 84.

[189] Ginn, pp. 69-77. The alterations to <u>Isumbras</u>, may be found listed in Mill's edition and are discussed later in this chapter. Robinson, p. 62 notes the changes in <u>Orfeo</u>.

[190] Ginn, p. 79. Parkes, 'The Literacy of the Laity' p. 569 also agrees that the manuscript was 'edited ... for family reading'.

[191] Guddat-Figge, p. 31. Robinson, p. 194 thinks Rate bought the manuscript, blank, already bound.

highly personalised manuscript.[192] She sees the fish and flower de-
vices as a 'visual equivalent of <u>explicit</u> or "quod Rate"'. <u>Sir</u>
<u>Isumbras</u> seems to have met with great approval since its ending merits
both an 'Amen Amen quod Rate' and a big fish![193]

The manuscripts discussed offer a wide variety of origin, content and
use and these factors influence any notions of self within the text.
Douce 261 is interesting in this context; a sixteenth century manu-
script, it contains only Romances: <u>The Hystorye of the Valyaunte</u>
<u>knyghte Syr Isenbras</u>, <u>The tretyse of Syr Degare</u>, a tale of Gawain and
one of Eglamour. Dated 1564 it is later than printed versions of
<u>Isumbras</u> and <u>Eglamour</u>. The same scribe in MS Egerton 3132 A, copied
a metrical version of <u>Robert the Devil</u> It seems to be the case that
the manuscripts were copied from printed versions of these works.[194]
Guddat-Figge suggests that the scribe, E. B., was an 'enthusiastic
amateur' who studied the Middle English Romances from old prints.
It seems to be a manuscript whose purpose is conservation and con-

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[192] Pamela de Witt, 'The Visual Experience of Fifteenth Century
Readers', unpublished Phd. (Oxford, 1977), pp. 50-51.

[193] Two other manuscripts I have not mentioned are: Oxford University
College manuscript 142 and Grays Inn 20. Both are fourteenth
century manuscripts containing fragments of <u>Sir Isumbras</u> but
little can be gleaned from them. The <u>Isumbras</u> fragment of Oxford
University College is edited by C. Brown in, <u>Englische Studien</u>,
48 (1914-1915), p. 329. The Grays Inn fragment is in bad condi-
tion and little is known about it. See Guddat-Figge, pp. 297-299
and 217-218.

[194] Although this is not entirely certain as Guddat-Figge, p. 266
points out.

solidation; E. B. wanting to copy, not to re-write the texts.[195] Kari

Sajavaara remarks, of <u>Robert the Devil</u> that:

> The manuscript copy of the verse text is an interesting example
> of the inter relationship between early printed books and man-
> uscripts. A comparison of the six extant leaves of the original
> edition with the manuscript shows that the manuscript is a
> faithful copy of a printed original.[196]

Early manuscripts point to a flexibility of purpose. Rather than

being conservative they are performative, with each manuscript forming

a different communication. The later manuscript tries to consolidate

and copy, thus fixing the notion of the self. This distinction is an

important one and will be further discussed in Chapter Five in re-

lation to printed Romances.[197] Douce 261 is useful here as a contrast

to the earlier manuscripts. These earlier manuscripts are illustra-

tive of open texts, where the story is a point of departure for the

writer and reader, as opposed to fixed texts conserved in print. For

each manuscript of, say, <u>Isumbras</u> we may posit a different idea of

'self'; the notion of the fixed 'hero' does not apply. It was not

only Rate who edited his material. Phillipa Hardman argues that the

editorial practice of the scribe in Advocates 19.3.1. extended to the

modification of both <u>Sir Gowther</u> and <u>Sir Isumbras</u>; making them

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[195] Guddat-Figge, p. 21.

[196] Kari Sajavaara, 'The Sixteenth-Century versions of <u>Robert the
Devil</u>', <u>Neuphil Mitt</u>, LXXX (1979), 335-347 (p. 344).

[197] For the relationship between 'communication' and 'preservation'
see Paul Zumthor, 'The Text and The Voice', <u>NLH</u>, XVI (1984-85)
67-92 (p. 69).

'cruder', whilst <u>Gowther</u> in MS Royal 17B xliii has been revised to

suit a cultivated audience conscious of Romance conventions.[198] For:

> contrary to our textbook definition of medieval romance as a
> chivalric tale, romance writing consists in what is done to such
> a tale.[199]

The early Romance has an openness which we tend to forget when faced

with a clean, printed edition with none of the manuscript's idiosyn-

crasies exposed. In dealing with the Romances of this chapter, we

should not concentrate on a single 'hero' but see beyond a single

figure to an awareness of a wider term - the 'self'.

Manuscript Bibliotecca Nazionale XIII B 29 supports an awareness of

a difference between a single 'hero/ine' and the self. It contains,

amongst other items, <u>Isumbras</u>, followed by Chaucer's tale of patient

Griselda.[200] After hearing the Clerk's story the Host exclaims:

> Me were levere than a barel ale
> My wyf at hoom had herd this legende ones![201]

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[198] Hardman, pp. 268-9 uses 'cruder' in the sense of 'more brutal,
frank, racy and blood thirsty'. <u>Sir Gowther</u>, edited by Karl Breul
(Oppeln, 1886), p. 5 Breul uses the phrase 'besseres publikum'
to describe the audience of MS Royal and believes the manuscript
to have been re-worked in the interest of clarity but, valuing a
'lost original', he is even-handed in his appreciation of the two
surviving manuscripts. I am grateful to Nick Davis for his help
with this point.

[199] Gerald L. Bruns, 'The Originality of Texts in a Manuscript Cul-
ture', <u>Comparative Literature</u>, 32 (1980), 113-129 (p. 121).

[200] According to Guddat-Figge p. 242 the scribe carefully began each
major poem on a fresh page; as he copied <u>Isumbras</u> from a defective
exemplar he left a few blank pages hoping to complete the text;
immediately after this comes the Chaucer text. The manuscript
is described by John M. Manly and Edith Rickert, <u>The Text of the
Canterbury Tales</u>, Vol I (Chicago, 1940), pp. 376-380.

[201]

The Host wishes to take the tale as exemplary and apply it to his own
wife. The Clerk counters this by moving away from a 'Griselda-centred'
interpretation of the tale:

> This storie is seyd, nat for that wyves sholde
> Folwen Grisilde as in humylitee,
> For it were inportable, though they wolde;
> But for that every wight, in his degree,
> Sholde be constant in adversitee   (1142-1146).

The audience of the Naples manuscript is faced with the very issues
I argue are important in my Romances. That is, the multiplicity of
interpretation Chaucer offers at the close of the tale of Griselda,
can be aligned with the practice of the romances discussed in this
chapter. The audience of the Naples manuscript is offered a choice
of interpretations - the Host's or the Clerk's, replication or con-
struction, tied to a single figure or moving beyond it. In addition
the Naples manuscript retains the Wife of Bath stanza:

> For which, heere, for the Wyves love of Bathe-
> Whos lyf and al hire secte God mayntene
> In heigh maistrie and elles were it scathe-
> I wol with lusty herte, fressh and grene,
> Seyn yow a song to glade yow, I wene;
> And lat us stynte of ernestful matere.
> Herkneth my song that seith in this manere   (1170-1176).[202]

By referring out to the Wife, it may be that, this stanza recalls the
issues raised in her 'Prologue' and 'Tale' which highlight questions
of identity.

The reader, faced with such choices, is not entirely left to his own
devices but is directed by the text, and this occurs most strongly

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All quotations are from The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, edited by
F. N. Robinson, second edition (Oxford, 1979).

[202] See also Manly-Rickert, Vol III, p. 371.

in the opening and closing passages of Romance. As Anne Middleton points out the relationship between '"objective" information' regarding a text's original audience and '"subjective"' interpretation' gleaned from the way a text presents itself and manipulates its public, is 'reciprocal'.[203] By looking at 'objective' manuscript evidence we have gained an impression of the original audience and function of the texts. Now, by examining the way the Romances open, we may glean some 'subjective' information as to how the texts manipulate their audiences.

2. The Openings

The openings of Emaré, Sir Isumbras, Chevalier Assigne and Sir Gowther create a sense of issues directly and immediately important. The term 'distancing' is not appropriate here; the openings do not recall times past so much as tackle issues within a qualitative and spatial world into which the audience is drawn. There is a sense of an all-embracing universality.[204] In the Chevalier Assigne, as with many Romances, the essence of the plot is contained in the opening few lines:

> Alle weldynge god whenne it is his wylle
> Wele he wereth his werke with his owne honde:

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[203] Middleton, p. 101.

[204] John M. Ganim, Style and Consciousness in Middle English Literature (Princeton, 1983), pp. 1-11 discusses the relation of the temporal and linear with spatial and patterned literature, noting on p. 3 that 'The perception of the world by means of a sequential and linear understanding was generally held to be an imperfect apprehension of a universal order'. Ganim, however, sees the audience as distanced from the text.

For ofte harmes were hente þat helpe we ne my3te
Nere þe hy3nes of hym þat lengeth in heuene.
For this I saye by a lorde was lente in an yle,
That was kalled lyor a londe by hym selfe.
The kynge hette oryens as þe book tellethe;
And his qwene bewtrys þat bry3t was & shene:
His moder hy3te Matabryne þat made moche sorwe;
For she sette her affye in Sathanas of helle.
This was chefe of þe kynde of cheualere assynge (1-11).[205]

These lines evoke the notion of God as Creator and occasional pro-
tector of the human race. It depicts figuratively the over-arching
heaven, a source of order and benevolence under which is the unstable
world of human disorder. <u>Sir Isumbras</u> picks us on this type of non
specificity (though not alluding directly to <u>Chevalier</u>) referring
loosely to 'you' and to 'us alle' (6, 4), presenting the audience with
an all encompassing vision of creation: earth, heaven, world, old and
young. <u>Emaré</u> too depicts in its opening lines the bliss and order
of heaven, the world of men who have to interpret God's creation, and
presents Mary as a channel of communication between the two:

    Jesu that ys kyng in trone,
    As thou shoope bothe sonne and mone,
    And all shall dele and dyghte,
    Now lene us grace such dedus to done,
    In thy blys that we may wone:
    Men calle hyt heven lyghte,
    And thy modur Mary, hevyn qwene,
    Bere our arunde so bytwene
    (That semely ys of syght)
    To thy sone that ys so fre,
    In heven wyth Hym that we may be,
    That lord ys most of myght   (1-12).[206]

These openings are comparable with that of <u>Sir Gowther</u>:

    God that art of myghtis most

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[205]

> The Romance of the Cheuelere Assigne, edited by Henry H. Gibbs
> EETS (London, 1868).

[206] <u>Emaré</u> in Mills.

Fader and Sone and Holy Gost
That bought man on rode so dere;
Shilde us from the fowle fende
That is about mannys sowle to shende
All tymes of the yere.
Sumtyme the fende hadde postee
Forto dele with ladies free
In liknesse of here fere;
So that he begat Merlyng and mo
And wrought ladies so mikil wo
That ferly it is to here   (1-12).[207]

Through its opening Sir Gowther declares its allegiance with the other

Romances I discuss. God is man's shield from the devils besetting

him; but he has to be invoked, protection is not automatic nor is it

continuous. The reader enters the shared world of literary reference

and is referred to a fund of clerks' tales of devils besetting women

and getting them with child.[208]

These openings are quite strikingly similar, especially if we contrast

them with other Romances.[209] Many Romances stress the distant past,

for example Sir Launfal speaks of 'doughty Artours dawes'; Lay Le

Freine of 'old aventours'; Orfeo mentions the many stories that exist

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[207] Sir Gowther in Mills.

[208] A topos used by Chaucer in the 'Wife of Bath's Tale'; for my
     discussion of the 'Tale' see Chapter One, pp. 61-65.

[209] Athelston, in French and Hale, possesses a similar opening, as
     does The Earl of Toulouse. Ywaine and Gawain briefly refers to
     God's creation and shielding of mankind before plunging into a
     tale of the Round table; The Avowing of Arthur similarly refers
     to the Creation before turning to 'haldurs þat before vs were'.
     The Destruction of Troy and Octavian similarly preface their tales
     of 'aunsetris' and 'eldurs' with mention of Creation but none of
     these posses such a fully developed sense of the qualitative,
     spatial timeless world with which Emaré, Isumbras, Chevalier, and
     Gowther open.

of times past, of 'kyngys that byfore us were'.[210] The Sege of Melayne
'off Chevallry that byfore us were';[211] Sir Cleges takes place in the
'tyme of kynge Vtere'.[212] All these refer to a past time which is
distinct from the present, with no strong sense of an over-arching
christian universe to connect the two. By using formulæ to invite
the audience in to the text, these narratives, unlike the four I
concentrate on, foreground their composition; they invite collusion
in the story which becomes an act of distancing the audience. My
texts, however, resembles these other Romances in having a set of
figures who are introduced at an early stage. At line eleven we meet
the chevalier; Emaré is mentioned by name at line twenty three, and
Isumbras at line twenty, in their respective texts. Gowther is not
mentioned by name until line 104 of the narrative in which he appears,
because of the way the text deals with the self - as I will later
argue. My chosen texts do not, though, focus on any one particular
figure unlike say, King Horn which forms a good example of eulogising
a 'hero' or central figure:

> Alle beon he bliþe
> þat to my song lyþe:
> A sang ihc schal ȝou singe
> Of Murry þe Kinge.
> King he was biweste
> So long so hit laste.
> Godhild het his quen;
> Faire ne miȝte non ben.
> He hadde a sone þat het Horn,
> Fairer ne miste non beo born,
> Ne no rein vpon birine,

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[210] In The Breton Lays in Middle English, edited by Thomas C. Rumble
    (Detroit, 1965), ll. 1, 8, and 23.

[211] In Mills. l. 1.

[212] In French and Hale. ll. 1, 8, 23.

Ne sunne vpon bischine.
Fairer nis non þane he was,
He was briȝt so þe glas,
He was whit so þe flur;
Rose-red was his colur.
He was fayr and eke bold,
And of fiftene winter hold.
In none kineriche
Nas non his iliche.[213]

Havelock also centres on a particular figure:

Herknet to me, godemen,
Wiues, maydens, and alle men,
Of a tale þat ich you wile telle,
Wo-so it wile here and þer-to duelle.
þe tale is of Hauelok imaked;
Wil he was litel, he yede ful naked.
Hauelok was a ful god gome.
He was ful god in eueri trome;
He was þe wicteste man at nede
þat þurte riden on ani stede.
þat ye mowen nou yhere,þupper case
And þe tale ye mowen ylere,
At þe biginning of vre tale,
Fil me a cuppe of ful god ale.[214]

Compare these openings with those of my texts.   In King Horn and

Havelock there is an insistence on a central 'he' of the narrative;

'he' is the focal point of the opening, rather than a larger world

of universals. These figures move through their world sequentially

until their narrative is completed by the acquisition of a wife, by

knighthood and a kingdom.   Emaré, Chevalier, Isumbras and Gowther

differ from this and instead of recollecting a distant past which is

complete in itself, finished long ago, they draw the reader into a

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[213] King Horn in French and Hale 11. 1-18

[214] Havelock in French and Hale 11. 1-14. After these lines the focus
of the text is widened via an expression of a need for Christ's
protection. For an account of how Havelock can be seen as as
manipulating time and space, and not purely in sequential terms
as I suggest above, see Ganim, pp. 17-37.

shared and familiar and immediate context; one which is timeless, and larger than the figures in it. They move around in a spatially organised narrative, in Christendom, as well as move along a linear narrative as Horn and Havelock do.

In order to substantiate and extend the ideas raised in this section, I will now look at the four texts in more detail.

Chevalier Assigne

The English Chevalier is a severely truncated version of a French original. Although the exact source of the Chevalier cannot be identified, comparisons between existing French versions and the English can be made.[215] The legend of the Swan Knight is traditionally associated with the history and lineage of Godfrey of Boulogne who, together with Arthur and Charlemagne, is one of the Nine Worthies. To his fame was dedicated a cycle of French poems developed, probably, in the twelfth century and falling into five sections:

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[215] John Edwin Wells, A Manual of the Writings in Middle English 1050-1400 (New Haven, 1916), p. 96. The Chevalier is a 'condensed version of the material, if not the verses themselves, of the first part of the story of the Swan Knight represented in the first 1083 lines of a French poem of six thousand lines of the twelfth or thirteenth century'. Gibbs, p. i agrees and cites the version in MS Royal 15 E vi as the source. Until the work of W. R. J. Barron it was accepted, by default, that MS Royal 15 E vi was the source; although the revised Manual qualifies Wells remarks with a 'perhaps', p. 101. See W. R. J. Barron, 'Alliterative Romance and the French Tradition' in, Middle English Alliterative Poetry and its Literary Background, edited by David Lawton (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 70-87 (p. 81).

Chanson d'Antioche
Chanson de Jerusalem
Les Chetifs
Helias
Les Enfances de Godfrey de Boullion.[216]

The cycle includes the first Crusades, the miraculous ancestry of
Godfrey and the conquest of Jerusalem.

There are four major French versions of the Swan Knight story. In
the A or Elioxe version the Queen dies giving birth to her seven
children and they, transformed into swans, are rescued by the one girl
amongst them. In the B, or Beatrix, version the Queen survives and
it is one of her sons who defends her from the charge of adultery by
judicial combat, destroys the old Queen and rescues the siblings.
The C version retains the opening of the A version but changes the
names and details to conform with the B version. The D version
'intermingles features' from both A and B.[217]

The B version is considerably more suited to introduce the chevalier
as the swan knight; the substitution of hero for heroine allows for
additional demonstration of the heroic ancestry of Godfrey in the form
of the fight for his mother.[218] The French cycle is, thus, concerned

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    W. R. J. Barron, 'Chevalier Assigne and the Naissance du Chevalier
    au Cygne', Med Aev, XXXVI (1967) 25-37 (p. 25).

[217] These are outlined by W. R. J. Barron, 'Versions and texts of the
    Naissance du Chevalier au Cygne', Romania, 80 (1969), 481-538 (p.
    483). As he points out relatively little attention has been paid
    to them

[218] Barron, Romania, p. 489.

with providing authentication for a known 'hero'.[219] Comparing the opening of the most recently edited text of the French _Naissance_ BN 786, and the English indicates this difference in slant between the English and the French. The French announces itself as:

> li roumans dou Cevalier au chisne
> et de Godfroi de Buillon
> caiment il prist Jherusalem.[220]

Despite the reference to Romance, later in the introduction the poet denies the text is anything but truth. It is not 'fable' but 'l'estore...veritable' (16-18). The English cuts down the thirty five lines found here to a mere five and cuts any mention of Godfrey. Instead of presenting a true history of one man it refers out to issues larger than 'character'. It opens out narrative accessibility rather than tying it down to a specific aristocratic personage.

The manuscripts surveyed by Geoffrey Myers in this edition suggest that the French story appealed to a courtly audience.[221] Certainly Paris BN 786 is catalogued in 1589 in the library of Henri III and BN 12558 belonged to Philip the Good; another version belonged in the fifteenth century to the Dukes of Savoy. Lost manuscripts are supposed to have belonged to Charles the V c. 1373. and Philip the

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[219] Barron, _Romania_, p. 482.

[220]
  The Old French Crusade Cycle, Vol I, _La Naissance du Chevalier au Cygne_, edited by Jan A. Nelson and Emmanuel J. Mickel (Alabama, 1977), p. 131.

[221] Geoffrey Myers, ·'The Manuscripts of the Cycle', in _Naissance_, pp. xiii-lxv.

Good.[222] One of the French Beatrix versions, copied in England in manuscript Royal 15 E vi was given to Margaret of Anjou by John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, for her marriage to Henry VI in 1445. It is, therefore, a manuscript aimed at a courtly audience and its contents include a genealogical table of the descendants of St Louis - showing the English and French royal houses culminating in Henry VI. Appropriately much of the decoration of the manuscript is formed of marguerites, and banners of the arms of England and Shrewsbury.[223]

The Swan Knight story, then, seems to belong to a pseudo-historical, aristocratic, self-authenticating tradition. Certainly during the fourteenth century the motif of the Swan Knight had become popular amongst the higher echelons of society; both the Bohuns and the Beauchamps had adopted the knight as their ancestor.[224] Eleanor Bohun, Duchess of Gloucester who died in 1399 bequeathed several books to her son, including a 'rimeie del histoire de chiualer a cigne' in French. John Elwode, a monk, during the late fourteenth century donated to his Abbey of St. Augustine in Canterbury a 'Liber de milite

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[222] Myers, pp. xxxii; xxvii; lvii; lx-lxi.

[223] The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyualrye, edited by A. T. P. Byles, EETS (London, 1932), pp. xvi-xviii.

[224] Rosalind Field, 'The Anglo-Norman Background to Alliterative Romance' in, Middle English Alliterative Poetry and its Literary Background, edited by David Lawton (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 54-69 (p. 59). Field suggests that the the Chevalier originated as a 'late example of the fashion for ancestral romance' stemming from Anglo-Norman; this seems unlikely in that it excises any reference to the genealogy of Godfrey and contains no mention of either the Bohuns or the Beauchamps.

de signo (cygno) in gallico...'.[225] Both the earlier French versions and, as I will later discuss, the printed version focus on the genealogy of Godfrey. The early English cuts away from this to move in a larger sphere. What does the early English redactor do with his material ? Barron has a succinct comparison of the French Beatrice group and the unique English metrical Romance.[226] The English poet retains the bare events of the story whilst removing descriptive detail. He condenses accounts of ceremonies of arming, or thanksgiving and preliminaries to combat. Barron claims that the French Romance is more successful in its initial setting up of 'character';[227] certainly the English is doing something very different from the French. The latter puts evil firmly in the old Queen Matabrynne rather than presenting it as channelled through her; Matabrynne has never liked the young Queen and every day loses no chance to revile her. Openly the text states that no blame is to be attached to Beatrice, she is 'viaire ot cler' (46). The figure of Matabrynne can be a source of action, inherently evil, she has a malicious dislike of Beatrice which will set the chain of events on their way.

The English version of The Chevalier Assigne makes radical changes moving away from biography to concentrate on the interaction of various qualities both in and beyond individual figures. Matabrynne is

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[225] Susan Hagen Cavanaugh, 'A Study of Books Privately Owned in England 1300-1450', unpublished Phd. (Pennsylvania, 1980), pp. 110 and 290.

[226] W. R. J. Barron, 'Alliterative Romance and the French Tradition' in Lawton, pp. 70-87 (pp. 80-83).

[227] Barron in Lawton, p. 83.

aligned with Satan and with the consequences of evil, she 'made moche sorwe'. Beatrice and Oriant are associated with weakness; we do not have a straightforward battle of good and evil but shifting categories of strength and weakness which exist beyond (and are also channelled through and across) the figures in the narrative. At line eleven the chevalier appears, described as, in some way, the outcome of these operations; he exists at the point where such definitions intersect.

After its opening lines the Chevalier moves straight to a revelation of Beatrice and Oriant's childless marriage. Oriant's distress is presented in terms of inheritance; if he has no heir there is no one to rule over his kingdom, but the concern spills over beyond the genealogical and is reminiscent of scenes in other Romances; for example, Gowther, Lay Le Freine, and in Chaucer's Franklin's Tale. In Chevalier Assigne, as the couple walk on the city walls, Beatrice makes the unfortunate remark that it is only an immoral woman who has more than one child at a birth, since each child must have a father. In Sir Gowther the duchess begs for an heir by any means whatsoever; it is this momentary slip which allows a demon to seduce her and beget a child which is half demonic. One may also recall Dorigen's foolish promise, in the 'Franklin's Tale', to be Aurelius' lover if he can make the black rocks go away. These situations involve a lack or faltering, and inevitably allow in a tide of misfortune which has an enormous effect on the world of the text. Possible and impossible are not fixed categories, they are not as separable as they might at first seem. In the Chevalier instant repercussions follow Beatrice's slip:

And whenne it drowȝ towarde þe nyȝte þey wenten to bedde;
He gette on here þat same nyȝte resonabullye manye   (33-34).

There is no logical connection between one action and its effect on the narrative, events appear shockingly inconsequential and horribly uncontrollable. There is no reason or motivation for Matabrynne to accuse Beatrice of giving birth to dogs and no apparent way of preventing her. Events move at a speed which makes them arbitrary and yet have the force of fate. There is no gap between Beatrice's words, the children's conception, birth and disappearance. This is not only a narrative but also a series of shocking vignettes, a set of episodes which hinge on chance - 'for a worde on þe walle þat she [Beatrice] wronge seyde' (349). Matabryne's actions in substituting seven puppies for seven children and her attempts to slander Beatrice are unpremeditated, nonsensical; they are not an expression of 'character'. Matabrynne is aligned with evil in a large sense as is apparent when she claims 'Now alle wyles shalle fayle but I here dethe werke' (182). Her actions do not arise out of 'character', out of personal and considered motivation; as presented, they offer an image of a universal possibility. Unwitting slips like those made by Beatrice and Gowther's mother will allow in the intervention of evil. Matabrynne is one who is aligned with evil and defined purely through her evil actions without actually having an evil personality of her own.

The evil working through Matabrynne, however, is not powerful enough to completely control the narrative. Paradoxically, the human weakness of Oriant leads him to suspend judgement on his wife's supposed crime; he professes faith in her as his wife and simply asks for her

to be removed from his sight. The text highlights the relationship of the the two as husband and wife rather than as King and Queen and sidesteps any legalistic debate at this point. As King, Oriant would have to dispense judgement on his Queen, but this issue is not raised and judgement is suspended. Instead the narrative makes manifest the innocence of the'30ng quene'(81). Incarcerated in a 'dymme prysoun' (86) she resembles patient Constance figures and young female saints such as Juliana and Margaret, cast similarly into dungeons for their integrity. The weakness of the human in these cicumstances is transformed through prayer, into a kind of Divine strength. Beatrice's actions can be read in two ways at this point. Gibbs and Stratton supply 'her' at l. 91 so that Beatrice prays that God, who saved Susannah, 'fro sorowefulle domus [her] to saue als'. Stratton explains that the reasoning behind this is that otherwise she would pray for all to be saved which is a 'most charitable act but not a likely one in the circumstances'[228] A reason which betrays its 'character-based', or rather 'character- biased' origins. Beatrice, like a female saint, offers an image of God-centred power and her words recall the opening stanza where mankind's need for help was stressed. Innocence protects Beatrice as it does her seven young children; though a passive virtue in the twentieth century, it has real force in this text. The children's very helplessness reminds Matabrynne's henchman (deputed to kill them) of Christ, 'he þat lendeth wit' (199), and in this way they survive to be found by a passing hermit. Divine intervention is thus part of the very fabric

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[228] Stratton, p. 88.

of the story. Human qualities extend out to God and God reaches down to man in the forms both of the hermit and of the hart, who succour the children. The human figures in the text must be seen as belonging to a larger fabric, or game, of good and evil and all possible permutations of these. No action exists in isolation but is imbricated in a larger world. In this way no one figure, 'character' or 'hero' has control over, or is the sole focus of, the text. Matabrynne tries to control events by having the children murdered but when her hired killer cuts off the silver chains from around their necks they are protected by God's grace and metamorphose into swans.

The words of the wife of the goldsmith commissioned by Matabrynne to make her a cup from the chains, indicate the limitations of the system Matabrynne works with. The gold multiplies so that half of one chain suffices:

> Hit is þorowe þe werke of god or þey be wronge wonnen;
> For whenne here mesure is made what may she aske more ?   (170-71)

Matabrynne thinks she is in charge, able to dictate the measure of things, working on a quantative system. As the wife points out the workings of grace and of evil are not that easily identifiable. One may only have limited understanding in this world and knowledge can be partial. In the end only God has full understanding and power - full existence.

Concerns like these become crucial when the narrative moves to its climax; Matabrynne makes a second attempt to have Beatrice burnt at the stake but the latter's young son arrives to save her. The text and the figures within it seem to view Beatrice's fate as fixed - she

will burn for her 'sin' - but the effect of the arrival of the chevalier is the highlighting of the interactive nature of existence. If Matabrynne is a figure aligned with evil, the chevalier is her counterpart; As the angel says of the chevalier 'criste hath formeth þis chylde to fyȝte for his moder' (200). If a mother (Matabrynne) tries to destroy the marriage of her son (Oriant), it is a son (Chevalier) who reasserts the truth of the mother (Beatrice). The emphasis falls not on a linear sequence of events but on the patterning between qualities, and in a large sense these include God and Satan.

As a visible sign of his mother's innocence, the chevalier forms an imaginative correlate to her prison scene. Through a mixture of weakness and strength he proves to those within the text what is already known to those outside the text; Beatrice is not inherently evil, merely humanly weak. The young chevalier is a type of Percival figure. He has no innate knowledge of what constitutes things; in trying to ponder the makeup of a horse he imagines it might be like wood or water or a lion. For him, knowledge of his mother is on the same level as knowledge of a horse, of fighting and of God. That is, these elements are seen as equally important and inseparable from one another. His innocence and youth allow access to truth; although his role is beyond his knowing comprehension he has been specifically formed for it. His appearance in the text highlights the imbrication of secular and divine concerns and points to the interwoven and immeasurable quality of things. He is weak but in that lies his strength; he may not know what a mother is but only he can reveal her

innocent self. The chevalier embodies the notion that God's justice permeates human actions. Oriant's 'weakness' drew him to mercy in not passing the death sentence immediately on his wife. Weakness can thus be a force for good as well as evil; but the human self cannot predict the outcome.

The chevalier's human body is directed by an angel perched on his right shoulder and his body halts the King's horse. His own emphasis on his youth and slight frame or 'body' (244), serves to make the reader more aware of that which is beyond the physical; his words strike home and the world of the narrative is re-aligned with that of truth. Divine justice works above and beyond the human but, also, through it; the chevalier is christened by an abbot, he has god-parents and needs a lesson in horsemanship in order to fight evil. As the chevalier points out, Oriant should keep faith with the 'ryȝte Iuge' (236). Human structures are relevant to the text, but they need and get an infusion of the divine. Church bells ring spontaneously for the young knight and in his fight he is aided by holy fire and an adder springing from his shield which, not surprisingly, clinches the outcome. He is the outward manifestation of Beatrice's honour and the holy fire and adder are manifestations, in turn, of his clearness of spirit. They link him with the backdrop of universals established at the opening of the text. Matabrynne is summarily dispensed with by being reduced to a heap of brown ashes, Beatrice and Oriant are reunited, five of the swans are returned to human form. The text closes with the re-assuring words 'And þus þe botenyng of god browȝte hem to honde' (370).

