Julie Burton

Fairytale Characteristics in Medieval Romances

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INTRODUCTION

From the viewpoint of the twenty-first century, Middle English romance can be a problematic genre. Its fantastic events, stock characters, repetitive structures and contrived endings seem to belong with the fairytale of the nursery rather than with the serious literature of the adult world. Stylistically, so many romances[1] do little to counter this impression with formulaic words and phrases expressing simplistic emotions and commonplace sentiments. Yet Middle English romance was an enduring genre, popular over five hundred years or more. Although Chaucer was famously disparaging about the verse romances in his burlesque 'Sir Thopas', many survive in the collections of, or indeed were commissioned by, worldly men, important and successful in their time.

Clearly this raises a question: why are the romances, once so popular, unpalatable to the reading public of today? Any response to this question would of course be complex, not least because the romance genre notoriously embraces a range of greatly differing works. In this thesis I intend to explore one aspect of the romances which must be considered in any comprehensive answer: namely their 'language', by which I mean their method of communication in its broadest sense, now generally regarded as lacking in sophistication and unrelated to real life. Because of the variety of works in the genre, I focus the study on a sub-group of the romances.

It is the contention of this thesis that the link between fairytale and romance which I previously mentioned as disparaging to romance is in fact a strength of romance. In many ways the "language" of fairytale is the "language" of romance. In fact, the

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[1] When I use the term 'romance' in this introduction it is to Middle English romance in particular that I refer.

closeness of fairytale and romance is such that an understanding of fairytale can contribute significantly to a deeper understanding and appreciation of the methods and effectiveness of romance.

Fairytale can justly lay claim to be one of the most enduring of artistic genres. The tales have achieved popularity with succeeding generations who find real satisfaction in stories where impossible adventures undergone by improbable and stereotyped characters culminate so often in the familiar happy ending. Indeed, the sheer implausibility of the tales is so central that the generic term 'fairytale' has come to be a euphemism for the unbelievable and the fantastic. Considered nowadays to be primarily suitable for children, fairytales have been transmitted amongst adults for centuries, communicated orally if not in writing. And where they enter literature and the other arts, the fairytale element is recognisably consistent with the fairytale of the nursery, even in cynical modern renderings.

While it is true that fairytale shares many of its characteristics with other folk genres,[2] and that the romances may be influenced by other sorts of folktale, like saint's legend,[3] nevertheless of all the traditional genres which we know collectively as folktale, fairytale stands apart in its relationship with the vernacular romances.[4] However, appreciation of the strength of the link between fairytale and the romances has

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[2] Stith Thompson lists the genres of folktale as: fairytale, novella, local legend, saint's legend, hero tale, explanatory tale, myth, animal tale, fable, humorous anecdote (including numskull tales). As he points out, the boundaries between sorts of tales are not rigid in practice, and not all the terms are universally accepted. See *The Folktale* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1946; repr. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), pp.7-10. See also Linda Dégh, 'Folk Narrative', in *Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction*, ed. by Richard M. Dorson (London: University of Chicago Press, 1972), pp.53-83 (pp.58-80).

[3] *Sir Isumbras* is one example: see for instance Laurel Braswell, '*Sir Isumbras* and the Legend of St. Eustace', *Mediaeval Studies*, 27 (1965), 128-51.

[4] 'Folktale' is an ambiguous term. Thompson says, 'although the term "folktale" is often used in English to refer to the "household tale" or "fairy tale" (the German Märchen), […] it is also legitimately employed in a much broader sense to include all forms of prose narrative, written or oral, which have come to be handed down through the years. In this usage the important fact is the traditional nature of the material', p. 4. In this study I shall follow Thompson in differentiating between folktale and fairytale.

developed slowly. Renewed interest in the Middle English romances in the nineteenth century and the resulting surge in editorial activity saw the collection of analogues from a variety of written and oral sources so that the romances could be seen in the context of like tales and motifs.[5] Piecemeal enquiry into romance's folk relations gradually gelled into more systematic collection and collation of sources and analogues, with prolific results.[6]

Investigation into sources and analogues tended, however, to be limited to establishing the historical and geographical connections of like stories in folktale and romance. The treatment afforded the folktale or motif in any particular romance, how it served the romancer's purpose, how its form and nature influenced that of the romance itself, tended to go unregarded. Motifs themselves were often simplistically understood. Insofar as it was considered, the influence of folktale was generally felt largely to account for the genre as second or third rate literature. Gerald Bordman, for example, considers *Guy of Warwick* to have been composed piecemeal by adding arbitrarily chosen folk motifs to a basic frame with an eye mainly to theatrical effect and little or no regard for convincing internal logic. In this ('the temptation is to term it literary prefabrication') he considers *Guy* to be typical of the majority of romances, and that this method of composition accounts for several of what he perceives to be the outstanding features of romance like one-dimensional characters which are 'stock folk-lore types,

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[5] See for example Walter Scott, *Sir Tristrem*, 3rd edn (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable; London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme & Brown, 1811), which draws together much material on, for instance, dragons, shared by the romance with other medieval sources (pp. 309-11). It is seen as evidence of 'traditions' rather 'folklore', a word not coined until 1846, by William Thoms. See too Sir Frederick Madden's 'Note on the word "werwolf"', in *The Romance of 'William of Palerne'*, ed. by Walter Skeat EETS ES 1 (London: Trübner, 1867), pp. xxv-xxix, where he collects and comments on several instances of the word; also Skeat's discussion of various instances of belief in lycanthropy in the same edition, pp. xix-xx.

[6] Many of these results are brought together and enlarged in Laura A. Hibbard's *Mediaeval Romance in England: A Study of the Sources and Analogues of the Non-Cyclic Metrical Romances* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1924).

incorporated into the stories as such without any further interest'.[7] To take another example, a glance at Lillian Herlands Hornstein's commentary on *Sir Eglamour of Artois* in J. Burke Severs's catalogue of the romances shows that the romance has been condemned as 'fantastic' (Kane), and 'repetitious and lacking in invention' (Hibbard), while Hornstein herself, who supports the 'validity to these animadversions', marks out the second part as 'a "patchwork" of […] well-worn incidents', remarks which imply that implausibility and repetition are not commendable literary characteristics.[8] A browse through the catalogue shows that such views prevail.

Gradually, however, such attitudes have been changing, prompted largely by increased understanding of the various sorts of folk narrative, their structure, style, and so on. The field of exploration most relevant to this study in this respect, though it is not the only one, is Folklore Studies.[9] The first significant explication of the characteristics of folktale in general was Axel Olrik's essay of 1909, 'Epic Laws of Folk Narrative', in which he defines the 'laws' of folktale (for example the 'law' of repetition and the 'law' of three) which he perceives as governing the creation of folk narratives of many sorts, including the fairytale and ranging from legend to myth.[10] Olrik's successor, insofar as he too formulates his observations from the study of the narratives themselves, is Max Lüthi, whose study of the essential characteristics of fairytale in particular, *Das europäische Volksmärchen*, was published in 1947. Lüthi draws attention to certain

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[7] Gerald Bordman, 'Folklore and the Medieval Romance', in *Folklore in Action: Essays for Discussion in Honour of MacEdward Leach*, ed. by Horace Beck, Publications of American Folklore Society, Bibliographical and Special Series, 14 (Philadelphia, 1962), pp.37-43 (quotations from p.41).

[8] 'Eustace-Constance-Florence-Griselda Legends' in *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English 1050-1500*, I, *The Romances*, ed. by J. Burke Severs (New Haven, Connecticut: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1967), pp.120-32 (pp.124-25).

[9] Another area of study which is changing perceptions of romance is that of orality/literacy. For a general introduction see Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologising of the Word* (London: Methuen, 1982). For a view of *King Horn* as an orally conditioned romance, and many useful references, see Anne Scott, 'Plans, Predictions, and Promises: Traditional Story Techniques and the Configuration of Word and Deed in *King Horn*', in *Studies in Medieval English Romances: Some New Approaches*, ed. by Derek Brewer (Cambridge: Brewer, 1988), pp.37-68 (pp.37-47).

[10] Reproduced in *The Study of Folklore*, ed. by Alan Dundes (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1965), pp.129-41.

impulses which, he argues, transmute material into fairytale, peculiar as it is in form and style.[11] Lüthi's work not only illuminates the differences between folk genres, but increases understanding of how fairytale communicates meaning.

Approaching the subject quite differently is Vladimir Propp's seminal study, achieving fame only after its translation into English in 1958, some thirty years after its publication in Russia. In it Propp, from his work on one hundred Russian fairytales, asserts that all fairytales share a common structure and that this is made up of a possible thirty-one 'constant' elements ('functions'), not all of them always present but always in the same sequence. The functions are themselves abstract and are realised differently from tale to tale through character and action. Thus constant elements, like 'the hero leaves home', are made manifest in each individual tale by 'variables' like the name and attributes of the hero or the particular circumstances in which he departs.[12] Character roles are limited and constant too.[13] Propp's work has been particularly influential in facilitating a view of folk narratives as layered constructs, the constant and the variable as separate layers of narrative, although interdependent of course in any one narrative.

Better understanding of the folktale has helped to alter the perception of its status in Middle English romance. For instance, Derek Brewer, in his characterisation of

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[11] Published in English as *The European Folktale: Form and Nature*, trans. by John D. Niles ([n.p.]: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1982; repr. as 1st Midland edn, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986). See especially chapters 1-4. On the link between Olrik and Lüthi see the foreword by Dan Ben-Amos, pp.vii-x. Another more recent book is Max Lüthi, *Das Volksmärchen als Dichtung: Ästhetik und Anthropologie* (Dusseldorf & Cologne: Engen Diederichs, 1975), available in English as *The Fairy Tale as Art Form and Portrait of Man*, trans. by Jon Erickson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984). For a useful summary of Lüthi's ideas on fairytale style see his *Es war einmal ... vom Wesen des Volksmärchens* (1962), available in English as *Once Upon a Time: On the Nature of Fairy Tales*, trans. by Lee Chadeayne and Paul Gottwald, 1st Midland edn, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), pp.47-57.

[12] Available in English as *Morphology of the Folktale*, trans. by Laurence Scott, 2nd edn, ed. and rev. by Louis A. Wagner, American Folklore Society Bibliographical and Special Series, 9; Indiana University Research Centre in Anthropology, Folklore, and Linguistics, 10 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968, repr. 1984). See pp. 19-24 for explanation of method.

[13] Propp, pp.79-80. In 'A Note on "Tale Role" and "Character" in Propp', *Journal of Literary Semantics*, 16 (1987), 56-60, Michael Robertson discusses misconceptions of Propp's view of character born of inaccuracies in the translation of his work from Russian to English.

romance as a genre, takes into account the presence of many of Olrik's 'laws' of folktale in romance as recurring features, while Bruce A. Rosenberg has suggested that Propp's fairytale structure underpins the romances too. Rosenberg places within this genus three species patterned thus: crime - punishment; separation - reunion; test - reward. He offers his observations as going some way towards a basis on which to define the genre.[14] And alongside the realisation that Middle English romance is a traditional genre, operating, like folktale, through structural and artistic methods quite different from modern genres like the novel, has come the recognition that it should be judged by criteria which allow that its traditional methods are valid methods of composition, as capable of being used well or badly as any other narrative devices.[15]

In addition it has not escaped notice that both fairytale and romance share a marked similarity to dream and this has proved a useful observation in the search for the logic presumed hidden in these strangely fantastic stories. Anne Wilson, in *Traditional Romance and Tale* (1976), argues that such tales may be profitably approached as stories constructed within the mind of the hero: just as the dreamer creates his dream, so the hero 'creates' his story. Characters are therefore best seen as projections of the hero's feeling about those around him; events are constructed by him to experience feelings of desire, hate, and so on, and are repeated until he attains the object of desire without guilt.[16] Of course, the hero may very well be a heroine.[17] Developing and modifying this approach Brewer argues, in *Symbolic Stories* (1980), that in traditional narratives like fairytale and romance, characters are limited to those of the nuclear

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[14] Brewer, 'The Nature of Romance', *Poetica*, 9 (1978), 9-48 (especially pp. 35-36). Rosenberg, 'The Morphology of the Middle English Metrical Romance', *Journal of Popular Culture*, 1 (1967), 63-77.

[15] Rosenberg, in an article arguing for the deliberate manipulation of folk material in *Sir Degarré,* suggests this should challenge the way romance is viewed. See Rosenberg, 'The Three Tales of *Sir Degaré*', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 76 (1975), 39-51.

[16] *Traditional Romance and Tale: How Stories Mean* (Ipswich: Brewer, 1976). For a summary of Wilson's thesis, see pp.109 – 10.

[17] Throughout this study I shall at times use 'hero' with 'heroine' implied. Whether or not 'heroine' is implied should be clear from the context.

family – protagonist, mother, and father, with the protagonist's eventual spouse as the only outsider. Each of the characters in these stories can be viewed as an aspect of one of the nuclear family as seen by the protagonist, and all such stories are about the process of growing up. He calls them 'family dramas'. In Brewer's hands this becomes part of a more general theory of traditional narrative which views stories as layered constructs with hidden patterns of varying sorts underlying the 'verbal' or 'literal' level forming the surface level of the narrative; that is, the level of which the audience is most immediately aware.[18]

This variety of scholarship shows the close and complex relationship between fairytale and romance, one which extends beyond the mere borrowing of motifs. It is my intention that this thesis should clarify the relationship further, working in the light of the aforementioned studies, to try to reach a closer understanding of how fairytale characteristics in particular contribute to the effectiveness of Middle English verse romance. I shall single out for close examination fairytales and romances which share a particular pattern of events, later going on to look at the same pattern when it flows from the pen of an accepted literary master, Chaucer. The pattern of events which provides the common focus begins with the birth of a child and ends with the integration of that child into the adult world, often through marriage. This pattern is by no means confined to the fairytales and romances which are my subject here: besides appearing in Chaucer's 'The Clerk's Tale' it is found in 'The Man of Law's Tale' as another of *The Canterbury Tales*; it shapes several stories in Boccaccio's *The Decameron*; some prose romances including *Valentine and Orson*; the saint's legend telling of the *Life of St Eustace*; Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*. It is not forgotten in

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[18] Symbolic Stories: Traditional Narratives of the Family Drama in English Literature, (Cambridge: Brewer, 1980), especially pp.1-14.

the exuberant and witty homage to the old romance tradition, David Lodge's 1984 novel, *Small World*.[19]

In my initial chapters I shall define more particularly my area of study and describe the affinity of the verse romances which fall within this area to fairytale; at the same time I shall consider the function of fairytale characteristics and patterns as conveyers of meaning. I shall begin with an examination of fairytale in order to define its characteristics, focusing especially on those features which are seen most often in the verse romances. Subsequently I shall turn to individual romances and the contribution made by fairytale features to their effectiveness. In so doing I shall extend Brewer's theory of fairytale and romance as 'family drama', and draw together this and other scholarly work to enable new readings of romance. Finally I shall consider Chaucer as part of the tradition identified here.

I have accepted the corpus of Middle English romances to comprise those romances listed in the first volume of J. Burke Severs's *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English 1050-1500*, and have not limited my investigation to any previously determined categories.[20] In romances which convey the aforementioned pattern of events, I have taken into consideration all the extant manuscript versions up to 1500. Where only a fragment survives, I have included it if its identity is clear and generally accepted and if the story it tells is stable elsewhere. This is the case with *Apollonius of Tyre*, which apart from Gower's version now exists only as a short fragment in Middle English in the fifteenth century Bodleian Library, MS Douce 216 (MS Douce 216); but the story was told many times from 'pagan antiquity' to Shakespeare and indeed beyond, in a

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[19] For examples in *The Decameron* see stories for day 2 (6), and day 10 (10).

[20] Lee C. Ramsey in *Chivalric Romances: Popular Literature in Medieval England* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), pp.157-88, deals with a group of romances he calls 'domestic romances' concerning 'family affairs' (pp. 157-58). His group includes many of the stories with which I am concerned. For details of Severs' *Manual* see note 8.

relatively stable form.[21] Gower's is the only complete Middle English version but I have omitted to make detailed reference to this and other romance stories as taken up by a major author with a well-defined oeuvre believing that such an author's distinctive style requires him to be treated separately.

Since it is not until Chapter Two that I look in detail at the reasons for basing this study on particular romances I shall, for the convenience of those reading Chapter One, list them here. Henceforth my use of the word 'romance' is limited to this group of romances unless otherwise specified. They are, with an abbreviated title following where appropriate:

Apollonius of Tyre (Apollonius)

Chevalere Assigne (Chevalere)

Emaré

King Horn (Horn)

Octavian, the northern *(N)* and the southern *(S)* versions

Perceval of Galles (Perceval)

Sir Beves of Hampton (Bevis)

Sir Degarré (Degarré)

Sir Eglamour of Artois (Eglamour)

Sir Isumbras (Isumbras)

Sir Torrent of Portyngale (Torrent)

Sir Triamour (Triamour)

William of Palerne (William)

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[21]   See Hornstein, p.145; also Elizabeth Archibald, '*Apollonius of Tyre': Medieval and Renaissance Themes and Variations* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1991) who lists the Latin and vernacular versions prior to 1609, pp.183-216. For the two fourteenth-century Middle English versions see pp. 191-93.

I do not forget that some of these romances are translated from, or at least, closely analogous to Anglo-Norman originals, or that some exist in versions made after 1500. But since a degree of economy of subject matter has been necessary, I have elected to concentrate on these specific Middle English examples though bearing their multiple connections in mind.

CHAPTER 1

FAIRYTALE CHARACTERISTICS IN THE ROMANCES

At first sight it may not appear that the heterogeneous group of poems generally held to

be the Middle English romances are strikingly reminiscent of fairytale. Dorothy

Everett, in her well known study, found the romances to be characteristically medieval

in ideals, behaviour, and background, idealising ordinary life, loving descriptive

embellishment.[22] In contrast, what is striking about fairytale is its unspecific temporal

and spatial settings instead of the real or quasi-real locations in romance;[23] its focus on

action where romances explain, comment, rationalise, and describe; its apparent lack of

interest in emotional experience where romance is so often concerned with love.[24] Of

course any generalised statement about fairytale or romance is likely not to be wholly

true in every instance, but it is generally the case that the romances take a strong interest

in the details of love, war, and social behaviour, and are concerned with what makes up

the beautiful and ideal, while the fairytale is not.

Notwithstanding, the relationship between fairytale and romance is a close one.

Kathryn Hume takes this into account in her attempt to define Middle English romance,

a notoriously difficult task given the variety of poems generally accepted as belonging

to the genre. She suggests that each romance be placed on an axis ranging from 'armor-

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[22] 'A Characterisation of the English Medieval Romances', in *Essays on Middle English Literature*, ed. by Patricia Kean (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), pp.1-22 (especially pp.5, 8, 16).

[23] See W.F.H. Nicolaisen, 'The Past as Place: Names, Stories, and the Remembered Self', *Folklore*, 102 (1991), 3-15.

[24] There are many characterisations of Middle English romance. Besides that of Everett I have consulted in particular John Finlayson, 'Definitions of Middle English Romance', *Chaucer Review*, 15 (1980-81), 44-62 and 168-81; Dieter Mehl, *The Middle English Romances of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), pp.22-28; Edmund Reiss, 'Romance', in *The Popular Literature of Medieval England*, ed. by Thomas J. Heffernan, *Tennessee Studies in Literature*, 28 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985), pp.108-130.

plated fairy tales to multi-volume "histories"'.[25]   None of the sub-group of romances to

which my own investigation is limited may be described as 'multi-volume histories'

although of course, even within the sub-group, each romance is an individual work of

art and its relationship to fairytale differs from that of the others; however, the

differences between them are of degree rather than kind.   We might propose another

continuum in which each text in the sub-group would be positioned according to its

relationship to fairytale.

In this chapter I shall describe the close nature of the relationship between fairytale and

this group of romances.   Besides this I shall consider some implications for meaning,

preparing the ground for a more detailed examination of the relationship between

particular romances and fairytale in later chapters.   Neither fairytale nor romance is

concerned to be entirely plausible in terms of actuality.   Rather than realistic causation

underpinned by attention to character psychology and the relation between character

and event of the sort so often found in the novel, fairytale and romance are highly

repetitive and predictably patterned, predominantly interested in the concrete rather than

the abstract, and favour exaggerated situation and character.   These are significant

factors, along with the prominent presence of the supernatural, in contributing to the

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[25] 'The Formal Nature of Middle English Romance', *Philological Quarterly*, 53 (1974), 158-80 (p.158).   Others who consider some aspects of the closeness of fairytale and romance include the following.   W.R.J.Barron, *English Medieval Romance* (London: Longman, 1987), pp.1-10: he sees fairytale and romance as two manifestations of the romantic mode, sharing certain values and a symbolic method of expressing basic human aspirations.   Morton W. Bloomfield, 'Episodic Motivation and Marvels in Epic and Romance', in *Essays and Explorations: Studies in Ideas, Language, and Literature* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp..97-128: on pp.112-16 he focuses on the unknown and inexplicable as a strong presence in both fairytale and romance and the effect of this on structure, namely the inadequate motivation of episodes.   Brewer, 'The Nature of Romance', where he points out the correspondence of romance to several of Olrik's laws of folktale (pp..34-36); also several short expositions, for example 'Medieval Literature, Folk Tale and Traditional Literature', *Dutch Quarterly Review of Anglo-American Letters*, 11 (1981), 243-56, in which some of the recurring stories, structures, motifs, and stylistic tendencies in the two genres are pointed out.   Northrop Frye, borrowing terms from Schiller, distinguishes between 'naive' romance (fairytale) and 'sentimental' romance (the 'more extended and literary development of the formulas of naive romance') in which he includes medieval romance; see *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), p.3.   Finally Enrico Giaccherini, 'Gawain's Dream of Emancipation', in *Literature in Fourteenth-Century England*, ed. by Piero Boitani and Anna Torti, Tübinger Beiträge zur Anglistik 5 (Tübingen: Gunter Narr; Cambridge: Brewer, 1983), pp.65-82 (especially pp.65-68).   He says, 'the distinctive features of romance can [...] be summed up as fantasy, non-naturalism, abundance of the marvellous and the supernatural, stylization, popularity, and an apparent lack of structural logic.   All these elements underline the analogies that relate romance to other phenomena such as fairy-tale, myth, and dream' (p.67).

implausibility of fairytale and romance and frustrating attempts to make sense of them in naturalistic terms. What may be less obvious is that such factors have themselves the potential to create and transmit meaning. In fairytale the very strangeness of narrative mode and content invites the search for significance. In romance, though the same narrative devices are often obscured by those characteristics of the genre which place it closer to realism, their potential for meaning remains potent.

My examples of fairytale are drawn, as with the romances, from a pool of narratives commonly accepted as being such. In scanning fairytales from different lands and eras, it quickly becomes clear that there is great variety in the way tales are told, and this obviously presents a problem to anyone wishing to identify characteristics of the genre.[26] Not least among the difficulties are those arising from the ease with which the fairytale moves between the oral tradition, from which it originates and by which it is conditioned, and that of literature, which brings another set of influences to bear upon it.

I have drawn from a variety of fairytales ranging from those collected in the field and committed to the page as spoken by the story-teller with minimal interference from the collector and writer, to tales adopted by writers and changed in the retelling, perhaps with a particular audience in mind. One of the former is 'The Little Slut', reproduced here in the Appendix.[27] 'Little Slut' was recorded in Romany by John Sampson who lived amongst Welsh gypsies at the end of the last and beginning of the twentieth centuries with an interest primarily in their language. This story, in part a version of 'Cinderella', was one of those 'ancient folk-tales with which it is the gypsy custom to

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[26] On geographical and temporal differences see Thompson, pp.451-57; Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (U.S.A.: Basic Books, 1984; repr. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), pp.29-30 and 48-67, discusses differences between French, German, Italian, and English fairytales.

[27] All the fairytales to which I refer in this thesis are listed, with their sources, at the end of the thesis. Numbers which follow the names of fairytales are page references to the Appendix where appropriate, otherwise to the edition used. In collections of folktales, fairytales are often called 'wondertales' (see note 14 below).

enliven the long winter evenings'[28]; it was entertainment for adult as well as for child. Elsewhere Sampson says of another tale what he might equally have said of 'Little Slut', that the 'bald' nature of the tale in English translation is a reflection of the 'terse and idiomatic' Romany.[29] Notwithstanding the distorting effects of translation, 'Little Slut' is representative of orally transmitted fairytale. At the other end of the scale, the Grimm brothers are among the most prominent of those who "improved" oral tales for readers. Their famous, lengthy and colourful description of the palace awakening after its one hundred year sleep in the tale generally known in English as 'Sleeping Beauty', was recorded initially as 'and everything awoke from its sleep'.[30] Description is found in some fairytales but not all and seems mainly to belong to the fairytale in its literary context.[31]

While Stith Thompson warns against assuming complete uniformity of style even among oral fairytales,[32] it remains the case that despite localised variation, recurring features are discernible throughout the genre as a whole. Happily much attention has already been paid to this topic, to which this study readily acknowledges its debt.[33]

Chief among fairytale characteristics, it is generally felt, is the presence of some kind of supernatural element, although whether it is definitive scholars disagree. Thompson and Iona and Peter Opie think that it is. Thompson describes the fairytale as being

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[28] John Sampson, *The Dialect of the Gypsies of Wales* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926), p.viii. For where and how he collected the stories see p.x.

[29] Introduction to 'Welsh Gypsy Folk-Tales no.16', *JGLS*, 3rd series, 2 (1923), 1-10, p.1.

[30] John M. Ellis, *One Fairy Story too Many: The Brothers Grimm and Their Tales* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), Ellis argues that the Grimms altered their sources 'deliberately [and] persistently', p.viii. See pp.145-46 for the MS version (in translation) of 'Sleeping Beauty' as collected by the Grimms in or before 1810; see pp.146-53 on editions subsequently prepared by the Grimms. Assuming the MS versions represent what their informants told them (and there is some doubt about this, pp.37-38), the MS versions may be regarded as representing something close to oral tales.

[31] Lüthi, *The Fairy Tale*, pp.19-20.

[32] Thompson, p.451; he gives evidence from Russia, pp.451-53.

[33] Particularly helpful are: Lüthi, *The European Folktale* and *Once Upon a Time*; Olrik; *The Classic Fairy Tales*, ed. by Iona and Peter Opie (London: Oxford University Press, 1974); Thompson.

'filled with the marvelous' while the Opies are more expansive: 'a characteristic of the fairytale [...] is that it is unbelievable. Although a fairytale is seldom a tale about fairy-folk, and does not necessarily even feature a fairy, it does contain an enchantment or other supernatural element that is clearly imaginary'.[34] Lüthi, on the other hand, distinguishes between several sorts of fairytale, but nevertheless concedes that the magical fairytale (Zaubermärchen), containing 'significant supernatural elements', is 'for many scholars and for the nonprofessional […] the "fairytale proper"'.[35]

In narratives generally held to be fairytales magic, that mysterious, inexplicable power, is certainly not peripheral. In 'The White Duck', for instance (reproduced here in the Appendix), the plot is resolved by the magical transformation of duck into princess, and 'Jack and the Beanstalk' depends upon a magical bean. Magic holds a similarly central and indispensable place in several of the romances, like metamorphosis in *William* and *Chevalere*.[36]

The use of magic is just one way in which the material of fairytale and romance is not bound by the limits of reality. Many events in fairytale are, if not magical, highly improbable and at the least extremely unusual. Banishment to a coal-hole, swapping a baby for a puppy (LS): these are the stuff of the sensational tabloid press rather than the common experience of everyday life; they are extreme events. In romance, improbable

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[34] Thompson, p.8; Opie, p.15.

[35] *The Fairy Tale*, pp.167-70, especially 'fairytale of magic', p.168. In discussing fairytale characteristics I refer more often to Lüthi's *The European Folktale* than to his other books. Its translator, Niles, states that Lüthi usually uses the term 'Märchen' to refer to 'tales of magic', numbers 300-749 in the index begun by Antti Aarne and revised and enlarged by Stith Thompson, available as the second revision, *The Types of the Folktale*, FF Communications N:O 184 (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1961). Of these he remarks that 'the term "wondertale" is not a bad equivalent'. He has, however, 'as a rule' translated 'Märchen' and 'Volksmärchen' as 'folktale', 'hoping that the reader will not interpret the English word too broadly' (p.xxiv). The subject of *The European Folktale* is, therefore, what I call the 'fairytale'.

[36] '*William of Palerne': An Alliterative Romance*, ed. by G.H.V.Bunt, Mediaevalia Groningana, 6 (Groningen: Bouma's Boekhuis, 1985); *The Romance of the Cheuelere Assigne*, ed. by Henry H. Gibbs, EETS ES 6 (London: Trübner, 1868). Only editions of main romance versions will be mentioned in the footnotes. Details of other versions are given in the bibliography. Numbers following the names of romances are line references.

although not impossible events such as the theft of children by animals (for example in *Octavian*, *Isumbras*, *Eglamour*, *Torrent*), the disguise of humans as bears (*William*), and the extraordinary deeds of heroes who not infrequently defeat hundreds of Saracens single-handed, are commonplace.[37] Additionally, characters are not confined by physical form. Villains have a remarkable ability to remain menacing when they should be dead, like Burlonde who fights dangerously after the hero has reduced his legs to stumps (*Triamour*, 1546-73).[38] There is a similar disregard for pain or bleeding as an inhibiting factor when the wicked sister cuts off a piece of her foot in 'Little Slut'.

Extraordinary happenings, supernatural or otherwise, may be rationalised in either genre. Magic itself may be offered as explanation: blood cannot be cleaned from the key to the death chamber in 'Bluebeard' because it is 'a Fairy' (108); the metamorphosis of a werewolf-prince in *William* is attributed to the esoteric power of a sorceress-queen. Alternatively, divine power may be held responsible: the Holy Virgin restores the heroine's severed hands ('The Woman with her Hands Cut Off', reproduced here in the Appendix); the speaking bird is a messenger from God (*Isumbras*, 42). Explanation in terms of the supernatural may seem more satisfactory than earthbound rationalisation: the heroine survives the severance of her right arm and breast thanks to the attentions of a doctor in 'The Unchristened Child', but the events as described lack any sense of the urgency that would be necessary for her to survive such a trauma in real life;[39] equally the suggestion in *William* (1692-94) that bearskin disguise is suitable for escaping lovers because bears resemble men seems unlikely. But often there is no

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[37] *Octavian*, in *Six Middle English Romances*, ed. by Maldwyn Mills (London: Dent, 1973; repr. 1982), pp.75-124; *Sir Isumbras*, ed. by Mills, pp.125-47; *Sir Eglamour of Artois*, ed. by Frances E. Richardson, EETS 256 (London: Oxford University Press, 1965); *Torrent of Portyngale*, ed. by E. Adam, EETS ES 51 (London: Trübner, 1887).

[38] '*Syr Tryamowre': A Metrical Romance,* ed. by A. J. Erdman Schmidt (Utrecht: Broekhoff, 1937).

[39] 'What did he espy but the young woman in the tree, dripping with blood: "I see a woman in the top of a tree, and moreover, blood is dripping from her body." A boat came over, and they took her down from the tree, and brought her with them on board. There was a doctor on board the vessel, and he was not long healing the wounds' ('The Unchristened Child', 313).

attempt at explanation: the presence of the silver necklaces on the newborn children in *Chevalere*, apart from the obvious fact that without their necklaces the children become swans, is as mysterious as the analogous case of the three children and their golden belts in 'Little Slut'.

Rationalisation sometimes seems arbitrary but at others has a significant thematic consistency as it does in 'The Girl Without Hands', or in *Isumbras*, where as Laurel Braswell notes, 'most events which could be considered supernatural [...] are given religious explanation'.[40] This clearly contributes to the strong religious theme running through the poem, just as it does in the fairytale.

Isumbras shows no astonishment at the curious bird-messenger, and in this he is typical of all romance heroes and akin to the fairytale hero who, as Lüthi puts it, 'lacks all sense of the extraordinary'.[41] A heroine is not surprised to give birth to a hen ('The Little Crop-Tailed Hen'); children show no astonishment at water which leaps from one basin to another, at an apple which sings and a bird which speaks about things concerning themselves ('The Dancing Water', 'The Singing Apple', and 'The Speaking Bird'). Romance characters, too, accept the existence of giants, dragons, speaking birds and werewolves without surprise. They give to each other magical gifts: rings which protect the wearer from harm are particularly popular (for instance *Eglamour*, 616-21; *Horn*, 595-610);[42] Josian keeps her virginity through seven years of marriage by wearing a special ring (*Bevis*, 1981-91).[43]

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[40] Braswell, p.149.

[41] The European Folktale, p.7.

[42] '*King Horn', 'Floriz and Blauncheflur', 'The Assumption of our Lady'*, ed. by George H. McKnight, EETS OS 14 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1901), pp.1-69.

[43] '*Sir Beves of Hampton': Study and Edition*, ed. by Jennifer Fellows, 5 vols (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 1979), II and IV. In Cambridge University Library MS Ff.2.38, and Chetham MS 8009 Josian wears a love-girdle rather than a ring.

The world inside a romance is, like that of fairytale, one in which the properties of characters, objects, and events are not bound by the laws of physics.[44] While the romance audience is called upon to accept this world with as much equanimity as the characters within it, the hero's extraordinary deeds, performed against extraordinary villains, nonetheless mark him out as special, even "within" the romance: in *Octavian*, for example, the young and inexperienced Florent defeats the battle-hardened giant and so is brought to the attention of kings and lords.[45] Even so, they do not question the extravagance of his outstanding deeds.

In fairytale also characters are too heavily drawn to be lifelike. Their qualities limited and unambiguous, they contrast sharply with those around them, and where they do not they are likely to be indistinguishable from one another. Olrik, speaking of folk narrative in general rather than fairytale in particular, suggested a 'law of contrast' as one of the governing rules of its composition, giving as an example the antithesis of characters.[46] Lüthi shows that extremes of character are typical of the genre, and along with Bruno Bettelheim emphasises the polarisation typical of fairytale characterisation.[47] 'Beauty and the Beast', a frog prince and a fair princess ('The Frog Prince'), a little girl and a wolf ('Little Red Ridinghood'), are obvious examples. Most of the characters in 'Little Slut' inhabit the extreme edges of the social world. The young heroine, and the children in their forest cottage are as low in the world as the

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[44] Everett, p.9.