But, all is not as comfortingly secure as these words might suggest.
One swan remains a swan because his chain has been made into a cup
for Matabrynne. The description of his sorrow is horribly pictorial
-he tears at his breast and the water foams and boils with his blood
and anguish. The entire human world of the text, both rich and poor,
move away from the scene and turn to surround a font to christen the
remaining children. A protective gesture, it seems to be an attempt
to form a hermetic seal which would exclude such as Matabrynne;
disastrously it also excludes the swan-child and he remains trapped
in swan form, irretrievably beyond the human. This is not the only
instance of a loose end. Matabrynne's henchman, Marcus, had his eyes
put out by her for daring to disobey her orders and he remains
blind.[229] He is forgotten, lost in the pattern of the fourteenth
century text. The Chevalier is not a 'hero' not someone who reverses
everything in the text; certain edges are left which seem to suggest
that evil is not and cannot be totally eradicated but remains a pos-
sibility. One may forget Marcus but cannot forget the closing scene
with the swan. In other Beatrix versions the swan serves as a com-
panion to the Chevalier and knows he will return to human form even-
tually.[230] None of this occurs in the Chevalier Assigne and the reader
is left frustrated and helpless at the very time that the chevalier's
achievements are at their highest. The focus of interest lies in the

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[229] In the French and in the sixteenth century English prints he has
his sight restored.

[230] Barron, Med Aev, p. 25 the 'practical function of the Naissance
was to explain the strange association between Godfrey's ancestor
and the Swan which accompanies him on his adventures', with this
function cut out the text is radically altered.

way in which strength and weakness, sin and innocence, good and evil are related; it is not on any one particular figure or 'character'. The potentiality of the human is huge and in this sense the text is optimistic and moves beyond the scope of a courtesy book for small boys.[231] The outcome of man's actions are impossible to predict and not always retrievable. The English opens out the narrative, frees us from biographical or dynastic concern with individual characters and allows us to concentrate more clearly on the phenomenon of the self; not just a particular Queen, King and Child but an idea of self as a matrix. Individual 'characters' come in and out of focus but through them the conflicts inherent in constituting a self are foregrounded.

Emaré

The figure of Emaré in Emaré has been dismissed summarily by M. J. Donovan in the following words:

> Her character at best is ill-defined and points to her chief purpose as exemplar of Christian virtue.[232]

Literary criticism sees Emaré as, at best, an exemplary 'character' and, at worst, because exemplary not a 'character' at all; but we do not have to discriminate in terms of 'character'. The text raises and encompasses such doubts and confronts the issue of identity. Its narrative is twice the length of the Chevalier Assigne; where the

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[231] See above, p. 72.

[232] Mortimer J. Donovan, 'Breton Lays' in, the revised Manual, pp. 133-143 (p. 138).

<u>Chevalier</u> moves rapidly from event to the next, <u>Emare</u> is much more leisurely with sets of events repeated; for example Emaré's exiles, her sea journeys, the reaction of the men in the text to her appearance. As Mehl points out, this repetition is a deliberate technique which 'makes it clear that we are not just listening to a tale of individual sorrow';[233] but I think we may modify his claim that Emaré is purely 'exemplary' and suggest that the text explores the relationship of the exemplary and the abhorrent. All the Romance texts I discuss examine this relationship and they all deliberately explode fixed categories of identification. We have already seen the patterning of the <u>Chevalier Assigne</u>; how does it work in <u>Emare</u> ?

I have already mentioned the opening of the text but it deserves closer attention since <u>Emare</u> offers the reader two openings. The first presents the order of heaven above, the chaos of man below with communication between the two indirect, necessitating the intercession of Mary. The oblique way in which the text infers the Fall and calls into play the need for Grace suggests a gap between man and God, good and evil. Perhaps also it offers us a generic pointer, indicating itself as a text between Romance and Hagiography. The text signifies opposite poles only to suggest that they are reconcilable; in this case by Mary who is an intercessionary for man, but she is also the means by which God intervened in the affairs of man. She is a two way channel of communication. God became man

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[233] Mehl, p.137. Emaré is exiled at 11. 265 and following, 586 and following; she is discovered at 11. 340 and following and 685 and following.

through her and through her men can reach out to God, and to the God-like in themselves. The opening does not imply a one-way meting out of justice but a complicated set of openings and closings of opportunity. A pattern of 'arundes' (8) passing between God and men. I would suggest that it encapsulates the method of the text which follows - hovering between pessimism and optimism, definition and recognition that no such polarities are fixed.

The second stanza forms a second opening and introduces the figure of Emaré:

> Menstrelles that walken fer and wyde,
> Her and ther in every a syde,
> In mony a dyverse londe,
> Sholde at her bygynning
> Speke of that ryghtwes kyng
> That made both see and sonde.
> Whoso wyll a stounde dwelle
> Of mykyll myrght Y may you telle
> (And mornyng theramonge):
> Of a lady fayr and fre,
> Her name was called Emare
> As I here synge in songe   (13-24).

The minstrel reference alludes to a Romance tradition which incorporates texts such as <u>King Horn</u> and <u>Havelock</u>, whilst the first opening stresses the matter of God. <u>Emaré</u> opens by highlighting the question of its own identity; if it is going to focus on the 'ryghtwes kyng' why is it the story of 'a lady fayr and fre' ? As the opening shows, <u>Emaré</u> is acutely aware of the problem of identity and in keeping with this does not offer us one 'character' but demands from the reader an awareness of contextuality and a sophisticated response to generic markers. The reader is forced to question how a text and the figures in it are constructed. Are they secular, religious, exemplary ? Or do they encompass all of these ? Certainly Emaré's mother is

exemplary in that in her short physical description she conforms to an ideal of feminine beauty dominant in Medieval Europe.[234] We seem to be in a Romance world with Emaré's parents names, Erayne and Artyus, reminiscent of Igrayne and Arthur, but the qualities of this secular court are the same as those attributed to Christ in the opening stanza. Both Christ and Emaré are 'fre'; courtesy is a shared element between divine and secular worlds. Moreover Artyus resembles the divine pattern in that he is the 'best manne/In the worlde that lyved thanne' and 'well kowth dele and dyght' (37-38, 42). Secular and divine, Romance and Hagiography permeate one another. This reflects the manuscript context where Emaré is sandwiched between an 'Orison to Christ of the Wounds' and a 'Long Charter of Christ'.[235]

By stanza seven we seem to be more firmly in a Romance world. Sir Tergeaunt arrives with a marvellous cloth; a rich gift, it is one of the most physically present objects in the text, yet what it _is_ re-

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[234] D. S. Brewer, 'The Ideal of Feminine Beauty in Medieval Literature, especially "Harley Lyrics", Chaucer, and some Elizabethans', MLR, 50 (1955), 257-69 (especially pp. 257-8).

[235] Well's Manual, p. 524 (the revised version has not yet covered these items) mentions one 'Orisoun to þe Fyue Woundes of Ihesus Christus' in a Vernon MS, which is reproduced in The Minor Poems of the Vernon Manuscript, edited by Carl Horstmann, EETS (London, 1892), pp. 131-132. It is a prayer to Christ with, after each verse, a Pater Noster. I presume that the 'Orisoun' in Cotton Caligula a ii is comparable. Wells, pp. 369-70 describes 'Long Charters' as 'written in general imitation of...legal charters...and purport to represent a grant to Man by Christ of the bliss of Heaven, on the condition that man give love to God and to his neighbor (sic)'; and 'In the "Long Charter" the deed is the crucified body of Christ, the parchment is Christ's skin inscribed by the scourges, the letters are His wounds, the wax is His blood'. Mary Caroline Spalding, editor, The Middle English Charters of Christ, Bryn Mawr monographs XV (Bryn Mawr, 1914) was, unfortunately, not available at time of writing.

mains unfixed for both those inside and outside the text. Called by Artyus a 'fayry/Or ellys a vanyte' ((104-5), by Tergeaunte a 'ryche jwell' (107) it is the meeting place of interpretation. So dazzling in actuality that Artyus has difficulty physically, and by extension mentally, seeing it. Any classification of it is, thus, open to doubt, it eludes categorisation.

As the gift is decorated with precious jewels and representations of true lovers, we might expect that Tergeaunte is a suitor for Emaré but no, this direction is denied. Tergeaunte leaves, and the tale turns to Emaré's father and focuses on his inability to distinguish between his own erotic desire and his daughter's self. Their independent existence is made plain by the text as it describes the meeting of father and daughter. They move towards one another from geographically different places, a space which messengers traverse. They greet one another at a fixed spot and proceed on their journey in tandem. Artyus, however, wishes to coalesce their existence, to marry his daughter, to 'worche hys wyll' (227). He wishes to negate her independent existence, her self, and as a sign of this he covers her in the cloth which he has had fashioned into a robe. I have stressed this section because critics have elided Emaré and her robe; but they are not identical. They reflect on one another, affect one another, but they remain separate although associated. Emaré exists 'vnþur wede' (250).[236]

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[236] Mehl, p. 139 'the robe is an inseparable attribute, like her outstanding beauty it is symbolic of her inner perfections'. The phrase 'wordy unthur wede' occurs again at 11. 612 and 366; at 1. 392 she is 'in kurtull'; 1. 394 the cloth is 'upon her'; 11.

Emaré when the robe is placed upon her 'semed non erthely wommon'
(245), which can sustain either the meaning of 'ferly' or 'saintly'.
Emaré associates herself decisively with the latter; steadfastly she
refuses to 'play' with Artyυ5 and aligns herself with Christ. The
text has drawn us Emaré in physical terms, in terms of others' de-
sires, and now she asserts her self through speech. The more Artyυ5
tries to erase her the more firmly she asserts her independent ex-
istence. Yet the matter of her identity is not so simple, as the text
continues to reveal. No one figure has complete control over defi-
nition of self. Emaré depicts her self in one way but the external
reader can interpret her in larger terms and arrive at a sense of self
that Emaré as a figure may well reject. The coat may well be an ac-
curate sign of her own, un-acknowledged eroticism. Emaré is exiled
by Artyυ5, once gone he is able to 'see' her again and repents of
his actions but:

> At the Emperour now leve we
> And of the lady yn the see
> I shal begynne to tell   (310-12).

Or, rather, begin again, now Emaré has become un-named. From being
a strong narrative voice, Emaré has become a strong but undefinable
narrative presence. Her physical human sufferings are emotively de-
scribed by the text but when her boat lands and Sir Cador discovers
her he sees a 'glysteryng thyng' (350) which, on closer inspection,
turns out to be 'that lady', who, as another attempt at self-

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439 and 697 it is 'on her'; l. 501 she is 'semely unthur serke';
11.590, 644 and 933 she is 'in it'. 11. 652-6 she hides in it;
11. 736 and 988 her son is 'worthy unthur wede'. At l. 954 her
father's confusion of the different ways in which she can exist
is manifest by his blurring of her coat and her 'skynne'.

definition, changes her name to Egaré. It is left open how much Emaré is her cloak, how much she is saintly in her suffering, how much 'ferly' and how much Egaré Emaré as a specific 'character' is dissolving but interest in how a 'self' exists is increasing.

Here her story repeats, or rather, starts once again. She is still beautiful, stil 'vnþer wede' (366), still embroidering and still like 'non erdly thyng' (396). This time a King falls in love with her and marries her with great ceremony. Egaré does not speak, nor does she need to since this marriage is not incestuous. In the corresponding earlier sections we saw Emaré as a possible saint figure. Here the internal audience in the form of the old Queen sees Egare as a possible 'fende' (446). Both versions are supported by the text's repetition of her unearthliness. The self is un-fixed, it remains something bigger than any one 'character', sometimes frighteningly uncontrollable. Emaré alternately suffers and enjoys the readings of her self, by those within the text. Rather than being exemplary, the text is alarming in the way it focuses attention on the way a self can be structured and re-structured, destroyed and rebuilt whilst the figure of Emaré, as cued by the repetitious structure, retains a certain core integrity.

After a period of bliss the King goes to war leaving Emaré in the care of his mother. The old Queen accuses Emaré of giving birth to a fiend. The Romance then refers back to itself with the King's words, on being told of this supposed monstrous birth, echoing the Emperor's earlier speech. On 'losing' Emaré they both bewail that they were made man

(557 & 292), both weep, both swoon. Both wish to restore a status
quo but neither is successful, because of the gap between different
readings of a self. Communications go awry in the text, the king's
messengers lose their 'resoun' (582) in the space between figures in
the narrative, and their messages are altered. The result is that
Emaré is sent off on her voyages once more.

Egaré takes her misfortune as calmly as a saint accepting the will
of God. The language she uses to interpret the King's letter also
suggests such a parallel. She warns the Steward that he should obey
'my lordes commaunndement' (629) and 'loke þou be not shente' (628).
Yet her interpretation of meaning behind the King's actions is erro-
neous. She thinks he is ashamed of her as Queen, but her assessment
of her self is correct and reminds the external audience that a per-
son's true worth is found in God:

    So gentyll of blode yn Crstyanté
    Gete he nevur more   (635-6).

The word 'blood' has only been used twice previously; at l. 73 and
l. 513 where the Emperor and the King's nobility is described; they
are of 'gentyll blode'. The very different referent here de-centres
attention from a single person as a member of a genealogy to emphasise
a wider valuation. In this second boat journey Emaré re-assembles.
At lines 664-72 she makes a speech that, in its directness, recalls
her first speech to Artyʋs:

    Myghth Y onus gete lond,
    Of the watur that ys so stronge,
    By northe or by sowthe,
    Wele owth Y to warye the, see,
    I have myche shame yn the.

Egaré and Emaré merge and, as in her first journey, both her saintly

endurance, or un-earthly calm, and human sufferings are emotively

described. She lands in Rome and is again described as a 'fayr lady'

and a 'glysteryng' presence, an unearthly person (695, 699, 701).

Again she is taken care of and returns to her embroidery. Having

re-assembled Emaré the text turns away from her and returns to the

subject of her husband, who discovers the treachery of his mother.

Although condemning her to death, her sentence is mitigated by the

barons and evil escapes into the fabric of the narrative, without ever

being placed again.

However, both Emaré's father and husband journey, separately to Rome

and the text reverts to calling Emaré by this name. Emare engineers the

re-union of her family and reveals her 'Emaré' identity; with this

the text comes to a close.

N. D. Isaacs complains that in Emaré 'the handling of time... is

virtually ignored', finding it unbelievable that Emaré journeys to

Rome in seven days.[237] I would argue that the boat journeys do not

constitute a measurable, sequential, quantitative episode but are an

indice of the qualitative. Emaré unfolds sequentially but also keeps

referring back within itself, reworking its subject matter. At the

close of the text we know we cannot define Emaré as the sum of a number

of sequential actions, and that awareness is crucial. The end of the

romance is not the sum of its parts any more than one view of Emaré

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[237] Neil D. Isaacs, 'Constance in Fourteenth Century England', Neuphil
    Mitt, 59 (1958), 260-277 (p. 275).

is the sum of her self. We can collect different interpretations of her but we are made aware that they are not to be strung out on a line which, once read, give an 'answer' to her identity.[238] In her patience Emaré recalls Griselda and the questions raised by her text. Both texts ask the reader to fit together various ways of defining a self: as imitable example or an instance of the almost infinite permutations of identity.

Emaré differs considerably from Sir Gowther, where the self is constituted not through accumulation but eradication. At the end of Gowther the connotations of the self have become reversed. In Emaré identity remains richly mysterious.

Sir Gowther

This text exists in only two manuscripts, both of the fifteenth century, MS Royal 17 B xliii and MS Advocates 19.3.1.[239] Laura Hibbard suggests that the story of Gowther was never well known, since both manuscripts are from the same region and there is no reference to

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[238] Nick Davis in his article 'Narrative Composition and the Spatial Memory' in, Narrative: From Malory to Motion Pictures, edited by Jeremy Hawthorn (London, 1985), pp. 25-40 (p. 30), links conceptions of "character" with ideas of memory and reading: 'to remember a person where memory itself is spatially conceived...is to recall different traits at different junctures ...The wish to conceive memory spatially goes with a sense that the mind's eye cannot actually take in at once, from a single position, everything that the vistas of memory have to offer.' That is, there is a certain correspondence between reading habits in a manuscript culture and the presentation of 'self' as exemplified above with Emaré.

[239] On these manuscripts see above pp. 73, 74, 78-79.

Gowther in contemporary literature.[240] On the other hand not many Romances are so referred to in contemporary writings. However, the sixteenth-century version of de Worde does not follow the Gowther Romance. The Gowther version of the Robert the Devil story in the two above mentioned manuscripts seems to be a unique abridgement of the story, as Chevalier Assigne is a unique version of the Swan Knight story.

Mehl remarks that both manuscripts treat Sir Gowther as a kind of legend. MS Advocates is mainly a collection of religious and didactic matter and Gowther, in MS Royal, ends 'Explicit Vita Sancti'.[241] Guddat-Figge, however, disagrees that Advocates is mainly a religious or didactic collection and calls attention to its 'very unusual mixture of texts' which she sees as 'edifying and...entertaining'.[242] MS Royal now contains Mandeville's Travels, Sir Gowther, St Patrick's Purgatory and The Vision of Tundale, but they were not bound together until, possibly, the eighteenth century.[243] Sir Gowther may have been bound with other manuscripts or it may, originally, have been a separate manuscript; we do not know. The opening stanza, extant only in MS Royal, claims that the text is a 'lufly' tale (30), but par-

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[240] Laura A. Hibbard, Medieval Romance in England: a Study of the Sources and Analogues of the Non-Cyclic Metrical Romances (New York, 1924), p. 51.

[241] Mehl, p.126. Also Mills, p. xix.

[242] Guddat-Figge, p. 129.

[243] M. C. Seymour, 'The English Manuscripts of Mandeville's Travels', The Transactions of the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society, 4, part 5 (1966), 169-210 (p. 185).

adoxically it is full of sorow and 'warcus wylde', a 'selcowth thyng' (30, 23-24,13). Although that which follows is an uneventful picture of marital bliss, immediately after there is an abrupt statement of malcontent:

> He chylde non geyt ne sche non bare:
> Ther joy began to tyne   (50-51).

In this text the answer follows easily, as the duke says:

> Y tro thou be sum baryn,
> Hit is gud that we twyn;
> Y do bot wast my tyme on the   (53-55).

Where the narrative suggests that the problem is joint, the Duke blames it on the Duchess. This accusation leads to the Duchess's prayer to have a child 'on what maner scho ne roghth' (63). The devils of the introduction become actualised. Here they take on physical shape and deceive the lady. The figure she takes to be her husband leaps up a 'felturd fende' (71). In Sir Gowther events quickly flip over into their opposites. Joy becomes grief, seemingly rational acts turn to chaos, husbands become fiends, fiends husbands, barrenness turns to fecundity. The transitions are abrupt and shocking.

The duchess may choose to call the fiend an angel, but her reversal of reality will not hold good and 'ei yode scho bownden with tho fende' (92). Gowther's parentage is physically half human and half devil; all that can be predicted is that in youth he will be 'full wylde' (74).

In his youth he is presented as an almost innocent murderer. He gets through nine wet nurses and tears his mother's breast, not as a deliberate piece of mischief but because it is in his nature. It is a

'fowle unhappe' (124) and as such is appalling - it is an unconscious expression of Gowther's fiendish self. His helplessness in the face of his make-up, the unknowing chaos of his existence is mirrored in the fact that his name is not mentioned until quite late in the narrative, at 1. 104.

His first venture in deliberate self-expression lies in the making of his 'fachon' which, like Emaré's coat, is closely identified with him. Such things act as an icon or index of identity and form a flexible means of mediating the changing nature of the self. Gowther forges his own 'fachon' and 'No nodur mon myght hit beyr' (138), its reference is essentially to him only. Emaré's coat existed before her and has a history of its own. At this stage in Gowther, the child is old enough to be out of his father's control and after having knighted him the duke dies out of sorrow for Gowther's evil deeds. Gowther then follows his fiendish father's rule; more than follows it as he becomes the law - a devilish law of misrule. He rapes and burns nuns to their death, terrorises the populace.

This section differs in MS Royal as compared to MS Advocates, with the former closer to the Robert the Devil tradition. In MS Royal Gowther does not make his 'fachon' but is given a sword by his father. Gowther refuses to be parted from this sword so it is still an index to his identity but it also connotes generalised human behaviour - 'normality'. In MS Advocates Gowther's 'fachon' has special reference to him alone and its meaning changes as its owner does. The Duke in MS Royal dies at this point, but it is not stated that this is because

of sorrow and the moment is not emphasised. Now Gowther is free in

MS Royal to rape and pillage but there is no play on his dual

paternity. The lines in MS Advocates:

> Erly and late, lowde and styll,
> He wold wyrke is fadur wyll   (172-73).

In Royal appear as:

> And tho that wold not werk his will,
> Erly and late, lowde and still,
> Full sore he wold hem bete   (169-71; and Mills, p. 215).

Breul does not privilege one manuscript over the other, as he values

a lost 'original', but remarks that MS Royal has been re-worked for

a 'besseres publikum' in the interests of clarity.[244] I would argue

that Gowther in MS Royal is more limited, in terms of 'self', in that

any destructive impulse is located in the figure of Gowther. In MS

Advocates the shock effect of exploiting the word 'father' and its

two referents widens our sense of what it is to be a 'self' constructed

out of the demonic and the human.[245] By consistently referring to

Gowther's demonic half, MS Advocates focuses more clearly on the

composition of the self and has a more imaginative approach than MS

Royal. Gowther's problem is bound up with his physical shape; his

very flesh in MS Advocates is imbued with fiendish matter.[246] In both

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[244] Breul, p. 5. I am grateful to Nick Davis for help with this point.

[245] This shock tactic occurs again at MS Advocates 1. 273 as Gowther
reveals his parentage to the Pope saying: 'My fadur hase
frenchypus f[one]. In MS Royal the line simply reads 'I trowe my
good dayes been done'.

[246] In MS Advocates the lay-out requires the audience to adjust to
quick changes of tone between works. Gowther is placed between
nonsense verse and a mock sermon, and Stans Puer ad Mensam and a
Life of Saint Katherine. See Guddat-Figge, pp. 127-128.

manuscripts, though, he is representative of a man's self and prey to angelic and devilish impulses, in continual danger of ricocheting from one to the other.

Gowther moves from demonic to angelic after being confronted at point blank range by the figure of an old Earl: 'thou.../art som fendys son, we weyn' (206). The shock effect of this sends Gowther off to his mother to demand information about his paternity. Gowther does not appear alienated by his violence; his sudden desire for knowledge stems initially from a desire to prove the Earl wrong and chop him into pieces. In a text where sudden reversals are not uncommon Gowther's recognition of his fiendishness comes as another moment of revelation. The external reader's expectations have been constantly turned inside out; now Gowther's are. Initially the external reader perceives him as destined for Hell: now he can aspire to Heaven. Gowther, at first unknowing, now drops into a consciousness of his actions, his nature and the need to re-fashion his self. If his very flesh is corrupt is this possible ? The answer appears to be 'yes' since Christ bought, with his body, the salvation of man's soul; through the body the soul can be released, and through the soul the body can be ruled. Gowther runs enthusiastically to Rome, taking his 'fachon' with him - not leaving any part of his self behind, but willing to redirect its meaning. In this the text differs from the self as presented in Emaré, where figures cannot control their selves, and Emaré's cloak images an elusiveness of the self. Sir Gowther is more comforting in that it allows Gowther a certain amount of control over his 'self'. In MS Royal Gowther simply departs for Rome but in

MS Advocates the moment is emotionally charged; both he and his mother weep, the moment is one of crisis and revelation and the weeping is a sign of interior change.

Arriving in Rome Gowther is shriven and receives a penance - he must not speak and can only eat the food of dogs - a direct contrast to the excess of his earlier life. The reaction of the next court he arrives at, to his appearance, is quite startling to the external reader. We have been used to seeing Gowther as half fiend, we are now forced into the recognition that he is also half human. In response to the question 'what is that ?' (335), the answer is unhesitatingly 'a mon/And that tho feyryst that ever Y sye' (336-7). The fiendish side of Gowther is beginning to evaporate. Gowther is not a freak occurrence but a universal possibility. The internal audience recognise this arbitrariness as they ponder the reason for Gowther's silence:

> And yett may happon thoro sum chans
> That it wer gyffon hym in penans   (343-4).

Gowther stays at this court fulfilling his penance in humility. The members of the court refer to him as a fool but they are only partially correct. He is a fool of God.

The Emperor in the text is a figure who represents faith in chance and grace. He constantly hopes his own dumb daughter will be able to speak one day, and recognises a possibility of change for Gowther. This faith in grace is realised for the external audience by Gowther's subsequent actions. Unprompted he prays for the wherewithal to help the Emperor in time of need, and such aid is granted. Gowther is given

horse and armour. Its colour sequence (black, red and white), sug-
gests Gowther's progress from sin through penance bought by Christ's
blood, though to purity. His 'fachon' is put to work in a new way and
signals the might of Christ in a just, sequential, battle rather than
the wild deeds of a fiend. Such energy as the young Gowther had was
directionless; only through the liberating constraint of penance can
he progress. The Emperor's dumb daughter forms an appealing image
of constraint as freedom. She is only seen in her bower or the castle
hall, but it is she who, watching the battle from a window, recognises
the truth. When Gowther is wounded in battle she falls from her tower
apparently dead but rises like a prophetess to proclaim the truth.
She reveals that it is Gowther who has saved the Emperor and fought
for him in battle and she pronounces his penance at an end. Gowther
now belongs to God. As 'Goddus chyld' (667) Gowther has succeeded
in re-working the fiend in his self. Gowther is able to re-direct
his self as well as receiving directives from God, his parents or
fiends.

Gowther immediately marries the damsel and moves back in to the social
fabric of the text with his penance complete and forgiveness granted.
Gowther is a channel for God's grace. He heals the sick, lets the
dumb speak and so is a regenerative force - a link between secular
and divine matters. Gowther has generated the impulse to perfection
in his self as well as being prompted by externals. The evil in the
narrative extends through and beyond Gowther; it is shocking in its
wildness but placed as refashionable. In the self it is capable of
being reduced and destroyed, and through this the self is strength-

ened. This seems to be a modulation of the relation between Saint

and hero. A saint usually receives his power from God where a 'hero',

such as Horn, possesses motivation for power. Gowther balances both

these claims as he has his own volition and guidance from God. More-

over Gowther's influence extends beyond his physical body and beyond

his death: his self is not contained by physicality or time. In a

sense Gowther was not present at the beginning of the text, or present

only as brute force. By the end of the text that unknowing brutality

is distilled into a much more powerful presence which is not contained

by the physical. His self is eternally available to all inside and

outside the narrative. In this way Sir Gowther is actually much more

comforting than either Chevalier Assigne or Emaré because of the way

it allows a definite re-fashioning. By the end of the narrative

Gowther's self becomes a possibility for all audiences of the text.

Sir Isumbras also deals with a penitential journey which re- struc-

tures identity, but one which is only semi-voluntary and designed to

re-construct an original goodness temporarily lost through pride.

Sir Isumbras

Sir Isumbras is a hybrid with no known source, but is 'clearly one

of the many derivatives of the legend of Saint Eustace'.[247] Mehl sees

the text in terms of a hero:

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[247] Mehl, p. 129.   The relation of these two legends has been thor-
oughly covered by Laurel Braswell, 'Sir Isumbras and the legend
of St Eustace', Med Studs, 27 (1965), 128-51 and it is the Romance
aspect of the story which is of primary interest here.   For a

the whole tale centres round the hero and every episode throws some light on his career.[248]

In this way, Mehl typifies a 'character-based' approach to Romance. This can lead him to criticise the text for its 'devotional' and 'didactic' matter since it 'detracts somewhat from the interest we take in the character of the hero'.[249] Yet, given its manuscript context and its mixed structure of legendary and Romance matter, what sort of hero is Isumbras ? Do we have to read the text in terms of a hero ? As there are so many manuscripts in existence we may have to posit as many 'heroes'. However, the Grays Inn, Naples and the Oxford versions are all fragments and are of limited use for identifying a particular view of the self. The major differences between the other manuscripts point to MS Cotton Caligula A ii as presenting a version of self which is particularly interesting.[250] MSS Ashmole, Thornton, Advocates and Caius are similar in that they do not have a 'universal' opening but refer to times past. They all possess an extra stanza where Isumbras and his wife bewail their fate after the loss of their children.[251] An extra couplet occurs in their conversation with the Saracens outlining their hunger and thirst. The lady, on being forcibly removed from her husband and witnessing his beating, bemoans

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detailed analysis of the Eustache legend see Thomas J. Heffernan, 'An Analysis of the Narrative Motifs in the legend of St Eustace', Med et Hum, ns. 6 (1975), 63-89.

[248] Mehl, p. 131.

[249] Mehl, pp. 133-134.

[250] For the differences between the manuscripts I have relied on Mill's edition and on the collation of all the manuscripts in Ysumbras edited by Gustav Schleich (Berlin, 1901).

[251] Schleich, p. 15; Mills, p. 209.

her fate. These texts emphasise the pathos in the story and heighten the pitiful state of husband and wife. In Thornton, Ashmole, Advocates and Cauis an angel leads the family into their last battle, emphasising the righteousness of the family. When reunited with their children the graciousness and wealth of the parents is stressed.[252] These shared factors indicate that these manuscripts form a separate group and MS Cotton Caligula deserves singular attention. Only two, MS Cotton Caligula and the incomplete MS Naples, have a 'universal' opening; and Cotton calls attention to its mixed generic nature by elaborating its closing stanzas where Isumbras and his family give thanks to God, and the narrative voice reminds the reader that this a tale of joy and woe intermingled.[253]

Isumbras in MS Cotton Caligula begins as a paragon of virtue. The text stresses his courtesy and generosity; five times in thirty lines his courtesy is mentioned, finally summed up as 'A ffull good man was he' (24). This overwhelming fullness is swept down by pride; this vice is not described as generated from within Isumbras but 'Into his herte a pryde was browghte' (37). This is like the description of Emaré's husband's journey to Rome; he did not decide to go as a 'character action' but 'a thowght yn hys herte come' (817). Isumbras is not central in this part of the text, outside forces are. God becomes central, becoming a source of action, he sends a bird to warn Isumbras to change his ways. The external reader is actually a split

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[252] Schleich, p. 61-63; Mills, p. 214.

[253] Schleich, p. 64; Mills, p. 214.

second ahead of Isumbras in realising that he, not the bird singing in the woods, is marginal. The bird is the voice of God and offers Isumbras the choice of misery in youth or in old age; a choice which is no choice, since our 'hero' must suffer at some stage. The bird presents the action in terms of memory; Isumbras must be made to remember himself since he has 'Foryete what [he] was,/For pryde of golde and fee' (50-51).

Just as the courtesy associated with Isumbras extended to those around him, so now does the misery. His possessions are stripped from him, so that his herdsmen and household are also left stricken. It is a mistake to separate Isumbras from the other figures in the text. He is not a containable 'character' or 'hero'; he is not the single focus but part of a pattern. Emphasis is also placed on the family which helps to spread the focus of the narrative. Hearing of the destruction of the household Isumbras says:

> If they on lyve be,
> My wyfe and my children thre,
> Yet were I nevur so fayne   (88-90),

and he has relinquished all attempt to dictate events himself 'For God bothe yeveth and taketh' (100). The action is both linear and spatial. The act of remembering the self is a realisation that the self is not always the centre of attention but a part of a pattern. Mirroring this, the text does not advance. It looks like a progressive narrative, like a journey, like gradual 'self discovery' on the part of a 'character-hero', but after line 138 it treads water. It re-states what we know already, Isumbras is a noble figure afflicted by pride who then becomes courteous again, he remembers himself as a

part of a web of relationships. Isumbras as 'character' does not develop after this point, yet we have 660 more lines of text. Sir Isumbras privileges the external reader; it is he who develops and who is re-educated, who goes through the process of remembering as he moves through the 660 lines which re-work the action of the first one hundred and thirty eight.

The figures in the text move along a narrative line begging their way to Jerusalem through two king's lands and six days. Reaching the Greek Sea 'Forther they myghte not go' (198). They have lost two of their children to wild beasts but the emphasis falls not on these markers of action but on the qualities of Isumbras; on his courtesy, his penitence, he is still 'good and hende' (175) and still humbly accepting God's will.

At this point the external reader is shown the illusory attractiveness of paganism. Isumbras and his family look over a cliff at the Saracen ships gliding past, glittering and beautifully made. It is a seductive world and one equatable to Christianity; the Saracens encourage Isumbras to relinquish his 'fals goddes' (260) and be dubbed knight by them. Isumbras is already a knight, and has been a pagan 'knight' in terms of his time of pride but as he declares 'nevur more' (268) will he be again. Through this section the external reader learns what Isumbras already has learnt: the insidious power of paganism, its alluring presentation of illusory wealth. In this way the audience is another focus of the narrative. The figures learn nothing after the first 138 lines; it is the reader who progresses, who encounters

what it is to be a Christian self - part of the Christian world. The reason for this is suggested by the words Isumbras uses to implore the Saracens for bread:

> For his love that dyed on rode,
> And with his blode us bowghte   (233-4).

The reference is to the process of redemption implying that man is in constant need of rescue, or remembering. As Dorothee Metlitzki remarks, the presence of Saracens in Romance can be a way of 'coping emotionally with a real threat', a threat both physical and external to this text in the form of historical fact, and a threat to the fabric of Christendom as a metaphysical reality.[254]

Next Isumbras is parted from his wife and the text foregrounds the quality of the love between them and the pity and confusion which results from their separation. The weeping Isumbras wanders through the land, follows a griffin carrying the gold given to him in exchange for his wife; loses his son and finally finds himself led back to the Greek Sea.

At this stage Isumbras thinks he has gone 'amysse'(384) but the loss of his family is not explicable in terms of 'character'. Isumbras has committed no fault to which we can attribute the subsequent loss of family. The narrative is imaginatively re-working what Isumbras lost when he was full of pride; what he 'forgot' then, we see lost now. The narrative is a re-creation for the external audience of

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[254] Dorothee Metlitzki, _The Matter of Araby in Medieval England_ (New Haven, 1977), p. 248.

Isumbras's earlier self with the result that Isumbras is adrift in his own story.

Isumbras next spends a year as a quarry man, and seven years seven months as a smith, but this is almost incidental to the fact that the Saracen King has not disappeared from the story. His intention was to 'walke so ferre and wyde' (209-210) and so he does:

    And all that sevenn yere so longe
    The hethen kynge with batell stronge
    Stryden Cristendome full wyde   (409-11).

Here Isumbras takes control of the action, but only for a short time; he forges his own armour and fights the heathens warring on the lands of a Christian King. He fights out of personal volition and as a milites Christi figure. The King offers to knight Isumbras just as the heathens offered, and this second offer is as unnecessary as the first and neither represent an end point. Isumbras relinquishes his armour to don a pilgrim's robe, which is presented as a self deter- mined action; 'Sir Isumbras bythowghte hym thare/That he wolde ther dwelle no mare' (490-91). The text also reminds us of his stability, he is still 'curteys and hende' (498), and his actions are determined by God since 'Criste hym thydur gan sende' (501). If anything, the text is positively anti-heroic. Isumbras has only briefly taken up what we might consider a heroic role and it forms a very short section of the text; within that section Isumbras describes himself not as a knight or 'hero', but as a 'smythes manne' (467).

The external audience learns that to remember the self is to remain the same no matter what role is taken on, just as Emaré or the

Chevalier have a type of integrity which cannot be destroyed; they are figures which possess a level of stability. Isumbras as pilgrim now crosses the Greek Sea and spends seven years in penance for his 'evell dedys' (516). This is surprising, since we have not witnessed anything of the sort, and Isumbras has frequently been described in terms of virtue. It is, though, in keeping with the idea that man is always in need of redemption, and it is a continuation of the horizontal plane on which Isumbras moves.

An angel then arrives to give Isumbras his pardon; his penance is complete and he can 'turne ayeyne' (531). But what does that mean ? The narrative levels seem to be out of step with one another. It means nothing to Isumbras as 'character', who 'wyste ... nevur what to do' (535). Secular and divine levels are out of step, not because the human has failed, but because it is human and not divine. Isumbras thus continues to exist as he has all along, as a humble Christian, whilst God who was once the main focus of the narrative, seems to recede from the narrative. It is by chance that Isumbras reaches his wife's castle, although he is unaware it is hers. The text stresses his pitiful condition, alone in the world, and the virtues of the lady, now a queen.The quality of the love they bear for one another and their generosity to fellow men forms the focus of the closing episodes.

This concluding section is much longer than we might expect; all that remains, logically is the restitution of the children, but Isumbras is not solely a linear narrative, not a biography with an obvious

stopping point but an imaginative re-creation of the Christian self.

A potential ending is ignored:

>   Now is syr Isumbras ryghte
>   Crowned kynge, that hardy knyghte,
>   Of many ryche londes thare.
>   Now is this kynge Syr Isumbras
>   In more welthe then evur he was,
>   And rekovereth hath all his care   (715-720),

and the narrative gathers new energy. Isumbras attempts to unite Christendom in order completely to destroy the Saracens, but the people fail him leaving only Isumbras to fight. His wife adopts the armour of a knight, to help him and together they ride against thirty thousand or more Saracens. The three children arrive on wild beasts and the Saracens defeated - all through the grace of God.

Far from being a 'hero' and the focus of the narrative, Isumbras is not truly memorable as a 'character' and is not meant to be. The text constructs a portrayal of the Christian self, sometimes in step with the divine and sometimes not. What is strikingly memorable in the text is its presentation of the virtues of a self: the love between Isumbras, his servants and family, the value of courtesy and generosity, the false allure of the Saracens. These things are experienced by the external reader, constructed through his reading of the text. As a biographic narrative the end of the text is thoroughly unsatisfying:

>   They lyved and dyed in gode entente,
>   Her sowles I wote to hevenn wente   (790-91).

Only in MS Cotton Caligula do the qualifying words 'I wote' appear, giving an edge of uncertainty to the figure's fate.[255] This is not a biography and this is the only statement that can be made about a self, since its true worth can only be known by God.

In conclusion, the four texts I have discussed all focus on the nature of the self and the different ways of constructing it and reading it. In this sense they form a group but all explore the question of the self in different ways: Chevalier Assigne privileges a type of oxymoron 'self'; Emaré has a repetitive structure which emphasises the different ways a self can be read; Sir Gowther offers the solution of re-fashioning the self and Sir Isumbras upholds the qualitative view of the self, the value of stability over action.

In the next Chapter I will look at some versions of the Life of Saint Margaret to see how the identity of a single saint differs in early and late versions of her Life. By examining the construction of 'self' in a religious genre I will also further explore the use of such narratives as presenting 'exemplary' selves.

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[255] Schleich, p. 64.

Saints' Lives form a parallel major vernacular genre to Romance. Like

Romances they were immensely popular,[256] and have frequently been

associated in literary criticism with Romances, although the exact

nature of the relationship remains un-fixed.[257] This Chapter will

examine some versions of the life of Saint Margaret from the point

of view that, the vernacular Saint's Life is not so much the re-

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[256] On the popularity of Romances and Saints Lives see, Jeanne S.
   Martin, 'Character as Emblem: Generic Transformations in the
   Middle English Saints Life', Mosaic, 8 (1974-75), 47-60; Rosemary
   Woolf, 'Saint's Lives' in, Continuations and Beginnings, edited
   by Eric Gerald Stanley (London, 1966), pp. 37-66; E. Catherine
   Dunn, 'The Saint's Legend as History and as Poetry: An Appeal to
   Chaucer', American Benedictine Review, 27 (1976), 357-78.

[257] For suggested links see Dunn p. 362; Woolf, p. 40; Paul Strohm,
   '"Passioun", "Lyf", "Miracle", "Legende": Some Generic Terms in
   Middle English Hagiographical Narrative', Chaucer Review, 10
   (1975-76), 62-75 and 154-171;   Evelyn Birge Vitz, '"La Vie de
   Saint Alexis": Narrative Analysis and the Quest for the Sacred
   Subject', PMLA, 93 (1978), 396-408; S. C. Aston, 'The Saint in
   Medieval Literature', MLR, 65 (1970), xxv-xvlii; William W. Heist,
   'Irish Saint's Lives, Romance and Cultural History', Med et Hum,
   ns 6 (1975), 25-40; Valerie M. Lagorio, 'The "Joseph of
   Arimathie": English Hagiography in Transition', Med et Hum, ns 6
   (1975), 91-101.   Peter F. Dembowski, 'Literary problems of
   Hagiography in Old French', Med et Hum, ns 7 (1976), 117-130 (p.
   120) believes Lives influenced other genres and changed 'pro-
   foundly' the 'conception of the hero' who became hagiographised;
   and as he remarks, pilgrims prayed on the tomb of Oliver and
   Roland, until the early years of the sixteenth century. David
   N. Klausner, 'Didacticism and Drama in Guy of Warwick', Med et
   Hum, ns 6 (1975), 103-119 (p.103); Derek Pearsall,'John Capgrave's
   "Life of Saint Katherine" and Popular Romance Style', Med et
   Hum, ns 6 (1975), 121-137 (p.121).   Perhaps the most striking
   instance of a link between Romance and Legend is that between
   Isumbras and the Legend of St Eustace. For a detailed examination
   of this see, Laurel Braswell, 'Sir Isumbras and the Legend of
   Saint Eustace', Med Studs, 27 (1965), 128-151.

flection of the courtly Romance as its parallel, its counterpart, and its counterblast.'[258] Saints Lives are interesting both in their own right and in relation to Romance. In Chapter Two I have discussed Romances with an exemplary aspect. This Chapter will further examine the construction and use of 'self' in some versions of the Life of Saint Margaret.

A further reason for looking at Saint's Lives, is that they frequently occur in the same manuscripts as the Romances I discuss,[259] and were printed in the sixteenth century.[260] However, I have chosen to focus, primarily, on the Early Middle English Life of Margaret and on the version of her life by Osbert Bokenham, and the relation of both of these texts to Latin sources.[261] Margaret was a popular

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[258] Aston, p. xxxix.

[259] For a list of manuscripts and contents see Appendix.

[260] Helen C. White, <u>Tudor Books of Saints and Martyrs</u> (Madison, 1963), pp.31-34 notes that Caxton's 1483 edition of the <u>Legenda Aurea</u> was wide-spread, and there is a faint possibility he referred to Bokenham's <u>Legends</u> in his translation. More importantly Caxton added Lives of thirteen Biblical figures even though the prohibition of 1408 forbidding the circulation of the Bible in English was still in force. When re-printed by de Worde in 1498 these Lives appear at the front of the text, as they do in his editions of 1512 and 1527 and in Julian Notary's edition of 1503. White sees this as 'puzzling' but may, perhaps, be accounted for in terms of a growing need to provide authentication for the Lives when transferred from a manuscript to a print culture. De Worde also printed a <u>Legenda Aurea</u>, in 1493. Other Lives printed by de Worde include a <u>Specculum Vitae Christi</u> 1494, <u>Nova Legenda Anglia</u> 1516 and 1519; all of these were folio editions. Other Lives in 4to were <u>Life of Jerome</u> undated, <u>Life of Saint Gregory's Mother</u> 1515, <u>Life of St Edward</u> 1533, <u>Life of Hildebrande</u> 1533 and 1534, and a <u>Life of St Brandon</u> undated.

[261] I am grateful for the opportunity of consulting the new edition of the Early Middle English Margaret, (forthcoming O.U.P.) edited by Bella Millett and Jocelyn Price; however, as the most widely

saint,[262] and the Early Middle English version[263] forms an example
of a sophisticated early vernacular Life, whilst Bokenham belongs to
a later development of the genre in English. Contemporaneous with
Bokenham is the version of Margaret's life extant in MS Asmole 61,
and this forms a useful bridge between the Romances of Chapter Two
and the Saint's Lives discussed in this chapter.[264] In its use of
Romance formuli the opening of the Life in MS Ashmole 61 cues the
audience to read Margaret in a similar way to that which one might
read the Romance of a virtuous heroine, such as Emaré:

> Old & ȝonge, þat here be,
> Lystyns a whyle vnto me   (1-2).

The audience is drawn in to a tale of a lady 'feyre & suete' (5), like
Emaré, Margaret is alienated through her tenacious grip on Christian
principles. The difference is that Margaret is completely isolated
through existing in a heathen environment. The opening of the text
makes no mention of an over-arching Christian universe or of a
watchful God. Margaret's father recalls Artyus in that although
'nobull' (7, 18), he is blind to his daughter's worth; he is guilty,
however, of more extreme action than Artyus, as he is responsible
for ordering the murder of Margaret as soon as she is born. This

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available text at time of writing, I use, throughout, Seinte
Marherete þe Meiden ant Martyr, edited by Frances M. Mack, EETS
(London, 1934, repr. 1958) and Osbert Bokenham's The Legendys of
Hooly Wummen, edited by M. S. Serjeantson, EETS (London, 1938).

[262] A useful and thorough survey of her popularity, from the Greek
to the sixteenth century is to be found in Frederick Spencer, 'The
Legend of Saint Margaret', MLN, 4 (1889), 197-201 and, 5 (1890),
71-75, 107-111.

[263] Henceforth EME

[264] MS Ashmole 61 is discussed in Chapter Two pp. 76-77

brutal attempt at cutting short the existence of Margaret as a
christian (since it is prophesied that she will be such) is thwarted
by her mother who sends her to the security of a christian nurse.
Margaret's early history thus resembles that of Romance heroines; not
only Emaré but the children of Lai Le Freine and the young Degaré.The
question of her future identity, however, does not follow a Romance
pattern but outlines her a 'crystys meyden of heuyne' (54).

This version of the Margaret legend derives from the same Latin source
as the early Middle English and Bokenham, but it is quite unlike ei-
ther of those versions.[265] The version of Margaret's life as pre-
served in the Auchinleck manuscript belongs to the same group as that
in MS Ashmole 61, but it offers a quite different approach. In the
Auchinleck version, Margaret's father is far more wicked than in MS
Ashmole.   He is condemned as 'wicked' (11), 'vnstable' (7) and
'feble...[in]...hert' (7), but Margaret 'þe þou3htes of hir hert
wald...nou3t forlete' (60). Unlike MS Ashmole 61, MS Auchinleck dos
not present the Life in terms of Romance, but much more austerely:

> All þat ben in dedly sinne and þenk with merci to mete,
> Leue in Crist þat 3aue 3ou witt 3our sinnes forto bete.
> Listen and 3e schul here telle wiþ wordes faire and swete
> þe vie of on maiden, men clepeþ seyn Mergre(te).   (1-4).

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[265] Gordon Hall Gerould, 'A New text of the Passio S. Margaritae with
Some Account of its Latin and English Relations', PMLA, 39 (1924),
525-56, Gerould also cautions (p. 555), that source relations
are extremely complex and handicapped by the unavailability of
edited texts. The version in MS Ashmole 61 belongs to the Meidan
Maregrete group according to Mack, p. xxxiii which was more
'widely current' than that of the Early Middle English. Meidan
Maregrete occurs in some of the other Manuscripts I discuss: The
Auchinleck Manuscript and MS Rawlinson 34. MS Cambridge Ff II
38 contains a prose Life according to Spencer, p. 200 but this
remains inedited, not even figuring in Burke-Severs Manual.

As I remarked in Chapter Two, MS Ashmole 61 shows evidence of consistent editing; I suggest the figure of Margaret may have been shaped so as to appeal to an audience familiar with Romances. Once she has been established in a way evocative of (although different from) Romance heroines, she then functions to dispense clear theological dicta. She is more 'judgmental' than versions of her self in the Early Middle English and Bokenham. Refusing to marry her heathen persecutor she rejects all men: 'I wyll haue none erthly mane' (143). Later, after torture, the crowd beg her to save herself and her reply is more judgmental than her response in the other two Lives I shall discuss:

Bot go 3our wey...me fro !
Alle þat forecme repente
And se me haue þis turment,
As þei thinke both gode & euylle,
They schall be quyte after þer wylle   (243-47).

Margaret explains, to both the external audience and to Olibrius, that her essential self does not reside in her body. Her steadfastness and rejection of the earthly and physical is rewarded by a gift from God of a cross and a promise that she will be rewarded in heaven. This episode does not occur in the source. The vision Margaret is vouchsafed, of a green dragon who threatens to blind her, is a clear indication of the superiority of christian might as compared to heathen. Olibrius boasted that he would 'blind' Margaret (252-56), but Christ can give Margaret sight in a way which is more than visual since it is sight of a concept of evil, and evil which she is able to vanquish. Evil is battered into submission by the cross, not Margaret herself, and the dragon's brother is forced to admit he came

to 'spyll [Margaret's] wytte & make [her] wode to be' (360).[266]

Olibrius, in MS Ashmole 61., is seen to be a necromancer, and to be behind the dragon's persecution of christian people. Margaret's cross continues to help her and renders all her tortures harmless. Apocalyptic thunder and lightning follow her to her death and assumption to heaven. Her beatification is witnessed not only by by the converted internal audience but also by the Archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, who take her soul to heaven.

It seems to me that the version of Margaret's life as preserved in MS Ashmole 61 has been adapted, and forms, for the purposes of this thesis, a bridge between Romance and Saint's Legend. It also contains, as I have remarked, differences from the version found in MS Auchinleck. Thus, one saint, one figure, can have various manifestations of 'self'. I will now look in detail at the Life of Margaret as found in the Early Middle English version and in Bokenham as they represent two very different approaches to a single saint's life.

The difference between these two versions of the Life of Saint Margaret is strikingly instanced by the ways in which the texts open; Bokenham prefaces the Legendys[267] with an authorial prologue adver-

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[266] In MS Auchinleck Margaret is not 'blinded' by Olibrius. The dragon's brother is not a dragon himself but is called 'Belgys'. Belgys does not identify Olibrius as a necromancer, instead Olibrius calls Margaret a 'witch' (338). MS Auchinleck does not elaborate Margaret's death as MS Asmole 61 does.

[267] Composed between 1443 and 1447, extant in only one manuscript - Arundel 327, and probably composed in the order in which we have them. See Serjeantson, p. xxiv and p. xix.

tising the whole book and its aims. This prologue shows Bokenham's

awareness of the importance of the author and of literary strategies.

He explicitly uses and foregrounds the Aristotelian or Scholastic

prologue, thereby demonstrating authorial expertise.[268] Bokenham is

as much a subject of the text as the Saint. The author as narrator

looks forward to the interventionary role of printers, which I discuss

in Chapter Four. Bokenham's presence in the Life is quite striking

if we compare it to his contemporary, Lydgate's, Life. Lydgate's Life

of Margaret does not possess the extra 'prologue' with which Bokenham

prefaces his work; it does possess a 'pearl prologue' in which Lydgate

utilises the modesty topos and entreats Margaret to infuse his pen

with 'aureate lycoure' so that he may write a fitting life for his

patron, the Lady Marsh.[269] This placing of the author in the text

bears a similarity to Bokenham but where Lydgate uses it as merely

an opening device, Bokenham's use is pronounced and continuous. Both

writers omit to mention the witness figure, Theotimus, who is both

witness and narrator in the Latin; but where Bokenham foregrounds

the author's role in the text, Lydgate replaces Theotimus with the

reported words of 'An holy seynt' (498). Bokenham's insistence on

the figure of the author is consistent with his other surviving work,

the Mappula Angliae, in which he lists other of his works, refers to

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[268] This type of Prologue, once popular with theologians, in the
thirteenth and fourteenth centuries received more general ap-
plication, see A. J. Minnis, 'The Influence of Academic Prologues
on the Prologues and Literary Attitudes of Late-Medieval English
Writers', Med Studs, XLIII (1981), 342-83.

[269] Lydgate's 'Life' is to be found in Altenglische Legenden, edited
by C. Horstmann (Heilbronn, 1881), pp. 446-453. The quotation
above is from 1. 56.

himself and puts his name into the chapter headings.[270] His refusal

to give his name in the Life of Margaret is a standard modesty topos,

illustrative of a fashion in England,[271] and through a later dis-

claimer:

> The forme of procedyng artificyal
> Is in no wyse ner poetycal
> After the scole of the crafty clerk
> Galfryd of Ynglond   (83-86).

Bokenham compares himself to Chaucer, as exemplifying a great English

author, and both himself and Chaucer to Classical authority.[272]

Bokenham's prologue is highly rhetorical and self-conscious and it

contrasts enormously with the relative anonymity of the EME version

whose opening appeals to a timeless spiritual world rather than to a

linear literary tradition. The EME has no prologue as such but opens

with the ritualistic sign of the cross, followed by an account of the

redemption; a structured map of creation which places man within it.

In its immediate creation of a shared, familiar world which the reader

can enter, it recalls the openings of the Romances I have already

discussed in Chapter Two.

It may be that this difference is accountable for in terms of audi-

ence. Bokenham was writing for specific local, aristocratic landed

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[270] Serjeantson, pp. xvi-xvii.

[271] Hope Emily Allen, 'The Manual des Pechiez and the Scholastic
Prologue', Romanic Review, 8 (1917), 434-52.

[272] For Chaucer's use of such a prologue see Barbara Nolan, '"A Poet
Ther was": Chaucer's Voices in the General Prologue to the
Canterbury Tales', PMLA, 101 (1986), 154-169. The prologue
functions 'above all' to present the poet but in Chaucer's case
a series of voices preserve his authority as 'elusive' and
emphasise a sense of ambiguity rather than truth.

families.[273] whilst the EME was probably aimed at anchoresses.[274]
Bokenham's audience was primarily secular and the EME, spiritual.
This distinction is, however, too sharp since aristocratic families
peopled the church and anchoresses were still alive to the secular
world.[275] In any case it is not clear that anchoressess formed the
only audience for the Ancrene Wisse[276] Further, a copy of Bokenham's
Margaret was presented to a convent of nuns.[277]

The openings of the texts and their, broadly, different audience
indicate the difference in slant between the two Lives and this be-
comes further apparent during a detailed consideration of the ver-
sions. I have split the Lives up into episodes since, in general

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[273] Serjeantson gives a full account of these patrons, pp. xx-xxi.
See also Samuel Moore, 'Patrons of Letters in Norfolk and Suffolk
c. 1450', PMLA, 27 (1912), 188-207; 28 (1913), 79-105. Catherine
Batt, '"These Olde Appreved Stories of Holynesse" : Literary
Inventiveness in the Hagiographic Text" unpublished MA
(Liverpool, 1983), pp. vi-vii suggests that as the hagiographic
text moved into the secular sphere in the fifteenth century, in-
terest shifted. Bokenham presents his Katherine in the Legendys
as a young aristocrat because ' his interest is directed princi-
pally towards the needs of his patrons, the social function of
the literary work with which he is engaged'.

[274] E. J. Dobson, The Origins of the Ancrene Wisse (Oxford, 1976) pp.
167-169. It occurs in two manuscripts: Bodley 34 and Royal 17 A
xxvii, both of which also contain the lives of Katherine and
Juliana and Sawles Warde, c 1230. See Serjeantson, pp. xii-xxi.
For a discussion of Sawles Warde see (my) Chapter One, pp. 44-50.

[275] For a vivid account of the way in which the whole of creation was
to be found in the anchoress in her cell see Linda Georgianna,
The Solitary Self: Individuality in the "Ancrene Wisse"
(Cambridge, Mass, 1981).

[276] Dobson, pp. 252-9.

[277] Serjeantson, p. xx relies on the evidence in the text to note that
the Legendys were given to a convent as a memorial for Thomas
Burgh and his sister Beatrice. See Legendys 11. 10618 to end.

outline, the plot of the Life remains constant. What we might see as' Romance' elements were present even in the earliest versions [278] and as Charles W. Jones remarks, Lives tend to foreground convention.[279] As well as being a structural point this is a reflection of a particular view of the self:

> Some ask whether we should say the 'life' of the saints or the 'lives', [it is] clear that it is better to talk about the 'life' of the Fathers than the 'lives', because, though there may be some difference in their merits and virtues, yet the life of one body nourished them all in the world.[280]

All saints share the one life. Agnellus of Ravenna makes this even clearer:

> Where I could not uncover a story or determine what kind of life they the Bishops of Ravenna led...I have...made up a life for them. And I believe no deception is involved, for they were chaste and almsgiving preachers and procurers of men's souls for God.[281]

A Saint is interesting, for Agnellus, as Saint, not as an individual or a 'character'. In a sense all Saints are the same for:

> A medieval hagiographer wrote the life of a saint, not to tell his readers anything about the subject's personality or individuality, but rather to demonstrate how the saint exhibited those universal characteristics of sanctity common to all saints of all times.[282]

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[278] Spencer, p. 198.

[279] Charles W. Jones, Saints Lives and Chronicles in Early England, (Ithaca, 1947), p. 60.

[280] Gregory of Tours quoted in Jones, p. 62.

[281] Agnellus of Ravenna quoted in Jones, p. 63.

[282] Patrick J. Geary, Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages (Princeton, 1978), p. 10.

How does this manifest itself in the Early Middle English and in Bokenham's versions of the Life of Margaret?

The Early Middle English Life of St Margaret and its Latin Source.[283]

THE OPENING

The EME has no formal prologue, as I have already mentioned, and this is a change from the Latin. The initial section of the _vita_ is fairly brisk, providing the reader with a picture of chaos before the resurrections and victorious christianity afterwards. The _vita_ is a tribute to victory and is dedicated specifically to virgins. The EME, having dispensed with a prologue, elaborates the initial setting up of the text. The earth is a 'wake worlt' (2/8) where christians must fight the heathens external to them _and_ the devil in their own flesh. Whilst depicting the difficulties facing a christian, the text also clearly shows the reason for the fight - victorious martyrs transform pain and misery into eternal bliss. This section is a drawing out of the initial sign of the cross and the rest of the Life amplifies and extends the issues raised in this, the strong background against

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[283] According to Mack, p.xxiv the EME is an adaptation of a particular form of the Latin, the Mombritius version. Gordon Hall Gerould, 'A New Text of the "Passio s. Margaritae" with some account of its Latin and English Relations', PMLA, 39 (1924), 525-56 (p.551), warns 'we have not at hand any text from which the Middle English prose version could possibly be derived' since Mombritius texts vary between themselves. The mombritius version printed in Mack's edition is a collation and for this reason I use it as a basis for comparison. I am grateful to Edward Burns for help with translating the Latin sources quoted in this chapter.

which the reader may view Margaret. The EME subtly shifts the ways
in which the self can be perceived in the text. The initial weak world
of misery, where christians die in numbers, gives way to the isolation
of the christian soul, and then is subsumed in the power of the Trinity
and the resurrection imaged by the sign of the cross, which re-
directs the reader's valuation of solitariness. The christian is not
alone, but living in a community of the blessed. Margaret, as part
of this community, will defeat the devil external to her and the po-
tential devil in the self. That is, she will recognise the possi-
bility of temptation whilst not succumbing to it.[284] In the last phase
of this section the reader is asked to become a part of the text.
The story, like the sign of the cross, is a thing to be used and to
enter into. In commemorating Margaret the reader can find a way into
the text and a route to joining the community of the blessed. Although
virginity is praised as the highest state, the text offers itself to
widows and the married as well, implying that chastity is a state of
mind as well as of body; it is a mental space. The EME offers a wider
and more elaborate map for plotting the self than the Latin _vita_, it
opens up an area to inhabit as well as being an authoritative pattern
for an audience to appreciate and applaud.

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[284] Woolf, p. 55 notes the possibility that external temptations carry
    internal force. A psychologically appropriate tempter (internal)
    can be represented as the work of a devil (external).

MARGARET'S EARLY LIFE All we are given of the saint's early life is, 'hire flesliche feder Theodosie hehte, of þet heþene folc patriache & prince' (4/16-17). This brief family reference is gradually replaced by a spiritual family. Her larger identity is, paradoxically, achieved by a voluntary relinquishing of identity - 'hire wil & here werc' (4/27), intent, deed and will are all given to God. This serves not to dissolve her but to strengthen her presence in the text; this is imaged by the widening and intensifying community which gathers through love. God loves Margaret, her nurse loves Margaret, everyone who sees her loves her and in return Margaret loves God, and by extension all the virtuous. Again, at this point the Latin is much briefer.

PRESENTATION OF THE PERSECUTOR

Olibrius is immediately presented as 'þe uendes an foster' (6/6), diligent and decisive in his anti-christian activities. We are never given any more of Olibrius than is necessary for his role as persecutor and he functions mainly to sharpen the focus on Margaret. His lust for the saint's body contrastiveley highlights the world of love in which the saint lives; Margaret can recognise the possibility of pleasure in lust but can also see its limitations in the face of love of, and by, God. She rejects both the pain and the pleasure of this world and cannot be persuaded to accept Olibrius:

    Wið wede...
    Ne wið wune...ne wiðnan worldlich þing'   (10/17-19).

She moves beyond his limited logic to then perceive that the threat he poses is greater than his designs on her body; it is a threat to

all she has consecrated to God and signified by her virginity. Virginity is more than a physical state, it signifies the self's mental and emotional constitution.[285] Margaret is more than a role or a 'character', she constitutes in her self a whole world of experience. For Olibrius Margaret can only be a free woman or a slave, mutually exclusive categories which Margaret's inclusive world overrides as she is 'Goddes þewe' (8/23). Olibrius' world is much narrower, it may have many gods but it is hopelessly ineffectual. The most powerful temptation Olibrius can offer Margaret is the mis-use by her of her own virtue, asking her to turn in on herself her pity and mercy and give way to his desires. Nothing, however, can turn Margaret back from ' þe wei þet [she has]bigunne to ganne' (10/19-20). Her steadfastness contrasts with Olibrius' increasing fury. He becomes irrational in his attempts to destroy her: his sword might 'forswelten' her but it cannot 'forswolhen' (12/1) her, however much he might wish it could. His metaphors of devouring and eating the saint cue the reader to recall the Mass, where the supplicants do achieve the 'impossibility' of consuming Christ's body. The two systems, based on lust and love respectively, are utterly opposed and neither here nor later when the crowd entreat the tortured girl to have pity on herself :[286] does Margaret conflate the two systems.

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[285] For studies of the meaning of virginity in medieval writing see, Jocelyn Price, 'The Liflade of Seinte Iuliene and Hagiographic Convention', Med et Hum, 16 (1986), forthcoming. John Bugge, Virginitas: an Essay in the History of a Medieval Ideal (The Hague, 1975).

[286] 'Weila! Wummon, hwuch wlite þu leoset & forletest for þi misbileaue - þe reue is reowliche wrað & wule iwis fordo þe; ah luue nu & lef him & tu schalt, wummone meast wunne & weole wealden' (14/15-18).