[45] See Everett on how the marvellous is not exploited for surprise and thrill, pp.11-12; Finlayson, pp.57-59, on the function of the marvellous.

[46] Olrik, p.135.

[47] Lüthi, *The European Folktale*, pp.34-35; see also Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (New York: Knopf, 1976; repr. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988), p.9.

prince in his castle is high; the heroine either a girl forced to hide in a coal-hole or, transformed in an instant, a 'grand lady' who captivates a prince.

Romance characters are not painted in 'the half-tones of ordinary human nature', to borrow Everett's phrase.[48] In contrast to the aristocrats are the cowherds (*William*), and the hermits (*Chevalere*); or the changed status of the hero himself may be one of startling contrast – Isumbras the wealthy landowner becomes a labourer and a rootless pilgrim. Horn's companions in exile are either loyal (Aþulf) or false (Fikenild); his ten other companions remain indistinguishable from one another and play no significant part in events. A murderous young wife is matched with a caring, brave, and honourable old husband (*Bevis*). Goodness allied to weakness, and evil allied to strength, as is often the case in both fairytale and romance, are accentuated. Virtue is highlighted by association with weakness in the brave and honourable, but elderly knight who defends the innocent queen against all odds in *Triamour*, or through its appearance in an unlikely character such as the old knight's loyal dog. Seemingly weak or insignificant allies are as much a feature of fairytale as formidable enemies: bird, fish, ant, and bee are instrumental in helping the hero win princess and throne in 'The King's Godson and the Baldchin'; in *Triamour* the dog exposes the villain.

Heroes are what Walter Ong calls 'heavy' characters, 'persons whose deeds are monumental, memorable and commonly public', type figures of oral narrative.[49] Heroes and indeed some others in the romances fit this description: Horn, for instance, is outstandingly beautiful and 'he customarily kills not one pagan during an encounter but more often hundreds'.[50] As in fairytale, pitted against the hero will be the most

[48] Everett, p.9; see also Reiss, p.110.
[49] Ong, p.70.
[50] Anne Scott, p.41.

terrible enemy: the young and naïve Enyas faces the evil, unscrupulous Matabryne in *Chevalere*; the semi-clad young Perceval defeats the formidable Red Knight, his father's killer; Eglamour takes on the huge boar which has previously killed all comers.[51]

As we might expect from the high degree of polarity in characterisation, conflict is common in these stories. Thompson notes the high incidence of 'some kind of conflict' in fairytale as a whole while Ong makes the point that conflict, both verbal and physical, is a dominating feature in orally based narrative.[52] In fairytale it may take a variety of forms: physical combat ('The Fiery Dragon', where the monster takes three days to defeat); verbal opposition (the fairies' promises in 'Sleeping Beauty'); competition ('The Three Feathers').

The romances of course are full of conflict. Battles abound, also tournaments and single combat. They are the means of settling disputes, establishing superiority, and demonstrating worth. There are other forms too: marital antagonism, unwanted marriage resisted, patrimony denied, accusation of adultery, and so on. As in fairytales, verbal conflict often precedes physical, as for instance when the hero and the Black Knight engage verbally before they come to blows in *Perceval* (1897-912).

Polarisation creates tensions which require resolution; in this it both initiates and furthers the progression of the plot. When in favour of the good the resolution of such tensions gives a great deal of satisfaction, so reinforcing our attachment to the good. Polarisation clarifies moral qualities and relationships, discouraging areas of doubt and

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[51] *Sir Perceval of Galles*, in *Middle English Metrical Romances*, ed. by Walter Hoyt French and Charles Brockway Hayle, 2 vols (New York: Prentice Hall, 1930; repr. New York: Russell and Russell, 1964), II, 531-603.

[52] Thompson, p.23; Ong, p.43-45.

encouraging unequivocal identification with the admirable. The good, the beautiful, the excellent, are defined all the more clearly when set against the wicked, the ugly, the despicable.[53]

The strongly drawn characters which people fairytale and romance are stock figures. The Opies draw attention to this in fairytale: the young and ill-treated heroine (often the youngest of three), the wicked sister, the helpful old stranger, are the stuff of the genre.[54] The hero or heroine is almost always young, often dirty, perhaps simple, and of a low status which does not accord with his or her birthright ('Cinderella') or at any rate with where he ends up ('Puss in Boots'). Romance heroes are usually young (though not always; Isumbras is marries with children), and do not have the status which either is their birthright or which we feel they deserve: they are either dispossessed (*Isumbras*, *Bevis*) or denied that of which they are worthy (*Torrent*, *Eglamour*).

While the fairytale is set in an unspecific time past, romance places its stories in a quasi historical past (not particularised but obviously roughly contemporary medieval) and peoples them with the stock figures of a specifically chivalric world – those imbued with chivalric values.[55] The central figure is the knight, as romance hero embodiment of all that is perfect in appearance and martial performance, with his behaviour generally governed (by the end if not at the beginning) by the chivalric ideals of courtesy, generosity, nobility, honour, and valour.[56] The female equivalent is beautiful, chaste, and courteous. In this group of romances honour and love are probably the two greatest motivators for a knight. Fear of shame spurs Eglamour to deal the death blow

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[53] Lüthi discusses effects of contrast in *The Fairy Tale*, pp.94-106.

[54] Opie, p.15.

[55] Michael Chesnutt discusses the medieval habit of describing 'the historical past in terms of the manners and customs of the present', in 'Minstrel Reciters and the Enigma of the Middle English Romance', *Culture and History*, 2 (1987), 48-67 (p.53).

[56] See, for instance, *Isumbras*, 7-30.

to the dragon who nearly defeats him (*Eglamour*, 739-50); Torrent is motivated to do deeds of arms by love for a lady (*Torrent*, 31-42). Unlike the fairytale hero, his romance counterpart is the idealised figure of a particular code.[57]

The villains of a piece are typically Saracens and huge animals alongside the more fairytale-like giants and dragons; a heroine is usually subject to the hostile attentions of a mother-in-law (as is her fairytale counterpart) or the court steward. Stock helpers are faithful squires and ladies' maids, the squires typically being less proficient in arms than their masters while the maids are as resourceful if not more so than their mistresses. All the main characters belong to an aristocratic world and tend to be earls at the least.[58] A certain amount of social mobility is possible within this world (Torrent, an earl's son, becomes an emperor) but there are no low born heroes to attain high office from outside this world of privilege as in the fairytale 'Puss in Boots' where a miller's son becomes an earl.

Although the romance hero may be said to have the several qualities of the ideal knight, for the purpose of the narrative just one – usually – is emphasised. His humility may be stressed, or perhaps his attachment to his beloved, but more often than not it is his fighting ability. His main trait, or traits, may take on a particular thematic purpose. This is strikingly illustrated in *Perceval* where the containment of brute strength and unbridled aggression in the knight by good manners is a principal theme. From the time Perceval, a high-born wildman, leaves his mother and the forest, his aggressive strength, uncouth manners, and ignorance of knightly ways are heightened, balanced, and eventually modified by Gawain's chivalric courtesy. It is through the interaction of the two characters that Perceval moves closer to knightly perfection: his unchivalrous plan

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[57] For comments on the idealisation of the romance hero see Finlayson, pp.54-55; Giaccherini, pp.65-66.
[58] Reiss, p.110.

to burn the Red Knight out of his armour, for instance, is stopped by Gawain who unlaces the armour and helps Perceval into it giving him, as Perceval himself remarks, at least the appearance of a knight (775-804). And it is significant that it is a man who 'the curtasye of Wawayne / He weldis in wane' (1263-64) who persuades Perceval to obey the lady's request and go into the castle to speak with her – initiating the process in which Perceval's impetuous aggression will eventually be channelled by love (1261-84). The stock qualities of Perceval and Gawain carry strong thematic interest and the English poem takes full advantage of the comic potential inherent in the polarity of their main attributes.

As much of the evidence amassed so far suggests, in neither fairytale nor romance does individualised inner thought and the idiosyncratic behaviour arising from it delineate character as it does in the novel. Fairytale characters are largely unencumbered by any psychological or inner life, often lacking overt motivation.[59] This is striking in 'The Fiery Dragon': the hero displays no desire to win or help the lady, yet three times he risks his life against the dragon for her.[60] Like the other characters he simply acts.

But most fairytale characters do not lack inner life completely. Even if we are not told much about it, many characters clearly do have ascribed to them some inner feeling: 'the lady fell in love with Jack' ('The Fiery Dragon, 4); 'when she heard this, she turned pale with rage and envy; and called to one of her servants and said, 'Take Snow-drop away into the wide wood, that I may never see her more' ('Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs', 177); 'after some time the king and his youngest son are in deep grief because some misfortune must have happened to them, and the youngest asks leave to set out'

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[59] Lüthi, *The European Folktale*, pp.13-16.
[60] See also 'The White Duck' where the false woman's motive for acting against the heroine is to be inferred.

('The White Blackbird', 183). Lüthi, with his fairytale ur-style ever in mind, considers such statements of emotion to be 'false style' but his work suggests that linking such statements with action is not unusual in actual fairytales.[61] When a narrative does attribute feelings to characters the tendency is simply to name emotion without any attempt to realise it as an inner experience; in addition it is emotion uncomplicated by introspection or interaction with personality or particular situation. The fairytale does not portray characters as rounded individuals but shows only what is necessary to the story. None of the inner feeling shown is individualised in the sense that it is the product of a unique and complex psychological entity. All is familiar, commonplace, shared: desire for a mate, sorrow at loss, and so on.

The portrayal of characters in romance shows similar tendencies. For example, an emperor swoons for joy on being reunited with his wife (*Octavian* (N), 1726-28. Although it finds exaggerated physical expression here, joy on reunion with a loved one after a separation of several years is an unsurprising and predictable response which does not imply any psychological individuality in the emperor. Torrent, too, feels joy on being reunited with his wife (*Torrent*, 2566-71). There is no interest in either case in presenting emotion as a complex set of inner experiences born of unique personality meeting particular circumstance, such as casts the audience as curious observers. On the contrary, since it is simple and universal, the emotion here is quickly and easily understood and may swiftly stimulate an empathetic response from the audience.

The characters of fairytale, lacking complexity and not particularised, are essentially role players, enactors of events. Despite localised attempts to suggest the contrary, the evidence suggests, as Propp observed, that 'in general [...] the feelings and intentions of

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[61] Ibid., p.14.

the dramatis personae do not have an effect on the course of (the) action'. Persona, motive, and action are separable; the action is predetermined. It is the action which is predominant and significant.[62] This point is strikingly illustrated by comparison of three variants of the well-known fairytale 'Cinderella' which shows that the tale as narrative structure exists independently of its characters' attributes or their precise actions. In Basile's version the heroine asks her father, who is about to go on a journey, to bring her a gift from the fairies. She treats the gift in a particular way so that one feast day, at her request, it equips her with fine attire and equipage. She joins the public celebrations where the king just happens to notice her. In Perrault's 'Cinderella' the heroine's godmother finds her in tears at being unable to attend the prince's ball, and assists her by transforming various household objects and animals into fine clothes and retinue.[63] In a third version, the Romany 'Little Slut', the heroine shows no inclination to marry a prince, or even to leave the house and see one, until after her third visit to the church; and in going to church she simply does what a stranger has told her to do. What is important to all versions is the underlying need of the plot: the heroine must meet the eligible man. The choice of event which brings them together – festival, ball, or church service – is unimportant to the general underlying structure, as are the particular attributes of the heroine. Nevertheless a broad consistency of character and event is generally made since the details are important to individual realisations. A heroine like Basile's, who is resourceful and willing to countenance murder for her own ends, is perhaps more likely to meet her man at a street festival rather than in a church.[64]

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[62] Propp, p.78. As Brewer says, 'event precedes character', and 'from the point of view of the story, events generate characters', *Symbolic Stories*, p.35.

[63] *Cinderella: A Folklore Casebook*, ed. by Alan Dundes, Garland Folklore Casebooks, 3 (New York: Garland Publishing, 1982), pp.5-10 and 16-21.

[64] In romance, localised, careful attention to realistic cause and effect can be seen in *Octavian* (37-84). The emperor sees his wife's face which makes him sad that they are childless so he weeps, his wife sees his tears and asks him to share his troubles, he voices his worry, she suggests a course of action (to build an abbey for the Virgin) which they take. Immediately (in terms of narrative time) the lady is pregnant. Juxtaposition of the two facts suggests the desired causal connection. But we know from similar stories like *Triamour* (where the causative factor is the king's going to fight in the Holy Land) that the vital, predetermined plot factor is the birth of a child, by whatever means it appears to be brought about.

The bony frame of the plot exists independently of the motifs and details which flesh it out, giving it substance and distinguishing one version from another; but just as the skeleton alone is not the animal, the plot alone is not the fairytale. A view of fairytales as layered constructs, which Propp facilitated by his distinction between variable and constant elements in fairytale is akin to the famous distinction between 'sens' and 'matière' in medieval romance to which Eugène Vinaver draws attention in his work on Malory.[65] It is crucial too, to Brewer's theory of narrative. He calls the variable levels of stories the 'verbal' or 'literal' layer and points out that the storyteller obviously has considerable control over the verbal layer: he may name his characters as he pleases, choose the setting for events, control the tone, suggest didactic significance.[66] This verbal coating gives expression to the series of events which make the story the particular story it is.

Romance, too, may usefully be seen as layered, with plot existing independently of character and motivation. Amongst romance variants there is usually a degree of difference at the verbal level due to imprecision in transmission arising from a variety of possible causes. The verbal (variable) level of stories may differ in small ways – perhaps the odd word or phrase changed here and there; alternatively versions may vary to the extent that the story switches genre as it does in *Isumbras*, which is derived from the St Eustace legend. In that legend the hero, Eustace, is a virtuous, but pagan, army commander. Following a miracle in which Christ is revealed to him he converts to Christianity; the trials which ensue (including a long separation from his family such as Isumbras endures) are expressly undergone as proof of his faith. His ultimate sacrifice

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[65] *The Works of Sir Thomas Malory*, ed. by Eugène Vinaver, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947), I, pp.lxiv-lxvii.

[66] Symbolic Stories, p.3.

is martyrdom which takes place after the family reunion. In the romance version the hero is a Christian from the beginning and his trials are punishment for a sin which is eventually forgiven.[67] The plot or pattern is the same in each case but the differing attributes, motives, and circumstances ascribed to each hero push the individual realisations of the story into separate genres.

Further evidence of fairytale's preference for the concrete over the abstract may be seen in the way personality trait, feelings, and relationships are externalised. In Lüthi's words, the fairytale 'translates feelings into actions by transposing the internal world onto the level of external events'.[68] The kindness and selflessness of one of the two half-sisters in 'The Little Crop-Tailed Hen' may be supposed from her gentle treatment of the three boars' heads she finds in a well; her sister's rough response to them implies a selfish, unkind personality. In 'Little Slut' when the daughter falls down in amazement on the recovery of her mother a concrete event demonstrates internalised feeling. When she wishes for a cottage by the river, and later for the return of her mother, these wishes are expressed in dialogue with another character; she is never shown to be brooding and miserable. Speech itself is a form of action. In action also, relationships reveal themselves: the sisters send the heroine to hide in the coal-hole; the prince and the heroine marry.[69]

In the romances too, abstract traits of character are also largely revealed through situation and event.[70] William of Palerne shows himself to be a natural leader

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[67] Braswell argues this in detail.

[68] *The European Folktale*, p.16. Olrik says, 'each attribute of a person and thing must be expressed in actions – otherwise it is nothing', p.137.

[69] Lüthi, ibid., pp.17-18.

[70] Thoughts rarely occur and when they do they are usually expressed in concrete terms: for example, *Perceval*, 585-92; *William*, 290-91. Melior's long monologue (*William*, 433-570) is unusual amongst these romances for its interest in an inner experience, in this case that of falling in love. As speech, monologue is action, though it is a step closer to interiorisation than dialogue.

consistent with his true rank by his behaviour amongst his childhood playmates. Florent (in *Octavian*), reveals his nobility through the purchase of hawk and horse when he has been sent out on business errands for his socially inferior foster father. Torrent shows his mettle in undertaking battle against the terrible giant, Slongus: conversation with local people makes clear the enormity of what he faces and Torrent's prayer shows his strength of mind and courage (*Torrent*, 951-94).

It is by means of a deadly plot that the old queen expresses the depth of her hatred for Emaré. Men literally take to their beds for love; Eglamour, for instance. That hero reveals his desire in a prayer to God, and his appreciation of the obstacle to its achievement as well as a sense of his own worth in conversation with his squire (*Eglamour*, 52-108). At the start of *Octavian* the emphasis is on the concrete manifestations of the emperor's grief and his wife's reaction to it (43-72). Isumbras's life crisis is expressed in action: his realisation of having sinned is put into a bird's mouth, his punishment is systematic loss of belongings, his penance is physical suffering. As with feeling, so with relationships. The ring which Rymenild gives to Horn to protect him in battle if he looks at it and remembers her is at one level a straightforward token of Rymenild's love; at another its supernatural power to respond to the hero's thoughts of his beloved in battle extends its significance to suggest that Horn at least partly derives the ability to be the great fighter he is from Rymenild's love.[71]

The names of fairytale characters reflect the importance of the concrete in characterisation. They are usually named (if at all) according to their situation: so in 'Little Slut', for instance, the heroine is, according to her circumstance, 'the young girl',

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[71] *Horn*, 595-610. The proviso that Horn must look at the ring and think of his beloved is missing in the Bodleian MS 1486 version. On gifts as indicative of relationships in fairytale see Lüthi, ibid., pp.17-18.

'the lady', 'the mother'. Certain names attach themselves to the role of hero and there are local preferences: Jack and Hans are the names of countless English and German fairytale heroes respectively. Like fairytale too, although not to the same extent, romance characters may be named from their situation: 'Degarré' is from the Old French "esgaré", meaning 'þing þat not never whar hit is' (*Degarré*, 256); 'Emaré', probably meaning 'pure, refined [...] endowed with rare qualities', which changes with the circumstances to 'Egaré', 'outcast'.[72]

Names in romance more often imply individuality than in fairytale, probably because it is the more literary of the two genres. Sir Isumbras is the hero of only one romance story. Yet no more in the romance than in the fairytale does the idea of 'identity' carry the implication of psychological uniqueness, as we have seen. And in both genres identity is, in Sandra Feinstein's words, 'something pre-existent [...] that must be realised through certain actions'. Later she claims it is one of the 'distinctive features' of the genre (and here she is referring to romance 'that the hero has an identity that must be recognised and assumed, recovered more often than discovered, claimed not questioned'.[73] The Opies recognise this in the fairytale when they say that these are tales of 'reality made evident'.[74]

In fairytale personal identity, insofar as it can be said to exist at all, is limited by role. The hero, for example, is the central figure who is the subject of adventures, often away from home, who struggles against some sort of wrong, and who succeeds and is

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[72] *Emaré*, ed. by Mills, pp.46-74; *Sir Degarré*, in *Medieval English Romances*, ed. by A.V.C. Schmidt and Nicolas Jacobs, 2 vols (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1980), II, 57-88. For comments on names in *Emaré* see *The Romance of 'Emaré'*, ed. by Edith Rickert, EETS ES 99 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1908), p.xxix. On the significance of names in *Eglamour* see Ramsey, p.166; in *Horn*, see D. M. Hill, 'An Interpretation of *King Horn*', *Anglia*, 75 (1957), 157-172, e.g. pp.168-69.

[73] 'Identity in Romance' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Indiana, 1984; abstract in *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 45 (1985), 2532A-2533A), pp.6 and 8.

[74] Opie, p.11.

rewarded. Recognition of identity is by outward sign: the hero of 'The Two Brothers', for example, is distinguishable from the false hero because it is he who possesses the tongues of the dead dragon which he has killed. In the romances identity is also a matter of role and depends on what may be perceived from without: behaviour, appearance, and social status. Isumbras, for instance, is a knight with all the trappings of nobility and wealth, valiant, courteous, generous, having many friends, married to a beautiful woman, with three attractive children (*Isumbras*, 7-36). He has no identity in terms of psychological individuality; rather his identity lies in his social position. It is true that his pride marks him out – indeed it is this which initiates the story. But this is unconvincing as a personality trait, not least because it is at odds with everything else we know about him; rather its importance is as a sin necessitating penance (118-20, 514-16). Since we are not dealing with psychologically complex characterisation, the anomaly of pride in an otherwise virtuous man (not intrinsically impossible, after all, though it may be felt to be improbable) can easily be accepted.

The link between identity and outward sign is illustrated in the exchange between Isumbras and the king for whom he has distinguished himself in battle after several years as a labourer.

> The kynge asked what was his name:
>
> 'Syr,' he seyd, 'I am a smythes manne;
>
> Byholde and thou may se with syghthe.'
>
> The kynge answered ayen thanne:
>
> 'I trowe nevur smythes manne
>
> In werre were so wyghte.'   (466-71)

The king's puzzlement arises from the disjunction between Isumbras's appearance and behaviour in a world where there is a clearly defined system of correspondence between appearance (which includes personal beauty and dress), behaviour, and social status. In this world fine appearance, prowess in combat good manners and other chivalric virtues are in general the preserve of those of noble birth. Isumbras's loss of social status which changes him from a landowner to a labourer marks a loss of the integrity necessary for personal identity.

Correspondence between appearance and reality is as important in fairytale as it is in romance for the realisation of identity. The frog who is really a prince ('The Frog Prince'); the beast who is a nobleman in enchanted form ('Beauty and the Beast'); the kitchen maid who is really a princess ('Catskin'): none of these characters can be recognised as who they really are until it is clear what they really are; put another way, who they are is what they are.

Fairytale is not concerned with the complexities of social status or with what it means to be noble. Specific family is not important, and while royalty is often attributed to fairytale characters it is in a generalised, symbolic way. This is not so in romance. Whether the main interest lies in the procedure of donning armour and the detail of knightly combat, or in good manners and the ritual of feasting in hall, the romances are – albeit to different degrees – concerned to project images of nobility. In romance identity and nobility are bound up together. Typically in both fairytale and romance the hero loses his identity at the beginning of the story and finds it at the end; in romance the integrity on which identity depends is built up gradually by the demonstration of noble qualities. For Isumbras and Degarré exceptional ability in combat provides clues to identity long before it is fully revealed, and Emaré's skill as a needlewoman and her

courtesy make Kador, who has rescued her from her ordeal at sea and who does not know her true identity, feel enough confidence in her noble background to tell the king she is an earl's daughter (*Emaré*, 421-29). Gradually, by outward sign, reality and thus identity is made evident.

Progress towards identity for the romance hero may be implicitly or explicitly tied up with a search for family. For William it is the former: though he laments his lack of family (*William*, 715-30)), he does not set out to find them; nonetheless the disclosure of his identity depends on reunion with them. Degarré, by contrast, leaves home specifically to find his family (*Degarré*, 309-10) and by implication, his true identity.

Despite their differing emphasis on specific family, in both fairytale and romance identity is a matter of what may be perceived outwardly. Romance's interest in nobility is an interest in its external constituents, and although a noble cast of mind may be implied it is very much dependent on birth and is not itself the subject of scrutiny. It is consistent with this that identity tokens are as important a means of recognition in romance as in fairytale: for instance, the gloves and tip-less sword given him as a baby by his parents allow the adult Degarré eventually, and at the appropriate moment, to be identified by and to identify his family.

The revelation of the hero's true worth and therefore his identity is the subject of countless fairytales and many romances. The story is that of the hero and this is reflected in the centrality of his role: the hero-figure is the one from whom other characters and events gain their significance. This is a particularly striking feature in the fairytale where there is often no evidence that characters have any existence apart

from their role in the plot.[75] The old woman who helps the heroine in 'Little Slut' is comparable with the hind who suckles the abandoned infants in *Chevalere*: the only interest in these characters lies in their relation to hero or heroine. This remains true even when a character's presence or activities are recorded in some detail. The *Bevis* poet, for instance, recounts King Ivor's marriage to Josian, the measures she takes to avoid sexual union with him, and his inability to ride Arundel, the hero's horse, events at which the hero himself is not present, but they are significant not for what they tell us about Ivor's fortunes, but for their function as an obstacle in the way of the hero's marriage with Josian, the loss of his "possessions" to another man and their enduring loyalty to him. *William* is a narrative which appears to be moving away from this sort of method. Alphonse's history occupies forty-nine lines (109-58), and the subject matter broadens at the end to focus on ceremony and conduct rather than the adventures of the hero. But it remains the case that Alphonse's story, although of interest in itself, takes its significance from its relation to the hero and the hero provides, even at the end of the romance, a focal point around which gathers the interest in noble behaviour.

The pivotal role of the fairytale and romance hero in the narrative encourages audiences to identify with him or her regardless of their own gender.[76] Defined by role rather than by personality, and lacking psychological individuality, characters can be seen as representative. In the hero's role, standing apart from but nevertheless central to his world, struggling against powerful forces, we can easily imagine ourselves. Indeed we are wise to do so since it is the hero whose actions are rewarded with the sort of success that has universal appeal: recognition or worth, signified publicly by kingship and on a personal level by marriage.

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[75] Lüthi, The European Folktale, p.17.

[76] Storyteller and audience identification with the hero is central to Wilson's thinking, p.30; see also Bettelheim, pp.9-10; Opie, p.11; Mehl, pp.26-27.

The special dependence of characters on the central figure of the hero is one of the factors which supports an analogy between the fairytale or romance hero and a dreamer. Wilson argues that just as a dreamer creates a dream, so the hero "creates" the characters and events which make up the story, himself taking the role of the protagonist. Feelings and relationships are projected outwards from the "mind" of the hero onto the surface of the story where they appear as character and event. Conversely, characters are not the many-faceted personalities of everyday, waking life, but are split into objectified aspects of a personality as perceived by the hero. This usually means they are either helpful or hostile. The world of the story, like a dream world, represents the world of the hero's mind, a sequence of situations in which the central figure experiments with his own place in certain scenarios. The surface character of the hero himself (technically the "hero") is not a rounded personality but is also a "split" (perhaps one of several), a projection of his own feeling, this time about himself. In one sense the tale is the full mind of the hero.[77]

While this idea has proved an indispensable key to unlocking meaning in such texts it is important to remember its limitations. These stories are not individualised in the sense that they represent the experience of a unique individual as the analogy with dream might imply: the sorts of characters and the situations in which they find themselves recur across many different stories. Indeed, these stories are not dreams, not reports of

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[77] Wilson, especially pp.14, 20, 30, 31. For an earlier and insightful study which sees dramatis personae as aspects of a hero's character see Hill. The concept of projection is central to Brewer's work, as I have mentioned previously, and has been taken up fruitfully by several other scholars: see, for example, Giaccherini; T. A. Shippey, 'Breton Lais and Modern Fantasies', in *Studies in Medieval English Romances: Some New Approaches*, ed. by Derek Brewer (Cambridge: Brewer, 1988), pp.69-91. Other features of fairytale and romance support an analogy with dream. The tendency to externalise and present information in concrete terms is analogous to the projection of the inner workings of the mind outward into the pictorial language of dream (Wilson, see for instance, p.18). In addition the strings of easily visualised, well differentiated episodes, often lacking a clear causal relationship, of the narratives are in some respects like the paratactic, inconsequential episodes of dream. See Giaccherini's statement quoted in note 4 of this chapter; also Barron, pp.3-4. However, Lüthi warns against confusing fairytale with dream or assuming dream as a source for fairytale in *The European Folktale*, p.99. For Wilson's view of the difference between dream and story see Wilson, p.55.

personal experience, but fictions. Because of this they are subject to the conventions of narrative genres such as are scrutinised in this chapter, which themselves deserve attention in any story interpretation because of their own potential for meaning.

Both fairytales and the romances are tales of adventure.[78] Adventure may take place under many circumstances including quest ('The Three Feathers'; *Degarré*), test/task ('Rumpelstiltskin'; *Eglamour*), banishment ('The Woman with Her Hands Cut Off'; *Emaré*), enchantment ('The White Duck'; *William*). Adventure may be initiated at home but usually involves leaving home at least for a short while. In romance in particular, especially in those of great length, it may seem that adventure succeeds adventure for its own sake, with little more to link them than the hero on whom they are centred.

A strict chronology seems, at least superficially, to govern the ordering of events in both fairytale and romance. This is quite clear in, for example, 'The Woman with Her Hands Cut Off', where the explicit linking of episodes by time marks the sequence of events: 'the next night' (116), 'five or six days went by' (117), 'not long after' (118). If there is deviation from a strict chronological order in fairytale or romance it is most commonly in the form of explanatory history to account for a person or event: for instance, 'here are the three alone in the forest whom the two sisters had turned adrift when their grand-mother died' ('Little Slut', reproduced in the Appendix, page 249). Such apparent deviations may also happen, often on a larger scale, in the romances, for example in *William*, where we are diverted from the hero's story to hear how his helper, the

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[78] Finlayson argues that adventure is at the core of romance and that the treatment it receives distinguishes types of romances, pp.55-57; see also Everett, p.3.

werewolf, became such a beast. But in neither instance is the chronological sequence of the main story seriously disrupted.

Strict chronology alone does not, however, account for the shape of events. At its simplest and most abstract the fairytale moves from a discordant state to one of harmony.[79] Long recognised, this progression has been variously termed. Propp speaks of a movement from 'villainy' or 'lack' to 'liquidation of misfortune'. Lüthi identifies the same pattern manifoldly as progression from 'minus to plus', 'need – fulfilment of need', and 'lack – remedy'. Often such a lack is brought about by a villainous act but as Lüthi points out, 'it is not necessary to single out the villainy for special attention [...] the villainy just brings about the essential factor, the lack, the missing element'. This assumes a state of harmony, plenty, stability, plus, to be present before the story begins, even if it is not mentioned in the narrative.[80] Northrop Frye describes the progression of such stories in terms of descent and ascent, the hero suffering a changed identity and descending to a world of alienation, darkness, conflict, and increased self-knowledge, and later ascending to a rediscovered identity, freedom, and integration.[81] Such progression is the deepest, because the most abstract, level of narrative; the foundation on which the stories are built.

A more detailed analysis of the morphology of the fairytale is the subject of Propp's seminal study already mentioned. Propp argues that although not all of the thirty-one possible 'functions' he identified are present in any one tale, those that are will always be in the same order. Although his claim to have identified the morphological basis of every fairytale may be contested he has at least drawn attention to the underlying shape

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[79] These terms follow Hume who speaks of resolving 'discord into harmonies', p.162.

[80] Propp (in translation), p.92; Lüthi, *The Fairy Tale*, pp.54-56, quotation from p.55. Hume points out the tripartite structure in many romances, p.162.

[81] Frye, pp.97-157; summary, p.129.

of an important group of traditional narratives including many romances. In brief, a lack or an act of villainy causes the hero to leave home. He has adventures, struggles, and achieves success; he returns to his home (or the equivalent) unrecognised, and is finally rewarded with recognition, marriage and a kingdom. Each sequence which progresses from misfortune to elimination of misfortune, Propp calls a 'move', and there may be many moves in one tale.[82] While the romances do not adhere faithfully to this sequence in all its parts, as a broad shape it is discernible in them all. *Isumbras* shows the pattern in a relatively simple form: by a staggered series of losses the hero, who has offended God, is bereft of his social position and family; away from home he is eventually successful, through struggle and suffering, in winning back God's approval; when he finds his wife and what will be his new home he is at first unrecognised but ultimately he achieves recognition, reunion with his wife, and a kingdom. In *Bevis* two tales are arranged consecutively: the first tale sequence, ending with the hero's marriage and succession to the family seat, being followed by the emergence of new discord and the start of a new tale. The hero once again suffers loss and has many adventures before he is happily reunited with his wife and made a king. Different again in *Octavian* (N), where one move is contained inside another to form a single tale: in the first move the mother is a victim-hero while her son, in the second, is a seeker-hero. Each is the centre of her or his own move with marital reunion of marriage, and recognition for both brought together in the reunion scene which completes both moves at the end of the story.[83]

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[82] Propp on sequence, p.22: he says, 'freedom within this sequence is restricted by very narrow limits which can be exactly formulated'; on moves, p.92. For the sequence of functions see pp.25-65.

[83] Propp distinguishes seeker and victim heroes, p.36.

Doubled fairytale structures where one tale follows another as it does in *Bevis*, are common in fairytale. 'Little Slut' is one example.[84] Although structurally each part of the bipartite whole could stand alone as a separate tale, in each instance certain non-structural features such as consistencies in character and situation act to unite the tales into one story. The hero will probably be the same in both parts, and other characters form the first sequence of events may reappear in the second, although not always in the same role. The prince who marries the heroine in the first part of 'Little Slut' reappears in the second part although here, for much of the time, he plays the role of villain. Ascopart, the heathen giant in *Bevis*, is at first a villain who by the end of the first tale has joined the hero's entourage; in the second part he reverts to a role opposed to the hero. No particular motive is given for Ascopart's reversion in several versions although it is unsurprising in view of his earlier refusal to be christened.[85] Consistency in characterisation across both parts of the romance provides a rationale for Ascopart's second change of role, while in the fairytale the prince's persona remains very little particularised throughout.

Structurally the classic denouement of fairytale is marriage and kingship, which means that in a double structure the second part of the story must occur within marriage. The double structure in such classic stories therefore implicitly recognises the pivotal role of marriage as both an end and a beginning. While the first tale usually has as its (often unvoiced) goals winning status and power, and marriage, and focuses on growing up, the second has as its subject the problems of maturity, in particular marital relations and shifts of power. The power with which the fairytale is concerned is usually domestic, whatever the gender of its protagonist. The hero of the Hungarian fairytale, 'Pearly-

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[84] Other examples: 'The Devil and His Three Daughters', ''The Golden Apple – Tree and the Nine Peahens', 'Fair, Brown, and Trembling'.

[85] Ascopart's reversion goes unexplained in MSS Chetham, Trinity, and Gonville and Caius.

Dew John', loses his wife after marriage and must seek and win her again as he did before. At the end of the second tale he destroys the winged gown which has been in his wife's words, 'my only power' (237), and which has allowed her to elude him throughout the story. For the heroine of 'Little Slut' marital relations are similarly central even though the children claim much of our attention. This is despite the setting of both stories being at least partly away from home.