Olibrius' desire to devour her pre-figures the dragon, which later also tries to devour the saint, and fails.

The Latin contains the bones of the narrative but is much briefer. It is structured event by event without achieving the cumulative effect of the EME. In the EME the lust Olibrius feels for the saint is both a contrast to and an extension of the love she inspires in others. It is not surprising that he is attracted to her, but his lust falls on a lower level than the christian love of which Margaret is a part. The EME constantly re-works its themes whilst the Latin is, generally, less linguistically self-referential.[287] Margaret's speech in the vita concentrates on the baseness of her oppressors without presenting us with an evocative account of the extent and worth of virginity as a state of being. When Olibrius, in the Latin, shuts the saint in prison the reader has no extensive sense of what it is to be a virgin saint, only that it is virtuous.

THE TORTURES The EME possesses a horrifying sequence of physical tortures but the battle between the saint and the persecutors goes beyond the physical and becomes a battle of vice and virtue. Where the vita is structured on a 'he said', 'she said', 'he replied' formal blocking, the EME presents strong and flexible dialogue. Margaret, stripped, beaten and streaming with blood, summons her courage to ask God for help which is not simply physical; asking for her 'wit' and

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[287] This capacity for re-working the source is noted by Batt, p. 29 who says of Katherine 'A prime strength in the English re-working of the Latin passio is the way in which the imagery reflects and signals spiritual developments within the text'.

'wil' (12/22-23)to be sustained against harm and pleasure. Where

Olibrius foolishly lusts after her physical frame and childishly wants

to destroy it, Margaret's true beauty resides beyond her body. Her

body carries within it and expresses beyond herself her 'deore

ʒimstan...blostme brihtest in bodi' (6/28-30). The EME goes beyond

the Latin, in seeing the saint's body as part of her self and as part

of God's creation; even if her body is ripped to shreds she will still

live in another form. Margaret's declaration of inaccessibility in-

furiates Olibrius so much that he is 'for-neh ut of his wite' (16/2)

whilst she retains her self through wit and will. Yet it is clear that

this power comes from beyond her, from God who saves her ' wit

&...wisdom from unwitlesse wiht' (20/12-13). In the Latin there is

no corresponding set of references to wit and will, although Margaret

does ask for her 'sensus' (133/15) to be protected. Of the thirteen

references to 'will' in the EME only two are in the Latin.[288] As

Margaret Hurley points out, this insistence on 'will' is important

and there is sense in which it means 'desire' as well as intellectual

choice.[289] The insistence on Margaret's 'will' extends the complex

relationship between her value system and that of Olibrius. His de-

sire, his will, is limited and possessive where hers is extensive.

Olibrius concentrates on Margaret's body and 'fleisch' is a more

frequent term in this Life than in either Katherine's or Juliana's,

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[288] Margaret Hurley, 'The "Katherine"-Group: Manipulation of Conven-
tion in Conventional Narrative', Unpublished Phd. (Syracuse,
1974), p. 97.

[289] Hurley, p. 97 sees the Katherine group as aiming to 'procure an
active commitment springing from emotional assent..rather than
from intellectual conviction'; I would rather suggest that these
categories are not necessarily exclusive.

as is 'bodi'.[290] Margarete's tortures are extended from the Latin.[291] This extensive re-working of the source throughout the EME shows both how seductive the world of paganism can be, and how insidious as a parallel system, and how utterly worthless it is when viewed from the perspective of Christianity.

THE DRAGON[292]

The _vita_ and the EME run parallel as the saint faces the dragon but the latter continues to stress Margaret as God's 'hondiwerk' (22/29). God made her and she re-creates him with her constancy. At this point the saint and God blur into one another and Margaret functions, in part, as emblematic of virtue.[293] The blurring of any distinct line between the saint and God is gestured as Margaret crosses herself, 'Ah o þin blisfule nome ich blesci me nuðe' (24/7).[294] A familiar gesture, it draws the reader into the text and towards the matter of

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[290] Hurley, p. 200 'Fleisch'and its derivatives alliterate ten times in Margaret, only five in Katherine and three in Juliana; 'bodi' alliterates fifteen times in Margaret and only five in both Katherine and Juliana.

[291] Cecily Clark, 'Early Middle English Prose: Three Essays in Stylistics', Essays in Criticism, 18 (1968), 361-82 (p. 365).

[292] For a full account of the complexity of the EME handling of this episode see Jocelyn Price,'The Virgin and the Dragon: The Demonology of "Seinte Margarete"', Leeds Studies in English, ns XVI (1985), 337-357.

[293] For a discussion of the 'emblematic' nature of saints see Martin, who argues that a saint can be emblematic of truth rather than exemplary.

[294] Hurley, pp. 210-2 notes gesture is more important in the EME than the Latin.

the text; it is an inclusive moment. In the vita the words 'signaculam' 'signo' and 'consignavit', as Margaret signs and seals herself to God and her crossing of herself as at (133/1), are demarcatory gestures separating herself from Olibrius; they are excluding gestures. Whilst both saints defeat their dragon, the EME stresses that Margaret's strength comes from God, whilst in the Latin the saint has power located in her. Paradoxically this limits her as a strong saint, whilst the EME Margaret has a larger frame of reference. Later, Margaret will give to the demon another powerful description of herself as belonging to God and ultimately beyond torture:

> Ah hwet-se ich am & hwuch-se ich am, þurh godes grace ich hit
> am, wil-ȝeoue unoseruet, þet he haueð me iȝettet, for to ȝelde
> hit him seoluen (38/14-16).

Anything done to her body will serve to bring her nearer to Christ and at the same time manifest his presence on earth. The stress falls on the saint's relation to this world, and the saint as part of it, as both physical and spiritual; just as in Iuliene interest in the way the saint is restored physically as 'fisch-hal' (570) signifies the christian faith which makes it possible.[295]

THE BLACK DEMON

The EME suddenly reverses it technique here and concentrates on Margaret as an individual physical being. Margaret demands that the

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[295] Batt, p. 18 also notes that in Katherine interest focuses on the wheel which Katherine is bound to as a symbol of destructive force.

demon tormenting her should stop annoying her, stop stinking next to her, and then refrain from troubling God's chosen ones, with each demand re-enforced by a hefty stomp on his neck. Although I have referred to Margaret as emblematic she is also very physically present in her narrative. She is constructed in two ways: the more she points beyond herself to the power of God, the more clearly she comes into focus, as in the earlier scenes with Olibrius; the more she points to herself, as here, the more aware we are of another subject of the text - God.

INTERROGATION OF THE DEMON

Margaret's physical encounter with the demon leads to an expanded portrayal of the workings of sin on and in a self. At the same time the demon narrates his wickedness, he is trying to corrupt Margaret, and the external reader is a step behind her in discovering this. Only her emphatic 'þu fikest' (30/31) allows the reader to perceive the demon's potentially corrupting flattery. What in the Latin is a straightforward account of sin becomes, in the EME, an instance of the pollution of sin enacting itself. The demon has to act very little to corrupt humans. He leaves them to generate sin themselves, internally. The 'unwarre heorte' (32/16) can be warped through a weakening of the will.[296] To fight a demon is to undertake a fiercely intense battle:

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[296] Such warping occurs, for example in Sir Gowther and comparable Romances; see (my) Chapter Two, p. 91.

3ef ha esdtonden wulleð mine unwreste wrenches & mine swikele swenges, wreastlin ha moten & wiðern wið ham seoluen. (32/25-27)

The struggle is internal and external, and physical as well as mental; both body and mind must be controlled. This struggle culminates in the exhortation to 'þenchen...þenchen...þenchen...' (34/5,18,22), but the substance of the thought includes matters of the body as well as of the mind. The EME incorporates a sense of humour when at the close of the section it is a thoroughly disgusted Margaret who hurls her demon back down to Hell.

THE SECOND ROUND OF TORTURES

The Latin and the EME retain the same two tortures, burning and drowning, but the EME elaborates on elements present but not developed in the vita. Margaret is stronger since her successful fight with the dragon and his brother demon, she wishes to be saved from her persecutors as an example to her internal audience. The encounter with the dragon and demon help her to experience and defeat sin, and she now wants to pass on her knowledge to others. She survives her tortures and receives a crown of eternal life. Olibrius' frenzied declaration of the death sentence is hollow; even now, Margaret is beyond his jurisdiction. No matter how he tries to tear her apart she simply comes into sharper focus. Margaret, even after death, becomes a channel for God's grace to become manifest on earth. Her powers extend beyond her and, as when she was alive at the beginning of the narrative, they spread and intensify. Olibrius' initial bribe to Margaret is re-worked in the EME in spiritual terms:

Cum nu, for ich kepe þe, brud, to þi brudgume. Cum leof, to
þi lif, for ich copni þi cume: brihtest bur abitd te...tu schalt
wealde wið me al þet ich i wald ah   (48/28-32).

Christ calls his bride to him offering her what she has dimly shared
on earth and which in heaven is fully realised. This re-working de-
liberately calls attention to the extensive nature of Margaret's self,
and the subtle ways in which the presentation of that self has been
modulated in the whole of the text. In the _vita_ the reference to the
bride of Christ motif occurs much earlier; the re-working seems to
deliberately ask the reader to gather up the whole Life as artifact.
Joyfully Margaret, approaching complete union with Christ, exhorts
her internal audience to love themselves. If they love themselves
they will love her and be able to use her as a channel for Christ's
grace on earth. This is strikingly unlike the Latin in tone, where
Margaret deems it her right to be commemorated and demands that she
be remembered. The EME Margaret can now discard her body as her soul
ascends to Heaven, but it remains physically valuable on earth as a
healing relic. Looked after by the witness to the Life, Theotimus,
it commemorates her experience as do the various written lives which
Theotimus dispatches around the world. The Life the reader has before
him or is listening to is, presumably, one such, and this action of
Theotimus acts as another way in which the reader enters into the
story of the Saint; the reader/audience participates in the Life and
its concerns rather than perceiving it as cut off from him as an au-
thoritative pattern to emulate or applaud. The narrative is to be
used, to be moved in. The process of bringing the reader into the text
began with the opening sign of the cross and continues until the
closing prayer.

The EME is a sophisticated construction of a christian self, balancing the claims of the physical and the non-physical, the idea and ideal of abstract virtue and a fully human realisation of virtue in the figure of Margaret. The Saint successfully mediates between the physical and spiritual worlds, the complex claims out of which a self can be built. Emblematic of sanctity she is also fully human in her gradual development towards finding her original, true, self with the Trinity in death.

Osbert Bokenham's Life of Saint Margaret[297]

THE PEARL PROLOGUE. I have already discussed the general prologue to the Legendys, and Margaret has its own prologue which, although it resembles Voragine, has undergone extensive re-writing. The first eight lines are original to Bokenham and constitute a placing of the authorial voice which is in keeping with the larger prologue. The author will tell the saint's story if he lives long enough, and the figure of Theotimus does not appear. The Life is, by this means, made of more immediacy to the author, who stands between the audience and the saint.

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[297] According to Serjeantson, pp. xxii, relying on a dissertation of 1888 by G. Willenberg, Bokenham has three sources which are as follows: (a) prologue vv.241-336 based upon Jacobus de Voragine's Legenda Aurea I use Legenda Aurea, edited by Th. Graesse (Osnabruck, 1890 repr. 1969) and the unreliable The Golden Legend of Jacobus de Voragine, translated by Granger Ryan and Helmut Ripperger (New York, 1941 repr 1948). (b) story vv.337-869 based upon a Mombritius version; the text I use is the same as for the EME Life. (c) translation vv. 939 to end based upon a version of the Life similar that in the Acta Sanctorum ex Latinins et Graecis aliarumque gentium monumentis, Johannes Bollandus (Paris, 1863-75).

The Pearl prologue in both Voragine and Bokenham brings the saint into focus, and in Bokenham is much extended, forming an effective example of a non-character based, non-biographical portrayal. The pearl and its many virtues forms a physical synechdoche of Margaret. In the Latin the pearl has more of a symbolic, a one-to- one, correspondence with the saint. Bokenham extends this, so that the pearl is a mnemonic for but cannot replace the fully-fashioned saint, who is emotively described as inflamed by love for Christ. It is love which fuels Margaret's virtues, so that the saint as presented by Bokenham is constructed on emotional grounds rather than being defined through actions. Her charity is singular to her; the author,re-enforcing his particular relation to Margaret, invokes her 'singuler grace' (333) for himself as writer. In this way he acts as a model for the external reader. We need not attempt to emulate the saint; instead we should follow the author. The EME encourages the reader to enter the text, Bokenham offers a model in which God is followed by the saint, the saint by the author and the author by the audience.[298]

THE STORY VV.337-869

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[298] Batt p. 80 cites, in a different context, Hugo van de Goes triptych The Adoration of the Shepherds in the Uffizi, Florence, which depicts the patron saints of members of the Portinari family, together with their name-sakes, directing their attention to the tableau of the Holy Family in the central panel. While the saints have a more prominent place, the patrons are in the foreground of the painting. I would see this as a similar pattern to that I describe in Bokenham: God followed by the saints, then by the patrons and finally the external audience.

The opening section is much extended from the Latin, with Bokenham imaging Margaret as the rose of sanctity on the thorns of paganism. The rose, like the pearl, is an effective image which can radiate the qualities of the saint but cannot replace her. The rose and pearl are physical things signifying ineffable qualities; Margaret is is composed of the ineffable which manifests itself through her physical reality.[299]

Bokenham elaborates on Margaret's childhood and adolescence which, together with the rose and the thorn image, creates a sense of continuity between the young saint and her background, making the pagan world much more of a tangible force in the text than it is in the Latin. Paganism is a reality in its own right as compared with the EME in which Olibrius is 'presented from so external a viewpoint that he can refer to his own gods by the deprecatory Christian term 'maumez' and his men can describe the Romans as 'heðene'.[300] Margaret's early life and the pagan usages are presented as linked temporally and conceptually with the present; the pagans had ceremonies for 'namys yeuyng' (368) 'and yet it is so' (373). By presenting the heathen world as ceremonious and the christian as private and simple,[301] Bokenham reminds the reader of the vanity of external status. Margaret inspired by love 'forsook al hyr hey lynage' (390)

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[299] Dunn, p. 369 predicates saints as 'ideas' of virtue rather than as characters or figures, seeing this as stemming from a growing allegorical tradition. This notion of the saint as a force or virtue is very much the case with Bokenham's Margaret.

[300] Price, Iuliene.

[301] Margaret's nurse is 'priuyly a cristene wumman' (381).

for christianity. God channels his love through the saint and she becomes the source of love in the text, rather than the object of it as in both the Latin and the EME. Moreover Margaret is not only lent grace but it is 'hyr nature' (401). In this way she represents hope for all people, however base.

Bokenham devotes this entire section of the narrative to examining Margaret's nature, which has no parallel in the Latin. Rhetorical masters such as Homer, Ovid, Virgil, Gower, Chaucer and Lydgate may be able to express her beauty but the author cannot. Bokenham has been accused of ineptitude,[302] but I believe Bokenham to be playing with rhetorical strategy in order to create a particular approach to Margaret. By his lack of ability to describe Margaret, it is suggested that she requires a completely different register, a different mode of articulation. She has 'yiftys of kynde' (422) and is full of virtue, invisible qualities, so that she is the 'merour of al bewte' (406). The description is not physical, but an attempt to portray her prismatic existence. Olibrius' persecution is fruitless - how can he destroy a mirror of all beauty? His rhetorical description of Margaret, which follows, is hopelessly wrong; she is not

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[302] Bokenham in general seems unpopular with critics. Walter F. Schirmer, John Lydgate: A Study in the Culture of the XVth Century, translated by Ann E. Keep (London, 1961), p. 171 sees Bokenham as simply paraphrasing the legend of Saint Margaret. Derek Pearsall, John Lydgate (London, 1970), p. 281 describes Bokenham as a 'reluctant Lydgatian' with Lydgate himself not a poet but a mechanical, non individualistic rhetorician (pp. 298-99). Batt, p. 83 argues that in his Katherine Bokenham falls into the category of writers who 'uses tropes as decorative trills, not integral to the meaning of the text' - a view which I feel rather harsh on Bokenham whose rhetoric has a definite function in the text

simply a rhetorical set-piece of physical beauty but an indescribable

value:

> Hyr bent browys blake & hyr grey eyne,
> Hyr chyry chekys, hyr nose streyt & ryght,
> Hyr lyppys rody, hyr chyn, wych as pleyne
> Pulshyd marbyl shoon & clouyn in tweyne   (450-53).

If anything she is less accessible to Olibrius than her counterpart

in EME or Latin. It is impossible for Olibrius to taint her, and

for this reason Bokenham omits the Latin plea from Margaret to God

that the persecutors might not pollute her.

This section also recalls the plight of virtuous women in Romances

such as Sir Isumbras and Emaré.[303] Sir Isumbras and Bokenham's

Margaret allow paganism a reverse logic so that Olibrius' henchmen

can accuse Margaret of blaspheming against their gods, whilst the

Saracen in Isumbras ask him to forget his 'fals goddes' (Mills, 260).

The Saracen is completely dazzled by Isumbras' wife, thinking she must

be an angel (275). Emaré has the same effect on her husband, who

cannot eat for looking at her (400-402), whilst his wicked mother

accuses her of devilry. All these are vital moments, in terms of

identity- confrontations of different systems of value against which

a self is plotted. Bokenham seems to be specifically using Romance

formulations to highlight the the reality of a self not bounded by a

physical body; to the limited logic of the heathen or the misguided,

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[303] I am not suggesting that Bokenham knew these Romances particularly
only that they share similar areas of concern as regards their
female figures; given the possible popularity of Isumbras, be-
cause of the number of surviving MSS, it is not inconceivable that
Bokenham knew of it. See (my) Chapter Two p: ! and pp.   ., 7 7
for discussion of MSS and audience.

physical beauty is all they see, all they can comprehend, whilst a true self is expressed beyond it. Bokenham is perhaps here tailoring the text for a landed secular audience, but more widely for an audience who were aware of specific Romance conventions. Like Emaré Margaret is frightening in her radiance, but tempered by grace.

THE TORTURES

Margaret is optimistic in the face of the various threats offered to her, but in a way different from the declamatory Latin. She expresses trust in Christ, and instead of describing human fear of God, she conjures up a vision of the last judgement with Gabriel calling the virtuous to life ever-lasting. At this stage Margaret is a powerful rhetorician in her own right[304] and engages with her torturers directly without recourse to the aid of God; she encourages her internal audience to become like her, to discover for themselves the ineffectuality of their Gods. Their idols are wholly worthless:

        ...for in hem is noon
        Spyryt of lyf ner flesh ne boon   (620-21).

Bokenham, by toning down the physical violence of the _vita_ makes the conflict between Margaret and Olibrius a battle of vice and virtue rather than a clash of 'characters'. In the _vita_ she can be physically threatened whilst in Bokenham she is inviolate and Olibrius has been downgraded from a raging lion to heathen dog.

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[304] Her sister saint Iuliene in the EME is 'curiously unrhetorical', the narrative validating her word as expressing not only her 'human ego' but 'plain truth' see Price, 'Iuliene'. In Bokenham the rhetoric of of the saint becomes expressive of a truth which subsumes the saint.

In keeping with the notion of Margaret as gently yet consistently beyond human destruction, Margaret faces the dragon with 'Lete not this dragoun, lord, noyen me' (707). She actually has to do remarkably litle in order to achieve quite startling results. Confronting the dragon she does not have to cross herself since the cross already upon her swells up and destroys it.[305] She is powerfully present in her narrative, not as a gesturing physical figure, but as a force to be reckoned with.

THE BLACK DEMON Confronted with Margaret, her opponents seem to shrivel up into pathetic, creaturely beings. The demon, rather than being an exploration of the workings of sin in this world, in 'sneuelyng voys' (721) peevishly complains about his brother, the dragon's, sudden demise. This heightens our sense of Margaret as beyond their level of perception. Both Olibrius' men and the demon accuse Margaret of being a witch (496 & 726), because of the fascination she exerts over those within the narrative. This again recalls some Romance heroines such as Emaré, who is similarly accused. In both cases there is instanced an impulse to destroy virtue which goes beyond a biographic desire to kill a particular 'character' or figure; neither Margaret nor Emaré appear as a biographic construct but are images, on one level, of universal truth. The desire to destroy them is thus an instance of a wide and obsessive attempt to destroy the

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[305] Both the EME and Lydagate's Margaret cross themselves at this point and are saved by their action.

unknown, to rip apart virtue and in so doing undo the fabric of the christian world. Margaret as grace, in her calm response to her demon, easily controls and diminishes him, even to the extent that he offers her a polite 'thank-you' as she removes her foot from his neck.[306]

THE SECOND ROUND OF TORTURES

In this section Margaret becomes more intensely what she has been all along the narrative - a distribution system for grace. Bokenham, as in the previous section, condenses the speeches, omitting two prayers by the Saint and the appearance of a dove who praises the saint. As with her confrontation with the dragon, Margaret has to do very little; she just has to exist as 'god, his seruauntys wych neuere forsake/Wil, ner suffre hem to myscheue' (806-7). Condemned to death she is 'ful glad.../Hauyng ful trust in goddys goodnesse' (821), whilst her Latin counterpart has nothing to say at this juncture. Acting as an intermediary between man and God she asks for our sins to be forgiven and God's own voice (direct communication, unlike the Latin where the dove speaks) grants her plea. She dies simply with no promise of reward, no exhortatory speech to her internal audience; she does not have to engage with them directly since her grace has already extended over them in the form of her direct communication with God. Executed, she is instantaneously at one with God. Like

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[306] Bokenham condenses considerably at this point, omitting the demon's account of Margaret's victory and his account of his misdoing.

the Gawain poet's Pearl maiden, she is not anyone's daughter, not a creature with a biography, but a part of a spiritual existence.

INTERLUDE

Here Bokenham interjects a transitional passage before he changes sources to follow the _Acta Sanctorum_ in terms of incident (but elaborating or cutting at will). For example he cuts a lot of the story of Berengayre who has Margaret's remains, in order to focus more clearly on the saint. In the Interlude Bokenham seems to be super-imposing a cyclical pattern upon a linear. First he creates clear linear links between himself, the saint and the audience. He draws closer to death and as pilgrim, closer to Margaret and God. Her grace is still operating through time, it inspires him to write which he does, leaving the audience specific time co-ordinates against which to plot his work: Mathews Eve, ten days before Michelmas, Michelmas day and thereafter. These references, however, belong to cyclic as well as linear time, as part of the liturgical calendar. The author draws closer in to the Life he is writing, and at the same time the audience is gathered in closer to the events of the text as operating across time rather than linearly through it. It is the pattern of redemption which draws the author the text and the audience closer in what has been, up to now, a linearly- structured narrative.

THE TRANSLATION

This section, dealing with the care of Margaret's relics, introduces the figure of Austyn who functions to tie in the external audience by mirroring the saints life on a human level. He is of 'nobyl blood' (985) and wishes to return to his family, his 'genealogye' (1000).[307] Austyn could act as an example to a landed fifteenth-century audience but he is also present in the Latin, so on a base level he represents human as related to saintly virtue. He is isolated as a christian among heathens, as Margaret was, but without her gift of grace and he is geographically isolated in a foreign country. Where Margaret exchanges her kin for christianity, Austyn leaves heathen company to re-join his kin - taking Margaret's relics with him. As with Margaret's life, his christianity is private to begin with and he takes her relics secretly, breaking up the casket they are in in order to avoid 'suspycyoun' (1069).[308] Not being a saint Austyn suffers, not torments on a grand scale, but natural afflictions and he finally dies of the red flux. He has repeated on a lesser level the life of the saint and forms an example of a pattern of christian behaviour which can be modified to suit the individual. Not everyone can be a saint but the pattern of her life is a model to follow;[309]

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[307] It is a standard hagiographical topos that 'blood' is a metaphor for God's grace. See Regis Boyer, 'An Attempt to Define the Typology of Medieval Hagiography', in Hagiography and Medieval Literature, edited by Hans Bekker-Nielsen and others (Odense, 1981), pp. 27-36 (p. 30).

[308] In the Latin it is to sell for money to travel with.

[309] Bokenham's attitude to the relics is not unusual in that, according to The Catholic Encyclopaedia, edited by Charles G. Herbermann and others (New York, 1911), p. 734 the doctrine regarding relics was set down at the Council of Trent, which advocated the veneration of relics so that through them 'many benefits are bestowed by God on men'; for an account of the trade in and

as the Prologue suggests, Margaret is emblematic. It is not suggested that we emulate her but pray through her and in praying exercise her virtues. As she followed in Christ's footsteps in imitatio Christi, so the external reader can follow her life by acknowledging and commemorating the qualities she represents.

As in her life, Margaret's relics take on a more public mode and are exhibited to the public at a monastery. She is given a saint's day, which action echoes and reverses her earlier heathen baptism. However, Bokenham instead of following the Latin with its plethora of miracles (withered hands cured, cancers cured and many other miracles) concentrates on the instability of the world. Margaret's relics suffer various upheavals, finally becoming lost in a wilderness. The Latin also contains these upheavals but they are counter-balanced by the number of miracles the saint performs. Bokenham stresses the strife in this world and makes Margaret appear a consistent life-line if only man can find her. She never fully vanishes but can become imperceivable. An historical time- reference at this point, to Henry III, serves to strengthen to idea that the power of the saint is operable in all times. It also serves as a linear time- marker, thus linking the external audience to the Life on two levels: as sharing the a-temporal world of the saint, and as a link in a temporal chain leading back to the saint. In the subsequent episodes the stress

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the theft of relics in the Middle Ages see Patrick J. Geary, Furta Sacra: Thefts of relics in the Central Middle Ages (Princeton, 1978) and for further discussion of relics Ronald C. Finucane, Miracles and Pilgrims: Popular Beliefs in Medieval England (London, 1977).

falls more upon the former than the latter, as Bokenham illuminates the belief that no one is truly alienated if they move within a christian sphere. The hermit who re-discovers Margaret's relics is a 'persone of straunge cuntre' (1217), a remark not found in the Latin. He pleads he does not know geographically where to find the relics but the saint is able to draw a new map for him:

> 'Kare not', quod she, 'for whil that grace
> Of god the guydyth, thou mayst not mys;
> For, wher-euere thou go, it shal the wys   (1249-51).

In a sense the real subject of the narrative is grace as ramified through various figures, with Margaret a focus for the writing. Bokenham's text ends where it began but it has brought its audience and its saint with it. The writer began at Mont Flask and it is here the saint the author and the audience find themselves at the close of the narrative. The journey has been linear and cyclic. The EME offers from the start a shared experience of saint and audience where the saint is fully human as well as emphatically saintly. Bokenham's Margaret is a crafted rhetorical construct, a force rather than a human figure. By the end of Bokenham's text the saint the author and the audience have closed together whilst in the EME they were never apart. Bokenham, with his explicit literary echoes looks back to Romance and, by the elevation of the importance of the author as standing between the text and the audience, looks forward to the age of print and the changing image of the text that came with it. In Bokenham's Life of Margaret we see an attempt at authorial control of the text which forms a movement away from the more open state of early Romance manuscript. The Romances I examined in Chapter Two were persistently altered and tailored for particular audiences.

Bokenham's text attempts to repulse this, with the 'author-in-the text' recording the authorial process, directing and intervening in the text. In chapter five I will discuss the interventionary role of the printers of Romance and the move away from open, performative, manuscript texts towards the closed, commemorative printed book. In the next chapter I will look further at notions of kinship; not the spiritual genealogy of Margaret, but the ties of secular kinship.

Interest in the ways in which a self can be represented belongs to a network of concern about the structuring of identity. George Duby notes, from court cases of the eleventh century and onwards, an increasing awareness of lineage and kinship relations, which gradually moves from a horizontal to a vertical patterning.[310] Brian Stock agrees that there was a 'profound mutation in the nature of kinship' but locates it earlier than Duby in that by the eleventh century the individual was:

> constrained by a far more rigid set of kinship ties...all based vertically on agnatic filiation. He was the member of une race, whose spiritual capital was transmitted from father to son.[311]

Literary texts reflect such trends and experiment with them, but much later than the eleventh century. No change takes place overnight, as David Herlihy argues:

> From the Central Middle Ages (approximately the twelfth and thirteenth centuries), a new kinship system, agnatic or patrilineal in basic design, came to be superimposed upon an older system, especially a cognatic or bi-lineal one...The new system was superimposed upon the old, but did not entirely obliterate it.[312]

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[310] George Duby, The Knight, the Lady and the Priest: the Making of Modern Marriage in Medieval France (London, 1984), pp. 173-74.

[311] Brian Stock, 'Medieval Literacy, Linguistic Theory and Social Organisation', NLH, XVI (1984-85), 13-29 (pp. 25-26).

[312] David Herlihy, 'The Making of the Medieval Family: Symmetry, Structure and Sentiment', The Journal of Family History, 8 (1983), 116-130 (p. 122).

Lawrence Stone expands upon this in his exhaustive study, The Family

Sex and Marriage: England 1500-1800.[313] He points to a blurring of

lineage and kin in the early sixteenth century in his definitions of

those terms. Lineage consists of:

> relatives by blood or marriage, dead, living, and yet to be
> born, who collectively form a 'house'. The kin are those mem-
> bers of the lineage who are currently alive...the core...bound
> together [by] a strong sense of loyalty to the ancestral ties
> of blood, that is of hereditary lineage, a system of thought
> which affected a whole range of values and attitudes.[314]

Stone supports the notion that cyclical and linear patterns co-existed

in the Middle Ages.[315] He also, however, notes that the sixteenth

century 'put a premium on male primogeniture', and that wider kinship

ties became prone to dissolution through political or economic pres-

sure.[316] Stone continues to stress the 'patrilinear, primogenitural,

and patriachal' nature of the sixteenth century family.[317] Literary

texts make use of the options open and reflect a variety of modes of

defining the self. In this chapter I discuss two texts, Sir Degare

and Malory's 'The Tale of Sir Gareth of Orkney That Was Called

Bewmaynes'. They combine the systems discussed above but Degare

splits into two distinct versions displaying predominately either the

agnatic or the cognatic pattern, whilst 'Gareth' meshes both

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[313] Lawrence Stone, The Family Sex and Marriage: 1500-1800 (London, 1977).

[314] Stone, p. 29.

[315] Stone, pp. 20-21.

[316] Lawrence Stone, The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641 (Oxford, 1965), pp. 590-91.

[317] p. 591.

systems.[318] One might call these narratives 'Fair Unknown' texts but

as P. J. C. Field remarks, 'very little about the Fair Unknown romance

is simple',[319] even to the extent of lack of precise agreement as to

what constitutes a 'Fair Unknown' narrative. R. H. Wilson suggests

a group of four: Libeaus Desconnus, Le Bel Inconnu, Wigalois, and

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[318] For an account of the two versions of Degaré see W. C. Stokoe jnr.,
'The Double Problem of Sir Degare', PMLA, 70 (1955), 518-314.
On p. 520 he remarks, 'The nine texts of SD (sic) present more
than an example of corruption in a textual tradition. They ac-
tually present for us two quite different versions of the story'.
In terms of syntax and diction Stokoe sees the text preserved in
MSS Auchinleck and Cambridge Ff II 38 as more coherent. This
version he praises also for its narratorial skill and the re-
tention of a supernatural background. Whilst I wish to modify
his criticism of the second version of Sir Degare as
'improbable...weak in characterization', I would like to retain
his division of the narrative into two groups. Nicolas Jacobs,
'The Second Revision of Sir Degarre: The Egerton Fragment and its
Congeners', Neuphil Mit, LXXXV, (1984), 95-107 more recently
agrees with Stokoe, grouping MS Egerton, Rawlinson and the six-
teenth century prints as aimed at a 'particular audience...one
more interested in spectacular fights than in the theme of the
education and development of the hero and his quest for identity'.
In the same year, however, John Finlayson, 'The Form of the Middle
English Lay', Chaucer Review, 19 (1984-85), 352-68 (p. 39), re-
mains unaware that there are two distinct versions of Sir
Degare.

[319] P. J. C. Field, 'The Source of Malory's "Tale of Gareth"', in
Aspects of Malory, edited by Toshiyuki Takamiya and D. S. Brewer
(Cambridge, 1981), pp. 57-70 (p. 63). The work of Field, Wilson,
Larry D. Benson, Malory's Morte d'Arthur (Cambridge, Mass., 1976,
repr., 1977), and Thomas Wright, 'On the Genesis of Malory's
"Gareth"', Spec, 57 (1982), 569-582 is important here in identi-
fying 'Gareth's'relationship to possible 'Fair Unknown' texts.
Benson, pp. 93-99 gives a good summary of the relation of 'Gareth'
to other texts: Érec et Énide, Ipomadon, Lybeaus Desconnus,
Perceval and the Suite de Merlin. Degaré, especially in the
dragon scene recalls Beves of Hampton and may have 'borrowed' some
lines directly. However it is not altogether clear which text
'borrowed' from the other. See George Patterson Faust, Sir
Degaré: A Study of the Texts and Narrative Structure, Princeton
Studies in English No. 11 (Princeton, 1935), pp. 22-29 and N.
Jaccobs, 'Sir Degarre , Lay Le Freine, Beves of Hamtoun and the
"Auchinleck Bookshop"', Notes and Queries, ns. 29 (1982), 294-301.
Faust, pp. 12-15 also sees some 'borrowing' from Lai Le Freine
and a resemblance to legends of Gregory the Great.

Carduino.[320] More recently, research into manuscript evidence has suggested alternative grouping of tales. Pamela Robinson isolates one such group, occurring in some fifteenth century manuscripts, as: The Erle of Toulous, Libeaus Desconnus, Octavian, Eglamour and Sir Isumbras.[321] This cuts across a 'Fair Unknown' group, raising the possibility of different grouping of narratives. I would like to retain the term 'Fair Unknown' whilst not adopting it as a distinct genre. I suggest that Degare and 'Gareth' are usefully described as 'Fair Unknown' stories, as they focus on the search for identity by a central figure. Moreover, they fruitfully elaborate on the question of identity through lineage and kin.

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[320] Robert H. Wilson, 'The "Fair Unknown" in Malory', PMLA, 58 (1943), 1-21.

[321] The Facsimile of Cambridge University MS Ff II 38, with an Introduction by F. McSparran and P. R. Robinson (London, 1979), p.xvi. Dieter Mehl, The Middle English Romances of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries (London, 1968), p. 259 remarks that Egerton 2868, a fourteenth century manuscript which is composed entirely of romances, including Degare, it is evidence for the possibility that 'a larger number of such manuscripts existed which, if they had been preserved, would have considerably modified our idea of the Middle English Romance'.

[322] The versions I concentrate on are: Sir Degarre, edited by G. Schleich (Heidleberg, 1929) who collates all manuscripts, with Auchinleck as a base text with emmendation from Cambridge. For comparison I use William Copland's 1565? text STC 64725 in, Select Pieces of Early English Popular Poetry, edited by E. V. Utterson (London, 1817), which when checked with a microfilm of the original appears editorially reliable; a very few minor discrepancies are listed by Faust, p.89. MS Additional may be found in Bishop Percy's Folio Manuscript: Ballads and Romances, 4 Vols, edited by J. W. Hales and Frederick J Furnivall (London, 1867), Vol III, pp. 20-48. The Egerton fragments are edited by N. Jaccobs in Neuphil Mitt, LXXII (1971), 86-96. Rawlinson 34 appears in The Breton Lays in Middle English, edited by Thomas C. Rumble (Detroit, 1965), pp. 44-78. A. V. C. Schmidt and Nicolas Jacobs, editors, Medieval English Romances, 2 vols, (London, 1980), Vol P. 240 notes that Rumble's edition is 'inaccurate and the text should be used with extreme caution'. For a description of the

This text has been much maligned in the past[323] but, as I hope to show,

the ways in which it structures the self are carefully handled.   In

Chapter Two I discussed the way notions of 'self' varied between

different manuscript redactions of <u>Sir Isumbras</u> and <u>Sir Gowther</u>.   An

extreme example of this is to be found with <u>Degaré</u> The narrative ex-

ists in six manuscripts:

Auchinleck	1330-40	incomplete
Cambridge Uni.Lib. Ff II 38	mid 15th C	incomplete
Additional 27879	c. 1650	complete
Egerton 2862	end 14th C	fragments
Douce 261	1564	fragments
Rawlinson 34	mid to end 15th C	complete

and in four sixteenth century prints:

de Worde	1512-13
de Worde	c. 1535 ?
William Copland	1565 ?
John King	1560

The Auchinleck and Cambridge manuscripts, although not close in date,

form a set in which Degaré's search for identity is tied in closely

with his mother's story.   In the second group Degaré, instead of un-

locking his mother's story with his own, repeats in a modified form

his father's narrative.   MSS Cambridge and Auchinleck may be 'placed'

as comparable with the Thornton manuscript and MS Cotton Caligula A

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manuscripts see Guddat-Figge pp. 121-126, 94-99, 151-159,
182-184, 265-266, 267-268; Faust, pp 3-4. For prints see <u>STC</u>
(1986) items 6470, 6470.5, 6472.5, 6472 which are available on
microfilm.

[323] G. V. Smithers, 'Story Patterns in Some Breton Lays', <u>Med Aev</u>,
XXII (1953), 61-92; Clark Harris Slover, 'Sir Degarre: a Study
in a Medieval Hack-Writer's Methods', <u>University of Texas Studies
in English</u>, 11 (1931), 6-23.

ii as compendia of family reading.[324] The Cambridge manuscript is described by Guddat-Figge as an:

> anthology of a rather unique character: three quite distinct groups of contents...religious and didactic lyrics...prose legends of the saints and exempla, interspersed with occasional religious lyrics...an almost uninterrupted sequence of romances.[325]

This implies that this particular version of _Degaré_, a story of 'ferli' which links Degaré with other figures in the narrative, was considered suitable for inclusion in a family volume. On the other hand, in MS Auchinleck it may simply have been commercially viable to include it. Controversy over the production circumstance of the Auchinlck manuscript continues. Recently T. A. Shonk, agreeing that it was a 'commercial work', argues that the first 'probably bourgeois' owner would have played a large part in choosing the contents. Implying that, as with the Cambridge manuscript, this version of the story was considered suitable for family reading.[326]

The second group, consisting of all other extant texts, focuses on Degaré's relation to his father and does not foreground the 'ferli' element in Degaré, his relation to other figures, particularly not to his mother. Judging by the survival of four printed books, _Degaré_ was a popular work. John King purchased a licence for printing

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[324] Mc Sparran, p. vii. I discuss the Thornton MS and Cotton Caligula A ii in my Chapter Two p 7₆ - ₁7

[325] Guddat-Figge, p. 97.

[326] Timothy A. Shonk, 'A Study of the Auchinleck Manuscript: Bookmen and Bookmaking in the Early Fourteenth Century', _Spec_, 60 (1985), 71-91.

<u>Degare</u>, which suggests he wished to exert a certain amount of control over the narrative; a commercial move that also safeguards the survival of a particular version of the story.[327] MS Douce 261, also sixteenth century, is an amateur work, probably copied from a printed book by one 'E.B.' who also copied MS Egerton 3132, A., which contains <u>Robert the Devil</u>.[328] The seventeenth century MS Additional testifies to the endurance of this version of the text. As regards the conception and preservation of 'self' in these texts, an horizontal to linear shift seems to take place under the influence of the printed book. MS Rawlinson 34 is earlier than the books, although it may only just pre-date them. It is the presence in this group of the late fourteenth century Egerton manuscript which is problematic. What is such an early text doing in a group of later texts all of which focus on the father-son linear plot ? In Stokoe's terms it belongs here because of the way it handles certain key episodes for his purpose and because it omits the fact that Degaré is half man, half 'ferli'.[329] Two facts are important here: firstly the manuscript consists of only a few fragments.[330] Secondly, at a crucial point in

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[327] The record of this transaction is to be found in the Stationers Company records for 1560 and is reproduced in <u>Bishop Percy's Folio Manuscript, Ballads and Romances</u>, Vol III, p. 18.

[328] Guddat-Figge, pp. 265-66; <u>The British Museum Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscript Collection 1931-35</u> (London, 1967), pp. 322-23; I am grateful to J. Price for help with this manuscript. Kari Sajavaara, 'The Two English Prose Texts of Robert the Devil Printed by Wynkyn de Worde', <u>Neuphil Mitt</u>, LXIII (1962), 62-68 and 'The Sixteenth Century Versions of Robert the Devil', <u>Neuphil Mitt</u>, LXXX (1979), 335-347.

[329] See above, note 4.

[330] Guddat-Figge, pp. 182-184. Only two leaves survive.

the narrative as regards the notion of 'self', Degaré is placed in relation to his mother but not his father.[331] So, in this respect, the Egerton manuscript does not contradict a horizontal to vertical shift in terms of the structuring of 'self'.

The variety of contexts Degaré falls into (family reading, commercial venture, dilettante copying) is evidence for a continuing interest in narrative construction of identity.   An interest Malory shared, since he includes four 'Fair Unknown' figures in the Morte d'Arthur: Lancelot, La Cote Male Tayle, Alexander the Orphelin and Gareth. By looking at the two versions of Degaré I hope to establish a background against which to plot Malory's more elaborate treatment of the 'Fair Unknown' figure.

The Auchinleck and Cambridge version of Degaré

In these, the text presents itself as a tale of 'ferli' (4) and, specifically of Degaré's experience of such adventures. It then establishes the background for these adventures, giving the external reader access to Degaré's personal history. As in Emaré there is an only daughter of a father who loves her 'als hys lyf' (23), but the seduction scene of Emaré is displaced. The duke demands his daughter's husband be his equal, should be able to defeat him in combat. The lady and her potential husband are defined in relation to her father; the husband must be the same as the father yet not he. But,

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[331] At 11. 309-310 Degare declares 'he nolde no lenger dwel in lond/or he had his moder y founde'.

as becomes apparent later, this close similarity of identity in only possible between blood relations, such as between father and son. At this stage no-one can defeat the Duke and the narrative offers another figure against which to define the damsel. Lost in a forest, separated from her father and her own retinue she is summarily raped by a 'Gentil ʒong and iolif man' (91), who describes himself as a 'fairi-knyʒte' (100).

Degaré's personal history stems out of a background in which linear, male, genealogical patterns are constantly displaced. His inheritance is a mixture of 'ferli' and human via the knight and the damsel. This duality is reflected in the landscape of the forest which contains pleasingly familiar 'floures' and 'wilde foules' and, potentially, some violently ferocious 'wilde bestes' (77,78,87). The knight himself is a contradiction in terms - a courteous rapist. Instead of a linear father-child pattern, the knight, the Duke and the damsel stand on the same plain, especially since the damsel cannot admit she is with child since:

> Men wolde sai bi sti and strete
> That mi fadir þe king hit wan.   (167-69).

Rather than being snatched away to 'ferli', as in Sir Orfeo, the damsel returns to society.[332] It is the child Degaré who will later serve as an identifying marker and by finding his own identity release that of others.

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[332] Sir Orfeo, edited by A. J. Bliss, second edition (Oxford, 1966).

Degaré, left with a hermit, is educated both in the city and with his

adopted parent.[333] This identifies him as a 'man' (294), but:

> Degarre nowt elles nis
> But þing þat not neuer, whar it is   (255-7).

The hermit passes on to Degaré the magic gloves which will identify

his mother and sets him on his journey to find his kin. Like Gowther

he chooses his own weapon but unlike him he later discards it; the

oak sapling he carries at this point signifies his youthful identity

only.[334] On his travels Degaré proves his prowess as a knight by de-

feating a dragon and rescuing an old Earl, which wins him horse and

armour together with the offer of a wife and land. Degaré, in search

of his kin, refuses his chance to start his own genealogical dynasty.

Degaré undertakes his next fight for personal renown; unwittingly he

unhorses his grandfather and as reward marries his mother. Although

this section of the text places Degaré in relation to his lineage it

also stresses his personal identity - his prowess as a knight. In

one sense only he could defeat the Duke because he is like him but

not him, his grandson, but in another he defeats him through personal

volition; both are important. In seeking personal renown, however,

Degaré has forgotten the importance for identity of kin:

> alas, alas!
> What meschaunce is comen to me!

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[333] Unlike the Chevalier Assigne who is wholly brought up by the
hermit and wholly formed by God; or unlike Gowther who exists in
a state of chaos as a child/monster.

[334] This relationship to Gowther may be due to an earlier stage of a
development of the 'Fair Unknown' story in which the central
figure contained conflicting elements of courtesy and savagery.
See Field, 'The Source of Malory's "Tale of Gareth"', p. 65.

Awai! A witless wrecche I am!   (641-43).

Trying the magic gloves on his wife, he discovers his mother.   After

resolving their relationship, the next step is to find his father -

this time armed with his father's sword.

In seeking his father, Degaré reverses his mother's journey in the

forest. He travels deliberately into the woods in search of 'ferli'

and like his mother he meets the unexpected; which in this case takes

the form of a lady in a mysterious castle by a lake who, given her

location and melodious harping seems to be 'ferli'. Yet she describes

herself as the only daughter of a baron, oppressed by the unwelcome

attentions of another knight. Degaré, rather than rape her, falls

in love and frees her from oppression. Unlike his mother, Degaré has

power in the forest and he uses it in ways opposite to those of his

father. The latter's power was 'ferli' and burdensome, Degaré's is

liberating and human. To find his father, though, he rides deeper

into the forest and meets his exact match in battle:

    Togier þai riden wiþ gret raundom
    And eiþer oþer bar adoun. (1043-44).

In this battle, Degaré's sword functions as his gloves did earlier,

as a recognition token; both are his by right of blood-relation and

able to function because of Degaré's particular use of them.   The

father tries to claim Degaré wholly for his world but Degarrefuses

and suggests that they both ride in search of his mother. At this

point both Auchinleck and Cambridge MSS break off.   It is clear,

though, that Degaré's identity is bound up with that of his mother

and in his search for identity he unwinds her story as well as his

own.

<u>The Second Version of Degaré</u>[335]

This Degaré is a more single track figure who categorically states

that he will find his father if he is in Christendom.   In Auchinleck

and Cambridge MSS Degaré hopes to find his father if it is God's will,

thus allowing a greater scope to chance and grace and pointing to

Degaré's identity as part of a large scale pattern.   Here the father

is wholly mortal and has been actively seeking the damsel rather than

meeting her by chance. Degaré's identity is more knowable from the

start.   When it is suggested to him that he seek his mother, he de-

liberately embarks upon a search for his father.[336] Copland structures

the story around planned, male, genealogy and Degaré posseses a con-

fidence in his ability to dictate events.

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[335] For the basis of this comparison I use Copland's text and refer
      to 'the text' and 'Copland' interchangeably.   A comparison of
      Copland and the earlier MS Rawlinson 34 showed that the two gen-
      erally agreed not only in broad outline but in detail as well.
      M. B. Carr, 'Sire Degarre', unpublished Phd. (Chicago, 1923) makes
      a very detailed study of the texts and manuscripts, concluding
      that the prints of Copland, de Worde and King are very close.
      Checking a microfilm of Copland and de Worde 1512-13 the dis-
      crepancies between them are minimal.   For example Copland l. 47
      reads 'bene a lyght' and de Worde 'ben alyght'; after Copland's
      l. 554 de Worde adds 'God suffred moche thynge there'.

[336] In Auchinleck and Cambridge it was his kin he sought, in Egerton
      his mother.   In Additional l. 250 after declaring he will find
      his father, Degaré rather lamely adds 'or some of my kinne'. MS
      Rawlinson makes nonsense at this point, 'Tyll that he hadd ferder
      mor found' - Rumble consequently substitutes a line from MS
      Cambridge.

Having removed the 'ferli' element of Degaré, himself the text makes surrounding episodes more other-worldly, thus making Degaré's prowess more apparent. The fight with the dragon is extended and the battle to free the lady in the forest is with a giant, not just another knight Degaré is defined against the 'other' and he stands out in his text.

Degaré duly finds and marries his mother but this section of the text is shorter, with little being made of the mother-son relationship. It is his grandfather, who does not speak in the first group, who claims him and accomodates him to male structures:

> my next kinne
> I wyl giue the knyghtes with the to wynne   (636-67)

In comparison to male lineage, other relationships pale into insignificance. For example when taking leave of the lady in the forest, only she weeps whereas in Auchinleck and Cambridge they both weep. When Degaré finds his father, the armour he is is wearing is described as some he has won in battle, rather than as the gift of a lady. By cutting out wider relationships the text emphasises Degaré's mortal identity in terms of a linear relationship between father and son. He and his father are 'ryght wel at one' (950) and ride 'in fere' (953), acting as a unit. There is no need for the father to invite this son to stay with him and no discussion of finding Degaré's mother. The pair do journey to England to the court at which his mother resides, and emphasis falls on the discovery of the father:

> my dere sonne Degore
> Thou hast thy father brought with thee. (970-71)

Next the grandfather comments:

> Nowe thanked be to God...
> For nowe I knowe...
> Who is Degores father in dede.   (974-76)

It is this which has been the focus of the narrative, unlike the first group in which the stress falls on wider relationships.   The focus is firmly on agnatic kinship, on Degaré's relationship to his father. In the first group both agnatic and cognatic systems were important.

The Tale of Sir Gareth of Orkney that was called Bewmaynes

Malory's Gareth, unlike Degaré, knows his blood, his kin, but feels a need to give his inheritance meaning.   This tale focuses on the identity of Gareth as is suggested by the opening architecture of the narrative. Gareth appears framed by the window that Gawain looks out of, rather as Gareth's story is framed by the Pentecostal ritual. He is a marvel, a strange adventure, something to observe through a series of windows.[337] Arthur guesses correctly that Gareth 'com of men worshyp' and that he will 'preve a man of ryght grete worshyp' (294). There is a gap between the two statements which Gareth must fill, and he does this by standing apart from his blood, refusing to reveal his genealogy to the court.   His identity remains to be discovered, both by the court and for himself. Kay sees him only as a villein, a judgement Gareth accepts in that he is willing to prove whether he is or not, irrespective of his blood. It remains to be seen whether

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[337] Gareth, for a large part of the narrative is observed as something outside, seen through a window; by the Red Knight p. 308, the occupants of the Castle Perilous p. 321, by Gringamour p. 203, and at p. 323 and 327 Gareth looks longingly up at Lyoness at her window.   After this, references to windows cease as Gareth increasingly moves inside the social fabric of the tale.

the nick-name Kay gives him, Bewmaynes, is mocking or fitting.[338] The

resolution of this question concerns Malory's use of the phrases 'body

for body' and 'hand for hand'. To fight 'body for body' is to engage

in a judicial combat, whereas to fight 'hand for hand' implies a sense

of individual control. In Gareth:

> the hero's pseudonym helps to foreground the question of iden-
> tity which is central to the narrative. Gareth is possessed
> of 'the fayreste handis that ever man sye'...In calling the
> unknown 'Beawmaynes, that is to say Fayre Handys'... Kay reads
> the physical...as symbol of a quality he does not believe the
> young man has. But as Lancelot warns him, he may have named
> him only too well, for 'in playne batayle hande for
> hande'...Beawmaynes sets about realising his potential and
> carving out his identity. His hands (physically and figur-
> atively) are part of his inheritance as a son of Orkney; his
> own volition decides whether they are to remain an aberration
> in a 'kychyn knave's' physique, or whether they indicate true
> nobility.[339]

The adventure offered to the court by the damsel, the rescue of a

nameless lady, is Gareth's opportunity to fill his name with meaning,

and he takes it.

Blood, however, remains important to Gareth's story. Gawain is drawn

to Gareth by the unconscious pull of blood since they are brothers.

Lancelot on discovering Gareth's ancestry, exclaims 'I am more gladder

of you than I was for evir me thought ye sholde be of grete blood'

(299). 'Gareth' complicates the meaning of blood through Gareth's

relationship to Gawain and to Lancelot. Although Gawain and he are

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[338] There has been much controversy over this nick-name; for a good
summary see Wilfred L. Guerin, 'Malory's Morte d'Arthur Book VII',
Explicator, XX (1962), 276-78.

[339] Catherine Jeanne Batt, 'English Literary Response to French
Arthurian Cyclic Romances: Contexts and Perspectives for Reading
Malory', unpublished Phd. (Liverpool, 1986), pp. 48-49.

of the same blood, Gawain in his first adventure proves himself un-

worthy as a knight by refusing to grant mercy and thereby killing both

a knight and his lover. At the end of his tale Gareth will draw away

from Gawain:

> evir after Sir Gareth had aspyed sir Gawaynes conducions he
> wythdrewe hymself fro hys brother sir Gawaynes felyshyp, for
> he was evir vengeable vengeable, and where he hated he wolde
> be avenged with murther (360).

Yet in 'Gareth' Gawain's behaviour is exemplary. The relationship

between Gareth and Gawain is emphasised by their frequent reference

to each other. They are the same yet not the same. Gawain can be a

noble knight in some respects and in some tales but Gareth, because

stable, is the 'beste knyght of all [his] brethirne' (696, 1148).

In his tale, Gareth lives up to and fulfils the reputation of his blood

while Gawain has already disgraced himself by not realising the po-

tential his blood offers.[340]

The relationship of Lancelot and Gareth provides another frame of

reference through which to see Gareth. Like Gareth, Lancelot first

appeared at court as a 'Fair Unknown' and, as Lamerak says 'full fewe

of us knew from whens he cam...' (459). Gareth and Lancelot are drawn

together:

> But as towchyng sir Gawayne, he had reson to proffer hym
> lodgyng, mete and drynke, for that proffer com of his bloode,
> for he was nere kyn to hym than he wyste off; but that sir
> Launcelot ded was of his grete jantylnesse and curtesy. (295)

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[340] He has not disgraced and cannot disgrace the blood-reputation,
only him self; see Chapter One pp. 30-31.

Here, in the text, is a 'Fair Unknown' prototype for Gareth; Lancelot a convention fleshed out, a 'Fair Unknown' who has found and made his identity, taken conventions and given them meaning. Lancelot is the ideal towards which Gareth strives and, because of this, Gareth has a high profile as one of the best knights in the world, together with Lancelot. Gareth loses this status in the next book, he is more limited than Lancelot; more ordinary than his initial appearance in the narrative might suggest.[341]

Two other figures in the narrative, particularly, offer alternative identities to Gareth - the damsel and the knight of the Red Laundes. The damsel is important in 'Gareth', for although she is a conventional figure her role is extended by Malory. La Cote Male Tayle and Gareth have damsels who rebuke them for a long time while damsels in other 'Fair Unknown' stories soon amend their manners. The damsel in Lybeaus Desconus accepts Beaufitz after seeing a single combat, but it is only after Gareth's seventh fight that his damsel has a change of heart. As Maldwyn Mills remarks:

> The apparently ignoble streak in his nature provokes the bitter hostility of Lyonet, his guide, and this is kept up by her for much longer than in any other cognate...[342]

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[341] Benson, p. 107. Wilfred L. Guerin, 'The "Tale of Gareth": Chivalric Flowering' in, Malory's Originality, edited by R. M. Lumiansky (Baltimore, 1964), pp. 99-7. suggests that Malory added passages to his sources highlighting their relationship. This remains uncertain as long as Malory's source remains precisely unidentified. Wright argues strongly. that Malory's source is to be found in the Suite du Merlin.

[342] Lybeaus Desconus, edited by M. Mills, EETS (London, 1969), p. 49.

Gareth has been presented to the damsel as a pot-boy, and she re-
presents a perspective in which Gareth is just a filthy kitchen boy

masquerading as a knight. Her view-point is, ironically, similar to

Lancelot's in that both believe Gareth's appearance to be hiding a

different identity. Despite the clothes of the kitchen boy, Lancelot

perceives the noble knight; through the clothes of a knight the damsel

smells the grease of the kitchen.[343] Gareth's damsel is insistent in

representing him as a fool, or dolt who wins his battles by chance

alone; that is, one who has no real identity for, as she represents

it, the fights are won neither by right of blood nor through personal

volition. She is frequently corrected by Gareth's opponents such as

the Green knight:

> 'Damsel, mervayle me thynketh...why ye rebuke this noble
> knyghte...for I warne you he is a ful noble man, and I knowe
> me no knyght that is able to macche hym...he shall preve at the
> ende that he is com of full noble blodd and of kynges lynage'.
> (307)

But, her insistence on Gareth's luck as the only criteria for his

continuing existence does represent a possible, different, career for

Gareth and one which he accepts as a possibility in that he is provoked

into rejecting it both by continuing to fight and by emphatically

replying 'I am a jantyllman borne and of more hyghe lynage than thou'

(304). It is not so much that the damsel teaches Gareth humility as

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[343] As D. Brewer, 'The Presentation of the Character of Lancelot:
Chretien to Malory', in Arthurian Literature, III, edited by R.
Barber (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 26-52 (p. 47), remarks 'we cannot
always read character from the actions performed'; Brewer later,
p. 51, rejects the term 'character' in favour of the more accurate
statement that Malory offers 'the image, created in broad strokes,
of a human being'.

Benson suggests[344] (he has already exhibited this quality at court),
but that Gareth teaches the damsel. Damsels in 'Fair Unknown' stories
are, typically, teachers, but it is Gareth who converts the damsel's
reading of him into a useful spur to inspire him to gain identity:

> the mysseyyng that ye mysseyde me in my batayle furthered me
> much and caused me to thynke to shew and preve myselffe at the
> end what I was... (191)

Her persistent alternative reading of Gareth is important to Gareth
in that he takes it into account and rectifies it. After the fight
with Perseaunt the damsel dramatically alters her perspective 'hit
may never be other but that ye be com of jantyll bloode' (312), but
this too is adjusted. Gareth rejects any rigid classification at this
stage and replies 'and that shall be knowyn another day whether that
I be a jantyllman borne or none' (313). Comparing Gareth's re-
lationship to his damsel, with Gawain's to his damsel in 'Gawain,
Ywain and Marhalt' is fruitful. Gawain needs all the help he can get
but loses his damsel because he will not learn from her. Gareth, not
only apparently ignores his damsel, but successfully teaches her his
identity and her own. His words recognise that good blood and per-
sonal nobility are related, but are not necessarily identical. He
could have but does not fall into the gap between the two. He does
not disappear into the lack of identity (in the form of fame through
luck) that the damsel posited for him.

As Gareth's story progresses, he tries to gain worship as a 'full
noble man' rather than one of 'kynges lynage' (307). As he says 'I

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[344] Benson, p. 103.

wolde fayne be of good fame and of knyghthode' (316). The more worship

a knight has, the more Gareth is willing to fight with him since he

will win his opponent's worship. When Gareth's battles with the se-

quence of coloured knights, with Kay and with Lancelot, are recounted

to Lyoness (p.318) the narrative is coming to a turning point; here-

after Gareth embarks upon a series of adventures concerned with his

identity within a social framework.[345] The fight with the knight of

the Red Laundes is the culmination of Gareth's quest (to rescue

Lynet's 'lady'), and the figure of the knight represents a type of

identity diametrically opposed Gareth's, and a real possibility for

him. The knight of the Red Laundes is ' nother of curtesy, bounte,

nother jantylnesse; for he attendyth unto nothyng but to murther...'

(318). Gareth is consistently courteous; his integrity extends beyond

his tale, and although he frequently appears elsewhere nothing con-

tradicts his description as 'jantyl'.[346] He is summed up by Lancelot

during 'The Fair Maid of Astolat' as :

> jantill, curteyse and ryght bownteuos, meke and mylde, and in
> hym ys no maner of male engynne, but playne, faythfull an trew
> (1089).

The knight of the Red Laundes is like Gareth in that he is 'a full

lykly man and a noble knyght' and a 'lorde of grete londis and of gret

possessions' (320). This could equally be a description of Gareth

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[345] Fewster, p. 33 notes this 'diptych' structure and places it as
part of the more flexible structure that is noted by Benson, p.
92 where this section is an important marker but one in a series
of such moments. The tale's two halves both reflect each other
and progress along a narrative line.

[346] See pp. 41, 77, 242, 696-707, 716, 720, 729, 731-37, 741, 747-49,
752, 754, 757-8, 760-61, 763, 890, 1048, 1088-89, 1109-1114, 1148,
1150, 1161-63, 1176-78, 1183-86, 1189, 1191, 1199-1200 and 1249.

at the end of his tale. Both Gareth and the knight of the Red Laundes
are fulfilling promises made on behalf of damsels; Gareth has pledged
to rescue Lyoness and the knight of the Red Laundes promised his
damsel, 'by the faythe of...knyghthode' (325), to destroy the knights
of the Round Table. The difference between them lies in the fact that
in fulfilling his pledge, Gareth is free to fulfill and add to his
identity through his fights and adventures with other knights. The
knight of the Red Laundes is trapped in a narrow existence which de-
nies him any real chance of adding to identity and gaining fame. Like
Maboagrin in the 'joie de la court' episode of Erec et Énide the ar-
rangement depends upon the knight's honour in keeping the promise,
but prevents that honour from developing.[347] In this context it is
significant that only the rather dubious figure of Gawain has en-
countered the knight of the Red Laundes (and was nearly killed by
him), whilst King Arthur has never heard of him. Up until now, Gareth
has been free to increase his fame and renown, but by falling in love
with Lyoness his identity as knight may be in jeopardy. The knight
of the Red Laundes represents a possibility for Gareth, one as
stultifying as that which Lynet offered. Gareth does also learn from
the knight, he 'taught Bewmaynes to be wyse' (323). Here Gareth
thinks he has bought Lyoness' love with 'parte of the beste bloode
within [his] body' (327). This may imply his 'heart blood' since this
was commonly thought to be more precious than blood elsewhere in the

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[347] Les Romans de Chrétien de Troyes, I, Erec et Énide , publie ,par
M. Roques (Paris, 1981); G. S. Burgess, Chrétien de Troyes, Erec
et Énide (London, 1984), p. 90.

body.[348] If this is the case then Gareth is operating in terms of his personal identity rather than as part of a blood/ancestry system. From here onwards he has to place that identity in terms of larger spheres of reference. He cannot always stand apart from his lineage and act as a single unit but must take his place in Arthurian society. Here, by the sea-board he is offered a choice of either replicating the identity of the knight of the Red Laundes trapped by loyalty to his damsel, or moving forwards. Temporarily he falters:

> and Sir Bewmaynes rode awaywarde from the castell makynge grete dole. And so he rode now here, now there, he wyste nat whother... (327).