The double-structure romances share the same general pre- and post-marital focus as the fairytale. Bevis wins domestic power along with his marriage but his role changes irrevocably with the birth of their children and his relationship with his wife must consequently be re-formed. But at the end of the second tale, after the reunion of the hero and his wife, Bevis affirms his supremacy over kings, the romance paying a great deal of attention to this (some 965 lines in the Auchinleck version). Thus of the bipartite fairytale ending "marriage and kingship", the latter element is greatly extended.

The female-centred romance, *Emaré*, also has a double structure, highlighted by the considerable verbal repetition in the accounts of the heroine being twice cast out in a boat, twice finding refuge on a foreign shore, and so on.[86] Relations between daughter and parent are at first the main problem but are superseded in the second part by relations between a wife and her in-laws. As in the fairytales the crisis is a family one. Power for the heroine is limited to the domestic, though it is not safe to assume that this limit is explained completely by gender since not all the women of the romances have their field of influence so circumscribed: Isumbras's wife, for instance, is made a queen who wields power over a kingdom.

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[86] Lines 325-36 and 673-84; 349 and 694; 350 and 699.

Single structure romances any equate to either part of the classic double structure: *Degarré* tells of a young man growing up; the hero of *Isumbras* is a married man. An interesting variant is the postponement of the denouement (marriage) to the first tale until a second tale (concerning the hero as parent) has been told. *Torrent* has such a structure, the hero becoming king at the end of the first tale although he does not marry and is unable to live as king until his marriage is formalised. The implication that marriage as an end is an illusory goal for the young, that sexual partnering is simply a new beginning, and that stability and power may be found only later in life when the trials of rearing a family are over, is essentially the message of the double structure. It suggests that mature experiences may be rites de passage as well as those of the young; it sees a depth and value in adulthood missing from a child-centred fairytale. This enlarged picture of the human condition has a dramatic potential which Shakespeare develops in his later romances.

In both single and double structures, recurring patterns give substance to the basic discord-harmony shape, showing how fundamental is Olrik's 'law of contrast' in these romances. Such patterns as exile-return, quarrel-reconciliation, prohibition-violation, crime-punishment, separation-reunion, test-reward, prediction-fulfilment, are much documented and several are illustrated in *Horn* where the hero is exiled from home and later returns, is separated from his beloved and later reunited, makes predictions and promises which he fulfils.[87]

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[87] On *Horn* see Anne Scott, pp.40-41 and 47-48. Others who identify and discuss such patterns are Rosenberg, 'The Morphology'; Susan Wittig, *Stylistic and Narrative Structures in the Middle English Romances* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978), for example pp.175-78.

The happy ending which is generally felt to characterise romance[88] is typical of most, though not all, fairytales.[89] It does not arise from manipulation at the literal level of the causative relationship between characterisation and event but rather from the organic resolution of structural tension. In 'Little Slut' for instance, no attempt is made to rationalise the resolution of tension which occurs in the family reunion; there is no word of remonstration, remorse, or forgiveness which might initiate reconciliation or make it plausible. Nonetheless the family reunion brings about satisfying structural symmetry from the sense of harmony restored. In the romances too, rationalisation may stand in unconvincing relation to the underlying structure. In *Emaré* a rather sketchy account of the human feeling behind the reconciliation is given: Emaré initiates reconciliation with her father for no apparent reason despite his terrible treatment of her years before; her father's response to his deed is governed by his apparent moral sense which prompts his remorse. But Emaré's move to be reunited with her father exactly parallels her move to be reunited with her husband not long before, and the patterning is so strong as to exert its own importance as the dominant influence in the resolution of tension.

The return to calm after the storm is a return to stability but stability which is different to that with which the story began. By the end of the story there has been a development: the hero is generally married or has become a king. In many cases the hero has come of age, but in any case there is often the sense that his position has been improved through effort and / or suffering. A hero, a heroine, a faith, a marriage, have been tried; not only have they been found to be good, but they have grown in the process, strengthened, become enriched.

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[88] Reiss, p.117; Everett, p.9, notes a few exceptions.
[89] Opie, p.11.

Within the broad structure, which itself recurs through many stories, the material in both fairytale and romance is highly repetitious. Repetition occurs at the level of word, phrase, episode, and sequences of episodes. Five animals make separate appeals to the hero-huntsmen in 'The Two Brothers' but their language is identical: 'Dear huntsman, do but let me live, / Two little ones to thee I'll give' (293-94). The old man who helps the hero in 'The Golden Goose' is first introduced as 'a little grey-haired old man' (323), and is thereafter referred to only as 'little', 'little grey', or 'little old grey', throughout the story.

It is more accurate to speak of "repetition with variation" rather than "repetition" as characteristic of fairytale and romance.[90] Two episodes in 'Burenushka' illustrate this. They are constructed almost identically: a man gets up early, washes, and takes the child to the field. Then comes a small but crucial difference. On the first occasion the old man stops near a bush; on the second the husband hides behind the bush. Subsequently, in both episodes, the geese arrive and the old man calls them, he calls to a second group, the mother arrives and removes her goose skin, she nurses the baby, then makes a prophetic speech. The accounts are remarkably close verbally: 'The baby's mother jumped to the ground, tore off her goose skin, took the baby in her arms, and nursed him at her breast'; and in the second episode, 'The baby's mother jumped to the ground, tore off her goose skin, threw it behind the bush, nursed the baby at her breast' (148-50).

While such close repetition is common in fairytale the romances share only the fairytale's tendency to structural repetition, leaning towards realism in that they rarely repeat an episode almost verbatim. On two occasions in *Octavian* Florent is sent by

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[90] See Olrik, p.132-33 on repetition in folktale. Lüthi discusses the persuasiveness and effect of repetition with variation in fairytale in *The Fairy Tale*, pp.76-94. For a good example see 'The Fiery Dragon'.

Clement on business and returns home with bad bargains. The episodes are structurally similar: Florent is sent out with valuable goods, he sees a noble animal, the creature is briefly described, he offers to exchange his valuable goods for the noble creature, both vendor and purchaser are pleased, Florent returns home and tends his purchase, and so on. But there is little verbatim repetition (643-756).

Both fairytale and romance are fundamentally formulaic. Susan Wittig's study, which is of a much larger group of Middle English romances than my own, finds that formulae govern the structure of every element in the romances from lines, scenes, and episodes, to groups of episodes. For example, wherever combat occurs events will follow a particular, basic sequence, though there are standard possible variations: the knight is armed, the spectator's described, battle is joined (often repeated three times), the victor is rewarded.[91] Once the formula is complete the storyteller moves on to the next episode which will have its own conventional structure. The formulaic impulse is a crucial factor in the repetitive, episodic structure of romance.[92]

The variation which combines with repetition often takes a particular form. Olrik points out the importance of the final position in a sequence, calling it one of his 'laws' of folktale, 'das Achtergewicht'.[93] Under its influence the final item in a sequence of repeated episodes differs at least slightly but nonetheless importantly from what precedes it: slightly because the difference may not seem great; importantly because it is this difference which allows the narrative to move forwards. The miller's daughter rewards Rumpelstiltskin with her necklace and a ring on the first two occasions of his

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[91] For a summary of Wittig's findings see p.179; for the specific example of combat see pp.81-83. Wittig includes all the romances considered in this study except for *Chevalere* and *Apollonius* (see 'Note to the Reader' preceding Introduction).

[92] On episodic structure in fairytale see Lüthi, *The European Folktale*, pp.38-39 and 47-51; in romance see Mehl, pp.23-24.

[93] Olrik, pp.136-37.

helping her, but on the third she rewards him with the promise of her first-born, providing the tale, in the gap between task and reward, with the opportunity to develop in such a way that the miller's daughter can turn the tables on the little man ('Rumpelstiltskin').

Olrik also points to a distinction between simple and intensifying repetition.[94] Jewel, jewel, child: Rumpelstiltskin's rewards are of two different sorts, the last essentially different from the first two which are themselves alike. This is simple repetition with Achtergewicht. But in 'The Mastermaid' repeated experiences in a giant's house yield for the hero items which are of a kind though of ever increasing value. He enters three rooms in succession, discovering in each a pot boiling without a fire. When he dips a lock of his hair into it the hair seems turned in the first case to copper, in the second it is silvered, in the third gilded. The ever-increasing value of the metal intensifies audience expectation of what he will find later. In a fourth and final room the hero finds something different in kind but of even greater value: a beautiful and helpful princess. His last find is the most important: the princess helps him get the better of the giant and, eventually, they marry.

Repetition should not, therefore, be regarded as redundant in these narratives. It invites comparison and it is often in the slight variation that the significance lies. Necessarily it is subject to certain constraints, and these are provided by the fairytale's favourite numbers. Probably the most important, as many commentators have noted is the number three.[95] Three times the wicked queen goes to Snowdrop's cottage to try to harm her ('Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs'); three times Jack fights the dragon to save the young lady ('The Fiery Dragon'); three times the heroine's new baby is

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[94] Olrik, p.133.
[95] Lüthi, *The European Folktale*, pp.32-33; Olrik, p.133.

mysteriously snatched away and she is accused of eating it ('The Three Shirts of Canach Down'). Achtergewicht is often in evidence. Where characters are grouped in threes, it is usually the last who will be different, while the others are indistinguishable for the purpose of the story. In fairytale this is a common way of distinguishing the hero. In 'The Golden Goose', for example, the youngest of three sons, Dummling, is supposedly the most stupid; yet it is he who wins the golden goose and, ultimately, a princess, while his brothers are indistinguishable from one another in gaining nothing but injured limbs.

The fairytale hero or heroine is often one of three; the romance hero rarely so. More often he is an only child or perhaps one of two, like Florent in *Octavian*.[96] Comparable twin heroes occur in fairytale such as we find in 'The Two Brothers' and 'Hänsel and Gretel'. Now and again, as in 'The Golden-Haired Twins', the twin heroes cannot be told apart; more commonly one of them, while perhaps appearing to be the weaker or less significant of the two, rescues the other from evil or death, as Gretel saves Hänsel from the witch and young Octavian saves Florent from heathen captivity.

Trebling is weaker in romance as a force in characterisation than it is in fairytale.[97] Yet trebling and Achtergewicht nevertheless occur frequently in these romances, even if less obviously at times than in fairytale. Eglamour completes three tasks to win Christabelle; Torrent, after losing Desonell, besieges the heathen in three cities, each campaign more difficult than the last (*Torrent*, 2179-274). In *Triamour* (472-564) the faithful dog visits the court on three days in a row: on the first occasion the king thinks he recognises the dog but cannot identify it; on the second he recalls its identity and

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[96] An obvious exception is Enyas in *Chevalere* who as the only significantly active one of seven siblings is thus distinguished from them.

[97] A rare example in romance: Isumbras has three children.

instructs his men to follow it; on the third the dog kills the false steward and is followed to his master's grave. So the king is led to learn the truth. There is a sense of development in such patterning, of progress towards a goal.

But the fact of repetition in the romances is sometimes blurred by interest in detailed elaboration and variation and by narrative length between repeated episodes. In *Bevis*, for example, after his confrontation with Saracens, Josian comforts and calms Bevis and heals his wounds (786-827). On his next fight, against a boar and more Saracens, she confesses to herself that she loves him (986-97). After a third battle, against King Bradmond, she offers him her love (1222-46).[98] Josian's feeling for Bevis is revealed by degrees and builds up until the third episode where her love is declared, but the episodes are so crammed full with the detail of enmity and combat as to moderate the impact of intensification and make the development of Josian's feeling seem almost incidental.

A second important number in fairytale and romance is the number seven: seven brothers in 'The Seven Ravens'; seven dwarfs help 'Snow White'; seven children in *Chevalere*. As these examples suggest, seven is less important than three in limiting episodes but is often used to limit numbers of characters and objects. In the romances seven is a favourite time period for dividing the hero's life. Bevis is seven when his father dies, he is imprisoned in Damascus for seven years and separated from his family for seven years too.[99] On being exiled Horn tells Rymenild to marry someone else if he does not return within seven years, and he stays with King Thurston into a seventh year. Such rigid division adds to the sense of unreality, reinforcing an impression of these stories as stylised representations of reality.

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[98] These episodes run consecutively: lines 650-827, 830-1005, 1006-269.

[99] Fellows notes this in vol.5, note to line 646.

In general patterns make their own kinds of connections, suggesting relationships which may not otherwise be apparent. Where fundamental causal relationships are not linked to character, and where pre-set patterns rather than the interaction between character and event govern structure, juxtaposition becomes an important consideration for meaning.[100] Interpretation needs to take patterning into account as a conveyer of meaning in such stories.

The structural patterning, the nature of the hero and the characters in his world, the sorts of events and their outcomes, quickly become familiar to audiences of fairytale and romance and the storyteller can rely on this. Familiarity breeds expectation, and expectation may be fulfilled or disappointed; this of course has the potential to take on significance in particular stories.[101] The stories' predictability emphasises their fictive quality. Stylised, they do not try to disguise their fundamental implausibility; nonetheless, each member of the audience is required to enter into the story as part of his or her own reality with the storyteller as guide.

In fairytale the storyteller is an obtrusive presence; for instance in 'Little Slut', the narrator says 'Let us return to the children. Here are the three alone in the forest,' (Appendix, page 249). While reminded of its shared position outside the story with the teller, at the same time the audience is encouraged into the world of the tale by the sudden change to the present tense from the past tense to which it has become used.

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[100] On structural juxtaposition in romance see Reiss, pp.120-21. The lack of plausible causality in fairytale and romance, its significance and possible causes, have received much comment, for example: Lüthi's chapter 'Isolation and Universal Interconnection', *The European Folktale*, pp.37-65; Bloomfield, especially pp.106-10; Olrik, p.138; Wittig, p.135 and pp.182-90.

[101] Reiss discusses the function of familiarity in romance, pp.121-24. He comments, 'the romance would seem to build on the expectations derived from the traditions and conventions its audience already was aware of' (p.111).

The storyteller does not enter the narrative as a persona, but enters the experience of the story along with the audience, directing and sharing their experience, moulding and sharing their responses. In 'The Mastermaid' an attorney spends a night attached magically to a door which opens and shuts unceasingly: 'So you may fancy what a dance the attorney had all night long; such a waltz he never had before, and I don't think he would much care if he never had such a waltz again' (58). In describing the attorney's discomfited movements ironically as a 'dance' and a 'waltz' the storyteller shapes audience response to the scene, and in pausing to invite them to reflect on it, and in asserting his own opinion of the character's feeling, he attempts to draw them into the experience of the tale along with himself. The effort to mould audience response may extend beyond the verbal. Geneviève Massignon tells of an incident when she was collecting oral tales in France: 'a Corsican woman narrator used to take my hand and place it over my heart in order to link me with the parts of her tale which she thought most moving'.[102] The romancer is a similarly obtrusive presence in romance.

> But from þe cherl and þe child nou chaunge we oure tale,
>
> for I wol of þe werwolf a wile nou speke.   (*William*, 78-79)

Here too the teller is an undisguised guide in the shared experience of the tale. He may well appeal outside the story itself to create suspense.

> Now god, that Dyed appon a Rode,
>
> Strengithe hym [the hero] bothe bone and blod,
>
> The fyld for to haue!
>
> He that schall wend soche a wey,

[102] *Folktales of France*, ed. by Geneviève Massignon, trans. by Jacqueline Hyland, Folktales of the World (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), p.xlii.

> Yt were nede for hym to pray,
>
> That Iesu hym schuld saue.
>
> Yt ys in the boke of Rome,
>
> Ther was no knyght of kyrstendome,
>
> That jorney Durst crave.   (*Torrent*, 112-20)

In appealing to the deity common to both his hero and his audience, the teller draws the audience into the tale. While guiding their perception of events, he shapes their response. At the same time he is asking them to travel with him: it is his god, his perception, his response too.[103]

While he stands outside the narrative as story, insofar as the narrative is an event the storyteller is nonetheless part of it. The oral tale is diminished as event if it is committed to the page and read with the teller absent, but not entirely extinguished since reminders of its fictive quality are built in. Formulaic beginnings and endings, which differ according to locale but which are so often present in oral versions as to be characteristic, are one way in which this is done. 'Once upon a time' is of course the best known fairytale opening which is an unequivocal signal that we are leaving the everyday and entering the particular world of the fairytale.[104] The end of a fairytale may be marked colourfully with, 'I was there and drank mead and wine; it ran down my mustache, but did not go into my mouth' ('The Armless Maiden', 299), or more prosaically with, 'I was there, and I played the fiddle for them, and they paid me handsomely. That is all I have to tell' ('The Little Crop-Tailed Hen', 31).[105] Either way the ending, which is not itself part of the plot although it is a part of the experience of

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[103] Everett, p.19; Mehl, p.26.

[104] See Nicolaisen, p.3.

[105] See Massignon, p.xli; Thompson, pp.457-58 on formulaic beginnings and endings.

the tale as a whole, brings us back into the everyday and prompts us to acknowledge the tale as a distinct entity with a separate existence of its own. The formulaic beginnings and endings of the romances have the same function, and frequent references to the 'tale' (of the sort made in my previous examples) have the same effect.

Each of the characteristics shared by these fairytales and romances contributes to the narratives as non-mimetic and implausible; self-consciously fiction, yet demanding a sense of close involvement. But it is also the case that the features themselves create meaning and they may assert that meaning even when they are obscured by other narrative techniques like a concern for realistic cause and effect or a heavily descriptive overlay. In this chapter it has been possible to suggest only very sketchily the possibilities for meaning in these characteristics; the possibilities are much richer in particular contexts.

The potential for meaning, however, is unequally recognised amongst storytellers. In making, or remaking, a story the teller inherits certain aspects which he cannot change either without creating a different story or entering a different genre. But given these limitations a storyteller can, to put it crudely, tell the story badly or tell it well. The better tellers of traditional stories like these romances take into account the potential of traditional narrative technique for meaning, and use them both to create meaning and to clarify that meaning latent in the subject matter so that in the final product each level of significance complements and enriches the others. The modern reader of romance is often dismissive of texts in which cause and effect make little or inadequate contribution to the understanding of events; but this is to judge such narratives by standards which are inappropriate and assumptions that are irrelevant. To insist on such

standards and assumptions is inevitably to obscure or denigrate the real but different standards and assumptions of fairytale and romance.

CHAPTER 2

THEME AND VARIATIONS: FAMILY PATTERN STORIES IN THE

ROMANCES

Part of the secret of success of fairytale must presumably lie in its reflecting some of the central concerns or experiences of its audience. The central argument of Brewer's book *Symbolic Stories* is that 'a very large number of traditional stories, though by no means all, are centred on the basic human experience of growing up',[106] and it is this which provides a useful starting point for the definition of the area in which the interest of this thesis lies. The stories to which Brewer draws attention have at their centres either a male or a female protagonist whose object is 'the breaking out of the family triangle, in which the protagonist is always inferior, into the freedom of adult responsibility and equal stable relationship with another person'.[107]

The domination of either parent must be avoided, and male and female protagonists achieve this differently. Males leave home, prove themselves in test or quest, marry a princess and become a king; females very often (although not always) stay at home and must make sure they are spotted by the prince who will marry them. Each of the three central figures (mother, father, child) in this 'family drama', as Brewer calls it, may be 'split', different aspects being represented by different characters in the story. Hostile father-figures in the form of giants, ogres, and the like, threaten males, while hostile mother-figures, commonly represented by wicked step-mothers and witches, threaten females. Parent-figures of the opposite gender to the protagonist may also be

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[106] Symbolic Stories, p.7.
[107] Ibid., p.9.

troublesome, usually by being too fond, like a king who wishes to marry his daughter. But there are helpful parent-figures too, like fairy godmothers or friendly animals.

The protagonist himself is a representative figure and may be split. Each of the personae in a story represents some aspect of one or other of these central family characters. He or she may be of multiple significance or may be supplanted by another as the story progresses.[108] Each 'family drama' story is a manifestation of an intricate web of interactions and responses which are the normal relations of parent and child during this period of family life. In Brewer's words:

> The possible permutations in the play of events deriving from the tensions between the three or four persons of the perennial family drama are almost limitless, and it is for this reason that I refer to the 'family drama' as in itself a neutral concept of the multiple play of forces about the emerging adult, which […] may take a number of different forms.[109]

Love (parental, filial, and sexual), fear, jealousy, the need for self-esteem, the urge for independence; such are the 'forces' which provide the impulses and restraints on the emerging adult.[110] They form a set of tensions, the relationship between them shifting as parental protection and the security it offers becomes parental domination and unwanted restriction from which the child wishes to break free. Brewer goes on to say,

> What is constant is the central focus on the protagonist at that most interesting point of his life, as it is of all our lives, the transition or passage from childhood to adulthood, inferiority to independence, virginity (more important for women) to sexual maturity.[111]

For Brewer, the family drama is essentially about childhood.

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[108] Ibid., pp.8-11.

[109] Ibid., p.11.

[110] Bettelheim lists the psychological problems of growing up as 'over-coming narcissistic disappointments, oedipal dilemmas, sibling rivalries; becoming able to relinquish childhood dependencies; gaining a feeling of selfhood and of self-worth, and a sense of moral obligation', p.6.

[111] Ibid., p.11.

While it is certainly true that at the centre of many stories is the growing child, Brewer's theory needs to be modified, or at any rate extended. What it fails to take account of is the parental interest: the experience of family life is as difficult for them as it is for the child and many traditional stories in fairytale and romance show this. In many fairytales and romances the main interest involves both relations between parents and relations of parents to children. Parents have their own special concerns during this period of family life, necessarily different to those of children, though related directly or indirectly to them: perhaps a child is perceived as a nuisance, or as the means of fulfilling a parental dream, or as requiring complete protection from the sorts of difficulties which troubled the parent when young. These sorts of concerns are born of the same set of forces which underlie the 'family drama' but they are governed by a perspective which is not the child's.[112]

In fact there is a body of stories in which a characteristic story pattern reflects underlying parental concerns, in which parents may be the protagonists, and which can be seen to represent parental rather than, or as well as, childish feeling. I call it the Family Pattern.[113] Family Pattern stories may have as hero or heroine a parent of either gender, but since this is a period of family life which may be experienced from one of four different viewpoints (adult or child, male or female), in the Family Pattern is recognised the possibility of any of these – or indeed, the family unit itself – as the central interest during the 'family drama' period. As a narrative shape it provides a vehicle for the expression of the experiences of any family member and sometimes more than one. It is identifiable by a particular pattern of events: a woman is

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[112] Brewer suggests one father-protagonist to my knowledge and that is Shakespeare's Lear in *King Lear*. See 'The Battleground of Home: Versions of Fairytales', *Encounter*, 54 (April, 1980), 52-61 (pp.58-61).

[113] I first outlined the Family Pattern as the 'Pattern' in my article, 'Folktale, Romance and Shakespeare', in *Studies in Medieval English Romances: Some New Approaches*, ed. by Derek Brewer (Cambridge: Brewer, 1988), pp.176-197.

separated from the father of her child (or children), the child is reared away from home, a long time passes, the family is reunited.[114]

The Family Pattern is a distinctive presence in fairytale although it is not to be found in great numbers. Unfortunately for the collector, the index of folktale 'types', compiled by Antti Aarne and revised and enlarged by Thompson, which is the fullest guide in the crowded and confusing world of fairytale types, depends on superficial elements for classification and is of little help in the search for Family Pattern narratives. The Aarne-Thompson index lists folktale 'types', defined by Thompson as being traditional tales which have an independent existence. A type is made up of 'motifs', a motif being, to borrow from Thompson again, 'the smallest element in a tale having a power to persist in tradition'. It may be an actor, an incident, an object, a custom, to name but a few.[115] The tale-type index takes into account the interchangeability of motifs in different versions of the same tale-type, but the Family Pattern exists at a level more abstract than that of sequences of motifs. As a consequence it may be found in a number of tale-types. To complicate matters further, although one tale-type may furnish several examples of the Family Pattern it

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[114] Several story patterns similar to the Family Pattern have been outlined in the past. See for instance Gordon Hall Gerould, 'Forerunners, Congeners, and Derivatives of the Eustace Legend', *PMLA*, 19, n.s.12 (1904), 335-448. Here, in 'Man Tried by Fate', 'a man for some weighty reason, often religious or resulting from religion, departs from home with his family. He loses his sons (usually twins) and his wife by accident or human violence, or both. After various adventures and considerable suffering, the several members of the family are at last reunited', p.338. This is one sort of Family Pattern, evident in the romance *Sir Isumbras*. Gerould draws attention to another pattern also: 'The Calumniated Wife'. This tells how 'a woman is driven from home by her husband or some enemy, how she gives birth to a child (sometimes twins) either before or after leaving home, how she has other adventures that are equally trying, and how she is finally reunited to her husband and exonerated from the charges which have been made against her', pp.341-42. This story sequence too may be a Family Pattern if the period between parental separation and reunion is lengthy enough. A 'Calumniated Wife' story which is not a Family Pattern is the Russian 'The Armless Maiden' which I shall discuss shortly in the main text. John Sampson, in 'Welsh Gypsy Folk-Tales, no.18', *JGLS*, 3rd series 2 (1923), 99-113, describes a similar narrative sequence thus: 'the calumniation and condemnation of the heroine, the abduction and attempted or intended destruction of her child or children, and the eventual reunion and recognition either by penetration of the heroine's disguise or through the agency of the children', p.111. This abstract takes no account of the husband's role.

[115] Thompson, p.415. For a critique of Thompson's definition see Dan Ben-Amos, 'The Concept of Motif in Folklore', in *Folklore Studies in the Twentieth Century: Proceedings of the Centenary Conference of the Folklore Society*, ed. by Venetia J. Newall (Woodbridge: Brewer, 1980), pp.17-36.

is not the case that all of one tale-type are narratives of that sort. Just a few examples will suffice to give an idea of the variability of Family Pattern fairytales.

In 'The Girl Without Hands', a story from the Grimm collection, a miller is tricked into promising his daughter to the Devil in return for wealth. A pious girl, she defeats the Devil's attempts to possess her, though not without the loss of her hands. She leaves home and, aided by an angel, takes fruit from the orchard of a king who sees and marries her. Now the Family Pattern begins. When her husband leaves on a journey the couple are separated and shortly afterwards the heroine gives birth to a son. The baby is falsely represented to the husband as a monster by the Devil who intercepts a letter sent to inform the king of the birth. The husband's reply, commanding gentle treatment of his wife, is in turn intercepted by the Devil and a letter ordering the heroine's death is substituted. The husband's mother does not kill her, however, but reluctantly casts her out with her child. In a forest mother and child are cared for by an angel for seven years (the child is reared away from home), and God causes the heroine's hands to grow again. On the husband's return home the deception comes to light and he sets forth to look for his wife, travelling for seven years. Eventually he finds her with their child in their forest cottage and the family is reunited.

A comparable story is the French tale, 'The Woman with her Hands Cut Off', reproduced here in the Appendix. These two tales are, in the events which constitute the Family Pattern, recognisably versions of the same story.[116] Differences in motif mean that on the surface they differ: the Grimm story has a stronger religious colouring, for instance, than the French. Partly this leads also to a significant

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[116] Aarne/Thompson tale-type number (A/T) 706.

structural difference. In the German story the events of the Family Pattern follow the heroine's successful resistance of the Devil and when she leaves her childhood home she leaves no unfinished business behind her. In the French story the Family Pattern is embedded in an account of family relations in the heroine's childhood home and the story is not complete until the tensions perpetrated there have been resolved.

A different sort of Family Pattern sequence is illustrated in an Italian story, 'The Dancing Water, the Singing Apple, and the Speaking Bird'.[117] A king, who has overheard three sisters day-dreaming about marriage, weds the youngest, who has undertaken to bear him two sons with apples in their hands and a daughter with a star on her brow. While her husband is away at war, his wife gives birth to three special children as she had promised, and her sisters bribe the nurse to replace them with puppies and expose them. The king, thinking his wife has given birth to animals, has her put on a treadmill. The parents are thus separated. The children are rescued by fairies and reared by a deer, and later move to a house in the town where they are recognised by their wicked aunts. In a series of episodes the wicked nurse tells the daughter that she lacks only the dancing water, the singing apple, and the speaking bird. The eldest brother sets out to find them but fails and is turned to stone; likewise his brother. Their sister, however, overcoming various obstacles on the way, finds the objects and rescues her brothers so that they all return home. The king notices the children one day and the talking bird reveals to him their identities and histories. His wife is released, the family reunited, and the wicked women punished.

Other versions of this story include a Basque tale, 'The Singing Tree, the Bird Which Tells the Truth, and the Water That Makes Young', a Russian tale, 'The Singing Tree

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[117] A/T 707.

and the Talking Bird', and from the Grimm collection, 'The Three Little Birds'. It is often the bird (which the daughter has successfully brought home) which reveals the truth to the king. In all these stories, considerable emphasis is put on what happens to the children and it is clear that without their activities the family reunion could not take place. This is in marked contrast to the 'Handless Maiden' stories, where the child is not active and is of little consequence in the resolution of the tale. In the 'Talking Bird' stories the duration of the parental separation is often unspecific but the family reunion depends on the children being capable of independent activity.

Different again is another Family Pattern story, 'The White Duck', reproduced in the Appendix. Here the children are involved in a battle of wits against a witch which they lose so that two of them die. (What happens to the third child, the starveling who has tried to protect his brothers and himself, is not clear.) They are only revived after the parental reunion (to which both parents contribute) and although the children in this story are more active than those in the 'Handless Maiden' variety, they are not responsible for the family reunion.

'The White Duck' is shaped entirely by the Family Pattern: the parental separation initiates the sequence of events which ends with the family reunion and punishment of the witch. This is not the case in 'LS', also in the Appendix, in which the Family Pattern story, at the centre of which is the heroine as mother, is preceded by a tale of sibling rivalry and winning a husband instantly recognisable as a version of 'Cinderella'. This Cinderella, rather than living happily ever after, finds marriage to be even more of an adventure than finding a husband. A post-marriage sequel is not

unique to this version of 'Cinderella', though not all such sequels reveal Family Patterns.[118]

In all the stories to which I have drawn attention here, except for 'The White Duck' where the starveling is one of three brothers, the central figure is a heroine. Even when in the 'Talking Bird' stories the mother is imprisoned, attention is then focused primarily on a daughter as the central character, for although the adventures of her brother may be the subject of the narrative for a while, it is their sister who is successful where they fail.

Most of the Family Pattern fairytales I have come across have women as their central character. There are, however, exceptions, one being a Serbian tale, 'The Golden-Haired Twins'. The story begins like the 'Talking Bird' stories except that here a king decides to marry the girl who will bear him twins with golden hair. While he is away at war his mother sends word that his wife has given birth to dogs so that he has the young mother put into a dungeon. His mother then has his two children – twins with golden hair – buried alive, but from their graves grow two beautiful golden trees. The king, on returning home nine years later, likes them very much. Further attempts by his mother to destroy the children (now trees) results in their becoming golden lambs (also beloved of the king), and later little boys who are adopted by a hunter. When they are old enough they become travelling musicians and it is in this guise that they arrive at the palace and reveal the truth about his wife and children to the king. The family is reunited and the old queen put to death.

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[118] See Marian Roalfe Cox, *Cinderella* (London: David Nutt, 1893), e.g. abstracts 50 (pp.244-46), 95 (pp.360-62), 101 (pp.378-82).

Although the motifs by which the parental separation comes about are similar to those in other stories, and the young queen is likewise a pathetic figure, this tale is notable for the attention given to the male characters. The attachment shown by the king to the golden trees and lambs suggests a strong bonding between father and sons which is, however, not strong enough to resist entirely the wicked mother-in-law's challenge. And it is the sons who bring about the family reunion while the mother is completely passive in this respect. Unlike those in the other examples, women in this story are either powerless or wicked.

It is the same in the Russian story, 'The Wicked Sisters', which begins in much the same way as 'The Golden-Haired Twins', but here a thrice maligned wife has her eyes gouged out and is set adrift in a barrel with an 'ordinary' child who has been substituted for her own. Her true children, each bearing sun and moon on his head and stars on his sides, as she had promised the king, are hidden in the garden. The 'ordinary' child heals the mother and brings her to a safe place where he engineers the arrival of her three true children, all by means of his magical powers. They live together happily before eventually the king arrives and the family are reunited. Here bonding is strong between mother and son rather than father and son.

As these examples show, the Family Pattern is by no means uniformly realised amongst fairytales. It may shape all or part of a tale's structure, be embedded in a framing story, or it may constitute half of a bipartite structure. The central figure is often, but does not have to be, female, and the spotlight may shift from one character to another during the course of the narrative. Events may be recounted with an evident religious or moral purpose, or with an eye for their comic potential. The circumstances, attributes and motives of characters differ in each case, even amongst

stories of the same type. The motivation for the development and resolution of the Pattern is variously ascribed.

This sample is not big enough (nor is it the intention of this thesis) to make a conclusive study of the Family Pattern in fairytale: nonetheless several commonly recurring features are revealed. The parental separation is usually either initiated or prolonged for reasons closely connected to the child's birth. The mother is subject to hostility, from or apparently from the father and/or a close female relative – mother-in-law or sister, except in 'The White Duck' where the villain is a witch. The mother, having been wronged, must leave home; the father, though he may be away from home when his wife leaves, can return freely.

The child (or children) is usually born at home but grows up away from home, often under the care of a foster parent of either gender, human or animal, if not his or her real mother. Shape-change is not uncommon for these child and maternal exiles. Several years pass. During this period the mother sometimes suffers physical abuse, sometimes receives help, occasionally a combination of both. The father often falls under the sway of a hostile female whom he may marry. If deceived, once he realises or suspects it, he usually seeks out his true wife. Sometimes, though not often, there is evidence that he grieves at his loss. Children of either gender, if they are active, are often tested in some way. It is usually the children who do most to bring about the family reunion, and if not them, then the father. Only in 'The White Duck' is it attributable (at least in part) to the mother's action.

While the Family Pattern is clearly present in a number of fairytales there are some stories in which it is almost, but not quite, complete. There are many tales of

calumniated heroines in which the time between parental separation and reunion cannot be described as long, such as 'The Armless Maiden', a Russian version of the 'Handless Maiden' stories. In 'The Armless Maiden' the wife's journey as an outcast lasts 'a long time or a short time' although it seems to be less than a day, and the child is still an infant and inactive when the parental reunion takes place. In such stories the child's role is vestigial and the focus is mainly on the parents. Although the parental separation is linked to the birth of a child, their reunion is not coupled with any sort of independent activity (which may be shown simply by the ability to answer questions) in the child as it is in the complete Family Pattern. A Scottish story called 'The Unchristened Child', another 'Handless Maiden' story similar in structure to 'The Woman with her Hands Cut Off', stands between the two extremes. This is a complete Family Pattern story where the parents are separated for three years before the husband finds the wife and is reunited with her. Although three years may be deemed in some respects a long time, the couple's child is not mentioned with regard to the reunion and it is clear from the earthy humour with which this part of the tale is told that what interests the storyteller is the sexual reunion of the couple rather than their parental roles.

Time, in fairytales, bears an unstable relationship with reality. A child's ability to act independently is no indication of its age. In the Norwegian tale 'Shortshanks', for example, twin babies get dressed and wander the world as soon as they are born. The narrative representation of time in fairytales makes it difficult always to identify Family Pattern fairytales with precision.

In other stories it is the parental role which, though still important, receives minimal treatment. This happens in the Irish story, 'The Speckled Bull'. Here a prince marries

the younger of two sisters causing the elder to become jealous. When the prince's wife gives birth to sons her sister throws them into the river and tells the prince that his wife has given birth to animals, later a puppy. The prince decides to banish his wife and her sister turns her into a stone before marrying the prince herself. A fisherman finds and adopts the second child but the wicked sister discovers, kills, and buries him. A miraculous tree grows from the grave and a cow who eats from the tree gives birth to a specked bull calf. The efforts of the wicked sister to kill the beast are unsuccessful, but they do result in the huge bull, as he now becomes, flying off to the 'eastern world'. Here he and a king's daughter fall in love and marry, and after some time her father, the king, manages to break the enchantment so that the bull regains his princely form. The young man then returns to his parental home and reveals the injustice done him. His wicked aunt is punished and his mother restored to human form. She returns with the prince to the eastern world where he is given the throne.

No mention is made in the denouement of the young man's father, the principal father-figure of the Family Pattern: for some reason he drops out of the story. As a hostile father he is replaced by the friendly figure of the princess's father who is instrumental in helping him into adult form and willingly placing his own crown on the young man's head. In 'LS' the father rejects his children as infants too, but in a change of heart that is never explained, attains a harmonious relationship with them at the end, simply switching role from hostile to friendly father-figure. In 'The Speckled Bull' interest lies principally with the child and the parental drama at the start of the story is significant not for its own sake as in the Family Pattern proper, but for its narrower relevance to the child's story.

The Family Pattern fairytales in which a male child and his future wife command a significant part of the story are evidenced in, for instance, the Grimm's 'The Pink', where the child's future wife saves him from death while he and his mother are banished from home. But 'The Specked Bull' is interesting for its parallels in romance, where the adventures of a male child and his relationship with his future wife are often of major interest.

So now, with the fairytale Family Pattern in mind, the romances may claim our attention. What follows is designed to show the manifestation of the Family Pattern in individual romances, paying particular attention to features common to the group. It is not intended as a catalogue of simple plot summaries; and omits much detail which might obscure the exposition of the underlying pattern. The selective information given is intended to highlight in the poems the fundamental shape, or pattern, which they share, and it assumes in the reader a degree of familiarity with the stories.

Emphasis on common factors may be condemned as being liable to inhibit full understanding of complex and individual works of art; but to expose the foundations of a structure is not to destroy the edifice although it can enhance appreciation of it through increased understanding of how it is built. A strong justification for critical analysis – and surely all analysis is reductive to some degree – is that the information gained enriches understanding of the work or works under scrutiny. In this case the exposure of the underlying pattern which these romances share is intended to increase understanding of the various unique manifestations of that pattern.

For it is important to remember that despite the existence of much common ground between them, each romance, and indeed each variant of a romance, potentially offers a unique treatment of the Pattern. Much of the detail of individual poems to which I do not draw attention here is nevertheless important to a full reading of that particular romance as a Family Pattern narrative. Because of this the choice of a particular variant version (where there is a choice) for examination of the basis is of little importance, although usually the most representative version will provide the most insight into the romance as a whole. In each case in this study I refer mainly to one version, taking into account only significant variations in other versions, and preferring easily available, reliable editions where choice permits.[119] The delicate relation between the generic underlying Pattern and the specific and particular realisation in a number of examples will be the subject of the later chapters of this study.

Sir Isumbras

There are five non-fragmentary variant versions of this romance extant and three fragments pre-dating 1500. This analysis follows the version in British Library, Cotton MS, Caligula A.ii (MS Cotton Caligula), which dates from 1446 - 1460.[120] The story presents a straightforward account of the Family Pattern insofar as it is short, structurally uncomplicated, and does not shift its focus away from Isumbras himself, who occupies the role of the father.

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[119] Only editions of the main versions used will be listed in the footnotes. Details of other editions are given in the bibliography. Details of dates are, unless otherwise stated, from Gisela Guddat-Figge, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Middle English Romances*, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Englischen Philologie, 4 (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1976). These are generally accepted dates with any major discrepancies mentioned in her footnotes.

[120] Main text: *Six Middle English Romances*, ed. by Mills, pp.125-47. Other complete versions: Caius College Cambridge, MS 175 (MS Caius 175), early fifteenth century; Lincoln Cathedral Library, MS 91 (MS Thornton), c.1430-40, at the earliest 1422; Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 61, end of fifteenth to beginning of sixteenth century; National Library of Scotland, MS Advocates 19.3.1 (MS Advocates 19.3.1), second half of fifteenth century. Fragments: Gray's Inn, MS 20, middle of fourteenth century, 104 lines; Naples Royal Library, MS 13.B.29 (MS Naples 13.B.29), 1457, 122 lines; University College Oxford, MS 142, end of fourteenth century, 15 lines which I have not seen.

The first part of the romance describes the way in which Isumbras loses his family, an integral part of which is, of course, that a woman becomes separated from the father of her children: Isumbras's wife is separated from her husband when she is taken by an invading sultan. Isumbras himself is indirectly responsible for this since it is as a result of his pride that the family is destitute, defenceless, and at the heathen's mercy. Isumbras, who remains loving towards his wife throughout, is distressed at losing her. She herself clearly remains loyal to him although powerless to prevent the separation. The children are reared away from home, leaving home with their parents when young and later being taken from them by wild animals. They are reared away from home, presumably by those same animals which later carry them as adults into battle. A long time passes – at least fourteen years – during which Isumbras is involved in combat and suffers both physically through a beating and poverty, and mentally from grief at the loss of his family. His wife, although she is made queen over the domains of her absent heathen captor, remains loyal to her husband throughout. We hear nothing of the children during this period of the family's life but follow the fortunes of Isumbras as he slowly recovers his identity as a knight and husband.

The family reunion happens in stages. Firstly the parents recognise each other and are reunited after Isumbras's arrival at his wife's home, but only after he has proved his superiority in combat over the indigenous population. Recognition is by means of the chance rediscovery of the gold wrapped in a red cloth which had been given to Isumbras by the Sultan in exchange for his wife but subsequently stolen from him.[121] Reunion with the children follows after a final battle in which the three sons, alone with their parents, defeat a Saracen army of many thousands, thus proving their

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[121] Identities are confirmed by matching two halves of a ring which the couple had divided between them at their separation only in MS Cotton Caligula. In the other versions, mention of a ring on the couple's separation is not taken up again on their reunion.

proficiency in adult activity. (A distinctive feature of this romance is the mother's taking up arms and fighting too, but this has nothing to do with proof of adulthood.)[122] After the victory each son becomes, as has his father, a king.

Sir Eglamour of Artois

Three versions of this romance and one fragment survive from before 1500; here I follow the account given in Lincoln Cathedral Library, MS 91 (MS Thornton), of around 1330 – 1340, which stands apart from the other two versions.[123] It employs the usual elements of the Family Pattern in an even more bizarre way than is customary. The affinity between the roles of bride and mother is particularly noticeable. Both father and son are active protagonists but the romance begins with the father's adventures before he becomes a father and the Pattern occupies only the latter part of the poem.

We join the hero, Eglamour, when he is still a young man trying to win his lady by accomplishing three terrible tasks set by her father. Unbeknown to her father, Christabelle and Eglamour plight their troth on the hero's return from completion of the second task, and the lady becomes pregnant. Their separation, which begins when Eglamour departs to undertake the third task, is prolonged and made involuntary when Christabelle's father, angry at his daughter giving birth to a son, has her and the baby cast out to sea in a boat (a motif found in several other stories). Thus a woman is separated from the father of her child, and thus is the separation linked to the child's birth. Many lament Christabelle's fate but to no avail; she is vulnerable with a pathos

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[122] See my 'Folktale, Romance and Shakespeare', p.182.

[123] Main text: *Sir Eglamour of Artois*, ed. by Richardson. Other complete versions: British Museum, Cotton MS, Caligula A.ii (MS Cotton Caligula), 1446-60; Cambridge University Library, MS Ff.2.38 (MS CU Ff.2.38), middle of fifteenth century. Fragment: British Museum MS, Egerton 2862 (MS Egerton 2862), end of fourteenth century, 160 lines. See Richardson pp.xiv-xvii for comparison of versions, especially p.xv.

contained in the image of her speechless gesture to the squire who eventually finds her starving on an Egyptian shore (900-03).

Degrebelle, her child, is reared away from home. He is stolen by a griffin from his mother and is subsequently fostered by an Israeli king who treats him as his son. A long time passes – fifteen years – which Eglamour, having discovered Christabelle's departure, spends fighting in the Holy Land.[124] Attention then shifts to the activities of the child, Degrebelle. He proves his superior prowess when he wins Christabelle in a tournament; her then marries her, only last minute recognition preventing incest. In a second tournament for Christabelle's hand, Degrebelle loses his supremacy only to his father whom he is persistent in challenging, and Eglamour wins for the second time his lady's hand.

As for the mother, she spends this period in the care of a king who turns out to be her uncle. She does not defend her chastity when it is threatened by her marriage to Degrebelle, although versions differ in their handling of this episode. In all three versions it is the narrow timing of the plot which preserves Christabelle's chastity rather than any resistance to marriage on her part, but in MS Thornton she is distanced from condoning the marriage while in MS Cotton Caligula and in Cambridge University Library MS Ff.2.38 (MS CU Ff.2.38) she agrees to it herself.[125]

The family reunion takes place in stages with the reunion of mother and son preceding the full family reunion. The marriages of both parents and child quickly follow. Degrebelle marries Organata, a lady whom his father had won but not married on

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[124] MS Thornton is faulty (lines 1011-16); the details are confirmed from MS Cotton Caligula (lines 1012-17), also available in Richardson's edition.

[125] MS Thornton is defective but it seems that it is Christabelle's uncle who agrees that the marriage should take place (1093-98); compare MS Cotton Caligula and MS Ff.2.38 (1093-98) where the lady herself is approached. A reading of the latter MS is also supplied by Richardson.

completion of his second task. Because father and son 'swap' the women they have won in combat, the child has, in a sense, won his own wife with his prowess. When Christabelle's wicked father falls from his tower and dies, Eglamour and Christabelle can inherit his earldom unopposed; their son, Degrebelle, takes the throne of half of Israel. The frequent shift of focus in this romance between father, mother and son makes the entire family the centre of interest rather than any particular member.

Sir Torrent of Portyngale

This romance survives only in one manuscript version, to be found in Chetham Library MS 8009 which dates from the late fifteenth century.[126] In some ways it is close to *Eglamour* since it tells a similar story, but its handling of the Family Pattern shows significant differences.[127] As in *Eglamour* the romance begins with an account of the adventures undertaken by a young man, in this case Torrent, to secure the hand of his beloved, Desonell, in marriage, despite the efforts of her treacherous father to prevent the match. Eventually it is agreed that they should marry after six months but before this time can elapse Torrent, leaving Desonell pregnant with twin sons, leaves for Norway to rescue a princess from a giant. Rather more than half way through the romance, therefore, a woman is separated from the father of her children. Parental separation is initiated by the father who departs voluntarily for Norway, but it soon becomes involuntary when, lacking his protection, Desonell is banished by her father, furious at her pregnant and unmarried state. Public pleading, and that of her mother, cause Desonell's sentence to be modified so that she is allowed to give birth before being cast adrift, but go she must, taking only the twins with her. The separation is

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[126] *Torrent of Portyngale*, ed. by Adam.

[127] Hornstein and others think that *Torrent* is an amplification of *Eglamour;* see Hornstein, p.126. Adam disagrees, p.xxvi-xxx.

thus linked to the birth of the children. Desonell's goodness is revealed in her pious concern that her sons be christened, as well as her trust in God throughout her ordeal.

The two children are reared away from home. Each is stolen by an animal (a leopard and a griffin) and is subsequently rescued, brought up in a king's court, and made heir to the throne: Leobertus in Jerusalem; 'Antony fice greffoun' (1998) in Greece. The two sons grow up away from their true parents.

A long time passes – about fifteen years as we might now anticipate – which Desonell spends at the king of Nazareth's court. The narrative mainly follows the fortunes of Torrent. He becomes king of Portugal but, lamenting the loss of Desonell, goes to the Holy Land where he is eventually overcome in battle by (unknown to them both) his own son, Leobertus. Although a prisoner, because of his skill as a fighter he becomes his son's teacher. Combat between the father and his other son follows in the tournament held to attract the renowned Torrent himself. It is a tournament held in Desonell's presence but not for her hand: hence there is no confusion of identities to threaten incest as there is in *Eglamour*. Instead the emphasis is on the relationship between father and sons established in combat, Torrent emerging supreme. There follows a family reunion. Torrent and Desonell marry and Torrent is elected emperor.

Emaré

Surviving only in MS Cotton Caligula[128], this romance manifests the Family Pattern quite differently from the previous examples in two main ways: it involves two Family Pattern sequences, one encapsulated inside the other, and its interest is in the female experience. Initially the focus is on the child of the sequence – a daughter,

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[128] Reproduced in *Six Middle English Romances*, ed. by Mills, pp.46-74.

Emaré. Her mother is separated from the father of her child by death, very little being known of the circumstances except that it occurs when Emaré is very young. The child, Emaré, is reared away from home by a foster mother in whose care she is placed on her mother's demise. A long time passes. Emaré reaches marriageable age and defends her chastity against the incestuous desire of her father, soon being cast helplessly adrift in a boat as a punishment for refusing him. Complex love and antagonism between parent and child of opposite sex is here apparent: the father loves his daughter too much and she rejects this. Disappointed love turns to hatred and later to repentance. Unlike most other Family Pattern fathers Emaré's father is not involved in combat during this period.

Instead of the family reunion we might expect at this point Emaré, who has found safety on a foreign shore, marries a king and a new Family pattern begins, this time with Emaré in the mother's role. Soon she is separated from the father of her child. The birth of a son while her husband is away from home (he has departed in response to a request for help in war) provides the opportunity for her mother-in-law to act against her so that Emaré is again cast out into the sea. The old woman's letter to her son stating that Emaré has given birth to a monster, and her falsification of his response so that Emaré is put to sea seemingly on his order, links the parental separation to the birth of the child. Although the father appears hostile to his wife, in fact he is never actually so. Public sympathy is with Emaré when she is cast out, her goodness is realised by her calm obedience to what seems to be her husband's harsh order, and her vulnerability is given form in the image of a nursing mother fearfully hiding her face, adrift on a stormy sea (649-60).

Emaré's child is reared away from home although with his mother: he lives with her in the house of Jurdan, a rich Roman merchant who takes them in. A long time passes, during which Emaré remains faithful to her husband. He, returning home from the wars, grieves at the loss of his wife, and it is his wish to do penance for her fate that takes him to Rome where the family reunion eventually takes place, initiated by Emaré. During this time the child, Segramowre, is growing up and a promising horseman, although the emphasis is on his skill in courtesy, skill which helps reunite his parents. The Family Pattern in which Emaré is the mother is now complete. Her son does not marry or become a ruler at once, although we learn that he later becomes an emperor.

A second reunion quickly follows the first, completing the first Family Pattern in which Emaré's role is that of the child. When Emaré's father arrives in Rome, like her husband to do penance, she again initiates a reunion through her son. The fact of Emaré's mother's death and the consequent impossibility of a parental reunion does not deny the Family Pattern structure here.

Apollonius of Tyre

A Middle English version of this romance (besides that of Gower) exists in fragmented form only, the final lines of the poem in the early fifteenth century MS Douce 216.[129] I have nevertheless included it here because of the general paucity of girl-children in Family Pattern romances: *Emaré* and *Apollonius of Tyre* provide together the main examples. Happily the fragment recounts events as recalled by family members, confirming this version as a Family Pattern and consistent in broad outline with other versions of this wide-spread romance. We learn how Apollonius

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[129] See J.O.Halliwell, *A New Boke about Shakespeare and Stratford-on-Avon* (London: [n.pub.], 1850), pp.1-13. Halliwell prints the fragment as 273 lines, some incomplete.

married a princess in Cirenen and of her apparent death at sea in childbirth: a woman is separated from the father of her children and, here, from her child. Left in Tharse with foster parents the child is reared away from home and becomes the victim of attempted murder by her foster parents. (We know from other versions that the daughter's virginity is threatened in a brothel later.)[130] Apollonius himself stayed at sea for fourteen years in sorrow (a long time passes) and although on returning to Tharse he found that his daughter was no longer there, they were subsequently reunited. Unbeknown to Apollonius he is telling his part of the story to his own wife who had been rescued from the sea where, thought to be dead, she had been cast in a waterproof chest. The family is reunited.

Octavian

Mothers are never the focus of entire Family Pattern romances: even in *Emaré* motherhood is only part of the story. In the northern *Octavian* the mother is broadly the centre of attention at first; then her sons, one in particular. This shift in focus, coming as it does in a romance the shape of which is (like that of *Isumbras*) wholly the shape of the Family Pattern, and incorporating the very different experiences of both parent and child as part of the same story, suggests the family as the true interest rather than any one family member. The father and second son too make important appearances. In the southern version the spotlight shifts more restlessly about.

Octavian survives in two groups of versions, the northern (N) and the southern (S), each telling a similar story but differing considerably in structure, thematic emphasis, and in sensitivity to the underlying Family Pattern. The northern romance is extant in

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[130] For a detailed study of the Apollonius story across many centuries and many countries see Archibald who gives a basic synopsis of the story as stemming from the classical Latin text *Historia Apollonii Regis Tyri*, pp.10 – 12, remarking elsewhere (p. 3) that the plot changed little throughout its long history from the fifth century on. Details of the Middle English fragment are given on p. 193. For a complete Middle English version not included in this Family Pattern study see John Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, Book 8, written in 1390 and revised in 1393, in *'Confessio Amantis': John Gower*, ed. by Russell A. Peck (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968).

two fifteenth century manuscripts and I follow here MS CU Ff.2.38. The southern version is in MS Cotton Caligula.[131]

Each version prefaces the Family Pattern with concern for a legitimate successor to the emperor. In N it is voiced by the emperor and his wife when, after seven years of marriage, they have no children; in S concern is expressed by his subjects rather than their ruler and they consequently exhort him to marry.

In both N and S a woman is separated from the father of her children as punishment by exile for supposed adultery. The separation is linked to the birth of twin boys. In N the emperor's mother accuses his wife of having formed an adulterous liaison specifically in order to have children and is seemingly worried that Rome will consequently be 'wrong-heyred' (107). The father offers no resistance to the idea of his wife's guilt and so bears part of the responsibility for the separation. His wife's piety is so emphasised that it becomes a motivating force: when she is about to be burnt for a crime she did not commit, her prayer is that her children should be christened before they die and the emperor, moved, commutes her sentence to exile. In S on the other hand, the emperor's mother makes reference to the folk belief that twins must have separate fathers to add weight to her accusation of adultery. Unlike his counterpart in N, the emperor in S does make at least some resistance to his mother's claim against his wife but is ultimately persuaded to act against her. His wife is innocent and pious but her piety is not motivationally important as it is in N. The twin sons in S are christened promptly after being born, so removing an opportunity to suggest a link between character and the chain of events. In S it is

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[131] Main text (N): *Six Middle English Romances*, ed. by Mills, pp.75-124. N also found in MS Thornton. S reproduced in *Octovian Imperator*, ed. by Frances McSparran, Middle English Texts 11 (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1979); see pp.32-38 on the relationship between N and S.

public sympathy (which is with the wives in both versions) which influences the emperor to modify his wife's punishment from death to exile.

In both N and S the children are reared away from home. In each case they leave home with their banished mother and are subsequently stolen by animals. One, Octavian, is reared first by a lioness and later by his mother who recovers him from the animal and takes him to the court at Jerusalem where they are treated hospitably. The other, Florent, passes through the hands of an ape, a knight, and a band of outlaws, before coming into the care of his final foster parents, Clement of Paris and his wife. Between them the children have, in each version, both animal and human foster parents.

A long time passes. For the mother, in each case, this period is relatively uneventful: there is no chastity test. In N the father is involved in combat against the Saracens and grieves over the loss of his wife. Both of his sons grow up and prove themselves in combat against the Saracens. Florent wins the love of a Saracen princess; young Octavian seeks out his father to prove his mother's innocence, bringing about the family reunion. Florent's marriage to the princess quickly follows. In S on the other hand, although the father is likewise involved in combat, there is no indication that he suffers a sense of personal loss. Both sons prove themselves in combat and Florent wins a Saracen princess, marrying her (unusually for a Family Pattern romance) some time before the family reunion, though the couple are soon parted by war. They are reunited when the family reunion, initiated by the mother, eventually occurs.

Sir Triamour

This is another romance in which the Family Pattern spans the complete structure and in which the mother's story dominates the first part with the interest later transferring to her son. It survives complete in only one manuscript pre-dating 1500: MS CU Ff.2.38.[132] The story begins with the concern of Margaret and her husband the king of Aragon over their childlessness, as a result of which the king goes to the Holy Land to fight the heathen in the hope that this will so please God that He will provide an heir. Margaret, who becomes pregnant on the eve of her husband's departure, is accused on his return of adultery during his absence by a wicked steward whose advances she has spurned. When the king, who does not question her guilt, sends Margaret into exile, a woman is separated from the father of her child. The separation is linked to the birth of the (as yet unborn) child and is largely the father's responsibility. Margaret's innocence and loyalty to her husband are emphasised in the portrayal of her adamant rejection of the steward's advances. Public sympathy is with the innocent but she must leave home nonetheless, her vulnerability underlined by the description of her departure on an old, blind horse with only an old knight and a dog for her protection.

The child is reared away from home. Her knightly escort having been killed, Margaret gives birth to a child, Triamour, alone in the wilds. She rears him in the house of a kind nobleman who takes them in.

A long time passes. The mother's chastity is threatened soon after she leaves home by the false steward who follows her with a view to raping her. Her old knight is killed in her defence but she manages to escape nonetheless to safety. The father suffers sadness for the loss of his wife for many years once he realises her innocence. He is involved in combat, including a fight against his son in which neither recognises the

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[132] 'Syr Tryamowre': A Metrical Romance, ed. by Erdman Schmidt.

other. It is during a tournament for the hand of a princess that Triamour unhorses his father. As for Triamour himself, the child of the Pattern, his adventures become the focus of attention once he is old enough to take up arms in the tournament. At the tournament he wins his princess, but he does not claim her at this stage and later must win her again from the unwanted attentions of the fearsome Burlonde. By the time they are married he has not only unhorsed his father but has helped him defeat his enemies, making undeniable his supremacy in the fighting man's world. The family reunion takes place at Triamour's wedding. His mother reveals to Triamour the identity of his father and the king is invited to the feast where the family is reunited. It is the child's activities which have enabled the reunion to take place, although it is the mother who is immediately responsible for it.

Sir Degarré

Like *Triamour* and *Octavian*, this romance focuses on the mother in the early stages and later transfers interest to the child. It survives more or less whole in two manuscripts pre-dating 1500 and this account is based on the earliest, from the National Library of Scotland MS, Advocates 19.2.1 (MS Auchinleck) of between 1330-1340.[133] Having been separated from her companions in the forest, the mother is raped by a fairy knight and conceives a child. His purpose fulfilled, the fairy knight disappears as mysteriously and suddenly as he arrived: so a woman is separated from the father of her child. The separation is not linked to the child's birth and is the father's responsibility. The mother is virtuous and is the victim of the father's hostility, unusually for these romances at the time of the child's conception. After this encounter she finds her way home again where, like the other unmarried mothers-to-be, she stays while her child's father is absent. The child is reared away from home:

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[133] Main text: *Medieval English Romances, II*, ed. by Schmidt and Jacobs, pp.57-88. Other version: Bodleian Library, MS 14528, Rawlinson F34, second half of fifteenth century. Fragments: MS CU Ff.2.38, 602 lines (not seen by me); MS Egerton 2862, two fragments totalling 161 lines.

as soon as he is born he is taken secretly to a hermitage in order to hide the fact of his birth. The hermit's sister cares for him while he is young; then he is brought up by the hermit himself.

A long time passes. The narrative's attention now focuses on the child, Degarré. Once he learns from the hermit the mysterious circumstances of their acquaintance, he sets out to find his parents. Soon he becomes involved in fighting, fast progressing from proficiency with a wooden club to supremacy in knightly combat. By defeating in combat the renowned knight who turns out to be his grandfather, Degarré wins his mother's hand in marriage. Incest is narrowly averted when mother and son recognise their true relationship by means of a pair of gloves which she left with him as a baby and which will fit only her. Degarré's involvement in combat later leads to his winning a wife: he defends his future spouse against an aggressive and unwelcome suitor. His fighting is also the means of his meeting his father who recognises Degarré during their combat by means of his tip-less sword, which he had left for his son with his mother all those years ago in the forest. Thus the child's fighting abilities play a significant part in bringing about the family reunion.

As for the parents, we learn little of the father except that he is involved in combat with his son, but we should note that the mother's chastity is threatened by near marriage with her own son. The final part of the MS Auchinleck text is almost entirely missing so it is from the Bodleian Library MS 14528, Rawlinson F34 that we learn that the family reunion takes place as a result of Degarré's meeting with his father and that this leads to the marriage of Degarré's parents and of Degarré himself with his lady.

Chevalere Assigne

This is a very short romance, preserved in one manuscript, British Library MS Cotton Caligula A.ii.[134] Although it focuses broadly on first the mother, then the son, it pays a good deal of attention to the machinations of the evil mother-in-law, Matabryne. When the queen, Beatrice, is thrown into prison on a false charge of having given birth to puppies, a woman is separated from the father of her children and the separation is linked to their birth. The birth is preceded by the king's concern that he should not be childless, and provides his mother, Matabryne, with the opportunity to act against the queen. The father's resistance to Matabryne's hostility towards his wife is weak and he is therefore responsible to some degree for the separation. Beatrice herself is a rare example of a Family Pattern mother who has committed a fault, though a slight and verbal one. She is not guilty of the charge made against her, but she has in fact given birth at one time to seven children, 'for a worde […] þat she wronge seyde' (197). This was the expression of her belief that twins must have separate fathers. Although foolish, Beatrice is not adulterous, and is shown praying to God while in prison, with effect.

The children, six boys and a girl, are reared away from home. Abandoned in the forest, they are separated from both parents and reared by a hermit with the help, when they are very young, of a hind. They have both animal and human foster parents although, as often in these stories, the female takes a very minor role. Here the hind simply suckles the babies. A long time passes – eleven years – during which the mother languishes in prison. Although six of the children are turned into swans the seventh, Enyas, has a more conventional career: the intervention of an angel delivers him from his woodland existence and he subsequently shows his ability in

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[134] The Romance of the Cheuelere Assigne, ed. by Gibbs.

combat against Matabryne's champion in defence of his mother who has been brought from prison to be burnt. The romance gives little detail of the father's experiences during these years: he agrees to his mother's demand that his wife shall be burnt 'withe a grymme herte' (189); although his pleasure when Enyas appears to champion his wife's cause contributes to a picture of him as unhappy but weak. He himself is not involved in combat and there is no antagonism between him and his son.

The defeat of Matabryne allows the mother to be rescued from the flames, the restoration of all but one of the children to human form, and the family to be reunited. The romancer shows little interest in the family reunion, turning his attention instead to the metamorphoses of the swan-children and the sad case of the one who must remain a bird. There is no romantic involvement for any of the children, nor indication that they go on to become rulers.

King Horn

Of the three extant versions of this romance, this summary is based on that in Cambridge University Library, MS Gg.4.27.2, the earliest (probably around 1300).[135] Rather than concentrating initially on the mother, it pays attention first to the father's story before switching to that of the child. A woman is separated from the father of her child early on in the story when Horn's mother is separated from his father by the latter's death at the hands of invading Saracens. Unusually the separation is not linked to the child's birth and his father is not responsible for it, dying in defence of his land (Sudene), helpless against a superior force. The mother flees the invaders and

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[135] '*King Horn*', '*Floriz and Blauncheflur*', '*The Assumption of our Lady*', ed. by McKnight, pp. 1 – 69. Other versions of *Horn*: British Museum, MS Harley 2253, c.1330 – 40; Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc 108, a composite MS with *Horn* being found in part 2, this part dating as part 1 from the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century, but with fifteenth century additions.

lives secretly a hermit's life 'vnder a roche of stone' (79). As such she is both good and vulnerable but the romance does not pay her much attention.

With the father's death the focus of the romance shifts to the child. Horn is at least partly reared away from home. Having been put to sea in a boat with twelve friends by the invaders who fear his vengeance, Horn and his companions arrive in Westernesse where Horn's care is entrusted to the king's steward, Aþelbrus. MSS Laud and Harley tell us that Horn leaves home when he is fifteen years old, a detail not recorded in the Cambridge manuscript, but in all versions he is clearly not adult when he leaves home since the king provides for his education when he arrives in Westernesse.

A long time passes, during which Horn proves his supremacy in combat by defeating Saracen invaders at Westernesse and again against a pagan champion in Ireland, who, as it turns out, is the man who killed his father years before.[136] He wins his beloved, Rymenild, in combat, rescuing her from marriage with two unwanted suitors. But before he will marry her, he insists that he must win back his father's kingdom, and it is his success in this that allows him to be reunited with his mother. Thus the wedding and the reunion are connected. The family reunion receives cursory treatment in all three versions. Celebrations for the liberation of Horn's kingdom are interrupted when Horn leaves to rescue his sweetheart from the attentions of the second suitor who is taking advantage of Horn's absence to press his claims. Horn's marriage follows and he and Rymenild reign in Sudene.

William of Palerne

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[136] There is no father – son antagonism in *Horn* but by defeating his father's killers Horn shows his superiority.

We now move away from Family Pattern romances with a dual focus on parent and child, to those in which the child figure dominates. *William of Palerne* is one of these. The first part of this romance is missing from the only extant English manuscript version, in the fourteenth century King's College Cambridge MS 13; consequently the first part of the story is supplied from the Old French *Guillaume de Palerne* from which the English version is taken.[137] In this the child of the Family Pattern, William, is abducted by a werewolf, who is in fact the enchanted prince, Alphonse of Spain, acting to save William from the evil machinations of his uncle. We take up the story in the Middle English version from the point where William passes from the werewolf's care into that of a cowherd, who together with his wife rears William until he is taken into the emperor's household. So we enter the Family Pattern at a point where the child is reared away from home. Separated from both parents at about four years old, William is brought up by both animal and human carers. We learn in retrospect that his mother has been separated from the father of her child when William's father dies, presumably from natural causes. The mother remains at home. She is not the victim of hostility at this stage; rather hostility is directed towards her son. So we learn very few details of the parental separation in this romance.

A long time passes, during which William falls in love with his future wife, Melior, and they elope. William's prowess in combat allows him to relieve the siege of Palerne and the family reunion ensues. This is made possible by the child's actions, for William protects the werewolf and arranges for his disenchantment and it is the werewolf who reveals William's true identity, an essential precursor to William's reunion with his mother. William is acknowledged as the rightful lord of Palerne and

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[137] *'William of Palerne': An Alliterative Romance*, ed. by Bunt.

marries Melior. A substantial portion of the end of the poem is devoted to the general harmony which follows these events, including William's accession to the imperial throne.

Sir Perceval of Galles

This romance is extant in MS Thornton.[138] A woman is separated from the father of her child early on in the romance when Sir Perceval senior, the father in the Family Pattern, dies in a joust against the Red Knight. The joust is held as part of the festivities to celebrate the birth of Sir Perceval's child, also called Perceval, thus linking the parental separation to the child's birth. To some extent the separation is the father's responsibility: he wants the joust because he 'wolde his son were gette / in þe same wonne' (119-20). On the other hand he is distanced from it by the fact that he is unwittingly wearing faulty armour. As a result of his death, Acheflour, the mother, goes to live in the forest, taking her son with her. She is shown no hostility at this stage. She herself rears her child away from the parental home, living a simple life in the woods.

A long time passes. The child, Perceval, an amusingly unworldly young man, leaves his woodland home at about fifteen years old. He wins his future spouse by his supremacy in combat against a sultan and his forces who threaten her, though not before he has killed the Red Knight. As in the southern *Octavian*, the child marries before the family reunion: Perceval has been married to Lufamour for a year before he sets out to find his mother. She has been the unwilling object of the attention of a giant who wants her for his 'leman' (2145-46). The family reunion occurs as a result of Perceval's active search for his mother and his defeat of the giant. The family

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 Reproduced in *Middle English Metrical Romances*, II, ed. by French and Hayle, pp. 531 – 603.

reunion cannot involve parental reunion since Sir Perceval senior is dead but his son is soon reunited with his own wife when he returns to his marital home with his mother. Perceval becomes lord of his wife's lands.

Sir Beues of Hamtoun

This summary follows the romance as it survives in MS Auchinleck, the earliest of the extant versions.[139] The Family Pattern does not begin until well on in the romance after Bevis has regained the lands lost in his childhood to his father's murderer with the connivance of his treacherous mother. As their lord he soon runs into trouble with the king and finds himself in exile with his pregnant wife, Josian. A woman is separated from the father of her children when Josian is abducted immediately after the birth of twin sons in the forest. She has told Bevis to leave her alone during the birth for the sake of privacy but he goes too far to be of assistance when she needs his protection; so they share responsibility for the separation which is firmly linked to the birth of the children. Josian's abductor is Ascopart, the couple's former servant. The couple's children are reared away from home. Bevis, finding Josian gone, gives one child, Guy, to a forester and the other, Miles, to a fisherman to be cared for. Separated from both their parents, the children are reared by strangers.