Next, in rescuing his dwarf, he enters an atmosphere of 'gamys' and 'playes' (331) at Gringamore's castle; previously perceived as on the outside, Gareth is now entering a new world.

Questions raised earlier in the narrative regarding the relationship of appearances to identity culminate here, when Gareth falls in love with the damsel of the castle who later turns out to be Lyoness in disguise. Gareth has intuitively recognised her; whenever and however they meet, they will always fall in love. A certain integrity of self is implied. Gawain was drawn to Gareth by force of blood, Lancelot by 'jantylnesse', here a third possibility is intuitive recognition of a beloved. However, Gareth has to incorporate his love with the rest of his identity in a public context which contains all three modes. The private existence of lover for lover runs contrary to Gareth's desire for fame as a way of filling his name with meaning.

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[348] See my Chapter One, p. 33.

Gareth is blissfully unaware of a crisis, it requires Lynet's inter-
vention to prevent the lovers becoming an isolated unit. Lynet re-
peatedly stresses that her actions, thwarting the lover's desires,
will be for their 'worshyp and to us all' (336). The knight Lynet
sets in motion to prevent the lovers consummating their love, Gareth
rips apart and hurls through the window. On one level the dismembered
knight represents the potentially destructive element in Gareth's
identity as a lover - an identity he defeats without recognising it
as his.

By the final tournament Gareth's identity as a knight, as a lover,
as a member of a blood line has consolidated. Claiming Lyoness' love
openly through the medium of the joust, Gareth is disguised, but this
very ruse serves to identify him as the knight of Many Colours.
'Gareth' closes with a flurry of naming and establishing of bonds.
Arthur refers to Gawain and Gareth as his 'nevewys' (358). Lyoness
and Gareth reject life as paramours and are married, Lynet marries
Gaherys and Aggravaine marries the damsels niece, Dame Lawrell.
Gareth accepts a role within Arthurian society and, although I have
been suggesting this is a necessary stage in his development, Gareth's
limitations also become apparent here. His narrative stops whilst
the two great knights, Lancelot and Tristram, 'departed suddeynly and
wolde nat be knowyn' (363). Gareth's identity and tale have wrapped
themself up, but Lancelot and Tristram continue to face the 'Fair

Unknown' both in their selves and in the Arthurian world of adventure.[349]

In conclusion, <u>Sir Degaré</u> shows the different ways the identity of a single figure can be constructed along a linear agnatic pattern, or a spatial horizontal kin pattern. In <u>Sir Degaré</u> it is enough to find one's blood. In Malory the worth of blood as part of one's identity is questioned and placed within many other frames. Both narratives, however, evince a concern with kinship and lineage as part of the self and they form good examples of how different patterns of kinship can be exploited in a narrative frame.

In the next, final, chapter I will examine the sixteenth century counterparts of the Romances discussed in chapter Two. By means of this comparison I hope to show how the agnatic system of genealogical identity comes to the fore; and how the change in medium from script to print affects presentation of self in the text.

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[349] Benson, pp.107-108 argues that Gareth is a limited figure who never gets beyond the stage of being comfortably off, married and content with his lands as the 'almost possible dream' for a fifteenth century gentleman.

Notions of 'self' find further expression in sixteenth century Romance; in these the strands of genealogy and exemplariness, which I have discussed in the previous chapters, are pushed into a more secular mode which focuses on the achievements of man-made structures.[350] A corresponding shift occurs in the method of production of the texts; in this case a move away from the scribal manuscript and towards a machine printed book. This chapter looks at sixteenth century versions of the fourteenth century Romances discussed in Chapter Two to see whether and, if so, on what scale, changes in distribution and production affect the narratives' self-image and, consequently, their presentation of 'self'. This Chapter is divided into two main sections: section one looks at the changes entailed in a shift from a manuscript to a print culture; section two at individual sixteenth century Romances.[351]

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[350] For a view opposed to mine, in which the importance of religious matter is stressed, see Paul A. Scanlon, 'Pre-Elizabethan Prose Romances in English', Cahiers Elisabethains, 12 (1977), 1-20 (p. 13).

[351] The texts I use are as follows: Helyas, Knight of the Swan in, Early English Prose Romances, vol III, edited by William J. Thoms, second edition (London, 1858), which is a reprint of William Copland's edition of c 1560?, STC no. 7572. Having checked Thoms against a microfilm of the original he appears editorially reliable and I use his edition throughout as a base text. This version is the same as that printed by de Worde c 1522, STC 7571.5 which I have also checked on microfilm, although it is extant only in fragments. It is a reprint of de Worde's 1512 edition, also fragmentary STC 7571, which I have also checked.

1. Script to Print

(a) The Changing Image of the Text.

The change from script to print is not a simple mechanical one but a

catalyst for a whole set of new questions.   Into an earlier config-

uration of poet-scribe-editor-audience we must now add the role of

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Robert the Devil in, Thoms, Vol I which is a reprint, also reli-
able of de Worde's text of 1517?, STC 21071.   Having checked a
microfilm of the original, it agrees with de Worde's 1500? edi-
tion, STC 21070.   I use Thoms as my base text throughout.   Another
version, in verse, possibly printed by Pynson 1510? survives only
in fragments, STC 21071.5; it was copied in MS Egerton 3132 A by
the same scribe who wrote Douce 261.   It was subsequently printed
by Herbert in 1798 and reprinted by W. Carew Hazlitt in, Remains
of the Early Popular Poetry of England (London, 1864).   According
to the British Museum Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts
1931-35, Trustees of the British Museum (London, 1967), p.   323
Hazlitts's edition of Herbert's octavo edition 'reprodu(ces) the
text with a few obvious misprints and less archaic spelling'.
Hazlitt follows the sixteenth century prose rather than Sir
Gowther, but because of its fragmentary state and because its
textual history is so tortuous I do not discuss it in this chap-
ter.   See also Kari Sajavaara, 'The Two English Prose Texts of
Robert The Devil printed by Wynkyn de Worde', Neuphil Mitt, LXIII
(1962), 62-68 and her 'The Sixteenth-Century Versions of Robert
the Devil', Neuphil Mitt, LXXX (1979), 335-347;   R. Flower, 'The
Manuscript of the Poem Roberte the Deuyll', British Museum Quar-
terly, 9 (1934-35), 36-38.

Sir Isumbras, edited by E. V. Utterson in Select Pieces of Early
Popular Poetry, 2 Vols (London, 1817).   This is an editorially
reliable reprint of William Copland's 1565? text, STC 14282.
Thoms and Utterson do silently expand abbreviations and are guilty
of minor omissions, but on the whole reproduce the black letter
print.   This version of Isumbras is the same as the fragmentary
London edition of c 1560.   Two more editions survive only in
fragments: STC 14280.5 printed by John Skot and STC 14280.7
printed by P. Treveris, both c 1530 which I have not been able
to examine since they are located at Harvard University and have
not yet been microfilmed.

Emaré, has not survived in a printed form and there remains no
evidence to suggest that it was ever produced as a book.

the printer. The printer intervenes between the poet-scribe-editor,
such as Robert Thornton or Rate, and his audience; and between a pa-
tron and a text. Manuscripts such as Lincoln 91 and Ashmole 61, which
contain early versions of the Romances under discussion, were products
which bore a personal relationship to their producers, and even man-
uscripts which might have been written commercially, such as the
Auchinleck manuscript, entailed the personal involvement of their
first owner.[352] A book is part of a print run, governed much more by
market-forces, its survival dependent on economics, on an autonomous
and anonymous audience. Dissemination of the text is determined by
the economics of publishing. The Philobiblon of Bishop Aungerville
of Durham, refers to his 'multiplici opportunitate quam habuimus
liborum copiam conquirendi',[353] by implication suggesting how, in the
normal course of events, manuscripts were difficult to come by. There
is a necessity for personal contact, word of mouth, money and influ-
ence.[354] From the late fifteenth century onwards, however, it becomes
possible speak in terms of travelling book sales-men retailing 4to
volumes.[355]

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[352] See Chapter Four p 164

[353] Richard de Bury, Philobiblon, translated by E. C. Thomas and ed-
ited by Michael Maclagan (Oxford, 1960 repr. 1970). The bishop
was an obsessive collector of manuscripts and describes them in
terms of living friends. The work was printed abroad from 1473
onwards and in England from 1598-9 in addition to circulating in
manuscript form.

[354] Philobiblon, Ch. VIII. This edition has been badly bound, for
which reason I do not give page numbers.

[355] Ronald S. Crane, The Vogue of Medieval Chivalric Romance during
the English Renaissance (Wisconsin, 1919), pp. 9-10. H. S.
Bennett, English Books and Readers 1558 to 1603 (Cambridge, 1965),
p. 2.

Moreover, instead of belonging with a host of other texts the printed edition is alone inside its covers; it circulates singly while every copy of itself is identical.[356] The image of itself that the text produces is, therefore, bound to be different from that of the unique manuscript compilation and this affects the presentation of the text and hence, as I will argue, the image of the self which the text constructs.

Derek Pearsall is the most recent critic to tackle the question of difference between a manuscript culture and a print culture, stressing the performative aspect of early medieval Romance.[357] The minstrels' memory of a written text, modified in performance from memory provides directly or indirectly the basis for extant written copies. As he says, this process of re-composition does not produce inferior texts; it is not a downward slope of scribal corruption, rather a text exists in an open and fluid state. The successive acts of writing down are no more than arbitrary stages in the continuously evolving life of the poem. This idea of the process of re-composition seems to me to be crucial when looking at the shift from manuscript to print but we do not have to get embroiled in the question of oral composition by

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[356] Bennett, pp. 296-7 remarks on some late sixteenth century books which filled up left over space at the end with improving verse, or proverbial phrases but 'In the earlier days of printing this would not have been acceptable, for there was always space left for the printer's device...and in addition the colophon which gave the printer's name, his place of business, the year and often the date on which the work was completed'.

[357] Derek Pearsall, 'Middle English Romance and Its Audiences', in Historical and Editorial Studies in Medieval and Early Modern English, edited by Mary-Jo Arne and Hanneke Wirtjes (Gronigen, 1985), pp. 37-47.

minstrels; we have already seen, from manuscript evidence, that copies of a single text vary considerably and are re-modelled by the poet-editor-scribe. The openness of the manuscript text is in direct contrast with the fixity of the printed book, where every copy of an edition is identical and where, there may be scarcely any difference even from edition to edition. Wynkyn de Worde's edition of, for example, <u>Robert the Devil</u> of 1517? differs little from that of 1500?.[358]

In contrast to the consolidated appearance of the printed book, a notion of a unique manuscript 'voice' finds an advocate in Walter J. Ong who supports the idea that in a manuscript culture texts, are sound rather than visual units and are more subtly assimilated to oral utterance than to the world of things.[359] We have already seen that manuscripts were suited to silent reading as well as reading aloud but it is none the less true that no two copies of a text would match as objects. They do not have title pages to identify them as things. For cataloguing purposes they would be identified by an opening <u>incipit</u> which, like an epilogue, often took the form of a conversa-

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[358] For example, where the 1500? version reads (Thoms, p. 11) 'I am now aduysed to make you a knyghte to thentente that ye with other knyghtes, sholde be conuersaut occupye and haunte cheualrye...' the 1517? version simply omits the words 'sholde be conuersaut occupye and'.

[359] Walter J. Ong, 'Orality, Literacy, and Medieval Textualisation', <u>NLH</u>, XVI (1984-85), 1-12. The importance of auditory material is stressed by Ong in his <u>Orality and Literacy: The Technologising of the Word</u> (London, 1982).

tional address. All these signal process rather than closed object. The idea of text as voice is also used by Paul Zumthor, who sees the manuscript text as performance and thus resistant to being identified with an author; it becomes the common property of a group at whose centre it functions. Zumthor sees the manuscript as having a special poetic facility, in order to hold the instantaneous quality of performance, and integrate it into the forward thrust of the discourse.[360] In this 'facility' lies the spatial organisation I discuss in Chapter Two and to which I would allow more scope than Zumthor's analysis allows. In contrast, sixteenth century Romances are fixed, organised on a linear plan with the reader encouraged to turn the numbered pages until the end.

At the risk of making too rigid a dichotomy, we can suggest that a manuscript culture is typified by unique communication and the idea of the voice; print culture is shaped by preservation and presentation of the written word. Printed words make the text less like utterance and more like other tangible things. Printed books have title pages, tables of contents, they feel like containers with labels on - like a box. They are visually ordered in a different way from a manuscript codex. Some of de Worde's Romances have numerous pictures, and chapter headings to entice the reader to follow the story onwards. The crazily printed title pages with major words broken up and inconse-

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[360] Paul Zumthor, 'The Text and the Voice', <u>NLH</u>, XVI (1984-85), 67-92.

quential words set in huge type appeal to the eye; to the single ad-

miring reader silently regarding the page.[361]

Ong also suggests that print is a major factor in the development of

personal privacy. With print there is the production on a large scale

of small portable books for private reading which creates a sense of

the private ownership of words. To listen brings people together to

read encourages people to draw apart.[362] Print cuts across our co-

ordinates in many ways;, we cannot apply the same criteria to a six-

teenth century book as to a fourteenth century manuscript.   Sight

isolates where sound incorporates; sight situates the reader outside

that which he views, whilst sound pours into the listener. Vision

is a dissecting sense; after print and printed maps the world is

something spread out before man. In a manuscript culture man is at

the centre of the world.[363] In the fourteenth century manuscript Ro-

mances which I discuss, the audience is drawn into the text in a

sixteenth century printed book he follows the text spread out before

him.   Individual printers could apply for Royal privileges which

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[361] Ong, Orality and Literacy, pp. 120-121 argues the reverse; that
such pages are evidence for auditory dominance hanging on. It
would be wrong, however, to ignore the notion that manuscripts
were to please visually as well. See Pamela de Witt, 'The Visual
Experience of Fifteenth Century Readers', unpublished Phd.
(Oxford, 1977).

[362] Ong, Orality and Literacy, pp. 130-131. Elizabeth L. Eisenstein,
The Printing Press as An Agent of Change, 2 Vols, (Cambridge,
1979), vol I, pp. 129-136.

[363] Ong, Orality and Literacy, pp. 72-73.

forbade the reproduction of a book by any other than the original printer, as did Richard Pynson in 1518.[364] In 1557 the Stationers Company began to include printers and stationers and acted as a protective guild for them. The advent of a print culture thus seems to encourage closure and fixity and protection of words; it encourages an audience to see what is in print as final.

The new printed title page had more than one function: it attracts a buying public, it advertises a fixed and named text and it advertises the printer himself. A, scribe if he identified himself, would tend to put himself at the end of a work, but a printers emblem, his ego, comes first. Print forces new definitions of literary property and new ideas of ownership and authorship.[365] Manuscripts and printed books differ in mechanics, scale of production and cost.[366] It is possible to estimate the output of a printing age but to ask the question of a manuscript age is an anachronism. Before the middle of the fifteenth century the press was unknown but after 1500 it could

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[364] On privileges see Eisenstein, vol I, p. 120; Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, p. 131; Bennett, pp. 64-68.

[365] Both Ong and Eistenstein stress the emerging importance of the author, but Rudolph Hirsch in *Printing, Selling and Reading 1450-1550* (Wiesbaden, 1967) pp 9-10. points out that it was not until the seventeenth century that authorial rights had any real force.

[366] It is difficult to estimate cost because of lack of consistent evidence, but a copy of *Bevis* in 1498 cost 10d whilst one in 1520 together with (it is not clear whether they were bound together or not) a small tract cost 6d. *Robert the Devil* retailed at 3d and *Isumbras* at 2d. See Crane, p.10.

be found everywhere and with this came new editorial processes on a large scale - proof readers were employed and lists of errata issued, thus encouraging the idea of the text as fixed.

So far, I have been stressing the difference between script and print, but the transition was not sudden. Early printers, in some cases, used scribal abbreviations and preserved the appearance of a manuscript codex.[367] The main impact of print was the advent of mass production. In other areas we can only speculate; for example we do not always know who chose the texts to be printed - was it the printer, the translator, the author or the patron ? We can, however, discern a development from the days of early printing with Caxton, to the practices of his successors.

Caxton did not adopt a title page, but for de Worde it was standard after 1500. Caxton's books sometimes had no titles and on other oc-

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[367] Hirsch, p.1; also Hirsch, 'Scribal Tradition and Innovation in Early Printed Books' in, The Printed Word: its Impact and Diffusion, Varorium reprints (London, 1978), Ch XV; Wynkyn de Worde's Robert The Devil c 1517 is one example of a printed text using abbreviations. MSS could also attempt to look like printed books; Douce 261 (discussed in Chapter Two) has illustrations which appear to be copied off woodcuts in printed books. M. B. Parkes, 'The Influence of the Concepts of ordinatio and compilatio on the Development of the Book' in, Medieval Learning and Literature: Essays Presented to R. W. Hunt, edited by J. J. G. Alexander and M. T. Gibson (Oxford, 1976), pp. 115-141 (p. 135), remarks both that 'The late medieval book differs more from its early medieval predecessors than it does from the printed books of our own day' and that the organisation of the book 'originated in the applications of the notions of ordinatio and compilatio by writers, scribes and rubricators of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries'.

casions several. The <u>Siege of Jerusalem</u> is referred to after the

table of contents as <u>The Siege and Conqueste of Jherusalem by Cristen</u>

<u>Men</u>; at the start of the work as 'Here begynneth the boke intituled

Eracles and also Godfrey of Boloyne'; and in the Epilogue as 'The Last

Siege and Conqueste of Jherusalem'. Not only this but it is rare to

find the author ever mentioned and <u>The Canterbury Tales</u> were issued

without reference to Chaucer, to Caxton himself as printer, and

without a title.[368] Even when Caxton issued an advertisement he makes

no mention of himself but only where his shop is.[369] As an early

printer Caxton may have let the form of his book be influenced by the

manuscript from which he was printing.[370]

To imply there was a simple split between script and print would be

erroneous and un-helpful. The Thornton manuscript shows evidence of

appealing to the eye as well as to the ear - Thornton makes arbitrary

divisions   in   <u>Eglamour</u>,   anticipating   the   practice   in   prose

Romances.[371] Not only did printers copy manuscripts but scribes copied

books and their work could be similar, as with Douce 261. Despite

this gradation between script and print, the shift taken overall had

tremendous impact: mass production, the rise of the role of the

printer, the influence of market-forces, fixity of the text - a com-

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[368] N. F. Blake, <u>Caxton, England's First Publisher</u> (London, 1976),
   p. 107.

[369] Blake, p. 110.

[370] Blake, p. 116.

[371] Derek Pearsall, 'The English Romance in the Fifteenth Century',
   <u>Essays and Studies</u>, XXX (1976) 56-83 (p. 61).

pletely different image of the text is generated. Who, then, formed

the original audience for this new product and how were they envisaged

by the printers ?

(b) The Audience.

With early Romance it was possible to speculate about the audience

by using manuscript evidence; with print, reconstructing the audience

poses new problems. Prologues to the text, such as found in the Knight

of the Swan, may mention illustrious patrons but this may be nothing

more substantial than commercial blurb. The patron may have done no

more than agree to let his name be used; the printer hoping to increase

his sales by 'name-dropping'. The remarks in the text itself are not

necessarily a true statement about the audience. There is a dis-

tinction between the actual audience and the hypothetical target of

the publisher. The text may address itself to noble lords and ladies,

to the aristocracy but it does not follow that they are the audience;

it is not the text's function to remind the reader that he has a lower

social status than he desires. One aim of the Prologue is to persuade

a non- noble reader that he is enjoying and benefiting from literature

hitherto restricted to the privileged few.[372] The reader engages in

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[372] Derek Pearsall, 'Middle English Romance and Its Audiences', p.
3. Cedric E. Pickford, 'Fiction and the Reading Public in the
Fifteenth Century' Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, 45
(1962-3), 423-38 remarks that the true audience of Romance will
never be known; but it seems clear that the number of printed
copies of Romance far outstrips the number of potential aris-
tocratic customers.

the fictive process in that he fictionalises himself in the role the

text offers.[373]

Long, comprehensive printed texts make new demands of their new, wide,

audience. Chapter headings appear to act as signposts for the reader,

helping him find his way along the narrative line. In the earlier

Romances the reader was free to move within the text, repeated inci-

dents, formulae, and tags referring him around the text and out to

other texts.[374] Eisenstein suggests that woodcuts in printed books

had a similar function; using the same cuts in different texts to

signal the reader in a particular direction; on the other hand, as

she also remarks, the practice of re-using cuts could be just care-

lessness.[375] If cuts were a guide to the reader then the audience of

the 1517? edition of <u>Robert the Devil</u> would need an encyclopaedic

knowledge since not one cut in the text is original. One is from a

devotional book of the fifteenth century another from a Ship of Fools

and so on.[376] A reader could not be expected to follow so disparate

and wide ranging a number of cuts. It is more likely that re-use of

cuts was a pragmatic and practical decision. When Caxton set up his

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[373] This is fully discussed by Ong in 'The Writer's Audience is Always
a Fiction', <u>PMLA</u>, 90 (1975), 9-21.

[374] Lesley Lawton, 'The Ilustration of Late Medieval Secular Texts,
with Special reference to Lydgate's "Troy Book"' in, <u>Manuscripts
and Readers in Fifteenth-Century England</u>, edited by Derek Pearsall
(Cambridge, 1983), pp. 41-69. provides a backgound to this situ-
ation in her study of illumination in manuscripts.

[375] Eisenstein, p. 86.

[376] E. Gordon Duff in Alfred W. Pollard, <u>Early Illustrated Books</u>
(London, 1893), p. 238.

press in 1477 there were no English wood engravers although after 1500 cuts were frequently used in books. Almost every book de Worde issued contained illustrations which are used and re-used in numerous texts.[377] It seems that cuts, far from encouraging inter-textuality, favour a consolidation of ideas. For example de Worde's 1517? edition of Robert the Devil has on its title page a woodcut of a Knight in armour on a caparisoned horse with an attendant, which is used again for his edition of Sir Degaré[378] I do not think it is a signal for the audience to read Robert in the light of Degaré but is consolidating a notion of what a knight looks like. In both the 1500? and 1517? editions of Robert the cut of Robert building a strong house in the forest are identical. If we look at Copland's Knight of the Swan[379] the same pragmatism operates. The beginning of every chapter in this edition is illustrated which entails the same cuts being re-used within the work. Thus, one of a King in his court occurs at the start of chapters nineteen, twenty-two and twenty-eight. The spectacular cut of the title page is re-utilised in chapters twenty-seven and thirty- two. Cuts seven to fourteen look as if they belong or have belonged to a set whilst some of the other cuts are badly cobbled together.[380] The cuts appear to exist independently of the text and function as fixatives - they simply say 'this is what a knight/house/King/marriage looks like' irrespective of context. They

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[377] Duff in, Pollard, pp. 223-249.

[378] STC 6470.

[379] STC 7572.

[380] For example that in chapter forty-three.

help the reader along the narrative line rather than encouraging him to dwell in the text, or relate the text to another work.

Coinciding with the introduction of print is a sixteenth century vogue for Romance. Printing made books cheaper and faster and the fifteenth century saw a wider reading public which was cultivated and sought for by the printer. De Worde saw the future of commercial printing in a larger and less exclusive audience than *Caxton aimed at*. According to Pearsall the effect of this was to bring back into favour the earlier verse romances which were sold cheaply.[381] However, prose was popular too and, like verse Romance, retailed in 4to volumes.[382] The range of books printed was large and included Grammars, the Bible, children's books, primers and catechisms, prayer books, proclamations, physiognomy, commentaries, sermons, prognostications and pithy sayings, proverbs, Saint's Lives, Herbals, Dictionaries, books on courtesy, manners, hawking, hunting and fishing, chronicles, fables, books on surgery, works by More and Erasmus. The range of works printed is huge, with Romance forming only a part of the output, but different printers had a degree of specialisation.

Caxton, between 1475 and 1491, printed seven Romances all of which were of French origin and all were prose and all apparently aimed at

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[381] Derek Pearsall,'The English Romance in the Fifteenth century', p. 83.

[382] For full lists of specific printer's out-put see STC and E. Gordon Duff <u>Handlists of English Printers 1501-56</u>, (London, 1895 and 1913)

an aristocratic audience.[383] De Worde reprints some of Caxton's Ro-
mances and broadens the repertoire to include metrical Romances,
reaching an even wider audience.[384] From now until 1575 there is a
balance of fourteenth and fifteenth century metrical Romances and more
recent prose translations from the French.[385] This balance is re-
flected in the Romances I discuss as Helyas, and Robert the Devil are
prose translations from the French, and Isumbras, and Degaré (which
I discussed in Chapter Four), are metrical versions of English origin.
Having outlined a theoretical background involved in the shift from
script to print, what of the printers themselves, and their relation
to the Romances they issued ? De Worde was the most important printer
of Romances, and I will concentrate mainly upon his work in this
section.

(c) The Printers.

Individual printers did not have a captive market, the demand for
books in the fifteenth century lead to a massive import trade of books
printed abroad. In 1484 an act was passed which stipulated that any
foreign bookseller or printer might import books into Britain, and
that any foreign scrivener or bookbinder might live in Britain. The
result was to increase the book trade and encourage foreign stationers
to settle in England; usually this was in he area around St Paul's

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[383] Crane, p. 3.

[384] Crane, pp. 4-5.

[385] Crane, p. 1.

in London. Many books in English were imported also, and sold cheaply, so during de Worde's lifetime there was fierce overseas competition.[386]

During the sixteenth century foreign trade continued to increase, but so did the number of English printers - who started to fight back. Legal intervention also helped; an act of 1523 forbids any alien to take apprentices unless they be English. Another Act of 1534 makes it unlawful for any person in the realm to sell printed books brought from outside the King's obeysaunce; nor could books be bought from anyone not a denizen. However, de Worde and his contemporaries had to fight to maintain their position in the market.

Caxton chose books, translated and edited them, whilst de Worde, in his employ, looked after the technical side of production and was 'in no sense a scholar'.[387] In his early years of independence, de Worde kept Caxton's elaborate format and reprints some of his texts, which suggests he was aiming at the same or a similar courtly audience.[388] In 1500 he moves his shop from Westminster to Fleet Street and further

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[386] For this information and most of that which follows I am indebted to Henry R. Plomer, Wynkyn de Worde and his Contemporaries from the Death of Caxton to 1535 (London, 1925).

[387] Plomer, p. 44. Typographically de Worde was forward looking, using a title page when Caxton did not; Caxton dies in 1491 leaving the business to de Worde whose typographical skill is amply illustrated by one of his early books, printed in 1494, the Horae ad Usum Sarum - a long a difficult task to undertake mainly because of the use made of red ink.

[388] Crane, p. 4.

broadens his potential audience from London to the whole of Great Britain.[389] From now on de Worde steadily increases his output. Liturgical and devotional works are in the majority but there is a greater number of Romances and poetical works than ever before.[390] De Worde had a higher output of books than any other printer before 1600 and : 'clearly saw that the way to succeed was not to produce large folios for the rich,but small and popular books of all classes for the general public.'[391] There is, however, a problem in determining output for de Worde or any other printer in that so much of their work must have been lost.[392] De Worde obviously saw a market for Romances and frequently printed off cheap quarto volumes of, for example, Degare and Bevis.[393] He is a so-called 'popular printer',[394] with no evidence to suggest he wrote, translated or edited himself.[395] De Worde seems to have felt his way into markets as he saw fit, using also the advice of Robert Copland to guide him.[396] Certainly he printed fifteen Romances, of which twelve had not been printed before.[397]

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[389] Blake, Caxton, p. 190.

[390] Plomer, pp. 56-59.

[391] DNB, Vol XXI, p. 915.

[392] James Moran, Wynkyn de Worde: Father of Fleet Street, second edition (London, 1976), p. 32; Plomer, p. 66.

[393] Moran, p. 14.

[394] Plomer, p. 60.

[395] DNB, p. 914.

[396] Plomer, p. 60.

[397] Moran, p. 48. Moran also deduces that de Worde 'contributed some

His output varies quite considerably; he could issue badly illustrated cheap work,[398] but the <u>Knight of the Swan</u> of 1512 is printed on vellum, perhaps one of a few specially printed for presentation with the remainder of the issue being on paper.[399] This same year sees him printing a number of educational texts.[400] Output seems to be determined both by market forces. As regards literature he keeps up production of Romance, Chronicle, poetical satire and chap books. Most probably the print runs were small (so as not to tie up the press for long periods of time), and the re-prints the result of demand.[401]

Blake, however, notes that de Worde continuously prints contemporary writers, which indicates a growing awareness of the figure of the 'Author':

> it meant that de Worde would have had less control over what he published, since he would seem to have published anything his writers produced.

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    15 per cent' of the total output of printed books before 1557 and that '70 per cent of the books printed by him were printed for the first time'.

[398] Plomer, pp. 69 & 71.

[399] Plomer, p. 81. He does not suggest to whom the work was to be presented nor does the microfilm of the original shed any light on the matter; the obvious choice, if we are to believe the prologue, is the Duke of Buckingham.

[400] Plomer, p. 81; Blake, <u>Caxton</u> p. 191. It is not always possible to date prints accurately, but <u>Helyas</u> appears to be the only Romance printed this year. I do not believe, however, because <u>Helyas</u> was printed in the same year as a number of educational texts it was perceived merely as such.

[401] Plomer, p. 78.

De Worde, from 1513 onwards, prints the grammatical works of Oxford

laureate Robert Whittinton and the writings of Richard Whitford a monk

of Syon.   Not only this, but when Treveris, 'pirated editions of

Whittington's texts, de Worde countered with a revised edition which

contained a sharp attack on Treveris for his inaccurate printing.'[402]

Robert Copland seems to have been in the service of Caxton, but in

exactly which capacity is uncertain; he appears as a literary adviser

to de Worde, to whom he frequently refers as 'my maister'.   In addi-

tion, he was both an author and a printer, translating from the French

and contributing verses to several books.[403] Often Copland's prologues

and epilogues complain about the problems of printing and bookselling.

He is aware of a need to 'correct' manuscripts without emending them;

thus we have a specific instance of a printer and author evincing a

desire for fixity of the text, for a correct text.

Like de Worde he was aware of market forces, he took advantage of the

fall of Rhodes to the Turks to print a book on the Knights

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[402] Blake, <u>Caxton</u> pp. 190-191.   Blake, p. 90 also remarks that de
   Worde printed manuscripts from the library at Syon and gave books
   to it; one of these being the <u>Orchard of Syon</u>, a translation of
   the <u>Dialogues</u> of Katherine of Sienna. Syon was a mixed house which
   moved from Twickenham to its new foundation at Syon in 1432. It
   comprised an 'abbess and fifty-nine nuns, with seventeen
   monks...and eight lay-brothers' according to David Knowles and
   R. Neville Hadcock, <u>Medieval Religious Houses</u> (London, 1953), p.
   178.For a full account of Whittinton see the Introduction to <u>The</u>
   <u>Vulgaria of John Stanbridge and the Vulgaria of Robert</u>
   <u>Whittinton</u>, edited by Beatrice White, EETS (London, 1932).