A long time passes. Josian defends herself against the attentions of another man by means of a herb-induced ugliness and, having escaped him, engages in a lengthy search (seven years in MS Auchinleck) for Bevis. He himself is involved in combat, winning the princess of Aumbeforce in a tournament and living thereafter as ruler of the country while eschewing immediate marriage to her. Thanks to Josian's endeavours, the family reunion can take place. It is unusual in that it happens before

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[139] *'Sir Beves of Hampton': Study and Edition*, ed. by Fellows. Other versions: MS Egerton 2862; MS Caius 175; MS CU Ff.2.38; Chetham Library, MS 8009 (MS Chetham 8009), late fifteenth century; MS Naples 13.B.29. Fragment: Trinity College Cambridge, MS 0.2.13 (iv), late fifteenth century, 240 lines.

the children have proved themselves in arms, though they are old enough for martial games. The remainder of the romance (965 lines in MS Auchinleck) is taken up with the subduing of various heathen lands to Christian rule and the re-establishing of the family's position in England. Ultimately both children prove themselves in combat and become rulers; one of them, Miles, marries. However, these events are unconnected to the family reunion.

Bevis is particularly interesting because the first part of the poem is a grotesque imitation of the normal Family Pattern. A woman is separated from the father of her child when Bevis's mother has her elderly husband murdered. In reverse of the usual situation, the separation is here the responsibility of the mother and hostility is directed towards the father. Far from being guiltless, virtuous and vulnerable like the usual Family Pattern mother, Bevis's mother is wicked and powerful, an accessory to murder. Parental separation is not linked to the child's birth, occurring as it does when Bevis is seven years old, but is caused by the mother's sexual frustration; and from the beginning her chief characteristic is disloyalty to her spouse. The child is reared away from home where his mother remains with her new husband. In an effort to be rid of her child, whom she hates, she has Bevis sold to heathen merchants. He is taken by them to Ermonie where he is brought up at the ruler's court.

A long time passes. Far from defending her chastity, the mother actively seeks union with her chosen lover, the Emperor of Almayne, and they marry. The child Bevis achieves notoriety for his fighting prowess and undergoes a series of adventures related to his relationship with his future bride, whom he eventually steals away from her unwanted husband by skills not the least of which is his ability in combat. The antagonism between parent and child is, unusually except for the need to escape from

incestuous fathers, between opposite sexes, and it is of a nature which cannot be resolved, for the child has remained intensely loyal to his father throughout. Bevis returns to England to reclaim his father's lands. The family reunion which follows is far from loving. Bevis appears before his mother and the emperor in disguise as a French mercenary offering to defend the emperor against Bevis. His mother does not recognise him. This ironic use of disguise and the most superficial of reunions turns on its head the usual motif of joyful recognition. Bevis's arrival results eventually in his mother's death, but for himself accession to his rightful inheritance and marriage to Josian.

Within the temporal and stylistic bounds of this study are some romances which do not conform wholly to the Family Pattern model, just as was the case in fairytale. Such poems we may regard as close relations of the Pattern, part of a continuum which ranges from the Family Pattern itself to stories which clearly deal with the same period of family life but in which, of the three possible central family members, one only (usually the child) appears, and in which parents appear as splits only – parent figures rather than parents.

One example is *Generydes*, which survives in two versions pre-dating 1500. I refer here to that in Trinity College Cambridge, MS 0.5.2 (dating probably from around 1470).[140] A mother is separated from the father of her child when Sereyne and Auferius part after one night together in which their son is conceived. The child is reared first by a foster mother, then later, when he can talk, at his mother's court where he eventually learns his identity. Later he goes to his father's court, and his identity is not long concealed from his father. A long time passes in which the child,

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[140] Main text: *Generydes*, ed. by W. Aldis Wright, EETS 55 and 70 (London: Trübner, 1878). Other version: New York, Pierpoint Morgan Library, MS M 876 (Helmingham), before 1450, which I have not seen.

Generydes, has many adventures centring on his difficulties winning his future wife and helping his father who has been usurped. In the midst of these problems our attention is diverted briefly to focus on the parental reunion and marriage. Father and son later meet in battle but Generydes is never reunited with both his parents at once, since Auferius and Sereyne die within a day or so of each other before their son can reach them, shortly before his own marriage.

Sir Gowther also bears a close relation to Family Pattern stories. It survives in two versions, this summary following that in MS Advocates 19.3.1 which dates from the second half of the fifteenth century.[141] It does not adhere strictly to the Family Pattern form because, like 'The Speckled Bull', it splits the hostile and friendly father figures in such a way as to suggest that they are irreconcilable. The child's (Gowther's) parents are separated but can never be reunited because his father is a devil (who appeared to the mother at the crucial moment in the guise of her husband (a father-figure) to beget Gowther. The mother's eventual marriage to another husband-figure, the good old earl, is a substitute for parental reunion. The man whom we feel should be the dominant husband-figure – the queen's first husband – is weak, ineffectual and dies, as the good husband-figure, the old earl, begins to assert himself. In addition the child is not reared away from home (although he leaves in adolescence to visit the Pope). Nevertheless, from the start he is at odds with his mother thanks to his fearful behaviour, and is reunited and reconciled with her on his return home. *Sir Gowther* is clearly akin to Family Pattern stories at a symbolic level although it does not take the Family Pattern form.[142]

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[141] Main text: *Six Middle English Romances*, ed. by Mills, pp. 148 – 68. Other version: British Museum, MS Royal 17.B.43, fifteenth century, but part in which *Sir Gowther* is found 1450 – 1500, which I have not seen.

[142] A more recent work in which the father – figures are split irreconcilably is Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge.*

Finally, *Guy of Warwick* is a particularly interesting Family Pattern relation. It survives in three versions from before 1500 and fragments from two manuscripts.[143] As the story appears in MS Auchinleck it is close to the Family Pattern in its second section (following the hero's marriage), but in the events leading up to Guy's marriage with Felice it is, since it lacks any parental drama, a maturation story. After Guy's marriage however, and significantly when the protagonist himself becomes a father, the perspective widens to include a parental drama and the shape of the poem moves closer to that of the Family Pattern. A mother is separated from the father of her children when Guy leaves his pregnant wife, Felice, to serve God as a pilgrim. We learn in retrospect that the child is reared away from home when the child, Reinbrun, is stolen by merchants. A long time passes during which Guy has several adventures. The parents are subsequently reunited albeit very briefly, but not with their child. In this same Auchinleck manuscript the child Reinbrun is made the centre of his own story, also nearly a Family Pattern. His parents are separated and he is abducted and reared in Africa, although as we would expect little attention is paid to the parental story here. There follow a series of adventures, those of Herhaud, a father-figure who sets out on Guy's behalf to find Reinbrun, and those of Reinbrun himself. There is no family reunion although there is a meeting between the child and the father-figure, Herhaud. The other complete Middle English versions of *Guy of Warwick* interlace the stories of father and child, leaving Guy the protagonist throughout. The failure to complete what is so obviously nearly a Family Pattern in *Guy* is puzzling, made more so by the anomaly of the Auchinleck version in which the

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[143] Main text: *The Romance of 'Guy of Warwick': Auchinleck and Caius MSS*, ed. by Julius Zupitza, EETS ES 42, 49, 59 (London: Oxford University Press, 1966). Other versions: Caius College Cambridge, MS 107 (MS Caius 107), fifteenth century; CU Ff.2.38. Fragments: British Museum, MS Sloane 1044, early fifteenth century, 216 lines, which I have not seen; another fragmentary text (fourteenth century) is preserved as part of the bindings of two MSS probably bound 1473: British Museum, MS Additional 14408, fourteenth century, c. 1610 lines; and National Library of Wales, MS 572, early fourteenth century, c. 1260 lines. For details of the latter see *Fragments of an Early Fourteenth - Century 'Guy of Warwick'*, ed. by Maldwyn Mills and Daniel Huws, Medium Aevum Monographs, n.s.4 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1974). The fragment is printed as 2872 lines.

protagonist is changed with the creation of Reinbrun. It is a problem to which I will return in chapter 5.

The above survey of romances is designed to show how a number of quite different poems each manifests in its particular way a single, unchanging pattern. Despite the differences (to which I will return and which are not, of course, unimportant to the poems as individual works of art), there are striking similarities in treatment of the Family Pattern, and we will look first, for convenience, at these.

A woman is separated from the father of her child (or children). The separation is often linked to the child's birth, which itself may be preceded by a concern with childlessness. It is often to some extent the father's responsibility. If only one person leaves home at the separation, it is usually the mother. She may be subject to hostility from a variety of possible figures: husband, mother-in-law, steward, her father, heathens. Normally she is guiltless, good and vulnerable. She may well have public sympathy with her, although this does not save her from her fate.

The child is reared away from home, although not necessarily from infancy (home at this stage being where the mother usually lives). The child either leaves home, often with the mother, or is born while she is in exile. He or she will be separated from one or both parents and will usually be reared by strangers, perhaps by animals. Even when a child has been reared by its mother, it will become separated from her before the reunion.

A long time passes after the parental separation. This part of the story is often filled with adventures, the nature of which depends on gender. A father or male child will usually be involved in physical or mental competition: fighting or riddle-solving perhaps. A father often grieves at the loss of the mother, even when he has banished her in anger. The female, whether parent or child, may well find that her chastity is threatened: that is to say, she must defend herself against the desires of someone other than her present or future spouse. Mothers must usually endure this period away from home in passive suffering, whether or not in physical discomfort. For both sexes, some form of antagonism between parent and child of the same gender often takes place temporarily.

The family is lovingly reunited at the end of this period. The father is rarely responsible for the family reunion; more often it is either mother or child. Recognition is often confirmed by some concrete token of identity, although in some cases identification of certain family members has taken place or is suspected before the actual reunion. By the time it occurs, the child has shown him or herself fit for the adult activities of (usually) fighting for boys, and marriage for girls. Boys usually show that they are unbeatable in combat while girls successfully defend their chastity. Adulthood in the romances, and in the sense in which I use the term throughout this study, is marked by certain abilities and behaviour rather than the attainment of any particular age.[144] The family reunion is often associated with matrimonial union or reunion for parents and /or for children too, as well as accession to an imperial throne or a lesser seat for males. It sometimes happens that parental reunion is prevented by the death of one of the parents: if their relations have been previously harmonious,

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[144] Characters excel in combat and marry at what we, several centuries later, may consider to be very few years: Perceval marries Lufamour and becomes lord of her estate at 15 or 16 years old; the Hungarian princess in *Triamour* appears to be seven years and six months old when the tournament is first fought for her hand and not much older when she eventually marries the hero.

then I have not taken the consequent absence of a family reunion to mean a failure of the Family Pattern to be completed.

There are some similarities between the manifestation of the Family Pattern in the fairytales and the romances. In both, the parental separation is usually linked to the birth of a child or children. The mother is usually an innocent figure who leaves home under duress. The child often has at least one foster parent and plays a significant part in bringing about the family reunion.

In romance, however, while the trouble usually begins within the home, hostile figures are more variable than in the fairytales and include stewards, heathens and fathers, as well as mothers-in-law and husbands. Accusations against those mothers who are accused are more often of infidelity than of giving birth to animals. Margaret Schlauch finds in her study of accused queens in folktale and romance an unsurprising shift in romance to motifs which reflect courtly life.[145] There is in romance more often a concern for childlessness and for family continuity in estate governance. As the literature of a patrilineal society, this is consistent with the higher profile of male children and fathers in the romances as main characters.

Male activity in both genres involves competition in the general sense, but in romance this generally takes the form of knightly combat; female experience in romance (unlike the fairytales) characteristically involves defence of chastity. Though children in both genres are capable of independent activity before the reunion, in romance it is specifically the sort of activity which marks them out as adult in a chivalric world. Marriage is one sign of adulthood and accompanies the family reunion more

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[145] *Chaucer's Constance and Accused Queens* (New York: University Press, 1927). See pp. 113 – 14 for a useful summary.

frequently in romance than in the fairytales. In the fairytales gender distinction in terms of areas of activity is less evident.[146]

In general the romances give the Family Pattern a contemporary coat, and find it a suitable vehicle for concerns about future continuity and wellbeing. There is an emphasis on a particular sort of worthy adult behaviour (excellence in combat and wifely integrity in particular). In adults and children such behaviour often plays a large part in restoring harmony where there was discord: wives must remain faithful, husbands combative, and children must prove themselves in these adult virtues. The Family Pattern is fundamentally optimistic, ending as it begins with the readiness of the adult to become a parent. *Emaré* and *Bevis* illustrate this well with the repetition of the Pattern as the children become parents themselves. But parenthood, while vital, is only part of the adult role: procreativity is approved though only within certain behavioural bounds.

In whichever genre it is manifested, the Family Pattern is a symbolic pattern, focusing on a central family experience – a child growing up – which can be experienced from four points of view: that of father, mother, male child, or female child. Because characters are representative, their responses fall within limited boundaries, but there are nonetheless numerous possible permutations and each particular Family Pattern story realises only one set. The precise symbolic significance of events can only be ascertained from their particular context, dependent as they are on who has 'created' them as part of a story. In themselves motifs potentially have multiple symbolic significance depending on point of view. Incest, for instance, suggests unduly close emotional ties but the nature of the ties will depend on the characters involved and the

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[146] I am not suggesting that in fairytale gender roles are uniformly undifferentiated, simply that in Family Pattern stories they are often less obviously so. For example, in the 'Talking Bird' stories two boys and a girl undertake the same task; the only difference between them is that the girl succeeds while the boys fail.

age and gender of the protagonist. Nonetheless, remembering that relationships, feelings and so on are projected outwards into situation and event, a general idea of the complex web of feelings and responses involved during the time a child is growing up emerges from the remarkable coherence of Family Pattern treatment in the romances. Gathering together, in this case from the romances, the similarities in treatment of the Pattern, we gain an overview, seeing events from outside the family as distinct from the point of view of any particular family member.

The parental separation in the Family Pattern suggests that when a child is born the harmonious parental relationship is disturbed;[147] this is in recognition of what is generally the case, that on becoming parents, the attention of a couple is drawn away from one another towards their children so that the primary role of each is father or mother rather than husband or wife. (The parental pair are not necessarily married at the literal level but I will refer to them as married because it enables easy distinction between couples as lovers (husband and wife), and as parents (father and mother); these are convenient shorthand for their particular sort of sexual relationship, whether literally married or not.) The parents' response to their situation is ambivalent. A husband may respond jealously to the diversion of his wife's attention, externalising this as an accusation of adultery, or as an attempt to steal her away from her children. After initially rebelling against the new situation husbands tend to lament the loss of their wives and wish for their restoration. At the same time however, husbands typically wish to protect and provide for their wives in their maternal roles. If ambivalent feeling is expressed in a particular story then at least one of these feelings – often the more negative – will be attributed to another character at the literal level by means of splitting, thus distancing it from its originator. In *Octavian* (N), for

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[147] Lüthi, in *The European Folktale*, p.9, says 'apparently the only way that folktales can express spiritual otherness is through geographical separation'.

example, the accusation of adultery is shown as deriving from the mother-in-law. The dominant father-figure, the emperor, appears to feel his wife's changed role as desertion and acquiesces in the accusation of adultery. At first he feels angry but later laments what is to him a loss. In *Isumbras*, the hero's wish to steal his wife away and keep her to himself as lover is attributed to a heathen sultan.

The mother cannot but attend first and foremost to the needs of her child especially during its infancy when it is at its most dependent. The romances do not condemn this: the sultan's abduction of Sir Isumbras's wife for instance is presented as one of unequivocal wrongdoing, and in general fathers take the main responsibility for the parental separations. The mother's sense of rejection is often represented in the stories by her feeling of being accused unjustly of disloyalty or perhaps by being cast out of her home, but her enduring loyalty to her husband suggests that her wifely (as opposed to motherly) role is simply secondary at this stage, not defunct. In *Triamour* the injustice of the rupture and the involvement of the steward (a hostile husband-figure) as instigator suggests the mother's feeling that her husband is under an evil influence, that the cruelty with which she is unexpectedly confronted does not come from the husband she knows to be truly loving at heart. Motherhood makes women vulnerable, a condition amply symbolised by the often horrendously dangerous circumstances into which they are forced in these romances. At the same time the mother finds in her husband a source of protection, a role which may be split from the dominant husband-figure, like Jurdan's in *Emaré*.

If the wife or husband aspect of a couple is felt to have vanished forever on parenthood, then in the story the couple will be separated by death at the initial stage. This happens in *Horn*. It does not stop the surviving spouse being reconciled to the

child in their mutually adult relationship, but suggests that parenthood alters the relationship of a married couple forever.

Parental attitudes to their children also show ambivalence. They depend on gender and shift as the child moves towards adulthood. The romances in general offer a view of the pre-adult years as divided into three phases: infancy, when the child is so young as to be helpless, perhaps even unborn; childhood proper, which I shall call "youth", and adolescence. This frees the word "child" to cover the three stages collectively. In youth a boy shows himself to be able in pre-knightly combat like fighting with a staff, combat-related skills like hunting, or combat-related games like playing at 'taluas'. A girl learns feminine skills like embroidery. In adolescence a boy undertakes knightly combat, and this period is marked for both sexes by sexual interest. These stages are not bound strictly by age.[148]

What is a complex and subtle shift of parental attitudes towards children in reality is shown as a series of chronological stages in the stories. Children are often reared when helpless by parental substitutes – perhaps low-born foster parents or even animals, who soon either die or drop out of the story and are replaced by new foster parents, usually of higher birth, under whose care the child demonstrates the skills of youth. Changes in foster parents reflect the changing needs of the growing child, predominantly a growing desire for independence. The move up the social scale means that by the time the child is reunited with his or her real parents who are usually of noble birth there is the sense that the child has moved from a low to a high state which is his or hers by right and that certain aspects of the parent-child relationship have been left behind for ever.

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[148] For a historian's view of the difficulty of defining childhood by age see John Boswell, *The Kindness of Strangers* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988; repr. London: Penguin, 1989), pp. 26 – 36.

In general the infant, highly dependent on its mother, provokes in the father ambivalent wishes: to be rid of it, and to protect and provide for it. In *Chevalere* the dominant father-figure (the king) wishes to be rid of his children, seeing them as puppies, helpless creatures quite unable to participate in adult, human activity. The hermit, on the other hand, an obvious father-figure, nurtures the children.

Eventually the protective role of the father becomes the friendly support of adulthood but not before the father has re-established his command of the mother's attention. The coming-to-blows of father and son over the mother's hand in marriage in *Eglamour* gives clear expression to this process: the child challenges the father for his mother's love, but of course he can have only that proportion and type of love which is his due as a son. Alternatively father and son may simply fight, as they do in *Degarré*, in order to clarify their identities and establish their equality as adults and their independence of each other.

With daughters, fathers are more likely to be over-possessive, a feeling often represented in the stories by incestuous desire. Close emotional bonds which satisfy the child's needs from within the family rather than directing them outwards in the search for a sexual partner are appropriately, if hyperbolically, expressed as incest. The best example of the potentially tragic implications of such fatherly feeling is in *Apollonius* where the old king clearly wishes to keep his daughter for himself and baffles her suitors with riddles to prevent them winning her. The result is death for both child and parent, symbolic of the daughter's inability to move into adulthood because stuck in the emotional dependence of childhood, and of the father's failure to enter that mature phase of fatherhood in which he has an adult-to-adult relationship

with his child. Emaré escapes such a fate because for her, incest remains a threat which she resists, and never actuality: the threat causes her to break free and find a husband. A normal outlet for fatherly protective feelings for a daughter is his appraisal of her suitors.

Analysis is hindered where daughters are concerned by their infrequent appearance in the Family Pattern romances. Family Pattern children number four daughters and twenty-one sons. Of these, the girl in *Chevalere* is, unusually, indistinguishable in her role from four of her brothers; Florence of Palerne's father dies early on in *William*. *Apollonius* survives in Middle English in so vestigial a form that it can contribute little, which leaves *Emaré* as the main example in the group. Having struggled inappropriately and without success to keep her to himself, Emaré's father laments the loss of his child and is glad to be reconciled to her as an adult.

Like fathers, mothers may be ambivalent towards their children, though usually negative attitudes are voiced by splits of the main mother-figure. Maternal dislike of an infant is suggested by the accusation of monster birth by the old queen in *Emaré*; but the dominant mother-figure does not usually reject the child as completely as she does in the anti-Pattern of *Bevis*. Here the mother's insistence on preferring a wifely (sexual) role to her maternal role means her rejection of her child and the result is a failure of the Family Pattern to be completed. More often the mother's attitude to her child is shown as positive: Acheflour in *Perceval* protects and provides for her child; Emaré is to Segramowre a teacher; Clement's wife (a helpful mother-figure) in *Octavian* (N) insists on Florent being allowed to assert his own identity as different from that of his supposed father, Clement. Maternal love may, nevertheless, become inappropriately cloying for the child's age: Acheflour, for instance, would like to keep

the adolescent Perceval in the forest with her. There is not much evidence of antagonistic maternal feelings towards a youthful or adolescent daughter perhaps because of the paucity of females as child in the Family Pattern romances. In Dionise's behaviour towards Thaise in *Apollonius* (Dionise is a mother-figure) we have evidence that it is not unknown. From other versions we know that Dionise tries to have Thaise killed.

Children for their part find parental authority (which is part of parental provision) increasingly irksome as they themselves move towards independence, and so they challenge it. A dominant father, necessary to the infant's survival, threatens the adolescent's growing independence, and ultimately his or her attainment of adulthood. Failure to become an adult is represented, aptly enough, by death. Sons frequently find themselves in conflict with menacing father-figures, giants, heathen sultans and so on.

Paternal domination is not, for a son, a sign of over-protectiveness as it is for a daughter; rather, father-son sparring is part of the normal process of growing up, the son measuring himself against the primary significant adult male in his life and needing to feel superior to him before he can feel his equal. A particular form of this is a son's desire to dominate his mother's love, realised in *Eglamour* by near-incest. What better way for a child to show superiority to his father than to dominate his mother's affections by demonstration of his manly prowess? Potential incest may however, as in *Degarré*, suggest confusion over identifying a suitable sexual partner. Sexual self-awareness of boys is accompanied by realisation of the sexuality of women, but all women are a blend of both sexual and motherly qualities and the child must come to recognise that his mother's feelings towards him would be misplaced in

a wife.[149] A principal difference between a mother's love and that of a lover is that a lover's must be won while a mother's is automatically her son's. If a son does have to escape an over-protective parent (as Perceval does) it will be his mother, and mother-son incest motifs may suggest something of this inappropriate bonding.

On the other hand, boys need to feel that their fathers love them, and a child may be unable to come to terms with his parent's relationship as husband and wife which must necessarily exclude him. Bevis perceives the emperor, a father-as-husband figure, as the dominant aspect of his father, and, seeing that his parents have between them a love from which he is excluded, feels that they reject him utterly.

Despite the paucity of daughters we have seen evidence that daughters too must break free from paternal domination. In *Emaré* the incest threat is doubly significant in that it is also a chastity test: sexual union, whether incestuous or not, represents a close emotional bonding which must be resisted with all but a spouse. In *Chevalere* the mother is seen as primarily hostile in the form of the mother-split, Matabryne: she is the most active of the mother-figures, her friendly counterparts being seen as weak (the queen) although life-giving (the hind). This is as true for the sons however as for the daughter. In *Emaré* and in *William*, mothers are perceived as friendly and helpful towards daughters, personified in Abro and the queen of Palerne respectively.

An overview of the Family Pattern romances shows in them a coherent view of this symbolic structure. But in the way the Family Pattern is treated in individual romances there are significant differences. The poems range from narratives lasting thousands of lines like *William* to those of just a few hundred, like *Chevalere*. The

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[149] See my 'Folktale, Romance and Shakespeare', pp. 187 – 89 for a fuller analysis of *Degarré*.

Family Pattern does not necessarily shape the story line of an entire poem, as it does in *Octavian*, for example, but may have attached to it extra materials, as in *Torrent*. Here, the hero's struggle to win his beloved, which in terms of the family drama is part of a child's progress towards adulthood, precedes the events of the Pattern which, because the hero is now a father, focuses largely on the parental story. Alternatively the Family Pattern may form a portion of a much longer narrative: the Middle English *Chevalere* seems to be related to a cycle of French poems celebrating Godfrey of Bouillon. Omitting the adventures of Enyas and the swan which are usually attached to the Family Pattern in the French, *Chevalere* tells just a small part of a very long story.[150]

Amongst the romances, the four elements of the Pattern are unevenly developed at the literal level; in places there are few or none of the secondary elements in place which commonly flesh out the main frame. In *William* the interest is very much on the child with the parental part of the Pattern present only in skeletal form; *Isumbras*, on the other hand, focuses on the parental drama and the treatment of the children's role is vestigial. The poet's interest and purpose is obviously a primary influence on the treatment of the Pattern at the literal level: concerning as it does two generations and both the sexes, the Pattern lends itself to a variety of concerns. *William* is a young man's story: falling in love, coming into an inheritance, the relationship between one's public and private personae, establishing an identity; these are its concerns. *Isumbras*, with its interest in the loss of established position, the challenge to identity, is a story of adulthood rather than growing up, of the trials belied by the fairytale phrase 'and they lived happily ever after'. The *Emaré* poet is clearly (and unusually for the romances) interested in women and their sphere of influence and finds the

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[150] R. M. Lumiansky, 'Legends of Godfrey of Bouillon', in Severs's *Manual*, pp.101 – 03, especially p. 101; also Gibbs, pp. ii – vii.

Family Pattern, with its focus on an area in which women are intimately involved and its happy ending, a useful vehicle through which to extol the virtues of feminine obedience and long suffering. But the Pattern's versatility is such that mothers may appear as peripheral figures only. In *Horn*, where the concerns are primarily masculine, the family is given little significance except as an indicator of Horn's progress towards adulthood, and the treatment of Horn's mother is rudimentary. Mother-son reunion seems incidental as Horn's marriage is made to depend on his recovery of his father's kingdom rather than family reunion.

Mother, father and child are essential figures in Family Pattern narratives but may be characterised differently in each instance. The mother may be a superstitious fool or a wise and tender wife; the father a fairy cad or a loving monarch. The impression of a woman vulnerable in the face of hostile forces is conveyed by material as varied as her being cast adrift in a boat on the machinations of a cruel mother-in-law, to being abducted by a warmongering sultan. And although character roles show strong gender and generational differences, not all characters perform what is typical of their sex and age. Uncharacteristically for a young man, Emaré's son is not involved in combat. The underlying significance of the Family Pattern confines the storyteller within certain boundaries, but within those limits the literal level may be determined as he or she wishes.

The flexibility which the storyteller has at the literal level means that the surface level, which may include an important thematic element, may stand in easy or strained relation to the underlying, more abstract layers. The surface level may be in symbiosis with the underlying symbolism so that they enrich each other, or it may jar against it. The literal level, determined as it is to a large degree by the interest and

purpose of the storyteller, may tell the symbolic story badly or well. Consequently, and this is an important point, the treatment of the Family Pattern must be assessed independently in each version of a poem.

Certainly the teller can change the symbolic significance with his choice of motif according to his inclination. This can be illustrated by the comparison of two romances which share a similar overall shape despite their differing proportions: *Eglamour* and *Torrent*. In both a young man must complete several tasks in order to win his beloved, tasks set by her father who opposes the match. In each the woman is banished cruelly by her father when he discovers her to be pregnant, and the Family Pattern structure then dominates, manifested similarly at least at first. Of the two however, *Torrent* has the stronger religious orientation:[151] *Torrent* leaves Desonell to go to Norway to fight a giant specifically for Christ's sake while Eglamour only ever leaves Christabelle to try to win her hand in marriage; Desonell's concern for her children's baptism is not Christabelle's and neither do they both make Desonell's expression of trust in God which is provoked by the theft of her children; in addition *Torrent* is peppered with the poet's prayers for his characters while *Eglamour* is not. The absence of the incest threat in *Torrent* is in keeping with the prominently pious tone of the story: the virtuous Desonell is dissociated from even unintentional participation in this sin in which the heroine of the other, less piously orientated romance, is albeit haplessly implicated. As a consequence of this difference at the literal level, the symbolic stories are significantly diverse: *Torrent* treats relationships between father and son, while the whole area of the male child's relations with the opposite sex, whether mother or lover, receive little attention; in *Eglamour* interest is in the boy's bonds with members of the opposite sex and their at first confusing

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[151] Adams thinks it written by a monk, pp. xx – xxi.

nature. In view of this it is consistent that Torrent's sons do not marry, while Eglamour's son marries a woman first won by his father (a concession to his symbolic wish to remain closely attached to his mother), but who is not his mother.

Some romances fail to utilise the potential for meaning in the Pattern altogether. *Chevalere*, for instance, implies little of the intense drama of human emotions inherent in the Pattern. Evil, suffering and human folly, shown with a lively interest, are countered not by human goodness but by divine power with man as God's instrument. Human joy is neglected even where it might serve a didactic purpose. The result is a rather bleak view of the human condition which, while it sticks to the letter of the Family Pattern, does not reflect its spirit. On the other hand, in *Triamour* the spirit of the Pattern is a strong presence. The underlying meaning of the characteristic sequence is brought out through sympathetic portrayal of character and event. When we think of the mother in this poem we think of her innocence, long-suffering and loyalty; all essential to the successful resolution of the underlying drama. Triamour's impulse towards manly pursuits is shown as coming from within himself (670 – 708), as growing up must. The joy of the reunion contrasts extremely with the bitterness of the parental separation which preceded it, giving an indication of what was at stake. The roles of all the principal family characters are given significant treatment so that the family as a whole is felt to be significant. Human behaviour is felt to be important. These are just some of the ways in which *Triamour* is sensitive to the unspoken drama beneath its surface.

In considering the place of the Family Pattern in individual romances I follow Wilson and Brewer in regarding the hero as the creator, so to speak, of the story. But the hero of these stories is not always easily recognised. In some romances there is only one

candidate: Sir Isumbras, for example, is the character in whom the chief interest of *Isumbras* resides. An account of his fate forms the narrative thread and we identify with him throughout. But in some other romances attention shifts from one character to another. In *Octavian* (N), for example, the eponymous father is an (albeit oft-present) background figure, and the main interest is divided broadly between mother and sons, and of these two brothers, mainly Florent. It is these figures with whom we identify and not Octavian.

In a case such as this it is the first hero to appear who should be regarded as the story's creator for the purposes of interpretation. In *Octavian* (N) events are 'created' by the mother. First she tells how her relations with her husband change when they first become parents: she feels estranged from him because of their children. She perceives her child as if he is two persons: in part he is a child who is nurtured by her into manhood (embodied by the young Octavian whom she rescues from the lioness and keeps with her); at the same time he is a child (Florent) who must make his own way in the world and on whom she exerts little influence except, through her split persona as Clement's wife, to encourage the emergence of his independent identity. She watches, as it were, Florent's emergence into adulthood, the centre of his own story. And we watch with her. Together we see Florent growing up as if through his own eyes, and his father's realisation of the benefits of parenthood as he begins to enjoy Florent's company. But ultimately Florent's story is subordinate to that of the whole family, and the heroine engineers events so that both aspects of her child are instrumental in reconciling her with her husband. For a short time young Octavian takes centre stage, this time more obviously the heroine's instrument than Florent was in restoring her in her husband's favour.

It is possible then that the hero as creator of the symbolic drama is not the main focus of attention at the literal level throughout the narrative. Inherent in the Family Pattern is the possibility of showing events from multiple viewpoints, and this is part of its strength.

Although there has been some dispute about it in the past (and I shall return to this point), the hero of *William*, the focus of my first detailed study of the Family Pattern in a particular poem, is not in doubt: it is William himself. The romance, as I have said, is a young man's story with little attention paid to the parental drama, but an uneven focus on the separate elements of the Pattern does not mean that the relationship between the Family Pattern and the less abstract layers is necessarily inharmonious; in *William* the very opposite is true. Without further ado, then, I turn to that poem.

CHAPTER 3

WILLIAM OF PALERNE: A SON GROWING UP

William of Palerne has provoked in the past a variety of critical responses. Scholarly focus has largely been on its relation to its French source, its treatment of love, its structure, the curious animal motifs and its optimistic, happy nature. It has taken three areas to be particularly problematic: the structure, where the devotion of a large amount of narrative space (900 lines) to ceremony, advice, recapitulation and kingship, is generally seen not only as disproportionate to the whole but a grave structural fault; the animal disguises, which are either condemned as ridiculous or damned with faint praise as charming curiosities: and finally the treatment of love which seems of less interest to the English poet than the French – for the English poet devotes considerably less attention to romantic love than his continental source.[152] It is my contention, however, that these areas become less puzzling if we consider them not, as has been the tendency, as separate from the whole, but as related manifestations of a particular approach to the story. Through examination of the fairytale elements in the romance and their relationship to the whole, this chapter shows how the apparently problematic areas lose their air of difficulty and may be seen as parts of a cohesive expression of conventional attitudes towards love, fighting, and romance ideals of perfection.

The Middle English romance, *William*, was translated from the Old French romance of the same name in all probability between the years 1335 and 1361. The story in French octosyllabic rhymed couplets was put into Middle English alliterative verse some 150 years after the creation of its predecessor. The English translation tells us (165) that it

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[152] Bunt surveys critical approaches, pp.109-11. This brief summary depends partly on his work.

was made under the patronage of Humphrey de Bohun, Earl of Hereford, but meagre and inconclusive evidence means that the location of the poem's creation, the circumstances of its commission, and the reasons for its being required in English at all, remain largely mysterious. The poem itself tells us only that it was made for 'ese of Englysch men in Englysch speche' (168), although whether this refers to the nobility or the common people is the subject of debate.[153]

While it is not my intention to make a detailed comparison of *William* with its French source, some of the differences are illuminating and in the brief comparison which follows (which is indebted to that of G.H.V.Bunt)[154] I have focused on these in particular. Bunt notes that the English poet omits most of the geographical and (pseudo) historical source material (which, as he points out, would have seemed irrelevant to an English audience 150 years later than the original French one), the reflective and philosophical passages, and reduces much of the description, particularly of emotion and of battles. Conversely he elaborates certain other scenes, the most renowned being that where William and Melior cross the Straits of Messina by ship. The bare-legged boy who, remaining in the boat when the other sailors pursue the fleeing werewolf, hits Melior so that she falls and must be rescued by William, is the addition of the English author.[155] The English author also makes minor changes in characterisation. Alisaundrine is a sorceress in the English version which explains the cause of William's dreams of Melior, while in the French she has no magical powers and the dreams simply occur. Bunt, following Max Kaluža, seems to accept that such

[153] Bunt, p.15 (on the dating of the English poem); pp.20-21 (on the dating of the French poem); pp.17-18 (on discussion of the intended audience of the romance).

[154] Bunt, pp.30-36. Bunt draws heavily on two studies which I have not seen: Max Kaluža, 'Das mittelenglische gedicht *William of Palerne* und seine französische quelle', *Englische Studien*, 4 (1881), 196-287; and Norman Toby Simms, '*William of Palerne*: A New Edition' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Washington University, St Louis, 1969).

[155] Kaluža, apparently, acknowledges that this incident may be derived from a lost intermediate French source, although he thinks it unlikely (Bunt, p.33).

changes illustrate a concern to give credible motivation to characters and to give a plausible account of events. This results also in the addition of such small details as Alisaundrine's suggestion that the lovers should elope as bears since these animals resemble man the most (1692-94). Kaluža finds that the tendency of the English poet is to concentrate on the major characters and to pay less attention to the minor ones. Especial prominence is given to William's exemplary qualities. On the other hand, the treatment of some minor characters is expanded: for example the colliers overheard by the lovers at Benvento are more individualised. Finally, Kaluža holds the view with which many critics have subsequently agreed, that the French romance is far superior to the English in the treatment of love, and he criticises the English poet's emphasis on external, social considerations rather than inner feelings of the heart.

This résumé of some of the differences between the two versions of the romance is necessarily brief and selective but even so it would suggest that William the translator brought an independent, creative spirit to bear on his material. The argument of this study rests to some degree on elements of the English romance which differ from the French, suggesting that William saw potential in the material which the French romancer missed, or ignored since his concerns were different.

Despite the differences between the two versions, the English poet has followed closely the story in his source, *Guillaume de Palerne* (*Guillaume*).[156] Earlier scholarship has made extensive investigation of the French *Guillaume* which happily remains relevant to the English *William*.

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[156] No-one, to my knowledge, has argued the case for there having been an intermediate French source; it is generally accepted that the twelfth century *Guillaume de Palerne* (*Guillaume*) is the source of the English version.

Irene Pettit McKeehan, in 1926, favoured a view of *Guillaume* as a composite of folktales, unlike previous scholars who, as McKeehan points out, seemed to imply a single source for the romance.[157] McKeehan contends that *Guillaume* was constructed from several different sources in such a way as to please Countess Yolande de Hainalt, the poem's patroness, and her court.[158] She considers that it is built around the nucleus of the 'Fair Unknown', 'the story of a lost prince, who, as a "fair unknown", falls in love with an emperor's daughter, rescues his mother from an enemy, and is eventually restored to his rights.' This pattern can readily be seen in *William*. To this is amalgamated the 'Wolf's Fosterling' motif and the 'Celtic Werewolf's Tale'.[159]

The 'Wolf's Fosterling' motif, in which a child is stolen and reared by a wolf was not, McKeehan suggests, originally a part of the 'Fair Unknown' tale but became linked to it, probably before the French poet took up the material. Charles W. Dunn examines this combination in detail, calling it the 'Romulus Type' and listing its analogues.[160] To summarise: the hero is not wanted when an infant or a child because of an unfavourable omen, an unusual birth or some rivalry, and he is exposed on the sea or in a deserted land. He is rescued by an animal or supernatural creature who shelters and feeds him. Later he is found by country people who care for him for a while before he is adopted by royalty. Finally he attains fame and rights the wrongs done him at birth.[161] William is not exposed (although he leaves home because of rivalry for the throne) and he is

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[157] Whether or not the romance has a single source as it implies (*Guillaume de Palerne*, ed. by Henri Michelant (Paris: Société des Anciens Textes Français, 1876), around lines 9658-59), it is an amalgamation of various folktales.

[158] Irene Pettit McKeehan, '*Guillaume de Palerne*: A Medieval "Best Seller"', *PMLA,* 41 (1926), 785-809 (p.788).

[159] McKeehan, p.789.

[160] Charles W. Dunn, *The Foundling and the Werwolf: A Literary-Historical Study of 'Guillaume de Palerne'*, University of Toronto Department of English Studies and Texts, 8 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960), pp.88-111.

[161] Dunn, *The Foundling*, p.88.

cared for by an enchanted man rather than a bona fide wild animal, but otherwise the 'Romulus' pattern can be traced in *William* with William as the hero at its centre.[162]

McKeehan's 'Celtic Werewolf's Tale' turns out to be what George Kittredge, in a detailed study of 1903, named the 'Werewolf's Tale'.[163] Whilst showing that it was taken up in Ireland before passing to Brittany, in both contaminated and uncontaminated form, to cast its influence on French literature, Kittredge did not insist on a Celtic origin for the tale. In the 'Werewolf's Tale', he says, 'a man is a natural werewolf, forced to spend a part of his time in wolfish shape. His wife, who has a lover, learns his secret and compels him to remain in his beast-form by removing from his control the means of disenchantment. The wolf commits great depredations. A hunt is organised, and he makes his submission to the king, who disenchants him. The wife and her lover are punished. Presumably the werewolf is freed from his curse forever.'[164] It is Kittredge's contention that this tale, in uncontaminated form, was the source for Marie de France's *Lai de Bisclavret* that – combined with the 'Fairy Wife' tale –later became the source for the *Lai de Melion*. Kittredge made no firm connection between *Guillaume* and the 'Werewolf's Tale':[165] this was left to later scholars. They made it clear that *Guillaume* bears many similarities to Kittredge's group of werewolf stories; also that the folktale influences on the romance are numerous and varied, far more so than can be enumerated here.[166]

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[162] It seems that Nicola Zingarelli, in1907, was the first to point out the parallel between the rescue of Guillaume by the werewolf and the fostering of Romulus and Remus by a wolf (Dunn, *The Foundling*, pp.86-87).

[163] George L. Kittredge, 'Arthur and Gorlagon', *Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature*, 8 (1903), 149 – 275.

[164] Ibid., p.261.

[165] Ibid., p.184.

[166] See for instance McKeehan, pp.797-802; Hibbard, pp.218-20.

In *William* the outline of the 'Werewolf's Tale' is clear, although it differs in two main ways from the analogues. Here the villain is Alphonse's stepmother and not his wife,[167] and he does not commit depredations as in the folktale. Nonetheless, Alphonse is not, as it were, a natural werewolf and is forced to remain in beast form; he is hunted and he does submit to a king, or rather two kings in fact, both of whom contribute to his disenchantment.[168] The villain is not punished.[169]

Both the 'Romulus Tale' and the 'Werewolf's Tale' follow the generalised structural pattern of the fairytale as Propp suggested it. To recap, the sequence begins with an initial stable situation into which an element of misfortune is introduced (often something is lacking or a villainous act occurs) which results in the hero leaving home. The hero may be tested by a potential donor, and subsequently he acquires the use of a magical agent or helper. He arrives at the place where is the object of his search (if he is a seeker-hero) and struggles with the villain whom he defeats. The initial misfortune is liquidated and the hero returns home. He may be pursued and then rescued and his return home occurs while he is in flight. He may arrive home unrecognised and perform some sort of task which precedes his recognition of and by his family and the exposure of the villain. After this the hero is given a new appearance and the villain punished. The hero marries and ascends the throne.

The 'Romulus Tale' in *William* adheres to the general Proppian structure as follows. The events leading to the child leaving home constitute the initial misfortune: William's uncle plans to usurp the throne and in consequence William is abducted by the

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[167] McKeehan suggests that the author of *Guillaume* probably introduced the change (p.797).

[168] William is already king of Palerne when the werewolf makes supplication to him although at the time no-one but the werewolf knows it. The role of the folktale king to whom the werewolf makes supplication is also played by the Spanish king, since he also plays a part in enabling the werewolf's disenchantment.

[169] Kittredge argues that the fact that the guilty wife (here a step-mother) is not always punished derives from the folktale, 'The Fairy Wife', where the adulterous fées are not punished (p.189). 'The Fairy Wife' is outlined on p.261.

werewolf. Thus he acquires a magical helper (although that he is not a villain is not immediately apparent) for as foster parent the werewolf fulfils this role. The sequence of successive foster parents constitutes a trebling of the help which the magic helper gives, with a different helper each time: the hero is given protection and provision. Structurally they are part of one function.

Eventually, with the help of the werewolf, William arrives home and rights the wrongs done him at birth. This involves him being pursued by his enemies and rescued by the werewolf (a trebled pair of functions); his arrival home unrecognised; his fulfilling the task of ridding Palerne of the Spanish; the subsequent disclosure of his identity and exposure of the villains; his marriage, and ascent to the throne which is rightfully his.

The 'Werewolf's Tale' in *William* also manifests the generalised Proppian fairytale structure. The hero leaves home as a result of the initial villainy: Alphonse's stepmother casts a seemingly irreversible spell over her stepson. The next function which occurs is the pursuit of the hero (as werewolf) which happens several times during his service to William. Alphonse's arrival at Palerne, unrecognised, is the equivalent of the hero's arrival home since that is where his father is. He makes supplication to the Spanish king and is disenchanted. The process of his social reinstatement involves the functions of his being recognised, the villain exposed, his receipt of a new appearance (his human form), and his subsequent marriage and ascent of the Spanish throne.

The role of helper in these stories is an interesting one for in the werewolf's case in particular it follows closely the requirements of the role as outlined by Propp: he is an animal, appearing suddenly and of his own volition to aid William, in the manner of

many other fairytale helpers; his rescue of William from pursuit and his leading him from one kingdom to another accords with the 'sphere of action' of his fairytale counterpart.[170]

It is interesting too that William himself takes on certain aspects of the role of helper in relation to Alphonse, the hero of the 'Werewolf's Tale'. William saves the werewolf-hero from pursuit (4010-34) and is instrumental in his transfiguration to human form, for it is he who makes the Spanish queen disenchant Alphonse. William's role as helper, however, has none of the mysterious magic of Alphonse's. There are no sudden or unexpected appearances or departures: William's actions are rationalised by his suspicions that the werewolf has human qualities.

In *William* then, there are two distinct Proppian fairytale structures united to form one such structure. The 'Werewolf's Tale' is subsumed by the 'Romulus Tale' giving William the status of hero of the romance.[171] Although Alphonse is the hero of the fairytale structure which centres on him, the circumstances surrounding his leaving home are mentioned only as an 'aside' (109-58) and it is only those of his adventures in which he aids William which receive attention. Consequently, until he makes supplication to William, Alphonse appears largely as a helpful animal – like both a fairytale helper and other helpful animals in romance. Only later do we realise that the

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[170] Propp, pp.43-45 and 79. The 'sphere of action of the helper' is: 'the spatial transference of the hero; liquidation of misfortune or lack; rescue from pursuit; the solution of difficult tasks; transfiguration of the hero' (p.79). It seems that Wilhelm Hertz, in 1862, was the first to point out the similarity between the werewolf and the helpful animals of folktale (Dunn, *The Foundling*, p.86).

[171] In the past some scholars have considered Alphonse to be the chief hero, or indeed, the only hero of the romance, for example, Hibbard, p.217; K.W. Tibbals, 'Elements of Magic in the Romance of *William of Palerne*', *Modern Philology*, 1 (1904), 355-71 (p.359); W.H. Schofield, *English Literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer* (London: Macmillan, 1906), p.312. However, as McKeehan points out, William dominates by far the greater narrative space while we often lose sight of Alphonse completely, sometimes for long periods. A hero so little commanding our attention would be out of character with those in most other traditional stories like the medieval romances (p.793). Furthermore, since this is a genre where the hero is always the best of men it is no accident that Alphonse is never superior to William. For example, when Alphonse is disenchanted he becomes:
    as fair, as fetys, and als freli schapen,
as any man upon mold miȝt on devise;
was non fairre in world but William allone (4435-37).

sequence of events which pertain to Alphonse as hero is to be followed through to the end according to the traditional fairytale pattern.

The creator of the first *William* poem, then, uses traditional material with some originality, while at the same time he does not stray from the conventional traditional structure he finds in his source. The reduction of contemplative and descriptive passages make the bones of the traditional structure more apparent. Although interesting in itself, the significance of this lies in its relation to other fairytale aspects of the poem, such as the identification motifs. To recap, at the heart of the identification motif is the confusion of identities that arises, or may arise, when appearance and reality do not correspond. The identification motifs on which I intend to concentrate here are 'disguise as an animal' (William and Melior are disguised as bears and then as deer; William's mother is disguised as a deer); 'transformation into animal form' (Alphonse becomes a werewolf); the 'foster parent' motif (William is reared by the werewolf, the cowherd, the emperor of Rome). In these motifs the external appearance or circumstances of the subject do not correspond to his actual status. This discrepancy is resolved in the 'family reunion' motif. Appearance is a principal means of identification: William's costly clothing identifies him as a king's son to the cowherd who discovers him in the forest, indicating his social rank if not his family.

The theme of appearance and its relation to reality dominates the poem: the impetus to progress from discrepancy to correspondence between the two is the central dynamic force of the narrative, impelling its movement forwards. This is a movement implicit in the fairytale structure, corresponding to the underlying movement from discord to harmony. There is a basic human need for order and stability expressed in this pattern

which is reflected in the satisfaction provoked at the end of the sequence by the resolution of the difficulties.

The initial discrepancy between appearance and reality occurs when William appears to be a nameless child abandoned in the forest but is in reality a prince. Soon afterwards we realise that Alphonse, who appears to be a werewolf, is in fact also a prince. The true identity of both remains, within the story, unknown. The discrepancy is resolved only when the physical appearance and circumstances of each corresponds to their actual social status, and only then can correct identification of them be made. The direct result of this is a family reunion: the initial lack is liquidated, the imbalance rectified, order restored. The audience, who is aware from early on of the true identities of the two princes, knows throughout that the key to the restoration of harmony is the revelation of their identities within the story.

Personal identity in *William* is a matter of what is outwardly realised and what conforms to a particular world view in which there is a clearly defined system of correspondence between appearance and reality. William's identity is a matter of his behaviour, dress and physique, which are of the type which accords with his social status. This derives from his social origin, the only precise indication of which is his name. None of the characters has an individualised psychology and the idiosyncratic behaviour arising from it; identity carries no implication of psychological individuality.[172]

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[172] This statement must be qualified by the observation that there is some attention given to inner feeling in the descriptions of the feelings of William and Melior during the awakening of their love for one another. But these are highly conventional, the earliest such passages in medieval literature occurring in the twelfth-century Anglo-Norman *Eneas* and deriving from Ovid. While they are evidence of a shift towards psychological particularisation, they convey common rather than idiosyncratic emotion in a stylised way and so do not alter the general nature of the characterisation.

The world which shapes William himself could not be other than upper class, clearly defined by appearance and behaviour. William's clothing is a sign of his social status to the cowherd who finds him in the forest:

> þerfore trewly as tyt he told hym þe soþe,
>
> how he him fond in þat forest þere fast biside,
>
> cloþed in comly cloþing for any kinges sone (292-94).

His manners and physical features are a further indication of his status. This time it is the emperor speaking:

> for lelly me þinkes,
>
> bi his menskful maneres and his manhede,
>
> þat he is kome of god kin (430-32).

That William's noble qualities are innate, his instinctive behaviour with the herdschildren shows. Naturally skilled at hunting, he is generous, well-mannered, and a natural leader:

> and bliþe was eche a barn ho best miȝt him plese
>
> and folwe him for his fredom and for his faire þewes;

and

> so kynde and so curteys comsed he þere
>
> þat alle ledes him lovede þat loked on him ones,
>
> and blesseden þat him bare and brouȝt into þis worlde,
>
> so moche manhed and murþe schewed þat child evere (188-89; 194-97).

In this system outward beauty, refined behaviour, physical prowess, and gentle birth all belong naturally together and earn social approbation. And as in fairytale, identity is a matter of role.

The nature of this code of behaviour is encapsulated in the cowherd's advice, given to William before he leaves for the imperial court:

> 'þou swete sone, seþþe þou schalt hennes wende,
>
> whanne þou komest to kourt, among þe kete lordes,
>
> and knowest alle þe kuþþes þat to kourt langes,
>
> bere þe boxumly and bonure, þat ich burn þe love;
>
> be meke and mesurabul, nouȝt of many wordes;
>
> be no tellere of talis, but trewe to þi lord;
>
> and prestely for pore men profer þe ever
>
> for hem to rekene wiþ þe riche in riȝt and in skille.
>
> Be feiȝtful and fre and ever of faire speche,
>
> and servisabul to þe simple so as to þe riche,
>
> and felawe in faire manere, as falles for þi state;
>
> so schaltow gete Goddes love and alle gode mennes.
>
> Leve sone, þis lessoun me lerde my fader,
>
> þat knew of kourt þe þewes, for kourteour was he long [. . .]' (329-42).

It is clear that this pattern of behaviour is a courtly ideal felt to be ordained by God, and that adherence to it will reward the individual with harmonious social integration. This is shown to be the case as we have already seen (194-97). Furthermore, when William

acts according to the precepts of his rank, there are positive benefits for all. William's concern for justice, for example, is for the communal good, and William himself reaps popularity as a reward. This is as it should be:

> þan William wiżtli, as a wis king schold,
>
> þes among þe puple he put to þe reaume,
>
> aleide alle luþer lawes þat long hadde ben used,
>
> and gart holde þe gode, and gaf mo newe
>
> þat profitabul to þe puple were proved and hold,
>
> so þat never Cristen king kaużt more love
>
> þan William dede in a wile, wite þe for soþe (5238-44).

So this is an ideal at the heart of which lies the social good as much as that of the individual: it is an ideal by which the two are harmonised.

The cowherd's speech, despite his low social status, has been thought to be courteous. Courtesy has proved notoriously difficult to define, encompassing a wide spectrum of meaning. Usage ranges from that of the courtesy books, where the finer details of communal behaviour (particularly table manners) are catalogued, to its property of moral sense, as in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. W.O. Evans has suggested that 'the tone of the word's central import in English [is] action intended to please or help others, or the spirit from which it springs'.[173] In this sense courtesy informs William's actions, revealing itself in his generosity, his good manners, his gratitude towards his foster parents, his loyalty to the werewolf, the mercy with which he treats his vanquished foes and wrongdoers, as well as the wisdom and justice of his leadership.

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[173] W. O. Evans, '"Cortaysye" in Middle English', *Mediaeval Studies,* 29 (1967), 143-57 (p.143).

For William to be fully integrated into this society – that is for him to achieve his full kingly potential so that his behaviour is of maximum benefit to society and he receives its fullest approbation in return – the implicit argument of the story is that William must know his precise social origin. He can receive only partial integration without this knowledge. This is most obvious when, although he is (by imperial admission), 'þe worþiest' (2077) in the land, he cannot marry the emperor's daughter because he does not know his lineage:

> ac I nel namore
>
> leie mi love so heiże mi ladi for to wilne,
>
> þoużh it nere for nouż [t] elles but for non in erþe
>
> no wot I never wisseli of whom I am come (718-21).

He goes on to lament that since he has no family in the land he cannot afford to risk the emperor's wrath. Clearly, identity is the pre-requisite for full social integration.

With such a close system of correspondence, appearance may take on a symbolic role. If fine clothing and a beautiful physique indicate gentility, then ugliness suggests ungentle behaviour and the absence of social integration. In *William* those who take on the appearance of wolf and bear, in appearance far from the ideal of human beauty, also take on some obvious aspects of animal behaviour which are similarly far from the human ideal and which result for humans in social alienation. These wolf and bear qualities are nevertheless traits naturally found in the human individual, most markedly through the aggressive instinct and sexual love. Common to all men, the resulting behaviour must be modified according to the spirit of courtesy in order to achieve social

harmony. It is not desirable that they be repressed completely, since both aggression and sexual love are necessary to the stability and continuation of society, but they must be channelled away from the purely selfish service of the satisfaction of the individual's instincts and into the service of the communal good. As the age of the hero in *William* suggests, this process takes place as a child grows up and its completion, which allows social integration, is a mark of maturity.

When a character takes on the appearance of an animal, he demonstrates an imbalance of qualities: his behaviour is dominated by animal qualities. The werewolf's main qualities are his wolfish cunning, his physical stamina and energy. Of course the mind of a human being remains beneath it all, and the poet never forgets the human component, always referring to Alphonse as a 'werewolf' rather than simply a 'wolf' (as far as we know, since the first three folios of the manuscript are missing), and calling him the 'witti' werewolf with great regularity. For the moment however we concentrate on Alphonse's wolfishness. Once enchanted, but for his wit, the poet tells us that he is completely wolflike:

> his witt welt he after as well as tofore,
>
> but lelly oþer likenes þat longeþ to mankynne,
>
> but a wilde werwolf, ne walt he never after (142-44).

He demonstrates both his cunning and energy when he deflects the hunt from the eloping lovers on several occasions, and his wolfishness is further apparent when he steals food for the lovers:

Þan fel þe chaunce þat a cherl fro chepingward com,

and bar bred in a bagge and fair bouf wel sode;

þe werwolf ful wiżtli went to him evene

wiþ a rude roring, as he him rende wold,

and braid him doun be þe brest bolstraużt to þe erþe.

Þe cherl wende ful wel have went to deþe,

and harde wiþ herte to God þanne he prayde

to aschape schaþles fram þat schamful best.

He brak up fro þat beste and bigan to flene

As hard has he miżt, his liif for to save (1848-57).

Fear of wolves is age-old, probably deriving from the fact that they are formidable predators, large and intelligent, often in direct competition with man. Yet stories would generally have it that werewolves are particularly to be feared. We are told in Marie de France's *Bisclavret*, dating from the last third of the twelfth century.

[. . .] sovent suleit avenir,

Humes plusurs garual devindrent

E es boscages meisun tindrent.

Garualf, c[eo] est beste salvage:

Tant cum il est en cele rage,

Hummes devure, grant mal fait,

Es granz forez converse e vait (6-12).[174]

Another story, recorded in Latin in Wales around two hundred years later charts the equally horrific depredations of another werewolf: *Arthur and Gorlagon* in the late

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[174] *Marie de France: Lais*, ed. by Alfred Ewert (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978), pp.49-57. The anonymous *Lai de Melion*, from the early thirteenth century, also concerns a ravening werewolf. Bunt summarises *Melion* and *Bisclavret*, pp.103-04.

fourteenth century MS Rawlinson B149. This werewolf disembowels his (human) victims, or tears them limb from limb.[175]

Not surprisingly, then, the churl fears and expects the worst. But in this case Alphonse's apparent ferocity is a cunning use by him of his animal resources. Relying on the fearful reputation of both wolves and werewolves, he swoops down on the unfortunate peasant as if he would kill him, and this has the desired effect: the peasant flees, leaving behind his provender, securing which was the werewolf's whole intention. In fact there is a light-hearted humour in this passage, albeit at the expense of the hapless churl; the sort of humour that makes a child jump from a darkened corner to frighten an unsuspecting passer-by. Although it is well within his power the werewolf never, in fact, kills or hurts anyone. The only time when we see him truly murderous is when he attacks the woman who has wronged him, and this may be seen not as bloodlust, but a demonstration of just anger.

Alphonse is the most sympathetically treated of all werewolves in the tradition. In other variants of the 'Werewolf's Tale', 'the protagonist, when transformed into a werwolf [sic], takes on a more ravenous nature than that of the wolf itself [. . .]'.[176] Some sympathy may be enlisted for the werewolf, but not by reducing the ferocity of its nature.[177] In this respect the treatment of Alphonse is the exception rather than the rule.[178] The audience, like the churl, would expect the werewolf to be savage, and the fact that his actual behaviour does not meet those expectations only points up its

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[175] 'Arthur and Gorlagon', translated by Frank A. Milne, with notes by Alfred Nutt, *Folklore,* 15 (1904), 40-67. The story is reproduced in *A Lycanthropy Reader: Werewolves in Western Culture*, ed. by Charlotte F. Otten (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1986), pp.234 – 50.

[176] Dunn, *The Foundling*, p.117.

[177] As Kittredge notes (p.172), the behaviour of the wife and her reasons for ensuring that her husband remains in wolf form are usually made inexcusable, thus enlisting sympathy for the werewolf.

[178] Many scholars note this, for example, Dunn, *The Foundling*, p.117; Kirby Flower Smith, 'An Historical Study of the Werwolf in Literature', *PMLA*, 9 (1894), 1-14 (p.13); Tibbals, p.360.

extraordinary nature. In general, werewolves stand for aggression, ferocity, strength and cunning, but the symbolic power of Alphonse the werewolf in particular is different because the romancer combines the two aspects of werewolf lore which derive from both of his main folktale analogues: from the 'Werewolf's Tale' comes the werewolf as cunning, strong, aggressive; from the 'Romulus Tale' comes the werewolf as provider and protector. The combination is not incidental for in *William* the werewolf represents energy, cunning, endurance, assertiveness (which I shall sum up by the term "aggression"), all in the loyal service of a just cause, here the protection of a wronged child and true lover.

The defining qualities of Alphonse the werewolf are quite different from those of William which are those courtly virtues which are apparent even in William's childish behaviour. When Alphonse is disenchanted and takes on a manly form, he shows that he has the qualities of William within him, and he does this by receiving his clothes and knighthood from William. When she has restored Alphonse to human form, the Spanish queen asks him,

> 'what gom wol że þat żou give żour garnemens nouþe?
>
> Że ne tok never, as I trowe, of kniżthod þe hordere' (4460-61).

Alphonse has no doubts; it is William:

> 'I wol take myn atir and þat trie ordere
>
> of þe worþiest weiż þat weldes now live';

and

> 'Mi tir of him wol ich take and þat trie order,

and love him as mi lege lord al mi lif-time' (4465-66; 4473-74).

Once attired, Alphonse emerges in public both 'hendli and faire' (4545). The close relation between clothing and status is indicated by the frequent repetition of words denoting clothing and knighthood. In receiving his clothes and his knighthood from William, Alphonse receives, both literally and symbolically, his identity. He now has the characteristics of the perfect knight, a combination of the qualities which previously dominated both him and William separately: he is brave and strong, dauntless and loyal in the service of a just cause, but now he is courteous and beautiful too.

William, for his part, remedies the imbalance in his own character (the nature of which will become apparent in the following pages) by taking on the essential features of the werewolf. At the literal level he chooses for his coat of arms the emblem of a werewolf, thereby taking from Alphonse, both literally and symbolically, part of his identity:

> 'Bi Crist, madame,' sede þe kniżt, 'I coveyte noużt elles
>
> but þat I have a god schel of gold graiþed clene,
>
> and wel and faire wiþinne a werwolf depeynted,
>
> þat be hidous and huge, to have alle his riżtes,
>
> of þe covenablest colour to knowe in þe feld;
>
> oþer armes al my lif atteli never have' (3215-20).

By this emblem William will be identifiable, and indeed, this is the case in the ensuing battle:

> whan þe stiwardes newe saw William come,

bi þe werwolf in his scheld wel he him knewe (3433-34).

William now has, like Alphonse, all the qualities of the perfect knight. Besides being 'hendli and faire' (4545) too, he fights in a just cause (the battle against the Spaniards) with a wolf-like ferocity which others are powerless to resist:

but William as a wod man was ever here and þere,

and leide on swiche livere, leve me forsoþe,

þat his daies were don þat of him hent a dent (3821-23).

The objection may well be raised that William fought perfectly well in the battle against the Saxons and therefore had no need of further aggressive qualities. Twice in his life, however, he does have such a need: when he is a young child, and when he falls in love. At both of these times William has need of the werewolf to look after him.

To take the last first: because he is in love William finds himself disguised as a bear. Initially it seems unlikely that a bear would need help from a werewolf; William and Melior, dressed as bears, have a savage and frightening appearance. Alisaundrine tells Melior:

'że arn so grisli a gost a gom on to loke,

þat I nold for al þe god þat ever God made

abide żou in a brod weie bi a large mile,

so breme a wilde bere że biseme nowþe!' (1730-33).

The terrifying appearance of the bear-lovers, which seems to be at least part of the reason for choosing the bearskins as disguise (1681-87), and which is emphasised initially, is seen to be effective in helping the lovers escape. A Greek, mistaking them for real bears as they escape through the garden, flees in terror from them, thinking they would 'have mad of him mete and murþered him to deþe' (1774; also 2160-63).

But in fact the bear-lovers shun society, even in times of need. Indeed, in the light of Alisaundrine's description of Melior which is echoed later by Melior when she sees William in his bearskin (1741-44), the behaviour of the bears is neither as aggressive nor as resourceful as we might expect. Soon after their escape from the palace we see them lying asleep in each other's arms (2237-38); a touching image of passivity and vulnerability in a fragile world which nothing disturbs. While the world rages around them they are oblivious: the hunt rushes by,

> and left þe loveli white beres ligge in here rest,
>
> þat wisten no þing of þis werk þat was hem aboute (2194-95).

Like most lovers in medieval literature, the bear-lovers live only for each other during at least the first stages of romantic love: lovers inhabit for a time an enclosed, private world. The poet approves this: the tone is light, amused, and generally sympathetic. Words like 'semli' (1910; 2185; 2245), and 'loveli' (2194; 2246) surround the bears when the poet is speaking of them in his own voice, in contrast with the unfriendly view held of them by most of the poem's characters. Audiences probably feel little resistance to being drawn into a sympathetic view of the bears. The duties required by convention, such as the denial of personal wishes in obedience to a parent which Melior's prospective marriage to the Prince of Greece would involve, are commonly felt to be

extremely weighty by the young in particular, and it is easy for those of any age, either young or young once, to identify with William and Melior and to want them to succeed in their kick over the traces.

The lovers' elopement removes them from worldly affairs. For a man, whose sphere of action traditionally includes politics, war and leadership, the obsessive, excluding nature of sexual love may reduce the efficacy of his social role to the point where he is no longer socially useful. We see this phenomenon in the love-sickness which keeps William in his bed and makes him 'certes, so ille, / þat I leve my lif last nouȝt til tomorwe' (1500-01).[179] For a woman romantic love is not as seriously debilitating since the sphere of her activity in the world is conventionally limited to domestic matters; it may, though, as for Melior, reduce her willingness to be used as a pawn in the male scheme of things.

At its most extreme, however, the mutual inwardlookingness of lovers is a social threat. When William and Melior elope, they strike a potentially harmful blow to the well-being of society. The emperor's wrathful distress on discovering the fact of the elopement is formidable:

> þan brayde he braynwod and alle his bakkes rente,
>
> his berde and his briȝt fax for bale he totwiȝt,
>
> and swowned sixe siþe for sorwe and for schame
>
> þat fals he schold be founde; ful ofte he seide, 'Allas!'
>
> and banned bitterli þe time þat he was on live (2096-2100).

---

[179] In medieval medical books love sickness was a disease recognisable by certain debilitating characteristics (see John Livingston Lowes, 'The Loveres Maladye of Hereos', *Modern Philology*, 11 (1913-14), 491-225). Detachment from worldly affairs as a result of love is not exclusive to *William*: see for example the French romance, Chrétien's *Eric et Enide*.

The lovers, and William in particular because he is a man, have jeopardised the emperor's reputation as a man who keeps his word:

> ' for his dedes today I am undo for ever!
>
> Eche frek for þis fare false wol me hold,
>
> and þe Grewes for gremþe ginneþ on me werre,
>
> and eche weiȝh schal wite þat þe wrong is myne!' (2078 – 81).

This episode illustrates the direct line connecting individual behaviour (and especially the importance of keeping promises) with social stability. Melior's elopement means that the emperor cannot give her, as promised, to the Greek prince; a breach of faith which could lead to Greek retaliation in the shape of war. In the end the threat is averted because, while honour might seem to justify revenge, the emperor of Greece chooses to respond to what lies behind his Roman counterpart's failure to keep his word, realising that he is not motivated by ill intent but has been deceived (2117-42).[180].

Nonetheless, as might be expected from the seriousness of their misdeed, the lovers are alienated from society: they are hunted throughout the kingdom by

> swiche an host to take hem tweie,
>
> þat never burn to no bataile brouȝt swiche a puple (2147-48).

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[180] Another instance in which this romance prefers restraint to bloody revenge is where William restrains the werewolf from killing his stepmother .

It is intended that William shall meet a horrible death (2086); the worst punishment society can inflict. In the poem none but Alisaundrine and the werewolf are sympathetic to their cause.[181]

Lovers, then, threaten the communal good. But from another point of view they are harmless, wanting only to be left alone to enjoy their love. The bear-lovers, apparently ferocious but actually passive, epitomise this paradox. As he does with the werewolf, the poet creates with the bears a gap between appearance and reality to set up expectations of savagery which are not met in actual behaviour.

So how, given its inward-looking nature and the weight of disapproval it faces, does love survive? In *William* it is the werewolf's close attention, his assertiveness, resourcefulness and stamina which enable the lovers to live happily ever after. It is he who diverts the hunt from the bears while they sleep and who provides them with food and drink, for even lovers must eat; and it is the werewolf who leads the lovers to Palerne where they find safety, recognition and, eventually, can marry.

Clearly there is an aggressive element to romantic love necessary for its survival, but in this story it is embodied in a character separate from that of the lover himself, William. The bear-lovers do very little themselves at the beginning to ensure the success of their venture except walk. This situation is very different to that near the end of the romance where William is urging his men on against the Spanish with the words,

'Eche lud þenk on his lemman, and for hire love so fiżt,

to winne worchip þerwiþ in worlde for evermore' (3370-71).

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[181] The sergeants who go to arrest William are potentially sympathetic but this does not extend to active help, and they are forced to act for the emperor (*William*, lines 2087-93).