[403] DNB, vol IV, pp. 1097-98.   For much of the information which
   follows I am indebted to F. C. Francis, <u>Robert Copland Sixteenth</u>
   <u>Century Translator and Printer</u> (Glasgow, 1961).

Hospitallers; and he issued the first Mariners Guide. His verses

often illustrate this awareness of his public:

> Newes/ newes/ newes haue ye ony newes
> Myne eres ake/ to here you call and crye
> Ben bokes made with whystelynge and whewes
> Ben ther not yet ynow to your fantasye...[404]

By the late 1530's his output was slowing down and records of his work

and life at this time are scarce. The last book he is known to have

printed appeared in 1547. After this the business passed to William

Copland.[405]

William Copland is even more of an enigma than Robert Copland, to whom

he may have been related. An original member of the Stationers Com-

pany the works he printed appear to have been miscellaneous. Amongst

many religious works are also Morte d'Arthur, Bevis, Guy, Triamour,

Helyas, Octavian, Richard Coeur de Lion, Degaré and Eglamour, plus

Isumbras and The Squire of Low Degree.[406]

De Worde dies in 1535 and William Copland in 1568. The other printers

of Romance in this period also appear to have a mixed output but little

is known about them and much of their work must have perished. As

Hirsch puts it, we are left with the conclusion that for the fifteenth

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[404] Prologue to the Parliament of Fowls in Francis, p. 33.

[405] Francis, pp. 43-4.

[406] See DNB, vol IV, p.1099; and E. Gordon Duff and others, Hand-lists
English Printers 1501-1556, pt iv (London, 1913); pages are not
numbered sequentially in this edition and so are not given.
Scanlon, p. 17 remarks that 'almost all' of William Copland's
Romances were published in folio editions, however, Duff lists
only two: the Morte d'Arthur and Recuile of the Histories of
Troy. Scanlon offers no evidence for his claim.

century our knowledge of book production is 'satisfactory', but for the first half of the sixteenth it is merely 'fragmentary'.[407]

Having provided a background to sixteenth century printed texts, I will now examine particular Romances.

2. The Romances

The sixteenth century versions of Romance exist in an interesting relation to their fourteenth century predecessors; differences in tone and slant are clearly exemplified in their openings. The most interesting of these is the Prologue to Helyas, the printed version of the Chevalier Assigne.

This prose prologue, unlike the Chevalier, refers to specific historical persons and to chronologically dateable events. It informs the reader that the work has been commissioned by Edward, Duke of Buckingham, Earl of Hereford, Stafford and Northampton. The text itself concerns the ancestry of Godfrey of Boulogne, Conqueror of Jerusalem. The translator of the narrative from the French, Robert Copland, states that this version was commissioned so as to preserve the record of the ancestry and history of Helyas, Godfrey and, by extension, Buckingham, since he is a descendant of Helyas; the Knight of the Swan should be as famous in England as he is on the Continent.

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[407] Hirsch, p. 125.

Further, the text is to provide a good example to the reader. As a history it should inspire the reader to emulate the good in it and shun the evil. Copland tells the audience that the text is designed to 'encourage and styre euery lusty and gentell herte by...exemplyficacyon'.[408] This prologue illustrates the desire in print to preserve texts, to keep them correct and fixed. It also shows a desire to form a chain of 'characters', to preserve the fame of Helyas (in the text), of Godfrey (in history), and Buckingham (in contemporary time). Robert the Devil, also in prose, does not have a dedicatory prologue, but its opening evinces a similar desire to preserve the story. The texts states from the outset that it is a record of Robert's life:

> Here begynneth the lyfe of the moost myscheuoust Robert the Deuyll, which was afterwarde called the seruant of God.[409]

The plot, therefore, in essence is quite clearly laid out - Robert the Devil will become a servant of God. Robert, we are told, belongs to a family of Dukes in Normandy and the story begins on Christmas Day, a day of regenerative connotations. The narrative then focuses in on human affairs, on human actions, and provides us with Robert's genealogy, recounting the events that led up to his birth. Emphasis, as in Helyas, falls on the importance of family ancestry and genealogy. The audience is being offered a complete text-object and asked to follow along its story line.

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[408] Helyas, p. 15.

[409] Robert, p. 3.

These two prose opening are unlike their earlier counterparts, but with Sir Isumbras, which retains a verse form, the differences in content are not so striking. It is a question of degree rather than of direction. The opening stanza allocates to the external audience a passive role; 'Lordynges listen and you shal here' (1), and later 'Ye shall well heare' (7). Text and external audience are clearly separated out and the tale itself is past history; it is of 'eldydrs that befor us were' (2). Outside and above this human history is 'Jesu Christ heauen kynge' (4). The world of Heaven is dangled like a carrot in front of the 'eldyrs' as 'mede' which they then receive at the end of the text. The narrative is comfortingly self-assured and complete. This is unlike the earlier version which offers the audience a more active role and which denies that audience certainty even in its closing stanza.[410] As in the openings of Helyas and Robert, the later Isumbras sees the outcome of the text as fixed, and it focuses on a central figure whose story line and ancestral line we are to follow and, by so doing, preserve.

De Worde's predecessor, Caxton, shows an interest in his prologues, in the exemplariness of texts and in the figure of Godfrey. For instance the prologue to Charles the Great tells us that:

> For the werkes of the auncient and olde peple ben for to gyve
> to us ensaumple to lyve in good and vertuous operacions digne
> and worthy of helth in folowyng the good and eschewyng the
> evyl.[411]

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[410] See my Chapter Two, p.   .

[411] N. F. Blake, Caxton's Own Prose (London, 1973), p. 66.

This is Caxton's reason for printing the Book of King Arthur, and for

having 'reduced into Englische the noble hystorye and lyf of Godefroy

of Bolyon, Kyng of Jherusalem, last of the...[9] worthy'.[412] Caxton

in his edition of the Morte d'Arthur in 1485 for Edward IV, claims

that Arthur is better known abroad than in his own country; Copland

claims this is true of Godfrey also, but the preface to Caxton's Siege

of Jerusalem, printed in 1481, gives us a description of Godfrey, and

dates him as living four hundred years before the printing of the

book. He is a glorious defender of Christian territory now re-

conquered by the Turks. Caxton explicitly links Godfrey's past deeds

with contemporary events emphatically declaring that 'this noble

hystorye... is no fable ne fayned thynge, but alle that is therin [is]

trewe'.[413] It is printed to inspire Caxton's contemporaries to fight

the Turks and achieve a renewed peace since the Turks have 'late this

sayd yere' overun Rhodes, and 'Ydronte', taken over Naples and are

threatening Italy. Tales of 'olde peple' are, for Caxton, relevant

to contemporary events, and the world is spread out in front of the

reader for him to view.

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[412] Blake, Caxton, p. 67. These nine worthies were a popular motif
in the Middle Ages and often associated with Ubi Sunt themes.
The Parlement of the Thre Ages, edited by M. Y. Offord, EETS
(London, 1959), p. xl; on the nine worthies see also Roger Sherman
Loomis, 'Versions of the Nine Worthies', Mod Phil, 15 (1917-18),
211-19. They usually comprised Alexander, Hector, Julius Caesar;
Joshua, David, Judas Maccabeus; Arthur, Charlemagne and Godfrey.
Sometimes changes appear in he list as when a local hero is added
to form a tenth worthy, or when Guy of Warwick replaces Godfrey.
I can find no reason as to why Guy and Godfrey are interchangea-
ble.

[413] Blake, Caxton, p. 140.

Instead of linking into a world of absolutes, as earlier Romance can do, Helyas attaches itself to a background of ancestral or pseudo-historical concerns.[414] As a sign or symbol of identity, however, the swan is obscure both in origin and meaning.[415]

Swans were appropriated by medieval nobility in a number of ways. They are birds widely used in heraldry, and as I have already remarked in Chapter Two, the Swan Knight was adopted as ancestor by both the Bohuns and the Beauchamps. From the thirteenth century onwards the nobility became increasingly concerned with descent and identification by genealogical lines. McFarlane points out that most families actually came very near extinction at some stage in their histories and their survival was always in the balance; only a handful of families managing to hold on to the male line. He also suggests that by 1450 the nobility was much more circumscribed and graded than in

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[414] On the historical figure of Godfrey see, J. C. Andressohn, The Ancestry and Life of Godfrey of Bouillon (Bloomington, 1967).

[415] As is demonstrated by Valentina Cohn, 'The Image of the Swan in French Literature', unpublished Phd. (Stanford, 1967); and R. L. Schurfranz, 'The French Swan-Knight Legend', unpublished Phd. (North Carolina, 1959). In some ways the swan is a ludicrous icon of identity: both Chaucer and Havelock suggest it is a bird which makes a good roast dinner. The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, edited by F. N. Robinson, second edition (Oxford, 1978); 'General Prologue' to the Canterbury Tales 1. 206; Havelock in, French and Hale., 1. 1726. Beryl Rowland, Blind Beasts: Chaucer's Animal World (Toronto, 1971), p. 61 and pp. 89-90 observes that the Swan was associated with the Company of Vintners and, consequently, the bibulous. The Book of Beasts, edited and translated by T. H. White (London, 1954 repr. 1969), a twelfth century bestiary, sheds little light on the subject. It concentrates on the swans ability to sing - their long necks reverberate!

1300.[416] Carol Fewster has demonstrated that the Romance of <u>Guy of</u>

<u>Warwick</u> was used as political propaganda by the Beauchamp family.

It may be that <u>Helyas</u> shares in this background of politico-

genealogical concern.[417] <u>Helyas</u> may have had a function for the Duke

of Buckingham, in trying to establish his noble genealogy and help

promulgate his value politically.

The use of literature in historico-politico ways has been documented

by R. S. Loomis in his article 'Edward I, Arthurian Enthusiast', where

he points to instances of Edward capitalising on the Arthurian myth

for political and genealogical propaganda.[418] More important to my

purpose is that he also tapped the legend of the swan knight. In 1306

he held a great feast of the swans. Edward knighted his son, and

nearly three hundred other young men, with great ceremony. The pro-

ceedings of chivalry were given a political slant when two swans were

brought in and laid on the table; both Edward and his son swore oaths

over the birds. They swore: '"before God and the swans" to avenge

the death of Comyn and the insult to the church; and, that done, to

fight only with infidels in the Holy Land.'[419] Loomis sees this as a

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[416] K. B. McFarlane, <u>The Nobility of Later Medieval England</u> (Oxford, 1973), p. 78.

[417] Fewster, pp. 182-236. It is this context that the ownership by Eleanor Bohun of a french copy of the Swan Knight story become significant. See Chapter Two, p 81

[418] Roger Sherman Loomis, 'Edward I, Arthurian Enthusiast' in, <u>Studies in Medieval Literature by Roger Sherman Loomis</u> (New York, 1970), pp. 275-288.

[419] Maurice Powicke, <u>The Thirteenth Century 1216-1307</u>, second edition (Oxford, 1962), p. 515.

purely Arthurian gesture but it seems rash to utterly ignore the possibility of knowledge of the swan knight and Godfrey of Boulogne. If Edward was using Arthurian literature as political propaganda to consolidate his identity as King of all Britain, then why not also capitalise on Godfrey of Boulogne, one of the nine worthies and descended from the swan knight ? Denholm-Young has conjectured that Edward I may have considered founding an order of swans as his grandson nearly founded an Arthurian order; but when it came in 1348 it was called the Order of the Garter.[420]

Moreover, despite the claims of the printed prologues that Godfrey was not well known in England, the swan knight was known to be related to the English royal family. A descendant of the swan knight, Count Eustace of Boulogne, married Edward the Confessor's sister. Their son, Eustace III, had a daughter Maud who married King Stephen of England. He founded Faversham Abbey and in one of its books, copied into the Red Book of the Exchequer, is the earliest mention in England of the tale of the knight of the swan. Written it Latin, it outlines the connection, through marriage, of the Swan Knight to the English Royal family.[421]

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[420] N. Denholm-Young, 'The Tournament in the Thirteenth Century' in, Studies in Medieval History presented to F. M. Powicke, edited by R. W. Hunt and others (Oxford, 1948), pp. 240-68 (n. 3, p. 266).

[421] Anthony R. Wagner, 'The Swan Badge and the Swan Knight', Archaelogia, XCVII (1959), 127-138 (p. 135). The Red Book of the Exchequer, pt II, edited by Hubert Hall (London, 1896), pp. 753-754.

All this provides a background to the first English prose edition of the Swan Knight text. The story was known in England despite Denholm-Young's claim that' The story never seems to have achieved wide popularity in England.'[422] The Swan symbol was established in use in heraldry, and heraldry itself indicates the growing concern by the nobility over identification through blood line or family. The swan figures in the Siege of Caerlaverock as the arms of the, historically authentic, Robert de Tony and is stated to be symbolic of his descent from Godfrey of Boulogne.[423] In 1301 de Tony's personal seal bears the legend 'Chevalier al Cing'.[424] Mathew Paris remarks that de Tony was descended from the famous Swan Knights 'qui a Cigni nomine intitulantur' which implies that the Swan Knight story did have a certain currency.[425]

The links between the swan knight legend and historical figures are tantalisingly fragmentary and there is always the danger of over-

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[422] Denholm-Young, p. 266; Scanlon, p. 13 also reiterates Thoms claim that the story was unsuccessful.

[423] 'The Siege of Caerlaverock' in, Eight Thirteenth Century Rolls of Arms in French and Anglo-Norman Blazon, edited by Gerard J. Brault (Pennsylvania, 1973), pp. 101-122, 11. 418-422.

[424] Wagner, 'The Swan Badge and the Swan Knight', plate XXXVII item k. Wagner's plates illustrate the widespread use of the swan sign in badges and seals by a group of aristocratic families; he also provides a comprehensive table showing how these families are interlinked.

[425] Richard Vaughan, Mathew Paris (Cambridge, 1958 repr. 1979), p. 177. See also Gerard J. Brault, Early Blazon: Heraldic Terminology in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries with Special Reference to Arthurian Literature (Oxford, 1972), p. 54.

stating those which remain.[426] It does seem, however, that there was

a group of noble houses using the legend in some form to increase

or consolidate their fame. The Rous Rolls written at the close of

the fifteenth century by 'antiquarian' John Rous, for the Earls of

Warwick, specifically state that the Earls of Hereford, Warwick and

Stafford all descend from the Knight of the Swan.[427] Thus, late in

the fifteenth century the Staffords are directly associated with the

swan knight; the Duke of Buckingham, patron of Helyas, was Edward

Stafford.

The Duke of Buckingham was a politically active member of the court

and was executed at Tower Hill in 1521, 17 May. As an extremely large

landowner and a very wealthy man he became the mouthpiece of the

barons, voicing their discontent and their dislike of Wolsey. Al-

though Buckingham was close to the King, the latter was nervous of

his power and it was said in Stafford's life time that he attempted

to be more royal than the King.[428] He was 'always most impressed by

the grandeur of his own descent'.[429] When Henry Tudor had an inventory

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[426] As N. F. Blake remarks in 'John Lydgate and William Caxton', Leeds
Studies in English, ns XVI (1985), 272-289 (p. 179), a printer
may have a number of 'patrons' who might be too young to have
commissioned the work or whom the printer may not actually know
or have met.

[427] Wagner, 'The Swan Badge and the Swan Knight', p. 129; The Rous
Rolls, edited by Charles Ross (Gloucester, 1980), pp. xv & Ch.
18.

[428] DNB, vol XVIII, p. 854; for a full account of Buckingham's life
before his execution for treason in 1521 see McFarlane, pp.
207-212. See also David Mathew, The Courtiers of Henry VIII
(London, 1970).

[429] Mathew, p. 58.

taken of Royal possessions, after the death of his son, there was in

the Wardrobe of the Tower of London 'a piece of tapestry into which

was woven the pedigree of the Duke of Buckinham, having a border of

his arms.'[430] He started improvements on what would have been, if

finished, a magnificent house called 'Thornbury'. He ordered the

gardens to be laid out with another of his heraldic emblems, the

Stafford knot.[431] One of the features of the building were the large

windows, the chief window of the Great Hall being mullioned and:

> profusely carved with the armorial badges of the family just
> as, on a smaller scale, are the jambs of a doorway downstairs,
> whereon accompanying the Stafford knot we find the swan...and
> many others.[432]

Helyas may have been a part of his drive for fame, for consolidating

his position. We do not know for certain, but we can say that it was

circulating in courtly circles and had as its patron a member of a

group deeply concerned with ancestry and political power; aware of

the propagandist uses of Romance.[433]

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[430] Gladys Scott Thomson, Two Centuries of Family History (London,
1930), p.18.

[431] Mathew, p.63.

[432] H. Avray Tipping, English Homes, Period II, Vol I , second edition
(London, 1929), p. 88. A photograph of the doorway is included
on p. 91.

[433] Buckingham himself appears in later literature: Shakespeare's
King Henry VIII, edited by R. A. Foakes, third edition (London,
1957); see especially his speech concerning his intertwined an-
cestry and fortunes with royalty Act II, scene i, 11. 100-136.
he is portrayed as opposing Wolsey. In some way, then, Buckingham
has achieved his desire for fame through literary texts.

I have already remarked that Helyas is printed on expensive vellum and that other copies on, cheaper, paper may have been issued.[434] For the non-noble reader it may be that the text works as a mirror offering an image of the self writ large. The text has already flattered the reader into thinking of himself as noble and 'gentyl', and the narrative helps the reader to become what he already is. The text commemorates a noble ancestral family, and the external audience, placed in the role of ancestral nobility, commemorate the text by reading it. Notions of genealogy and self-construction form both an important background to the circumstances of the text's production and, as I will argue, are important for the narrative's conception of self.

The Book of Honour and Arms (1590) neatly sums up the concerns in Helyas:

> Men may bee reputed noble three waies. First, by nature or discent of Auncesters, which is the vulgar opinion. Secondlie, for vertue onelie, which the Philosophers affirme. Thirdlie, by mixture of auncient gentle race with Vertue, which is indeede the true and most commendable kind of nobilitee.[435]

These different ways of self definition are central to Helyas and are foregrounded in its prologue. Moreover, if one did not actively pursue nobility then one was in danger of forfeiting any one might already possess:

> He that ioyneth to his gentilnes nobles of good condicions is to prayse, and he that holdeth him content with the gentilnes

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[434] See above, p. 200.

[435] Bornstein, p. 122.

that cometh of his kynne with-oute addynge therto some good
condicions scholde not be hoolden noble.[436]

The self, then, can be conceived of as actively building itself and
as having a duty to be true to itself. Copland's text exhibits faith
in this sort of structuring. The world of his text is one where people
consolidate who and what they are, and what is said to happen does.
Recapitulation in the narrative acts not as re-evaluation but a con-
firmation. The text and the people within it are true to themselves
at all times. The process is one of accretion, but accretion of the
same values; the self is always building itself yet remaining the
same.

Helyas irrespective of his changes of role - King or Hermit, remains
the same, a defender of right, pious knight, righter of wrongs and
founder of a dynasty which produces Godfrey of Boulogne. Godfrey
mirrors, and is a continuation of, his father; he follows the example
set by Helyas and performs the same functions; he fights oppression
and champions the Christian cause. Alternatives are slowly shut down
by the narrative; Beatrice is, and remains, innocent, Matabrynne
is, and dies evil, the children remain children despite their swan
suits. Above it all is an omniscient God overseeing events but never
so close a part of them as in the earlier Romance. As suggested by
the Prologue, people become what they already are; if anything they

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[436] Christine de Pisan Epistle d'Othea translated by Stephen Scrope
in 1440. Quoted in Bornstein, p. 60. These concerns resembles
those of the earlier 'Wife of Bath's Tale' discussed in Chapter
One, pp. ⌐ ⌐   ⌐

intensify their existence by belonging to a genealogical chain of replication.

In terms of incident, Copland's is a much larger version of the story and the pace is more leisurely than the Chevalier Assigne. Copland begins with an account of Matabrynne's marriage, which was based on covetousness. He follows this with the description of Beatrice and Oriants' meeting in the forest. The chain of events or narrative history is thus much longer than in the Chevalier. Copland's text raises possibilities present in earlier Romances, such as meeting a fairy mistress in the woods, only to move back into a more genealogical and pseudo-historical mode. Impressed by Beatrice's reasonable speech and demeanour, Oriant marries her and soon the lady is happily expecting his heir. The action of the scene containing the fateful words regarding the bearing of more than one child is also quite different from the earlier Romance. It is the Queen her- self, not Oriant, who draws attention to the woman with twins and Beatrice is already expecting, unlike the earlier Beatrice who is pregnant with seven children only after she speaks. The Queen's words in Chevalier allow evil access to the world but Copland's text is more interested in the figure of Matabrynne than in the abstract operations of fate. Although the text mentions that Beatrice will regret her words, her subsequent suffering is a result of Matabrynne's evil 'character', rather than an instance of a universal possibility.

The text has already suggested that Matabrynne is wealthy and her marriage based on, not qualitative, but economic grounds; she also

objects to Oriant's marriage on a monetary basis, and is 'hevy and angrie' that Oriant refuses to take a rich bride and accrue her lands 'by succession' (p. 30). Her destruction of the seven children is planned well in advance of their birth, both stemming from and rotating around a cash economy. Matabrynne bribes the midwife both with cash and a promise of social advancement for her family. The action is arranged in a logical chain of events with each part of the story having its root in a preceding episode and itself looking forward to a subsequent and consequent part of the narrative. As we have already seen, the Chevalier is a much more disjunctive text, more like a series of shocking vignettes, whilst Helyas possesses an inexorable story line. In the Chevalier it is starkly stated:

> But whenne it drowȝe to þe tyme she shulde be delyuered,
> Ther mooste no womman come her nere but she þat was cursed,
> His moder Matabryne þat cawsed moche sorowe   (37-39).

These lines imply ironic chance with the force of destiny. In Helyas, Beatrice is committed to Matabrynne's care because Matabrynne is Oriant's mother. A past generation is to look after the future generation; she of all people is concerned with lineage, and this leads her into the desire to murder Beatrice and her offspring. This impulse is not like the universal and inexplicable evil in the Chevalier, instead it is planned by and stems from Matabrynne.

Matabrynne is perverse and hypocritical, and evil motivation is rooted in her. She speaks as though she were in accord with Oriant but:

> these wordes saide she with mouthe, but not with herte...she
> cesed not to murmure in her selfe...and malignousli thought
> alwai to put therin som diversite, and separacion (p. 30.).

Such hypocrisy is not available in the earlier text, it does not arise, but in this text the issue of being true to one's self paradoxically involves hypocrisy. Matabrynne is always playing on these two façades and in so doing gains a certain amount of control over events in the text. She is an example of a self constructing itself in contradistinction to its lineage, with economics forming an alternative system to that of genealogy. The issue is one of quantity versus quality. The text is much more interested in the problems these bring in this world, than in exploring the universal possibilities of the Chevalier.

Faced with Matabrynne's accusations and thrown into prison Beatrice is not presented as saint-like as in Chevalier, but as her reasonable self. Too rational, she believes herself to have produced whelps not children, as Matabrynne declares, and can only logically attribute this as a punishment from God for a sin she cannot remember having committed. The text is linear in interlocking ways. That is, structurally it is linear with each episode part of a chain which effect is re-enforced by the chapter headings which inform the reader of the episode's past, present and future functions. Thematically Helyas is concerned with lineage and its role in self construction. Finally, as we see here, the figures in the narrative operate lineally. In order to account for her present situation Beatrice has logically to work out a sequence of events which will lead her to prison, however unlikely they may be in terms of her self.

If the figures within the text rationalise out what they think are the actions of God, they also enter into debates about the human operations of justice. Chapter XI witnesses Oriant calling together an assembly to debate his wife's conduct and her fate. In this section the claims of the church are pitted against those of the state, restating the opposition of quality versus quantity in different terms. The church is in favour of imprisoning Beatrice and hope that God will intervene at some point to indicate her guilt or otherwise; which stance forms an indication of how distant God is from the narrative. The state want Beatrice burnt so Oriant can re-marry and provide an heir. Neither side wins since Oriant refuses either to burn her or re-marry. Empirical evidence is emphasised, for internal and external audiences, as Matabrynne perverts the course of justice, producing a false eye-witness claim that Beatrice tried to poison the King. Helyas when he arrives at court gives a verbal account of his ancestry then politely offers to stay in prison whilst his evidence is checked. (p.79). Proof of what the self is, is required for the narrative to progress; intuitive recognition plays no part in this Romance. Neither Beatrice nor Oriant are intuitively drawn to Helyas; there is no instantaneous recognition of truth, as there is in Chevalier. Beatrice asks Oriant to accept Helyas' story, simply because he seems to want to uphold their honour. There is no immediate access to truth of the self. Subsequently Oriant does check Helyas' story by visiting the hermit. Nothing like this occurs in the earlier version. There is no strong feeling of the operation of grace and chance or revelation, instead the text moves along a path of confirmation and accountability. This process is continued with the treatment of

Beatrice. First she is freed and then Helyas fights for her, as visible proof that she is innocent.

Helyas has God's backing, but he is a much more secular figure than the young Chevalier. The narrative takes pains to ensure that the audience knows that Helyas is unusually 'parfite in his adolence' (p. 65). Unlike Chevalier he has a confidence and assurance and makes plain to his audience that he knows exactly what it is he must do:

> I am come hyther at the only commaundement of God...to tell you the verite of the cause and of al the fait wherfore ye ben here assembled (p. 77).

These impress the King who thinks to 'himselfe' that Helyas is a token of God; God is not cut out of the narrative but emphasis falls on the achievements of the human. God is a force in, but not the focus of, the text. Helyas' armour is not, as it is in the earlier version, mysterious, but tailor-made for him on his father's orders, as befits a prince of the realm. He might be the 'right arme of God' (p. 85.), but he is not vouchsafed the mysterious fire and adder of the chevalier, instead he has simply the might of a man fighting in a right cause.

Once Matabrynne and her henchmen have been disposed of, there remain only the swan children to be dealt with. The concern of the Chevalier was with divine providence, Helyas concentrates more on secular, royal, grace. The goldsmith called to return the chains is terrified of offending 'riall maiestie' (p. 92). Helyas restores Marcus' sight; Helyas is central to the narrative as a 'good knight' (p. 94), who

achieves objectives through prayer in a way very different from the unknowing power of the Chevalier.

Copland's text invites its audiences to witness justice being done, in the words that open the following chapter, 'Now ye ought to wit or we procede any ferther...' (p.94). Explaining itself and recapitulating as it goes along, the text evolves in linear fashion with continual checking against itself along its length. The children return to their 'propre humayne forme' (p.96); ie. in this text there is such a thing as a correct self, with the one remaining swan being comforted with the words:

> My dere brother my freende, have somwhat pacience, and discomforte youi not. For I shall make so meeke and humble praiers unto God almighti for you, that yet I shall se you ones a noble knight (p. 96).

Helyas offers solace to the King and Queen and the swan proffers his thanks. The chapter ends with the baptism of the children, and a feast in the palace witnessed by the internal and external audiences.

Instead of stopping abruptly as does the Chevalier, Copland continues his story until the birth of Godfrey and the start of his knightly deeds. The swan is given a function in the narrative as Helyas' guide, and ultimately regains his human shape. Copland closes the narrative with a reference to Godfrey's conquest of Jerusalem, thus confirming the narrators authoritative voice. We are given a perspective on a line of inheritance, qualities of self passing from father to son each endlessly mirroring the other in a secular eternity.

The genealogical and the pseudo-historic are important in the six-
teenth century version of <u>Chevalier Assigne</u>. The earlier text pruned

biographical detail and linear concerns in order to concentrate on

the nature of man and his place in a universal scheme of things.

Copland's version has a secular genealogy, and the world is spread

out before man with God presiding over it but slightly disconnected

from it. Where the early text focused largely on the intra personal,

the later alters the focus to concentrate on the issues of secular

genealogy and moves towards a more 'biographic' presentation of self

in terms of a man centred world.

Are similar sorts of changes occurring in the other Romances ?

Robert the Devil

The story of Robert the Devil was well known throughout Europe, but

de Worde is the first in England to print it, in prose form, translated

from a French version.[437] Exactly which is the French original is open

to debate.[438] The versions fall into two groups: those with a

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[437] <u>Sir Gowther</u>, edited by Karl Breul (Oppeln, 1886), pp. 198-207.
lists numerous versions of the story; see also Laura Hibbard
Loomis, <u>Medieval Romance in England</u> (New York, 1924), pp. 49-51.
The Romance of <u>Sir Gowther</u> stands in a similar relation to <u>Robert
the Devil</u>, as <u>Chevalier Assigne</u> does to <u>Helyas</u>. In both cases the
earlier text forms a unique abridgement of a well-known story
which is not printed in England until the sixteenth century.

[438] Loomis, p. 49 refers to a twelfth century version as 'The ori-
ginal' whilst Thoms, p. xvii suggests it is a French print of
1496. A source study on the scale required to be of use is beyond
the scope and aim of this thesis, which seeks to contrast ideas
self in early and late English versions of the narrative.

pietistic ending where Robert rejects his ancestral heritage and re-
tires as a hermit, and those where he marries a princess and accepts
his inheritance.[439] The latter is the type de Worde prints. As I noted
earlier the opening of the text itself concentrates on Robert's an-
cestry, which for some time lead critics to try to identify his
character with historical fact, attempts which have been
discredited.[440] Never-the-less ancestry remains an important strand
inside the text.

As regards the original external audience, we can only speculate that
it was similar to that of Helyas. We do know, however, the the nar-
rative provided material for disguisings at the court of Henry VIII
so presumably it was in circulation there in some form.[441] The Duke
of the text is faced with a gathering of his barons who suggest he
take a wife; 'To thentente that his lygnage myght be multylyed therby,
and that they myght have a ryght heyre to enherite' (pp. 3-4). The
Duke is posed with a problem - how does he pick a wife, what if she
is a different sort of person from him ? The conclusion he comes to

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[439] Loomis, p. 50. I have been unable to trace any more recent work
on these sixteenth century Romances.

[440] Loomis, pp. 51-52; Thoms, p. xviii.

[441] Crane, p. 10. C. R. Baskervill, 'Some Evidence for Early Romantic
Plays in England', Mod Phil, 14 (1916-17), 229-251 & 467-512 (p.
477), notes that the Letters and Papers of Henry VIII, record
provision of garments for a Robard the Devil at the jousts at
Guisnes. Robert was not the only Romance to be performed,
Baskervill cites evidence for dramatic use of Eglamour in 1444
and The Play of Placidas at Braintree, Essex in 1534. The
Constance story too was performed c 1600. See Baskervill, pp.
229-231. It may be that as the texts passed into print their
'performative' or 'voice' aspect was shunted out into such dra-
matic stagings.

is an expression of confidence in the status quo, 'it were better that I kepe me as I am' (p. 4). This chapter lays bare problems inherent in defining and recognising a self. A comparable situation to _Robert_ occurs in Chaucer's _Clerk's Tale_ where a court deputation approaches Walter to remind him:

> That thurgh youre deeth youre lynage sholde slake,
> And that a straunge successour sholde take
> Youre heritage, O wo were us alyve!
> Wherefore we pray you hastily to wyve   (137-40).

Walter, in reply, accepts that he should wed as a social necessity, whilst noting that the worth of a person is not dependant on their ancestry - children are often quite unlike their parents. Instead of wishing to uphold a status quo Walter allows scope to the operation of chance and grace:

> I truste in Goddes bountee, and therefore
> My mariage and myn estaat and reste
> I him bitake; he may doon as hym leste   (159-161).

A person's attributes come from God and not from lineage, so Walter chooses intuitively and his wife, although poor, is virtuous. In _Robert_ the approach is wholly different, it is the barons who choose the Duke a wife of his own social class. As in, _Helyas_ , lineage is important in defining the self, but in _Robert_ the role of genealogy is scrutinised. For example, when dealing with the couple's childlessness, the Duke is presented as seeing the bearing of children as a moral imperative. It is not merely dishonour that they be without heirs but a sin; he does not locate this sin in either of their persons but in their marriage; wed to other people, he believes, they would produce offspring. Perpetrating the bloodline is, for him, of paramount importance, and to replicate himself his highest duty. The narrative openly questions this stance, which is unusual in Romances

which tend to uphold a desire to produce children. The Duke's views lead him into 'gret angre and pensyfness' (p. 7) so that he falls into the sin of pride. He blames God as an external entity, thinking himself singled out for unreasonable blight, 'I se wel that I am hated of God' (p. 6). His own self importance traps him into an impasse much as his earlier lack of confidence in change ossified him. The more aware or assertive the Duke attempts to be, the more isolated he becomes.

The couple eventually conceive, but not before the formerly patient and reasonable Duchess has become vexed and irritable. The text here echoes earlier Romance conventions, only to slant them in a different way. Like Gowther's mother, the Duchess speaks 'folyshly' (p. 7), but instead of being foolishly mistaken she actively commits her child to the devil, 'body and soule' (p. 7.). Vexed by their human concerns, this couple between them share the blame for Robert's mischievous nature. The duchess is to suffer in a very physical way for her words, by being in labour for a full month and is only saved by the prayers and good deeds of those around her. Physical and mental capacities are thus intertwined. Her physical self is saved by the thoughts of those around her, and Robert is devilish because she wished it on him - there is no other demonic paternity.

At the birth terrible portents occur - eclipses of the sun, thunder and lightening which rent the sky, terrific winds which blow from all four corners of the earth. Of the two possible comparisons, the most hopeful is denied us. This is not an eclipse such as at the

Crucifixion, instead 'all they that were in the hous wened that the worlde had been at an ende' (p. 8). It is an apocalyptic vision which occurs both for those within the text and outside it. All this stems from the self-importance of the Duke and the lack of patience of the Duchess! On one level these humans are ludicrous, self-important creatures, and on the other admirable for their determination. The text expresses both a confidence in the human self and traces the danger of that confidence becoming too great. As a corrective it offers emphatic use of collective human structures by the populace.

The child at the centre of the uproar is described in such a way as to make him absurdly monstrous. Large with huge teeth he frightens his nurses and victimises his playmates; more horribly he enjoys so doing 'therein was all his delyte and pleasure' (p. 9). A child prodigy, his companions do not know what to do with him, or what to make of him. Is he mad ? Or is he a devil? The other sort of prodigy we might expect in literature is the child saint, but at this stage Robert's actions hardly qualify him for sainthood. The audience in the text become unanimous in naming Robert 'devil'. He is a devil in term of his deeds since, unlike Gowther, his flesh is not devilish. The narratorial voice informs us that this name 'he kepte durynge his lyfe and shal do as longe as the world standeth' (p. 9). The signification of the name will become amplified as the text progresses, and the devil will become a servant of God.

The Duke, through his actions, seems to suggest that before the age of seven Robert is not responsible for his behaviour, since only at

that age does he get a schoolmaster to instruct Robert in 'vertues and doctrine' (p. 10). Robert thinks otherwise, and after neatly disembowelling his tutor, carelessly throws his books at the wall. At this point he speaks for the first time in the text, and his words are a manifestation of his utter selfishness.[442] He will do whatever he pleases, rejecting any strictures that stem from outside him. Yet still his deeds are presented as crime rather than sin;[443] his self is a criminal self which the populace are willing to ignore provided he avoids them. Only the Duke and Duchess are really grieved by his actions, because he is their son.

They try again to curb his impetuous nature by making him a knight, thereby offering Robert a shared code of conduct. He despises knighthood, despite performing wonderfully well in the tournament; his enthusiasm for killing anything within reach brings the day to an abrupt halt. The populace can stand no more of Robert and demand an end to his 'mysrule' (p.13).

This seems beyond their power since Robert only stops when there is nothing left to destroy. Like an automaton he will continue to rape, pillage and murder until there is nothing left but a void echoing with angry noise. The appeal by the populace to their head of authority, the Duke, is not presented a particularly successful. The duke is

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[442] OED, p. 421 notes that such compounds first appeared in the six-teenth century and were greatly augmented in the seventeenth century, when the word 'selfishness' first appears.

[443] MED, 'crime' 1 a, p. 734 records a distinction between the use of the word 'crime' for 'sin' and 'illegal act' from 1384 onwards.

made helpless by emotion, and 'wote in no wyse what to begyn, nor doo, nor nor saye' (pp. 13-14). In turn he has recourse to a higher authority, God, yet he has no faith in God either. He asks God to help in a small way, to ease his sorrow a little. For him it is as if when human institutions fail there is no where else to go.

The barons, trying to rationalise the situation, have recourse to the law as a regulatory force and only now for the first time is Robert alarmed. In this text it would seem that the law is an example of human collective forces working in an exemplary fashion. The figure of Robert is placeable as directly opposed to this construct, he is criminal in a singular way. The law is bigger than Robert, and his reaction is to flee from it claiming it to be malicious. In a mindless rage Robert flees to the forest, not a pleasant <u>locus amoenus</u>, but a place 'more meter for wylde beestes, than for any people to abyde in ' (p. 17). In this places begins a wild life of destruction; either Robert is 'out of his mynde' or he and his new companions are 'as wolues waryng' (p. 18). At this point he is described in terms which show his increasingly horrific potential. From being a peevish howling child, he becomes a figure out of a nightmare. Besmeared in the blood of holy men he rides across the countryside on horseback; an all too fleshly phantom from Hell. Here he is at the height of his powers, he is most fully his evil self but suddenly he undergoes a change of heart:

> O! Almyghty God, how may this be, that every man thus fleeth from me! Nowe I perceyue that I am the moost myscheuouste and the moost cursedest wretche of this worlde... (p. 19).

The reason given for this change is Robert's recognition of the fear he inspires in others, a recognition of alienation. The text suggests that social collectives are better than individual manoeuvres. Robert traces the root of his 'vycyous and curste' behaviour to either his mother or his father and wants to know which (p. 20). He perceives his self in terms of blood, of bodily and mental inheritance. The Duchess rejects this, attempting to take on herself the whole blame for his wicked self.

Previously Robert has been shown to be incapable of choice and so not morally culpable; now he perceives himself otherwise and retrospectively sees his crimes into sins. In the past he has succumbed to many devils, to temptations besetting him and now he realises he must do penance for his 'synes' (p. 21). From this point on he moves away from his mother's conception of his self and towards his father's, as a servant of God.

I have suggested that Robert was alienated and that his conversion is also a move towards integrating him with the society around him. Yet in the forest Robert had his own band of evil companions, who now echo his earlier stubbornness, in refusing to leave their wicked lives and repent. Since his fellows reject his advice, Robert kills them all in an attempt to restore the status quo that existed before his arrival. His wickedness called them into existence and, now he is repentant, he dissolves their presence in the narrative. In the same way the gold he stole from the abbey he now restores. Abandoning his sword and his horse he goes alone, but not in isolation, to Rome.

His sword is no-where-near such a strong icon of identity as Gowther's 'fachon'. Robert does not vouchsafe any information as to where the sword came from, or even if it is Robert's only sword. This section of the narrative is the only place in which it is at all important. In his new found identity Robert is instructed by God, whose teaching he does not reject as he did his school teacher's. Told to fight the Saracens, he does. Murder in this context is construed as praiseworthy since the intention or motivation has changed, these are ' dampned dogges' (p. 40). Not actions, but their context, the motivation behind them define the self. His valiant deeds and humility inspire the King's mute daughter to love this 'fayre and well fauoured yonge knyght' (p.44). Deeds once defined Robert as mischievous, criminal and sinful, now similar deeds can be interpreted as indicating his value.

From her window on the world, the dumb maiden can perceive the truth of Robert's deeds but is unable to proclaim it. As a result she is forced, though trickery, into marrying a wicked seneshall. Her actions cannot help her - tearing her hair and ripping her garments has no impact, it is as if she exists in a vacuum. The court close around her and arrayed as a bride she is lead to the altar by her father's hand. Flanked by the men and women of the court she is an emblem of paralysis. In this case, collective structures are shown to be inadequate and the insight of the individual more desirable. By a miracle God gives her the grace to speak the truth. Her words are then backed up by empirical evidence, she produces a spearhead which identifies Robert as the servant of God.

At this point the court, the maiden, her father, the confessor hermit and the Pope all collect around Robert and witness his redemption. He has completed his penance. The reader expects him to marry the maiden but this is prevented by the hermit, 'wherfore euery man departed and wente home' (p. 51). This is a cross roads for the narrative, which could re-align Robert with a heavenly family and send him off to be a saint or a hermit. Instead God intervenes, and speaks to Robert directly for the first time, telling him to return and marry the maiden. God's words merge the choices open to Robert - marry the girl or be an exemplary Christian - by telling him he will have a son who will defend and promulgate the Christian faith.

Returning to Normandy with his bride, Robert replaces his father as the head of the state, defender of justice and order. There is no longer any need for the Duke and Duchess. They have done their duty by replicating themselves. Robert fills their places, and in so doing commemorates them. Stability and social order are upheld, and we are informed that Robert's son, Richard, will join Charlemagne on his crusades. Richard inherits the reformed Robert's qualities and is as beloved of the people as is his father.

Robert the Devil is similar to Helyas, in that the audience follows the fate of a central figure and his relations with the society or state around him. For both Helyas and Robert their ancestry connects them closely with their environment. What is interesting in Robert is the importance of the narrative voice which openly questions the assumptions of the figures. In Gowther we are always aware of the

world of absolutes which relativises human behaviour. In <u>Robert</u> the relativising voice is that of the narrator.

Sir Isumbras

For <u>Sir Isumbras</u>, again, we cannot say specifically what or who its audience were. Unlike either <u>Robert</u> or <u>Helyas</u>, it retains a verse form and follows its fourteenth century English predecessors quite closely in terms of action. The differences between early and late versions are ones of tone rather than of direction, and they are most apparent in certain key episodes of the story. As I have already looked at <u>Isumbras</u> in some detail in Chapter Two, I will concentrate on its key episodes here to chart the changes in slant from the earlier version, to see what light they shed upon the presentation of the self.

The version printed by William Copland opens by allocating to the external audience a passive role 'Lordynges listen and you shal heare' and later 'Ye shall well heare' (1; 7). Text and external audience are clearly separated out and the tale itself is past history, it is 'of eldyrs that before us were' (2). Outside and above this human history is the realm of 'Jesu Christ heauen kynge' (4), which metes out reward at the close of the tale. The text is comfortingly self-assured and, as in <u>Helyas</u> and <u>Robert</u> what it says will happen does -

unlike the earlier version which denies the reader certainty even in its closing lines.

The moment when the messenger of God arrives to tell Isumbras of his misdemeanours centres on the human; there is a sense of the focus slowly narrowing to fix upon Isumbras, where in the earlier versions it was the external audience rather than Isumbras who were central:

> He sawe an aungell in the skye
> Which toward hym dyd flye   (40-41).

The angel carefully explains that Isumbras will lose his wealth as a punishment for forgetting himself (43) through becoming proud.   The fault arises in Isumbras, and appropriate punishment is meted out from Heaven.   After the angel has finished speaking he flies off back to his celestial home, leaving Isumbras the centre of attention.   In both early and late versions the fall from grace is presented as acci-dental, but in the early versions the incident is presented as 'Into his herte a pryde was browghte' (37), it comes from outside; in the later 'For worldly welth, and pryde he fell' (31).   In both it is misfortune, but the frequent use of 'he' in Copland instead of 'it' puts the focus and the blame more firmly on the protagonist. Copland's Isumbras also takes an initiative, although accepting the judgement of God he still appeals against it.   A type of legalistic format allows Isumbras some attempt at control.   The earlier Isumbras was faced with a baffling riddle he could not unlock; poverty in youth or age but no escaping his penance. Copland's Isumbras tries to barter over his punishment by suggesting to the angel he should have adver-sity in his youth.

The following episodes in both texts deals with the suffering Isumbras undergoes. In Copland, Isumbras has an internal audience who act out a chorus of gloom for him:

> There wet he with his meynyhende,
> Before hym on a rowe:
> Syr, they sayde, we tell you playne... (79-81).

Human normative viewpoint is used to comment on the action; venom and poison have depleted his stock, fire has destroyed his property. Isumbras' reaction to all this woe is to equate it with a wheel of fortune 'For he that sende me all this wo/He maye sende me mirthes mo' (90-91). God and Fortune elide and are externalised, whilst Isumbras remains central. As a liege lord he pardon his men, clearing them of blame for the disaster, and dispensing money where necessary. In the earlier text the focus was wider with more emphasis placed on the inter-personal relation of the family. In Copland there is a sense that if only Isumbras can hold out long enough the wheel will turn and he will regain all his wealth. In the earlier text the workings of God were much less predictable and the text organised spatially, spreading its focus.

The difference in tone between the two narratives affects the presentation of the protagonist. On their travels Isumbras and his wife and children must cross a river at which time two of the children are lost. In Copland, Isumbras' strength and speed are picked out as admirable attributes, where in the earlier text Isumbras is 'good and hende' (175). The later figure's attributes are more quantifiable and measurable in human terms.

Copland's Isumbras also has a good grasp of geography. He is described as going 'the ryght way' (492) and figures inside the text credit him with a pre-determined route. Places are geographically fixed, with references to Calvary (132), Acres (498), Jaffa and Alexandria (780-1), Calabre and Surrye (850; 843); geographical plotting gives a sense of progression to the narrative. The text is spread out in front of both Isumbras and the external reader. This type of specificity makes the story less exploratory and more exemplary, it becomes a tale of 'pride takes a tumble'. Good and evil, pride and humility are fixed points of reference against which Isumbras and the external audience can measure themselves. The Saracens are 'lyke a prynce proude of pryde' (212) and so to be avoided, an example Isumbras refuses to follow: 'I shall never bee hethen hound become' (268); the earlier Isumbras declared he would never again fall into paganism. Copland's Isumbras is more emphatic in his self presentation and the text shows a tendency to see the world as finished and whole; Isumbras moves deliberately along a planned route and when he asks the Saracens for food he requests it:

> For his loue that dyed on the rode,
> And made this worlde of nought   (233-34).

a reference to God as supreme creator of something fully fashioned and completed. The protagonist of the earlier version makes the same request but in different terms:

> For his loue that dyed on rode
> And with his blode us bowghte   (233-4).

This reference is to the crucifixion and process; man is in continual need of redemption, he is not yet completed.

Following the narrative along, the next move is the separation of husband and wife. which in each narrative produces different reactions. The uppermost emotion in the early text is pity and confusion; when Isumbras and his wife part 'grete dole it was to se hem' (325). Copland's Isumbras suffers, then stops suffering. When he parts from his wife it is with an element of self determination and 'there was ioye to se them' (325). The text celebrates human dignity and human confidence in the face of adversity. We applaud the sentiments but we do not sympathise with the emotions. Where the earlier Isumbras gives way to grief under a tree, Copland's Isumbras climbs it to watch his wife depart. This, much more assertive gesture, is followed by a prayer to 'the kynge that bare of thorne the croune' (378). The scornful connotation is continued and applied to Isumbras as he becomes a quarryman and a smith; the narrative suggests that these are shameful occupations for Isumbras.

From this point until Isumbras' arrival at his queen's castle, there is little difference between the texts. Arriving at the castle Copland's Isumbras displays a sixteenth century version of the stiff upper lip, 'might I one get, well were me' (544). Self-reliant, he uses human, practical ingenuity to make the best of his circumstances. Making merry at the gate he succeeds in gaining entry, and the lady talks to him with 'greate disporte' (586). In exchange Isumbras gives her half his pardon. A physical pardon, since one would assume that the pardon granted to Isumbras by the angel would be impossible to pass on as it pertains only to Isumbras. The scene is courtly and dignified, based upon a series of transactions, such as the exchange

of the pardon, rather than operating through chance and grace; in all it seems to be designed to show off Isumbras' talents rather than to refer out to a larger world as do the earlier versions. Riding on his 'fayre stede' (611), (the earlier Isumbras rode a crooked nag and was a picture of humility), his external attributes correspond to his self-reliance and confidence.

Curious about the gold under his bed the lady asks Copland's Isumbras about his ancestry:

> Whether he were a gentleman
> And in what countre he was borne   (697-80).

In the earlier version the lady asks him about his sorrows (580). The correspondence of inner and outer is important in this text, as is geographic placing. The ring she gave to Isumbras when they parted is then produced as empirical proof that Isumbras is who he says he is - as in the other sixteenth century narratives, evidence is more important than intuition. All that remains before the text closes is the last battle against the Saracens and the re-appearance of the children. Copland expands this section of the narrative giving details of the heralds and the ritual exchanges between the rival forces. He celebrates the glory and the grandeur of human structures and the emphasis remains on human activities. The children re-appear as knights and saying they have been sent to save Isumbras from 'shame'. Copland closes with a parcelling out of the Holy land as reward for destroying the Saracens and a triumphant 'Amen, Amen, for charitie' (855). For this text all things are complete and resolved, for the earlier text the adventure continues and certainty denied.

The sixteenth century editions of these Romances contrast with those examined in Chapter Two, in that they offer the text as finished, complete. This confidence is reflected in the structuring of the figure whose exploits we follow admiringly. The figures in the text offer images which flatter or admonish the external audience and the texts move towards being 'character centred' in a way the earlier texts are not. The later Romances place their figures in relation to a state and other human institutions where the earlier one reach out to a world larger than the human. In general the sixteenth century texts link into a pseudo-historical tradition rather than a world of absolutes. In the foreground of the sixteenth century texts there is always the image of a completed and completing self which is expressed by the image of the printed book and the issue of genealogy.

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sections. Section A contains primary texts, with facsimiles listed

last. Sections B and C refer to Secondary material: books and theses,

and articles and chapters in books, respectively.

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This Appendix lists, simply, the date, the material and the contents of the major manuscripts discussed in this thesis. For all of the following information I am indebted to the <u>Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Middle English Romances</u>, by Gisela Guddat-Figge (Munchen, 1976).

<u>MS Cotton Caligula A ii</u>
c 1446-60. Paper.

Sussan
Eglamour of Artas
Four recipes against the colic and the gravel
Lydgate, Stans Puer ad Mensam
Lydgate, Dietary
Lydgate, The Chorle
Octouian Imperator
Chestre, Launfal Miles
Lybeaus Disconus
Elegy for the tomb of Lord Cromwell
The 10 commandments
Lydgate, the Nyghtingale
Lydgate, Deus in nomine tuo salvum me fac
For pestilence
For þe better abyde
All way fond to say þe best
þonk god of all
Make amendes
Prose form of confession
Orison to Christ of the Wounds
Emare
Carta Jhesu Christi
Ypotis
þe Stacyonys of Rome
Trenatle Sancti Gregori
Vrbanitis
Prayer of thanksgiving for the Redemption
Quindecim signa
A song of love to the blessed vigin Mary
Owayne myles
Tundale
Veni coronaberis
Myn owene woo
Cronica
The Sege of Ierusalem
Cheuelere Assigne

Isumbras
Lydgate, Quinque wlnera
Jerome
Eustache[444]

Advocates 19. 3. 1.
Second half of the fifteenth century. Paper.

The Hunttyng of the Hare
Mock sermon
Nonsense verse
Sir Gowther
Stans puer ad mensam
The Maryage of seynt Kaþeryn
Sir Ysumbras
þe masse
Carol
Nonsense verse
Deceyte
Proverbs
Rhyming proverbs
The terms of carving game
The terms of hunting
ffor a malaundre
Aue regina coelorum
That pes may stond
Sir Amadace
The Lytylle Childrenes Lytil Boke
Recipe for a poultice (later addition)
R. Maydestone: Paraphrase of Psalm 51
Ecce Ancilla Domini
As I wandrede her bi weste
Servis is no heritage
Deo Gracias
Verbum Caro factum est
Satirical carol
Form of Indulgence
Tundale
W. Lychefelde: Complaint of God
Household expenses (later addition)
Lamentacio Peccatoris
Worship wymen wyne and vnweldy age
Precepts
Charm for healing wounds (later addition)
This louely lady sat and song
Prescription (later addition)
Prognostications of the weather

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[444] Guddat-Figge, pp. 169-72

Trentale sancti gregorii
Deus creator Omnium[445]

BM Royal 17 B XLIII
Part II second half of the fifteenth century. Vellum.

Sir Gowther[446]

Caius 175
Early fifteenth century. Vellum.

Uita Ricardi Regis Primi
De Milite Ysumbras
Vita Sancte Katerine Virginis
Matutinas de cruce in anglicis uerbis transpositis
Athelston
Beffs de Hamptoun
De spiritu gwydonis[447]

Lincoln 91, The Thornton Manuscript
c 1430-40. Paper.

þhe Lyf of Gret Alexander Conquerour of All þe Worlde
Prognostications of weather
Lamentacio Peccatoris
Morte Arthure
The Romance of Octovyane
The Romance of Sir Ysambrace
þe Romances of Dyoclicyane þe Emperour and þe Erle of ...Toulouse...
Vita sancti christofori
Sir Degreuante
Sir Eglamoure off Artasse
De miraculo Beate Marie
Lyarde
Thomas of Ersseldoune
The Awentyrs off Arthure at the Terne Wathelyne
The Romance off Sir Percyuelle of Gales
Three charms for Toothache
Epistola sancti Saluatoris
Prayer
Indulgence and prayer
A Preyere Off the ffyve Joyes of owre Lady ... and the ffyve sorowes
Psalmus Voce mea ad dominum claumaui
Five prayers to the five wounds of Christ
Oracio in Inglys
A Colett to owre lady Saynt Marye

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[445] Guddat-Figge, pp. 127-30.

[446] Gudat-Figge, pp. 211-13.

[447] Guddat-Figge, pp. 82-83.

Oracio in modo Collecte pro amico
Antiphona Sancti Leonardi, cum Collecta
The Previte off the passioune of owre lorde Ihseu
Tractatus Williami Nassyngton
R. Rolle ? A thanksgiving to God
R. Rolle ? An orison to the Trinity
R. Rolle ? A prayer to Jesus for mercy
R. Rolle: of the vertus of the haly name of Ihesu
Naracio: a tale þat Richerde hermet made
A prayer þat Richert hermet made þat es beried at hampulle
Ympnus quem composuit Sanctus Ambrosius et est ualde bonus
De imperfecta contricione
Moralia Richardi hermite de natura apis, vnde quasi apis argumentosa
De uita cuiusdam puelle incluse propter amorem christi
Richardus hermyta
Item inferius idem Richardus
A notabill Tretys off the ten Comandementys Drawen by Richarde the
hermyte off hampull
Item idem de dilectatione in deo
Speculum Sancti Edmundi Cantura Archiepiscopi in Anglicis
Tractatus de deominica oratione
religious verse
A prayer to the trinity
Prayer
A meditacione of þe ffyve woundes of oure lorde Ihesu criste with a
prayere in þe same
A medytacioun of the Crosse of Criste with a prayere
A warning on the transitoriness of life
Prayer
A sermon þat Dan Iohn Gartryge made
A song of love to jesus
W. hilton: Of Angels song
R. Rolle? An exhortation to love Jesus
A warning against worldly vanity
W. Hilton: Epistle on mixed life
W. Hilton: from 'Scale of Perfection'
Of Sayne John þe Euangelist
On prayer
Six things are to wit inprayer
De gracia dei
R Rolle:? Our daily work
A Reuelacyoun Shewed to ane holy woman now one late tyme
Psalm 'Misere mei deus'
Hymn 'Veni Creator Spiritus'
Sayne Ierome Spaltyre
Religio sancti spiritus
Prick of Conscience
De vii gaudia beate marie uiginis per sanctum Thomam et martyrem
Cantuariensem Archiepiscopum
A noþer Salutacioun till oure lady of hir fyve joyes
Ane antyme to þe ffadir of heuene with a colett
Anoþer Antyme of 5e passyoune of criste ihesu
A colecte of grete perdone vnto crist ihesu
A Preyere to þe wounde in Crystis syde

memento homo quod cinic es et in ceneerem reuerteris
Prescription 'ffor þe scyatica'
Liber de diuersis medicinis[448]

Grays Inn MS 20
Mid 14th century, vellum.

A fragment of Sir Ysumbras, followed by a fragment of the Life of Saint Anastasia.[449]

Naples Biblioteca Nazionale MS XIII B 29
1457, paper.

139 Medical recipes
Sir Beuys of Hamptoun
Of Seint Alex of Rome
Libious Disconious
Moral verse
Sir Isumbras
Chaucer, Griselda
Lydgate, envoy to 'Doublenesse'[450]

Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 61
End of 15th century to beginning of sixteenth, paper.

Seynt Ewstas
Lydgate, Rammeshorne
A father's instructions to his son
A good wife instructs her daughter
Isombras
The ten commandments
Lydgate, Stans puer ad mensam
Dame Curtasy's moral instruction
Distich
Twelve points for purchasers of land
Latin oracle and Latin tetrastich
Prayer at night
Morning prayer
Repetition of the first 2 verses on the ten commandments
Orisoun to the Blessed Virgin Mary
The debate of the carpenters tools
Hymn on the Eucharist
Legend of the cross
The Erle of Tolous
Lybeus Dysconus
Sir Corneus

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[448] Guddat-Figge, pp. 135-142.

[449] Guddat-Figge, pp. 217-218.

[450] Guddat-Figge, pp. 241-242.

Miracle of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Tale of an Incestuous Daughter
Sir Cleges
The founding of the feast of All Saints and All Souls
Grosseteste, The Castle of Love
Ypotis
Passio Domine nostri
Testamentum Domini
Lamentacio beate marie
Lydgate, the gouernans of man
Maydestone, Septem, psalmi penitentales
Stimulus consciencie minoris
The Stasyons of Jerusalem
The Adulterous Falmouth Squire
Legend of the Resurrection
St Margaret
On the Seven deadly Sins
Orfew
Vanyte
King Edward and the Hermit[451]

Bodleian Library MS Douce 261
1564, paper.

The Hystorye of the Valyaunte Knyghte Syr Isenbras
The Treatyse of Syr Degore
The Jeaste of Syr Gawayne
Syr Eglamoure of Artoys[452]

University College MS 142
End of 14th century, vellum.

Prick of Conscience
Prologue for an Easter Sermon
Six stories about tribulation
Sir Isumbras
On the evil hours and perilous days of the year[453]

University Library MS Ff II 38
Mid 15th century, paper.

Lychefelde, þe compleynt of god
þe ix lessons of dyrge whych ys clepd pety joob
þe prouerbis of Salamon
Tje markys of medytacyoune
xij profytes þat men may gete in sufferyng of bodely anger

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[451] Guddat-Figge, pp.249-252.

[452] Guddat-Figge, pp. 265-266.

[453] Guddat-Figge, pp. 297-298.

þe mirrour of vices and vertues, which also ys clepid þe seuene ages
Brampton, The seuene salmes
A salutacion of oure Lady
þe x commaundementis of almyȝty god
þe vij werkis of merci bodili
þe vij werkis of merci gostli
þe v bodyly wyttis
þe v goostly wyttys
þe vij deedly synnes
The vij vertues contrarie to þe vij dedli synes
þe xij articles of þe beleeue
þe vij sacramentis schortly declarid of seynt Edmonde of pounteneye
A tretice of þre arowis þat schullen be schett on domesday aȝenste þem
þat schullen be dampnedd
The viij tokenes of mekenes
þe life of marye mawdelyn
The lyfe of seynte margaret
þe life of seynt thomas
On the assumption of the Virgin
þe lyfe of seynt kateryn
þe chartur of criste
þe xv tokenys before the day of dome
How the goode man taught hys son
A good ensaumple of a lady þat wa sin dyspeyre
A Lamentacion of the Virgin
A Lamentacioun of the Virgin
The Adulterous Falmouth Squire
How a merchande dyd hys wyfe betray
A gode mater of the marchand and hys sone
The Erle of Toulous
Syr Egyllamore of Artas
Syr Tryamowre
Octavian
Sir Bevis of Hamtoun
The Seven Sages
Guy of Warwick
Le Bone Fflorence of Rome
Robert of Sicily
Sir Degare[454]

National Library of Scotland MS Advocates 19.2.1. 'Auchinleck'
1330-40, vellum.

Gregorious
þe King of Tars
Adam and Eve
Seynt Mergrete
Seynt Katerine
Owayne Mile
þe desputisoun bitven þe bodi and þe soule

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[454] Guddat-Figge, pp. 94-99.

Harrowing of Hell
The clerk blinded by the glory of Our Lady
Speculum Gy de Warewyke
Amis and Amiloun
Marie Maudelayne
leuedis moder
sinnes
þe pater noster vndo on englissch
The assumption of the Virgin
Sir Degare
þe seuen Wise masters
Floris and Blauncheflour
On the King's breaking the Magna Charta
A list of names of Norman barons
Guy of warwick
Reinbrun
Sir Beues of Hamtoun
Of Arthour and of Merlin
þe wenche þat loved a king
A penniworþ of witte
Hou oue leudi saute was ferst founde
Lay le freine
Rouland and Vernagu
Otuel a kniȝt
Alexander þe great
The Thrush and the Nightingale
Dicts of St. Bernard
Dauid þe king
Sir Tristrem
Sir Orfeo
The Four Foes of Mankind
Liber regum anglie
Horn Childe and Maiden Rimenhild
Praise of women
King Richard
þe simonie[455]

BM MS Egerton 2862
End 14th century, vellum.

Kyng Richard
Beuous of Hampton
Sir Degarre
Fflorence and Blanchefloure
The Batell of troye
Amis and Amylion
Sir Egleamoure[456]

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[455] Guddat-Figge, pp.121-126.

[456] Guddat-Figge, pp. 182-184.

Second half of 15th century, paper.

Vita sancte margarete virginis
Song on a merry gentleman
Disputacio inter Clericum et Philomenam
Lydgate, Passio sancti Erasmi
Passio sancte Katerine virginis et martyris
On nine virtues
The Lyff of Sir Degare both curtays and ffre
Balade in praise of St Mary[457]

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[457] Guddat-Figge, pp. 267-268.