Here, in the defence of a just cause, William is making an active contribution to the well-being of society. Love and aggression are still closely linked, but now love inspires aggression in the cause of social good by becoming the means by which the individual attains 'worchip'. Through love, the interests of the individual become compatible with the common good. It is significant that at this stage William appears, both in his dress and in his living conditions, to be a man of the status which he actually is. He has taken the werewolf emblem on his shield, and the qualities of the werewolf (aggression directed to promote a worthy cause) within himself. This, like his more refined qualities, is a prerequisite for knighthood and the full integration of the individual into society.

The lovers' isolation is part banishment, part perceived banishment. Their return to social integration finds ultimate expression in marriage, the socially acceptable outlet for sexual love. But before marriage can take place, the lovers have to be perceived (symbolically) to be human. The change from bear state to human does not occur suddenly: there is an intermediate stage – the deer state, wildly unrealistic as this seems.

Their disguise as deer symbolises the lovers' progression towards being fully human – symbolically as well as literally. That they are closer to this as deer than they were as bears is suggested in several ways:

> þe skinnes sat saddeli sowed to hem boþe,
>
> as hit hade ben on þe beste þat hit growed.
>
> And better þei semed þan to siʒt semliche hertes,
>
> þan þei semed before, beres whan þei were,

so justili on eþer of hem were joyned þe skinnes (2592-96).

The fact that the deerskins make the lovers look more like deer than the bearskins had made them resemble bears, suggests (since realistically this is unlikely) that as deer the lovers are closer to their natural states. In addition, the curious image of their hides cracking in the hot sun to reveal human clothes beneath (3033-34) suggests that their return to human form is imminent; and the ease with which the Sicilian queen disguises herself as a deer in order to approach the lovers, with her statement, 'I am swiche a best as że ben' (3133), is further evidence of the closeness of the deer and human states as symbol.

The behaviour of deer is less of a threat to society than that of bears, and this corresponds symbolically to the increasingly active and outward-looking behaviour of the lovers. As deer they no longer sleep as danger passes by, but await possible discovery in frightened anticipation. When they leave the ship after crossing the Strait of Messina they make a determined escape from the bare-legged boy, an incident which the English poet introduces. William shows the first signs of wanting to fight (since the elopement) just before he enters the deer state (2348-52), and significantly, the next occasion is shortly before he takes on a human appearance once more (3091-93).

Society's hostility towards the lovers eases accordingly, its ambivalence embodied in the exchange between two workmen which the fugitives overhear shortly before they don deerskins. While one collier wishes to gain the reward for their capture, the other is tolerant of them:

'What were þe þe beter nouż, þeiżh þe beris were here,

to do hem any duresse? Þei misdede þe never.

Mani hard hape han þei aschapet,

and so I hope þei schal żit, for al þi sori wille.

God for his grete miżt fram greves hem save,

and bring hem boþe wiþ blis þere þei be wold!' (2547-52).

The ambivalence which the two colliers represent was present earlier (see note 30), but a sympathetic view of the lovers only now begins to assert itself in terms of action. The pursuit becomes less urgent: the lovers are not followed to Palerne.

In this poem the deer state serves to represent that sort of love between people which may or may not be sexual, and the fact the queen of Sicily takes on the deer state suggests that it includes parental love. There is partial social alienation because any love between individuals is necessarily exclusive of others, but although its participants are marked off from the group, it is not in such a way that poses much of a social threat. As sexual love matures it loses its quality of obsessive infatuation and becomes increasingly susceptible to integration into the values of a harmonious community. Social acceptance of the lovers is apparent in Sicilian hospitality.

Although Melior, like William, dons a bearskin and is estranged from society, her case is different from William's because she is a woman. Her behaviour is, in one sense, the antithesis of William's, for when she is most under threat (that is when her love for William is threatened by marriage to the Greek prince), she is at her most active, while William under the greatest threat is at his most passive.[182] For Melior the elopement is an active response to the threat to her chastity which she wishes (and is honour bound)

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[182] H.L. Creek, 'Character in the Matter of England Romances', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 10 (1911), 429-52 (p.450, note 29), notes that Melior is active when in love while William is passive.

to preserve for her true lover. When they return to normal life and Melior's chastity is no longer under threat, she resumes her normal passive role.

The fact that William and Alphonse each take on the essential qualities of the other in order to become a perfect knight suggests that we may regard each of them as representing one aspect of a man; that is to say, they are a split hero. In support of this we can see that they are in fact similar in many ways. Each is the hero at the centre of a conventional sequence of events adhering to Propp's fairytale structure, and each takes on, at least in part, the role of a helper (as Propp defines it) to the other. Each is of royal birth and each is the victim of villainy involving wolves at an early stage in his life. Each grows up away from home and endures long periods during which his physical prowess and loyalty is tested; each proves his loyalty to the other. Each is, or appears to be, a man-beast for a time. Each is presumed drowned by his one remaining parent (3516; 4046), his enemies are eventually exposed, he is reunited with his family and he marries his princess.

As well as the experiences of the two princes being so similar, the stories of William and Alphonse are each dependent on the other for their resolution. William reaches Palerne only with the help of the werewolf and once there gives Alphonse his protection and arranges his disenchantment. Because of this Alphonse is able to disclose William's true identity. This interdependence is reflected in the structural interweaving of the two fairytale plots by which is created one such plot. During the initial sequence, for example, William is the victim of a villainous act (the abduction) which results in his leaving home. This is the conventional fairytale sequence. But by taking this villainous act from the hands of the real villain and putting it into those of the hero of the parallel fairytale plot, this second hero acts as helper in the first sequence and so the

two separate fairytale sequences begin to depend on each other for their forward movement; this reflects the interdependence of the two heroes.

The close relationship of the two heroes is further suggested by the patterned repetition of events. After each of the three battles with the Spanish the werewolf makes supplication, and the queen of Sicily comes close, in conversation with William, to discovering his true identity. The three incidents are obviously linked: that they occur together three times in succession puts it beyond doubt. Trebling is a prominent feature in this romance:[183] here, not only are three events grouped together, but the combination is repeated three times. The emphasis falls on the events in the final position for it is from these that the narrative progresses. In the first of the battles between the Sicilians and the Spanish the Spanish steward is killed, in the second their prince is captured, and likewise their king in the third. The removal of Sicilian enemies from the field in order of increasing social importance creates a sense of increasingly difficult obstacles being surmounted, but the outcome is not only the submission of the hero's enemies but the placing of the king of Spain in a position where the werewolf can reach him. Parallel to this the werewolf makes supplication twice to William and on the third and final occasion to the king of Spain, prompting the king to recall his lost son. Finally, running alongside both of these sequences, the queen of Sicily, on the first two occasions, tells William of her lost son and even thinks in her heart that William is he, but on the third occasion she calls him 'soverayn lord', telling him,

> 'I sette żou for no soudiour, but for soverayn lord
>
> to lede al þis lorldschip as żou likes ever!' (3954-55).

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[183] For example: the sequence of clothing donned by the lovers when they elope (bearskins, deerskins, fine garments); William's three foster parents (werewolf, cowherd, and emperor); the Sicilian queen sees the deer three times from the castle (in a dream, 2869-86, from a window, 2980-88, again from a window, 3029-66) before she brings them inside; there are three marriages (William marries Melior, Alphonse marries Florence, Alisaundrine marries Braundis).

For William all that remains for his true identity to be revealed is the disclosure of his name, for the lordship of Palerne which the queen has bestowed on him is already his birthright.

The structured repetition suggests and underlines the link between the werewolf's pleas, William's prowess in battle, and the disclosure of William's identity. Together, the repetition of the werewolf's supplication and William's prowess inch the werewolf's story to a position from where it can move forward (the Spanish king is brought into contact with the werewolf and in consequence remembers his enchanted son), while at the same time it becomes clear that William's own story can move no further towards resolution since the disclosure of his name is impossible while Alphonse remains in animal form. This echoes the way the werewolf brings William to Palerne but must then await developments in William's story before his own can progress further.[184]

The climax of the interdependence of William and Alphonse is when each takes from the other the means of his identity. After this their closeness is symbolised by their being brothers-in-law, but William's words to Alphonse after his disenchantment reveal an even closer link:

> 'but þer nis god under God þat I may gete ever,
>
> þat it schal redeli be þin at þin owne wille,
>
> ne no dede þat I may do þat ne schal be do sone;
>
> and love lelli what þou lovest al mi lif-dawes,

<hr>

184 A fairytale parallel is 'The Two Brothers', where the brothers are 'as like each other as two drops of water' (p.290). The worldly-wise brother rescues his more gullible sibling from a witch, but the gullible brother, who is the main hero, proves his dominance over his shrewder sibling by beheading him. Only then, when he has allowed the shrewd brother to be restored to life, do they achieve equilibrium.

and hate heiżeli in hert þat þou hate þenkest,

so þat my hert holli schal hold him at þi wille' (4716-21).

William's subjection of feeling, if taken literally, would unite the pair, making them think and act as one.

Although we may usefully regard William and Alphonse as a split hero, it is clear nonetheless that William is the chief hero. He dominates the narrative and is always superior to Alphonse (see note 20). Although the idea of the two young men as a split hero is supported by the lack of individual psychology in either of them, each of them has nonetheless particular qualities which mark them off from other characters, including each other. William's primary qualities are the refined ones of civilised society, while those of Alphonse the werewolf are aggressive and antisocial. In the ideal knight these coarse qualities are subordinate to the more genteel, since if unmitigated, they would threaten social stability. Alphonse, then, is a split of William. Similarly, Alisaundrine may be regarded as a split of Melior. Her magical skills have been given her by the English poet, equating her more closely with the magical fairytale helper than the confidante of the French version. Alisaundrine is to Melior what Alphonse is to William: she represents the aggressive and resourceful qualities of a woman which do not concur with the socially accepted view of a woman's role as compliant and passive. Nonetheless they are qualities necessary for her to assert her love and to defend her chastity for her true love; both just causes by the values of romance. Melior calls on these resources (externalised as Alisaundrine) to assert her love for William and to arrange their elopement.

For the purposes of analysis we may regard William as the creator of the story, which is not to confuse him with the raconteur, the poet. William creates in Alphonse the embodiment of his own aggressive nature, qualities necessary to a young person in search of his identity. William's slowness in recognising the human nature of the werewolf symbolises his own increasing awareness that the wolfish qualities are a necessary part of being human. When he first receives the werewolf's help he thinks it is brought by 'a wilde best, þat weldes no mynde' (1873), but gradually he comes to recognise the human qualities of the creature until at Palerne he says of him, 'he has mannes munde more þan we boþe' (4123). To borrow a modern phrase, the story shows William 'coming to terms' with his own aggression.

Aggression, in the sense that I have used it to include energy, endurance, cunning and assertiveness, is not condemned in the romance. Indeed, it is seen as necessary for survival in certain instances, and not only in defence of life and liberty against an unjust aggressor. It is required too for psychological well-being and the business of growing up. The first time that William needs the werewolf is when he is very young indeed. The werewolf abducts him from his home, symbolising William's breaking away from his parents and the beginning of his development into an adult.[185]

His progress, towards the ideal of the integrated adult is dramatised by the succession of his foster parents. Here again we see the rule of three in operation as William's foster parents come from increasingly high points on the social scale. The werewolf has a double symbolic function at this early stage: he is the aggressive nature of the child, but as the first of the foster parents he is also a father-figure, representing the aggressive qualities of a father which protect and provide for a child in early life. The combining

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[185] A comparable fairytale is 'Puss in Boots', where the cat represents the assertive aspect of the hero's nature and is instrumental in his getting a wife, wealth, and high social standing.

of father and hero-split into one symbolic figure, although only temporary, suggests the child's perception of their shared qualities as males. The necessity for fatherly protection of course declines as the child grows older, and under the care of the cowherd William begins to assert his own identity. Finally, under the care of the emperor of Rome, William is able to play an adult role, which is indicated by his prowess in fighting against the Saxons. His rise up the social scale by means of his foster parents symbolises his movement towards total integration into society. It is only the lack of a name that prevents William from playing his full role in that society.

It is when he falls in love, which is part of growing up, that the need to know his name becomes urgent because, as part of the social ideal, marriage is love's natural outcome. Marriage is only stable when each party is an adult confident of his or her own identity. For William, love is the means of finding his identity. It channels his aggressive instincts by giving them purpose, and allows him to achieve that balanced combination of characteristics which are the mark of the mature, socially integrated adult. There is a strong element of aggression in sexual love which is necessary for love to establish itself, but as social acceptance of that love grows, aggression becomes redundant and must be channelled elsewhere. Aggression is, however, a very necessary attribute of the fighting knight[186] and, harnessed by the refined values of a civilised society (which express themselves in concepts like courtesy, honour and chivalry), it is essential to its stability, for the chivalric knight defends society against the destabilising forces of selfish aggression. In this system, love becomes the stimulus for prowess, which in turn is the means by which the individual, in winning 'worchip', is ennobled.

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[186] There are strong links here with the rehabilitation of wild men into knighthood. Richard Bernheimer, in *Wild Men in the Middle Ages: A Study in Art, Sentiment, and Demonology* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1952), makes the following remarks: 'clearly the wild man's prowess and physical power make of him a potentially successful candidate for a career as a knight at court, where strength and courage are in high demand, even though the knight's love of strife, unlike the contentiousness of the wild man, is justified on highly ethical grounds. We find, in consequence, that stories about the transformation of the wild man into a knight carried considerable favor in the Middle Ages' (p.18).

Finally we come to the last nine hundred lines of the poem, lines which some feel to be extraneous or disproportionate to the whole. They are much taken up with 'welcomes, leave-takings, exhortations and recapitulations of the story' which may seem 'over-elaborate and little short of tedious'. But as Bunt, whose words these are, goes on to suggest, 'these passages may have held their very own attraction for their medieval audience because of their ritualistic insistence on the "right" courtly behaviour and courtly ethic'.[187] In fact the last part of the romance paints a picture of social harmony in which the fully integrated individual lives a life according to an ideal.

It is towards this picture that the plot has moved and from it that events in the first part take their significance. The subject of the poem is not only William's progress towards his role as the central figure of a society which is improved by his presence, but is the behaviour which that society condones. We should not think of the last lines as arbitrarily attached to a fairytale structure, lying beyond and extraneous to that structure's obvious and satisfying goal; rather, if it is seen as a juxtaposition of distinct parts, then *William* can be read both as expression of and a vehicle for the movement towards beauty and perfection.[188] It is a poem which reiterates and reinforces the values of its culture,[189] and in this fairytale is neither an intrusive nor extraneous element, but an integral, indeed essential, part. The broad structure, the trebling, the split characters, the symbolic fantasy of fairytale are taken up by and transformed into romance.

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[187] Bunt, p.110.

[188] Lüthi, *The Fairy Tale*, pp.34 – 39, discusses beauty as a motivating force in the fairytale.

[189] Bunt, following Wittig, makes this point with regard to the poem's style, in particular the ritualistic handling of the formal occasions, p.100.

CHAPTER 4

EMARÉ: DAUGHTER AND MOTHER

Whilst it is, like *William*, a Family Pattern romance with a strong interest in a child

growing up, *Emaré* is concerned with the female experience: the heroine's adventures

are motivated by her conditions as first daughter, then mother. A review of the critical

discussions of *Emaré* reveals several features remarkable for their command of critical

attention.   Whether it is seen primarily as a devotional, exemplary tale (Mehl,

Donovan), a tale of family relationships (Ramsey), or interesting for its origins and

analogues (Rickert, Speirs), of recurrent interest are the marked religious element, the

heroine's beauty and exemplary patience throughout her suffering, the teasing presence

of the supernatural, the heavy patterning, the high degree of repetition, the curious

cloth.[190]   Some of these features the romance shares with fairytale, and it is by

approaching the romance through the medium of fairytale that I hope, by accounting for

the poem's puzzles, to offer a more holistic view than has, to my knowledge, been done

before. I shall argue that *Emaré* skilfully uses fairytale narrative techniques and motifs

in particular ways to present an ideal of femininity, an ideal in which a woman's

perceived weaknesses are really strengths. They become strengths of society too, yet

are given expression through intimate relationships.   There are several layers of

meaning and they are all inter-related.   To stress the story's exemplary function is

simply to focus on one – the top, or literal – layer of meaning; a deeper level of meaning

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[190] Mehl, pp.135-40; Mortimer J. Donovan, *The Breton Lay: A Guide to Varieties* (London and Notre Dame Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), pp.216-25; Ramsey, pp.181-84; Rickert, especially pp.xxviii-xlviii; John Speirs, *Medieval English Poetry: the Non-Chaucerian Tradition* (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), pp.157-61. See also Mortimer J. Donovan, 'Middle English *Emaré* and the Cloth Worthily Wrought', in *The Learned and the Lewed: Studies in Chaucer and Medieval Literature*, Harvard English Studies, 5 (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974), pp.337-42; Mills, pp.xiii-xv, xxiii-xxvi; Velma Bourgeois Richmond, *The Popularity of Middle English Romance* (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1975), pp.61-65.

is provided by family relations which do not merely provide an impetus for the action but are crucial to the story's understanding of femininity.

There is much about *Emaré* that recalls fairytale, not least its preference for the external. Its interest lies in the heroine's skills, behaviour, appearance, and concrete experiences. Her inner qualities, like her fortitude, are revealed through her responses to situations.[191] Relationships too are suggested through action and reaction, like Emaré's seemingly motiveless initiation of reconciliation with her father at the end of the poem and his loving embrace in response. On the whole the romance prefers action to embellishment by description. It favours extremes: of character (the unscrupulous old queen); of event (not simply one stormy sea ordeal for the inadequately protected heroine, but two); of object (the mysterious, wonderful robe). The heroine herself is a 'heavy' character in that what happens to her is 'monumental' and 'memorable'.[192] Much of what happens to her strains belief: the sea journeys; the happy ending itself which is constituted by the arrival of the king in Rome and at the very house where his wife just happens to be staying, and the arrival soon after of the only other man with whom the heroine's relations need repair, her father.

Patterns of an expected kind are more important here than local causation and this contributes to the story's implausibility. The heroine falls foul of her father and is consequently cast out of her home onto the sea in a boat, eventually finding safety and kindness in a home on a foreign shore. Here she lives for a while under an assumed name, before being claimed as wife by a young king. These events are paralleled by her falling foul of her mother-in-law, being cast out again onto the sea, and again finding

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[191] This does not mean that the expression of internal feelings and thoughts is completely externalised; they are often at least named, for example: the emperor's desire to see his daughter (188-89), his lust for and designs on her (226-28), his remorse (280-82). But they are quickly translated into the appropriate action in each case. See note 4 for edition used.

[192] See Ong, p.70.

safety and kindness in a home on a foreign shore, where she lives for a while under an assumed name. Finally she is reconciled to the men who either perpetrated, or appeared to perpetrate, the injustice against her in each case (her father and her husband respectively). Acceptance of the probability of such strong parallels between events and characters) requires an acceptance of sustained coincidence as realistic which is not borne out by common experience. Characters are not autonomous but are part of the structural symmetry. Further plot symmetry arises from the encasement of one Family Pattern within another. The sense of patterning is enhanced by the episodic construction, but it is made particularly strong by the use of close verbal repetition in describing parallel episodes as in, for example, the two sea journeys (325-36 and 673-84).[193]

Emaré is a narrative which is given an obvious function as an exemplar (of which more later), but the symmetry of the plots – the parallel fates which the heroine suffers as a result of the anger of her father and (albeit apparent) of her husband – suggest that the two story sequences have a close relationship, even though the full nature of this may not be immediately apparent. The same may be said of the two Family Pattern sequences, with the expulsions from home and the reunions, not to mention the two interim periods being filled by very similar motifs.[194] Furthermore, if this is a romance which speaks to us in terms of what is concrete and not abstract, of what is external and not internal, then the key to the significance of a perplexing object like the robe lies in its function as giving external form to what is abstract and not concrete. In fact the whole story can be usefully read as representing an inner drama – inner that is to the heroine's mind – but a drama which nonetheless is directly related to the explicit

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[193] The text referred to throughout is Mills' edition in *Six Middle English Romances*, pp.46-74.

[194] For discussion of repetition in the romance see for example Mehl, pp.136-37; Rickert, pp. xxvi-xxvii and xxxii; Mills, pp.xiii-xv and xxiii.

concerns of the poem. The heroine's resilience in the face of extremes of ordeal and enmity, often expressed in terms of what is thoroughly unrealistic, can be seen as a form of fantasy in which the heroine proves herself to be what she perceives herself to be.

That we are concerned here with identity is apparent from the start, where the heroine's identifying characteristics are established in terms of what is external and concrete. Emaré's parentage is the first concern; then her singular qualities: her beauty as an infant (50-51), her good behaviour (she learns 'curtesye and thewe', 58), her skills ('golde and sylke forto sewe', 59). These personal qualities are of course consistent with her noble birth, but they also distinguish her from others throughout the story. Later, Kador tells the king that she was especially chosen for his household because of her skills in courtesy, and that she is an extraordinary needlewoman too. At times of difficulty, such as when she is an outcast under Jurdan's protection, the pursuit of courtesy and needlework fill her time. These skills are taught her and in turn she teaches them, both at Kador's home and in Jurdan's. They are creative skills: needlework obviously so; courtesy since the practice of courtesy creates a society where all manner of people can live harmoniously together. They are also social skills:

> Abro tawghte thys mayden small
> Nortur that men useden in sale [. . .]
> She was curtays in all thynge,
> Bothe to olde and to yynge (61-65)[195]

and

> She kowghthe werke all maner thyng
> That fell to emperour or to kyng,
> Erle, barown or swayne (382-84).

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[195] "Courtesy" in *Emaré* seems to be used in the sense 'refinement of manners; gentlemanly or courteous conduct; courtesy, politeness, etiquette' (see MED courteisie 2(a)). "Nortur" has a very similar meaning: 'breeding, manners; courtesy; also, cultivation of mind' (MED norture 3(a)). I return in more detail to the subject of courtesy later in the chapter.

Themselves concrete activities, courtesy and needlework are here not seen as introversive in purpose, but useful to the community. As characteristics of the heroine they are not incidental since they are mentioned often and usually together through the poem.[196] Creative, they seemingly counterbalance, but in fact complement, Emaré's meek passivity in the face of adversity. This is another of her defining characteristics, but it becomes apparent only as the narrative develops and after she has been given the robe. In the face of her father's anger and of the apparent hostility of her husband, she accepts the punishments they impose on her (this being particularly striking in the second instance where she is innocent of anything which might actually anger him) without protestation. Instead she submits to the initial horror of the punishment, then settles down with the practice of courtesy and needlework and endures.[197] This capacity for suffering, for endurance, is a quality which in the poem is given concrete form by becoming an action – something Emaré does. This is most obvious when we see her choosing a passive course when the young king's spurious letter, with its command for Emaré to be cast into the sea, reaches the steward's court: it is she who commands that her husband's orders shall be carried out without objection. Passivity is for Emaré something active through being actively chosen, and later, as I shall show, becomes a creative force too.

Insofar as the story is a creation of the heroine's mind, then at the start of events she is at ease with her own persona and its reception in the world. Her name, if Edith Rickert is correct and it is a form of Esmerée, meaning 'refined', 'excellent', reflects this feeling.[198] She perceives no hostile figures in her life, feeling rather that she is loved

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[196] See lines 58-59, 376-84, 425-29, 730-32.

[197] Some critics feel that Emaré's primary characteristic is her capacity to suffer e.g. Donovan, *Breton Lay*, p.224.

[198] Rickert suggests that while 'Emaré' seems to be a form of the Old French 'esmarie' meaning 'afflicted, troubled', the poet may have had in mind the name 'Emeré' meaning 'pure, refined (as gold), endowed with rare qualities', since this would contrast more sharply with 'Egaré' meaning 'outcast', and thus be more consistent with the subject matter, p.xxix.

and respected by all (68-69). Through courtesy and needlework, she shows herself able to make a creative contribution to the noble world into which she has been born, a capacity she never loses, for they are associated closely with her throughout the romance. Responses to her do change, however; the turning point is her acquisition of the wonderful robe.

Even before this, Emaré has a rare beauty and provokes from others love and respect. Appearance (another external) is of great importance in the romance.[199] Whenever she is wearing the robe made of the cloth from Cesyle, however, a specific and different set of responses comes into play, responses, whether friendly or hostile, which suggest that she is something out of the ordinary: she may seem scarcely of this world (244-46, 394-96, 446-47); she dazzles men, causing wonder and/or fear, and their reaction is to take her into their care and/or wish to marry her (244-49, 349-72, 394-432, 697-720). She dazzles her prospective mother-in-law too (the only feminine reaction we are shown), only this time the response is to reject her as 'a fende' (446). The old queen's view of the be-robed Emaré is likewise of something supernatural, only something dangerous and evil which must be destroyed.

The robe and its function in the poem have long been considered to be problematic.[200] Hanspeter Schelp lists the problems: in a romance little interested in description, it is remarkable that the robe receives so much descriptive attention, so much so that it is disproportionate to the whole; it seems to have no obvious function in the action; it lies outside the frame of the work, entering the poem suddenly and without connection with

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[199] Formulae referring to clothing, like 'wordy unthur wede' are used quite frequently throughout the romance to refer to Emaré e.g. 198, 250, 366, 501, 612, and sometimes to other characters e.g. 736, 864. Used so frequently such phrases direct our attention to appearance, marking it out as significant: see Mills's note to line 303, p.199.

[200] For example, Donovan finds that the description of the cloth is out of proportion with the rest of the text and seems to be present for the pleasure of the rich description alone; he also finds it ironic that the description of 'true love' on the cloth is followed in the story by true love's opposite – incest (*Breton Lay*, p.221). See also Rickert who suggests that the abrupt introduction of the cloth into the narrative may be a sign that the Middle English *Emaré* is a condensation of a longer French poem (p.xxxii).

the previous life of the emperor; nonetheless our attention is often directed to it.[201] So what do we know about it? It is made by a woman for the love of a man, and that woman is herself represented in one corner of the cloth together with her beloved, a prince of Babylon. Thus the couple is associated with those famous lovers represented in the cloth's other corners: Ydoyne and Amadas, Trystram and Isowde, Florys and Blawncheflour. It is so richly set with gems that it dazzles the emperor when he first sees it and makes him impute to it a supernatural origin. The stones intricately adorn the portraits of the lovers and thus each couple's love is closely associated with their virtue; in each case it is a love famous for being, as it is described in the poem, 'so trewe' (123), done 'wyth honour' (124, 148), and 'ryght' (136).[202] This wonderful robe passes from the woman who made it to her beloved and from him via various men, including the heroine's father, to Emaré herself.

Schelp argues that the robe, with its representations of lovers famous for steadfast love, and its stones with their powerful virtues (in particular their common association with chastity), is symbolic of the heroine's inner perfection. We come to associate its qualities with those of its wearer as it is an inseparable part of her appearance throughout, surviving unharmed with her to the end. The supernatural gleam which emanates from the robe-clad Emaré recalls medieval saints and so *Emaré* is lifted from the ranks of typical idealised romance heroines to become a Christian exemplary model.[203]

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[201] Hanspeter Schelp, *Exemplarische Romanzen im Mittelenglischen*, Palaestra 246 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), pp.105-13, especially pp.105-6, in a translation kindly made for me by Michael Robertson.

[202] Since these pairs of lovers are all from romance, this is love of a sort designed to appeal to a romance audience; the poet could therefore expect, in naming these lovers, to exert a meaningful and powerful appeal.

[203] With reference to lapidaries, Schelp finds that most of the stones in the cloth are associated with the preservation of chastity, or they are powerful only if worn in chastity and virtue (p.111). My own feeling on consulting medieval lapidaries is that the multitude and variety of properties which the stones – and there are many of them – have between them make it dangerous to assume that we are meant to assign any particular virtue to the group as a whole. It is enough to know that stones are powerful, a fact which any romance audience might be expected to appreciate since powerful stones make not infrequent appearances – in rings and so on – in the romances. For Emaré as a Christian exemplar see especially Schelp, p.113; Mehl, pp.139-40, follows Schelp.

But as Maldwyn Mills points out, we must not overlook other equally important aspects of the cloth which suggest that 'one of its functions, at least, was to stand for the sexual attraction exerted by the lady': it is decorated with pictures of 'wholly secular lovers', is first seen in the story just after the widowed emperor has 'turned his thoughts to "playnge"' (an ambiguous term which can have sexual implications), and on two of the occasions when it is worn by Emaré, a man sees her and wishes to marry her.[204] In addition to these observations it is noteworthy that the princess who made the cloth commands a significant proportion (a whole corner, i.e. 25% of the corners) of the cloth with her lover and this pair is not famous in romance for anything as the others are: all that is known about them is that the princess loved the prince and made the cloth 'for hys sake' (160). Furthermore, having been created by a woman the cloth reaches the heroine via male characters. Thirdly, the robe-clad Emaré's attractiveness brings her both suffering and happiness related to marriage and men, a fact which the heavy patterning draws to our attention. It brings her the horror of a threatened marriage with her father, but the protection of Kador; suffering within marriage to a husband, but the kindly provision of Jurdan. All this means that the sexual associations of the robe must be taken into account. It is important to remember too that although Emaré has something of the Christian exemplar in her, she is also a woman who is full of earthly joy to be reunited with her husband and father, and who cherishes her son, being at pains to teach him worldly skills and virtues.

A concrete object closely associated with the heroine, the strange cloth can be regarded as an externalisation of her feeling about herself. She is beautiful before she dons the robe, but this is the beauty of a child. The fact that she first wears the robe once her

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[204] Mills, pp.197-98.

father has decided that he wishes to marry her, and that he is inspired by the sight of her in it to inform her of his intention, suggests that the robe is for Emaré an expression of her new-found sexual attractiveness. The explicit association of the cloth with love and lovers supports this idea. If we accept this then the significance of the robe's history becomes clear. The characters, like the cloth, are the product of Emaré's perception of the world, and the admiral's daughter (who made the cloth) is a projection of the heroine herself; her creation of the cloth is Emaré's creation of her own sexual charms. The fact that the maker is split off in the heroine's 'mind' as a separate character, as well as the fact that the cloth is separate from and transforms her appearance, tells us that this is not Emaré's picture of herself entire.[205] The cloth enhances her already present beauty and gives her an extra fascination.

Needlework is Emaré's special skill, and such a cloth requires very special craftsmanship. The cloth is made specifically for the princess's beloved, but its influence spreads beyond their relationship: in the story it is not only Emaré's future husband who responds to her specialness once she is clad in it. It dazzles others; they too feel its power. This tells us something of the way Emaré perceives her sexuality: it is powerful in the world of men. It is meant for the response of her husband alone, but of course, as she discovers, this is impossible. The cloth reaches Emaré through several male characters, most importantly her father: Emaré's sexual appeal is created by her in that it comes from within her, but it is also in a sense given to her by men. Without male recognition of that quality it has no appreciable existence. Her father is the first to recognise it and to feel its power since he is the first man in her life. In the history of the robe and its acquisition by Emaré, the story acknowledges the interdependence of men and women in the existence of heterosexual attractiveness.

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[205] The cloth does not transform her into something otherworldly but makes her SEEM otherworldly (e.g. 244-46, 394-96). Interestingly the old queen assumes that the heroine IS a fiend (446-47).

The cloth is described in such detail initially because it is important to our understanding of the action which follows. The stones in the images on the cloth, and the unicorn are, like the cloth itself, rich, rare and valuable, and this can be appreciated as a general feeling even if one does not know the specific virtues of the individual stones. The lovers portrayed are themselves a byword in romance for loyal love, enduring in the face of difficulty, and it is made clear time and again that the love which they evoke is true and honourable, a condition which, the poem says, is like the cloth itself, precious, dazzling, and seeming scarcely to be of this world.[206] Sexuality for Emaré is not simply a physical, carnal thing; rather it involves honour, rightness, fidelity, steadfastness, fortitude of emotion, all directed towards one appropriate person. That Emaré associates herself with this sort of love is symbolised by the appearance of her projected self and her beloved in one corner of the cloth. Her father fails to recognise the true nature of Emaré's sexuality even when she "shows her true colours", i.e. puts on the robe. And it is not surprising that the recognition of these qualities by the old queen antagonises her for she realises that they will command her son's reciprocal commitment and direct his attention away from herself. The nature of Emaré's sexuality would not allow a brief affair.[207]

There are two sorts of male response to Emaré in the robe: some – her father and her husband – want to marry her; others – Kador and Jurdan – to protect her. Sexually attractive to men and requiring protection: this is a conventional view of the feminine. It is a limited view – in the romance as well as in reality: Emaré considers herself to be more than this as her creative skills, which she learns in childhood, suggest. Her story

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[206] As Mills points out, there is no attempt at realising the individual features of these pairs of lovers (note to lines 121-56, p.198).

[207] Ramsey thinks that 'the cloth represents love and beauty, especially as found in the romances' and notes that 'romantic love' both aids and causes trouble for Emaré, p.183. Donovan also notes the robe's seemingly ambiguous function, 'Middle English *Emaré*', p.341.

concerns the assertion of her feminine identity, of which physical sexuality, even when tempered by the ennobling elements of love, is but a part. In fact, by the end, the qualities embodied in the robe take their place as yet another aspect of Emaré's creative ability. Her sexuality brings trouble insofar as it causes her to attract and then refuse the sexual attentions of all but her husband, and later to obey what she believes to be his command and to permit herself to be cast out of her home; but this same loyalty is vindicated when it enables her and her husband to be reunited. It is the heroine herself who controls this (family) reunion: it is she who trains her son to act as he does, who initiates the events which will bring him to the king's attention, and who allows herself to be recognised by the king. Despite being unaware that her husband has never rejected her, she remains loyal to him throughout her ordeal. Her apparent submissive endurance during her ordeal turns out to be in fact active loyalty, and this long-suffering loyalty creates, in the reunion, harmony and wellbeing.

But it is some time before the heroine is recognised for what she really is. The steps towards her achieving recognition are shown largely in terms of the responses she provokes and their consequences. They are of two kinds, bearing in mind that they are the responses of others as perceived by the heroine: positive, or friendly towards the heroine; and negative, or hostile towards her. Emaré encounters hostility twice, each time resulting in her alienation given external form as a lonely sea journey made in wild conditions.

On the first occasion, alienation results from the threat of incest. The emperor's desire for his daughter is, as we have seen, a response to and acknowledgement of her sexuality: in imputing to her father sexual desire for herself, the heroine puts into the concrete terms of the story her own realisation of her sexual nature. But it is also a

response to her burgeoning adulthood: she feels that he is trying to dominate her although she is no longer a child. As incest, this underlying emotion is given concrete form consistent with the nature of the robe. At one level of the story Emaré repels the emperor's sexual advances towards her because she realises that as her father he is an inappropriate lover. At another, less obvious level she perceives him as someone from whom she must break free if she is to grow up, leave home, and fulfil her own adult potential with an appropriate sexual partner. In his role as her father he now constricts and limits her. This is perceived as an attack on her sexual nature which is, after all, part of her adult persona: an effort to make her misdirect her adult attentions. But Emaré is 'trewe of fay' (296): on one level true to God's law, she is also true to her own feminine nature which intends her to leave home and form a union with an appropriate peer-lover figure.

The enormity of the threat posed by her father to Emaré is clear from his powerful status as emperor and by the approval of his demands by the Pope – the ultimate earthly father-figure in a Christian context. Emaré realises that if she stays with him then she can only be 'forlorne' (255): her chance of ever taking her adult place in the world literally and symbolically will be destroyed. But the alternative is to lose his protection, to face alone the terrors of the stormy sea of life. Emaré perceives her father as rejecting her because she refuses to comply with his unnatural demands; yet also as regretting his action and her loss (290-98). Perceived, as well as actual, ambivalence in fathers on their children leaving home is not unusual of course.[208]

The second hostile reaction Emaré meets occurs after her marriage when her husband appears to reject her after their child's birth. In the underlying drama, husband and wife

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[208] This explains the perfunctory treatment of the father's incestuous aberration. For comment on this see Neil D. Isaacs, 'Constance in Fourteenth-Century England', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 58-59 (1957-58), 260-77, p.273; Ramsey, p.181.

are mentally estranged by each taking on a parental role, and this is given external form in the story as geographical separation. But Emaré's husband only appears to reject mother and child: he does not actually do so even though he has been led to believe that the child is a monstrous devil – like the puppies in LS, outside the pale of human society – who will 'come bytwene' (564) him and his wife. In reality the king is as much a victim of his mother's duplicity as Emaré is. The contrast between the perceived reaction of the king, contained in the letter which is in fact composed by his mother, and his actual reaction, contained in the letter which he sends but is intercepted by the evil queen, only points up how powerless he is at this stage in the story; a weakness which reflects the irresistibility of the underlying forces which pull the married couple apart. The arrival of children automatically alters the role of husband and wife towards each other.

The requirements of the Family Pattern and the drama which underpins it are fulfilled in the king's apparent rejection of the heroine, but in fact a great deal of the surface attention of the story is paid to the mother-in-law's role as actual perpetrator of the rejection. Her response to the sight of Emaré in her bright robe is a sarcastic comment about her beauty and the immediate assumption that she much be a fiend. Focussing solely on Emaré's appearance, she is concerned with no other qualities she may have. She recognises the power of the beauty of Emaré's femininity but interprets it a danger: Emaré is a threat to her own influence over her son and she opposes their marriage from the start.

The old queen is a hostile mother-figure, a parent whose role parallels that of the hostile father-figure, the emperor. Like him she is perceived as being reluctant to relinquish

her hold over her child; like his, her hostility alienates the heroine.[209] The old queen is a projection of more than one level of meaning however. Like Abro she is a mother-figure: the two women represent the extremes of a mother's role in a daughter's eyes. The old queen is the mother who rejects her daughter for the femininity which will usurp her own power; as such she is a barrier to the younger woman's realisation of her own identity. But she is also, at a more obvious level, a mother-in-law, and during the vulnerable time of the heroine's early motherhood alienates her, forcing the heroine into a narrow maternal role which is allowed only grudgingly (she is cast out to sea alone with her child). Certainly relations between many female "in-laws" are characterised by struggle, a point evinced in jokes to this day. But motherhood, although it brings weakness also brings power – through children and, in this romance at any rate, through and over men. At the end of the romance for example, Emaré controls the reunion with her male relations by manipulating the behaviour of her son. She enjoys unchallenged power over men (and therefore their world) once the senior mother-figure is destroyed, although because of the cyclical nature of the Family Pattern her own power will one day be replaced by that of the younger woman whom her son marries. But that is another story.[210]

In part then, at least, Emaré's identity is revealed by her relations with her parents and this receives expression in the fact that on both occasions alienation results from parental hostility, alienation which is given concrete form, as I have said, in her being cast out to sea in a boat. The images of her, terrified, hungry, at the mercy of the sea for

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[209] Just as the emperor wanted to dominate his daughter, so here a mother wants to dominate her son. Ramsey notes how 'all of Emaré's difficulties stem directly from the passions of parental figures', pp.182-83.

[210] Where the power of the family hierarchy is not reduced, by geographical distance for example, dictatorial matriarchal power is notorious. We can see the necessity of its being displaced by the new in Stella Gibbon's comic and parodic novel, *Cold Comfort Farm*, in which the continued and untimely dominance of old Aunt Ada Doom over the Starkadder family leads to stasis and suppression of progress. It is the youthful heroine Flora who changes this. Interestingly, Aunt Ada herself eventually gains a new lease of life along with the farm, unlike the senior mother figures in the Family Pattern romances who suffer punishment, even death, for their attempts at domination.

several days, are a projection of the heroine's feeling about this stage in her life: she is adrift on an emotional and spiritual turbulence, one which is a serious threat to life. On the first occasion, torn away from her father and all those who peopled her early childhood, she drifts away from the mental nourishment and support of her childhood family towards one in which, although she does not know it, she will become a parent herself. This is the alienation of adolescence. On the second occasion she is the only source of protection, comfort, nourishment, to her young child. As before she is carried away from a set of relationships – now those of a wife – which once sustained her but which with the arrival of her baby were suspended. Her posture, as she drifts in the boat lying face downwards with the child at her breast, suggests the isolating, inward-looking nature of the mother-baby relationship, as well as their defencelessness. On both occasions she meets her ordeal with passive endurance, not trying to steer the boat but simply suffering the buffeting of the waves. She does not actively carve out for herself a place in life; rather she endures. The death which threatens from the stormy sea is the social and emotional "death" which is the implied fate of one who, having outgrown the relations of childhood, fails to find a place for herself amongst her peer-group, or who, having had her wifely role changed by parenthood, fails to keep faith that adult relations will resume.

Hostile responses to the heroine are balanced by positive ones, and just as alienation stands at one extreme of the spectrum of outcomes, so union and integration result from the friendly responses. The polarisation of these extremes in itself conveys meaning: even without peeling back the different layers of the poem we are left in no doubt as to the implication of certain events for the heroine. There are no grey areas. The central figures of father, mother and husband who are unhelpful to Emaré also have their

friendly aspects, usually expressed through different agents. In other words the characters are split according to the heroine's perception of them.

The first friendly character is Abro. She of course is a mother-figure for she looks after Emaré while she is a child. Emaré's real mother dies when she is a baby (the heroine is not interested in this initial stage of her life) and she is thought of only as beautiful and full of 'love and goodnesse' and, significantly, courtesy (35-36). Abro presides over the next stage in Emaré's development which is seen as one of learning. From Abro, Emaré learns the feminine virtues of needlework and courtesy – virtues which we have seen become some of her identifying characteristics. They are also a means of continuity: a mother teaches her child those virtues which will enable her to continue the family cycle. Emaré later endures the period away from her husband by herself teaching these virtues to her son in Jurdan's household and courtesy plays a vital part in reuniting her and her husband.

The other friendly figures are men. There are four in the story: Emaré's father, her husband the young king, and her two protectors, Kador and Jurdan. At first, the emperor's response to his daughter seems to be friendly: having summoned Emaré from her nurse's household to court, he greets her as a loving father (212-15). But this friendliness soon becomes a threat as we have seen. A great deal happens before the emperor can be accepted as a friendly father once again: Emaré has to establish herself in her adult identity so that they can forge a new relationship as adult to adult.

The romance charts the process of adjustment of the relationship between father and daughter, and in a sense Emaré's relations with the other men in the story have this as their unstated goal, for it is towards this end that the narrative moves. The man who

rescues Emaré from the emotional wasteland of her first alienation is, ultimately, her husband. But her immediate rescuer is Kador. Kador is a father-figure in that he protects and provides, and the fact that he feels no sexual desire for Emaré supports this interpretation of his role.[211] But Kador is closely connected to the young king himself, the peer-lover figure who responds in an unequivocally physical way to the heroine on first setting eyes on her. Kador, as the king's steward, acts for his master, looking after his affairs as well as his wife when he is away from home. This close connection means that he is best seen as a split of the king: he is the fatherly aspect of a husband. Not very glamorous (he stays at home while the king goes off to foreign wars), he none the less continues to believe in Emaré throughout (he is reluctant to commit her to the waves as the king apparently requires), and he brings to Emaré nothing threatening (the king has a wicked mother attached).

Into the character of the king, Emaré projects all the frankly carnal aspect of her husband's feeling for her. As soon as he sees her he is 'anamered' (400) of her, cannot eat (an outward sign of inner distress), and must marry her. The vision that provokes such an extreme response is of Emaré so transformed by the robe that 'she semed non erdly thyng' (396). It is interesting that this transformation of the heroine into something which seems otherworldly induces a frankly sexual response in Emaré's future husband just as it did in her father but both transformation and thoughts of marriage are absent from Kador's response (349-72). In the character of the king Emaré's sexuality has found a legitimate respondent, but even so, his sexual response spells danger for her just as did that of the emperor – only this time through the old queen's hostile response. Her suggestion of Emaré's supernaturalness (suggesting that she too recognises her sexual power) offers a foretaste of the trouble to come.

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[211] Kador seems to be an actual father (425) although this is mentioned only in passing.

Trouble brewing though it may be, the responses of both Kador and the king are obviously friendly, and they result in the heroine's forming a set of adult relationships. She becomes first a teacher (this is Kador's description of her to the enamoured king) and then a wife. Such harmonious integration is the opposite of alienation. Those of her own qualities which have enabled this to happen are those, some embodied in the robe, which are characteristic of her: the chastity of mind which allows her to recognise an appropriate peer-lover, her powers of endurance, the skills in needlework and courtesy for which she becomes a valued member of Kador's household. It is these latter skills which so impress Kador that he lies to his master when asked about Emaré's identity, telling him that she is an earl's daughter brought to his household specifically to teach his children courtesy, when in fact he does not know her identity: so they help to further her fortune.

But Kador cannot protect Emaré from the alienation of motherhood, alienation which is as unavoidable as that of adolescence. The one who rescues her from this second episode of alienation is again a man, Jurdan. To Jurdan, as to the emperor, the king and the old queen, Emaré, when he first sees her in her shining robe, seems scarcely mortal (694-702). But unlike the emperor and the king he does not wish to marry her, or to reject her like the old queen. Instead his reaction is like Kador's: he gives her a home. He is another protector-provider figure. At last, it seems, here is a man who recognises the full power of Emaré's feminine attractions, but whose response is not carnal. Emaré's refuge in Jurdan's home gives concrete expression to the fact that in the underlying drama she is not literally estranged from her husband: her need for him as protector-provider (his fatherly qualities) is stronger than ever because of the child. But since she is primarily a mother rather than a wife at this stage of the story she remains

symbolically estranged from the king: she is estranged from a predominantly carnal, wifely role.

Jurdan's response then is also a friendly one, and as before, it is this, plus Emaré's characteristic qualities, which allow her to survive the effects of alienation. Again she becomes a teacher, this time teaching her son 'nortowre' (731) while grieving in secret (730-32). The fidelity which is an essential part of what this romance calls true and honourable sexual love, submission to and endurance of fate, and her creative skills, all lead, as they did during the trial of her younger years, to social integration, or in this case, reintegration, for Emaré emerges from this second ordeal in her rightful identity as beloved wife and daughter once again.

At the underlying level the husband regrets his estrangement from his wife until they are reconciled, something which can only take place once the demands of the children are such that they no longer preoccupy their parents.[212] Their reunion will be a rediscovery and reaffirmation of an old relationship rather than the discovery of a new. That is the case for Family Patterns in general. In *Emaré,* Jurdan's response to the heroine opens the way for her reconciliation with the two main male figures in her life – father and husband – because Jurdan realises the power of her sexuality but does not try to possess or destroy her as a result. Of those who do realise its power, her father's response is physical (unacceptable in a father), while Kador's response is paternal (unacceptable in a husband). The king's response is sexual, acceptable in a husband,

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[212] The king's rather sudden assumption of responsibility for the heroine's expulsion and his consequent decision to go to Rome to do penance may seem a rather obvious device to get the heroine back into the close proximity of her husband so that reconciliation can take place, but in terms of the underlying drama it is an indication that Emaré perceives her husband to be sorry for the misery which his mother's influence over him has caused her. At the time when she is most vulnerable (when their child is young) and when her claim on her husband is arguably the strongest, he seems to her to be the most under his mother's influence. Beneath it all Emaré does not believe that her husband wishes her ill in either his role as a sexual partner (the king) or his paternal role (Kador), and she gives her feeling concrete expression by distancing the king from the villainous action against her through his mother's role and by having Kador obey the instructions in the king's supposed letter only reluctantly.

although the need for a paternal element in a husband's role is evinced by Emaré's need for protection when she is apparently rejected by her sexual partner. Emaré projects into the figure of Jurdan what she wants, in a general way, from all men, and establishing this enables her to settle her relations with men in particular roles.

It is another male figure, Emaré's son, who becomes the instrument of his parents' reunion through his skills in courtesy: it is precisely his matchless ability in this area which attracts him to his father's attention. Courtesy is essentially an activity exclusive to, here, the higher levels of human society; it cannot be practised by animals or devils. The child is now in no sense outside the pale of human activity, as he was portrayed by the old queen; rather he plays a useful part in adult society. At the literal and underlying levels, Segramowre has passed from the high dependency of the baby and young child, to one of increased independence and ability.

Through the behaviour of the child, courtesy is used to promote healing: in restoring family unity it is instrumental in bringing about harmony and integration from discord and fragmentation. By contrast, the old queen, 'unhende' as she is in word (445) and deed (534), achieves just the opposite by promoting the disintegration of the family group.[213] Although courtesy is evoked several times in this poem without any indication that it is being used in a specific sense (e.g. 36, 74, 475), at other times it apparently has to do with correct behaviour or more specifically, good manners (58, 425). Certainly it is something which can be taught to children (425, 731) and when we see it performed it is in the form of behaviour at mealtime. The ritualised form of feasting makes it a symbol of orderly, harmonious, civilised society, and good manners

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[213] For a different view of the poem's use of 'unhende' see Mills, note to line 445, p.199.

are the key to its success.[214] Courtesy raises man above the animal in social behaviour and in this it is a creative force. It is creative too in its role in restoring the unity of the family within the context of the Family Pattern, for social continuity through the family is embodied in the Family Pattern structure. Completion of the Family Pattern cycle through courtesy at the feast therefore broadens the implications of the power of courtesy as this romance sees it, and because it is especially associated throughout with Emaré, the power of the heroine herself.[215]

Emaré chooses to be reconciled with her menfolk and she chooses to bring this about through her son. Because his role is one of the enactment of courtesy (one of her own characteristic qualities), at her command, she is in effect acting through him.[216] Through her child she creates harmony and integration.[217] Her power to act comes from that broader assortment of qualities which is her adult femininity. It is not only instrumental in bringing husband and wife back together again, but in reconciling father and daughter too. By the end of the story Emaré's father can appreciate her femininity for what it really is: physical sexuality ennobled by qualities like constancy and chastity which are an inseparable part of it.

Emaré is herself the only friendly mother-figure operating in the world of the heroine's sexual maturity. Remembering that each character in the poem is a projection reflecting

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[214] This view of the reunion episode in *Emaré* owes much to Felicity Riddy's statement, 'But long before and after the fifteenth century feasting was the primary peaceable communal activity, the centre, in fact as well as in fiction, of the self-celebration of the noble way of life. The feast, governed as it is by rules of etiquette that have to be learned, is an expression of civilisation understood as nurture.' *Sir Thomas Malory*, Medieval and Renaissance Authors, 9 (Leiden: Brill, 1987), p.75.

[215] For a narrower view of courtesy in *Emaré* see Donovan, *The Breton Lay*, pp.222-24.

[216] The idea that the mother is acting through her child is expressed in the structural patterning since the child fills the role in the second sequence which the mother took in the first: Emaré's role as server at the feast in which she is noticed by the king prior to their marriage is paralleled by Segramowre's role as server at the feast at which he is noticed by the king prior to the renewal of the king's marriage with the heroine.

[217] The child as instrument of parental fulfilment is not peculiar to *Emaré*: compare Margaret Robson's remarks about the relationship between Sir Gowther, hero of the romance of that name, and his mother: 'He is the embodiment of her fears and anxieties, and the means whereby her needs and desires are fulfilled', 'Animal Magic: Moral Regeneration in *Sir Gowther*', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 22 (1992), 140-53 (p.144).

the heroine's view, she displays in the dominant character, Emaré, a positive view of motherhood, one in which the feminine skills of needlework, courtesy, endurance and loyalty are sources of power. In teaching her child courtesy she gives him a skill which will enable him to take his place in adult society and which immediately marks him out as different from other people (871-73).[218] Because she is so closely associated with courtesy herself she is, in effect, giving him a part of herself as his identity. There is no conflict here between Emaré and her son: she does not perceive him as being rebellious or even assertive. Instead he is obligingly her instrument.

So far much of what has been discussed has been the result of the romance's predilection for externalisation; little account has been taken of the meaning emerging from the heavy patterning which is so strong a feature of the work. Some of the patterning seems to obscure meaning. Why, for example, are Emaré's father, who is so wicked, and her husband, who is not, treated so similarly? Mills puts the problem thus:

> We might have expected a very sharp differentiation here: the father is one of the monsters of the story – an ageing lecher, who treats Emaré quite ruthlessly when she will have nothing to do with him; the husband, on the other hand, is its Prince Charming. But by applying very similar motifs to each, the author makes them seem curiously alike. Each of the two men, whether intentionally or not, is responsible for putting the life of the heroine in danger (265-76, 586-97), bitterly regrets what has happened when it is too late (280-300, 769-83), sets out on a pilgrimage

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[218] Needlework for a boy would be inappropriate. Segramowre acquires more appropriately masculine skills but the skills important in the romance are those his mother teaches him (731-41).

of atonement to Rome (817-40, 949-60) and is there reunited with the lady and the son (913-36, 985-1020).[219]

In addition the heroine's treatment of the father when he arrives in Rome echoes that afforded the newly arrived husband. She approaches both men through her son, bidding him behave courteously towards each man and to lead each one to her; and the child's speech to the father echoes that which he made to the husband (922-23, 1006-07) even though the reference to Egaré has no relevance to the older man.

Significantly, although they are central to distinct periods of Emaré's life, both men are reconciled to her in episodes which are closely juxtaposed. This, together with the similarity of their treatment overall, suggests they are in a sense the two parts of one figure: not a split in the sense in which I am using it in this study, but rather the two principal aspects of the archetypal adult male from a feminine viewpoint. There are only two male roles in this romance – father and husband – and each male character takes on something of one of them. Father and husband are like two sides to one coin in their response to Emaré's femininity: although with each of them her sexuality leads to both alienation and reconciliation, each is essentially different in their response to her by the end. The response of a father differs from that of a husband, or to put it in terms of identity, identity as a daughter is different from identity as a wife. But Emaré's overall identity is as a combination of the two: her own identity is formed by her relations with both of them. The narrative conveys this abstract idea by placing reconciliation between Emaré and each of these aspects of men side by side in the narrative and by making Emaré's overall identity (as Emaré rather than Egaré) to be revealed only when she is about to resume relations with them both.

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[219] Mills, p.xiv. Ramsey too notes the surprisingly favourable treatment of the father, p.181.

Placing side by side the family reunion episodes is just one of the ways in which the boundary between Emaré's childhood and motherhood are blurred. In the Family Pattern sequence parents and children can be reconciled once the child takes on an adult role – so often in these stories indicated by the child marrying – but here Emaré and her father are reunited only after Emaré has in addition undergone the trials of motherhood. Secondly, adult status is usually in such stories accompanied by the protagonist becoming known by his or her real name, but Emaré lives her married life under a false name – the same one that she assumed in adolescence. If we compare *Emaré* and *LS* we can see that the fairytale heroine takes on a new and, we feel, true identity when she is rescued from servitude to marry the prince, and it is after a trouble-free period that she suffers a second change of identity and becomes a sow. There is no such respite for Emaré. She becomes Egaré (the abandoned, isolated, lost one) before her marriage and does not regain her true identity until the final reunions. Thirdly, when the romance heroine marries and becomes a mother, she enters, in terms of the Family Pattern, an adult world just as the little slut did. But while in the fairytale the domestic world of the heroine's girlhood is contrasted sharply with the foreign setting of her motherhood, in *Emaré* the corresponding worlds of the heroine are strikingly similar: she finds refuge in a domestic setting on a foreign shore and occupies herself with the practice and teaching of needlework and courtesy. The similarity of these worlds is highlighted by the parallel roles of the two protector-provider figures, Kador and Jurdan, who give shelter to Emaré the girl and Emaré the mother respectively.

So while it is true that the familiar stories of a heroine's trials as she grows up and during motherhood are charted in *Emaré*, the boundaries between the two areas of her life are obscured. Clearly marriage does not provide a satisfactory new identity for the

romance heroine as it does for her fairytale counterpart. Instead the romance requires that the heroine experiences the role of parent as well as child before the question of her identity is resolved. Furthermore, the placing of the second Family Pattern sequence within the first deprives the first of a sense of closure until the second is complete. *Emaré* is a poem about a woman making clear her identity through her relationships with others, men and women, and it is a holistic identity which embraces the experiences of adulthood as well as childhood.

Once her identity as a child becomes complicated by her sexuality Emaré's identity is no longer clear, and she becomes one whose true identity is unrecognisable to those around her – although she herself is in no doubt as to whom she really is. The romance tells how the nature of Emaré's true identity is revealed bit by bit; put another way, it tells the story of her assertion of her feminine identity. This of course includes the experience of wife and motherhood as well as of adolescence and being wooed. In the process of defining her own femininity, Emaré offers an ideal of womanhood: she is exemplary. The Family Pattern by its very nature lends itself to considerations of identity and of sexuality; in *Emaré* two such narrative patterns are arranged in such a way as to broaden these issues to look at the state of being female and to offer a model. By the end of the story Emaré's strengths and weaknesses have become clear but those qualities which make her vulnerable, like her sexual attractiveness in a world of men, and her powerlessness in the face of hostility, have been shown really to be strengths. Her capacity to suffer injustice is a capacity to endure; her meek homely skills evidence of a healing creativity which takes its effect in the world outside the home. Her sexuality, thanks to all its aspects, allows the stable continuation of the family line.

But lest we women in the audience, quick with ideas of our own, reluctant to sit at home and sew, loath to submit in silence to injustice, aquaphobic, should feel doubt as to the acceptability of the heroine as a model, *Emaré* incorporates the means to persuade us otherwise. One is the structure: the story ends happily with joy for all including the heroine. The poet capitalises on this by giving the heroine control over the final outcome of events, lending her an apparent power after her suffering which is in itself attractive, although the Family Pattern is in fact a predetermined structure which carries the heroine forwards powerlessly to its happy resolution. The strong patterning conveys a sense of the dominance of the plot's momentum, regardless of the characterisation. So if by the end we feel that events could not have worked out in any other way, and yet Emaré's behaviour seems to have contributed to the final outcome, then we might feel that perhaps she is not such a bad model after all.

The second means of persuasion is the strong religious element: control over events is attributed to God:

> Now thys lady dwelled thore
> A good sevennyghth and more,
> As hyt was Goddys wylle.
> Wyth carefull herte and sykyng sore,
> Such sorow was here yarked yore,
> And ever lay she styll.
> She was dryven ynto a lond,
> Thorow the grace of Goddes sond,
> That all thyng may fulfylle (325-33).

This passage, which describes Emaré's first sea-journey, is repeated almost word for word in the description of the second alienation episode (673-81). Emaré's sufferings are her destiny; it is God's will. But it is also God's will that her sufferings are relieved (943-45). It is God's will that she is pregnant and bears a child (480, 499-501); it is God's will that her husband arrives safely in Rome where he will be reunited with his

wife (835-37). Emaré for her part obeys God's law (261) as the emperor recognises (295-96), and turns to Him in her troubles (313-15, 670-72). So Emaré's destiny of suffering and eventual happiness has divine endorsement. The events which are God's will find expression in the poem's structure, each lending to the other a sense of inexorable progress. Again, the effect is to promote Emaré's appeal as an exemplar.

Schelp's view of Emaré as a model of spiritual and moral virtue is, while limited, made more attractive to a secular audience by her obvious sexual attractiveness and her close involvement in the common human experiences of family life. Emaré is not an ascetic and shows no wish to deny herself; neither does her final happiness depend on anything but being true to her feminine character. My next example is a far less obviously symbolic romance where the Family Pattern is not the model for worldly happiness that it is in *Emaré*. And we leave behind the world of women, and re-enter the world of men.

CHAPTER 5

GUY OF WARWICK: UNCOMPROMISING FATHER[220]

Guy of Warwick (*Guy*) has a claim to be considered the most popular of all the medieval English romances, lasting well into the sixteenth century. Yet to modern readers it offers many problems. Of the several versions of the Middle English *Guy* it is the Auchinleck which is the earliest (1330-40) and which has proved the most puzzling to critics.[221] It differs significantly from both its likely source, an Anglo-Norman *Gui de Warewic* (*Gui*), of about one hundred years earlier, and later Middle English versions, in the way it presents the story; a story which is much the same in all the versions.[222] It concerns the life of the hero, Guy, and falls into two parts. Firstly there are the events which lead up to Guy's marriage: these are mainly adventures undertaken away from home to win the love of his lord's daughter, Felice, and they earn him the reputation of being the best of knights. It is this status specifically which wins him Felice's hand in marriage. In the second part of the romance Guy's realisation that he has neglected God sends him out into the world once more though this time as an errant pilgrim, and now his adventures are undertaken for God's love rather than for a woman's. The briefest of reunions with Felice follows, and then the hero's death. This second part of the romance is also concerned with the story of Reinbrun, son of Guy and Felice. Reinbrun

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[220] Much of this chapter has been published as 'Narrative Patterning and *Guy of Warwick*', *The Yearbook of English Studies,* 22 (1992), 105-16. It is reproduced here in altered form by kind permission of the editor.

[221] See Zupitza, EETS ES 42, 49, 59. For more information on the MS see for example the introduction to the facsimile *The Auchinleck Manuscript: National Library of Scotland Advocates' MS 19.2.1*, introduced by Derek Pearsall and I. C. Cunningham (London: Scolar Press, 1977); also I. C. Cunningham and J.E.C. Mordkoff, 'New Light on the Signatures in the Auchinleck MS', *Scriptorium*, 36 (1982), 280-92.

[222] '*Gui de Warewic': Roman du XIIIe siècle*, ed. by Alfred Ewert, Les Classiques Français du Moyen Age, 74-75, 2 vols (Paris: Champion, 1933). In his introduction Ewert lists twelve MS versions, each more or less complete and in rhyming couplets. He reproduces mainly British Museum MS, Additional 38662, the earliest of the MSS, which he dates from the second quarter of the thirteenth century. He dates the poem itself at 1232-42, a little before the earliest preserved MS.

too has heroic adventures away from home and returns at the end of the story to take his place as lord of Warwick.

There are two main surviving Middle English manuscript versions of *Guy* from before 1500 besides that in MS Auchinleck: they are in MS Caius 107 of about 1475, and in MS CU Ff.2.38 of the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century.[223] Traces of other versions survive but only in fragmented form, and since the patterning of material within the whole is my concern here I shall leave them aside.[224]

The Auchinleck differs from the Caius and Cambridge University versions in two main ways. For one thing the two later poems follow the Anglo-Norman in interlacing those parts of the story which concern Reinbrun with those which concern Guy. After the first of Guy's post-marriage battles we hear about how Reinbrun is kidnapped and subsequently sought by Guy's trusty companion, Herhaud, whom we leave temporarily imprisoned in Africa. He remains in this predicament in the Anglo-Norman, Caius, and Cambridge University versions which abandon him and return to Guy to follow events up to and including his death. The Caius version ends here (leaving Herhaud permanently imprisoned) but the Cambridge University one continues, like the Anglo-Norman, to tell of Herhaud's eventual reunion with Reinbrun. The Auchinleck poet, on the other hand, extracts all this Reinbrun material and packages it into a separate romance. Another difference is the versification. Caius and Cambridge University follow the Anglo-Norman version in not deviating from rhyming couplets throughout, while the Auchinleck version begins the story in that form but changes to twelve-line

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[223] For the Caius version see Zupitza, EETS ES 42, 49, 59; for the Cambridge University version (MS Ff.2.38) see *The Romance of 'Guy of Warwick': The Second or Fifteenth-Century Version*, ed. by Julius Zupitza, EETS ES 25, 26 (London: Trübner, 1875-76). For more information on MS CU Ff.2.38 see the introduction to the facsimile *Cambridge University Library MS Ff.2.38*, introduced by Frances McSparran and P.R. Robinson (London: Scolar Press, 1979).

[224] For details of the fragments see Charles W. Dunn, 'Romances Derived from English Legends', in Severs, *Manual*, 17-37 and 206-24 (pp.217-18). For a fragment not included here see Mills and Huws.

tail-rhyme stanzas just before recounting the story of Guy's marriage with Felice. The Auchinleck anomaly puzzles critics but considering *Guy* in the light of folk narrative methods and the Family Pattern can, I believe, make sense of it.

In the Auchinleck *Guy* the rhyming couplets break off at line 7306 and after this the script becomes larger though it remains similar in shape to the previous hand.[225] The writing is continuous: the break is not marked by an illustration or by moving to a new column, but simply by a large decorated initial of the sort already frequently used in the poem. The first of the tail-rhyme stanzas interrupts the narrative flow with a new but still conventional opening topos: the audience is commended to God, the prowess and fame of the hero are announced, and he is identified as Sir Guy of Warwick. In the second stanza we are reminded of Guy's fame, his travels, and that his most recent undertaking, the dragon –slaying, is now complete (fol.146v).

The anomaly perplexes both with regard to the possible reasons for the break and its effect. Critical opinion is wide-ranging but can be said to lie between two poles: the break may be the result of some accident external to the poem, such as an incomplete exemplar or a change in versifier, or it may be a deliberate response to the internal nature of the poem. An early and influential commentator, Julius Zupitza (1876), thought that the stanzaic part of the poem was a separate version from the couplet part which precedes it. Other opinion held that the second part was 'the result of an independent translation of the French original' by the same scribe who copied the first part of the poem; yet another that the two parts were by different authors.[226] But Laura Hibbard Loomis, in 1942, argued influentially for the break being evidence of

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[225] 'At no point does the change of metre coincide with a change of scribe.' So says Pearsall, in Pearsall and Cunningham, p.ix. See also Cunningham and Mordkoff, p.282 for discussion of and further references on the subject of the Auchinleck scribes.

[226] See Zupitza, EETS ES 25, 26, pp.v-vi. The other views are respectively those of Weyrauch and Möller as cited in Hibbard, pp.128-29: I have not been able to see their work myself.

purposeful scribal collaboration with the material being divided so as to achieve the effect of three separate romances, and with the sections so carefully dovetailed as cannot have been due to chance.[227]   Derek Pearsall suggests that the reason for the change lies in the internal nature of the poem: 'the shift to tail-rhyme stanza […] whether the work of a different continuator or not, seems to be the result of deliberate policy which, recognising the affective nature of the new material […] adopts the more suitably lyrical and "poetic" tail-rhyme stanza'.[228]

The effect of the break is also contentious. Some, such as Loomis, Pearsall, and Dieter Mehl, for example, think that the effect is of three separate romances: the first in rhyming couplets ending with the slaying of the Northumberland dragon (which I shall call *Guy* 1); the second in tail-rhyme stanzas beginning with Guy's marriage and ending with his death (*Guy* 2); the third concerning Reinbrun, in stanza form, and preceded in the manuscript (fol. 167r) with the heading *Reinbrun gij sone of Warwike* (*Reinbrun*).[229] But Carol Fewster points out the ambivalence of the evidence: the beginning of a new romance is signalled less emphatically at the start of *Guy* 2 than it is at the start of other manuscript items and 'it is not clear whether the signals are to a new romance, or to two halves of a single one'.[230]   While the material is quite clearly divided into three separate parts, comparison of the division between *Guy* 1 and *Guy* 2, and *Guy* 2 and *Reinbrun*, shows a significant difference. Unlike *Guy* 2, *Reinbrun* begins with an illustration and a title as well as a new opening topos. It begins at the top of a new column (except for the

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[227] 'The Auchinleck Manuscript and a Possible London Bookshop of 1330-1340', *PMLA*, 57 (1942), 595-627 (pp.609-13). See also Pearsall, in Pearsall and Cunningham, p.ix.

[228] 'The Development of Middle English Romance', *Mediaeval Studies* 27 (1965), 91-116 (p.99).

[229] Loomis, p.612; Pearsall, in Pearsall and Cunningham, p.ix; Mehl, p.221. Mehl says that the Auchinleck *Guy* is divided into 'three completely separate poems' but notes that because *Guy* 2 was not given a contemporary number in the manuscript it 'was probably counted as part of the first section'.

[230] *Traditionality and Genre in Middle English Romance* (Cambridge: D.S.Brewer, 1987), p.83. Fewster thinks that the break 'appears to be a careful editorial re-structuring' (p.83), and discusses its implications for our reading of the poem. For her discussion of *Guy* see especially pp.42-49, where she considers the question of the metrical break in detail, and pp.82-103.

last two lines of *Guy* 2) and it is given its own contemporary compilation number. It shares these features with the beginnings of the other romances in the manuscript but not with *Guy* 2 which as we have seen has no illustration or title. I.C. Cunningham and J.E.C. Mordkoff say that the evidence from the manuscript shows that the scribe clearly considered *Guy* 1 and *Guy* 2 to be one poem.[231]

Of all the attention which has been lavished on the problem most has been focused on the Auchinleck manuscript itself and, as Frances McSparran points out, another factor about the Guy poems has gone largely unconsidered: 'there is no extant manuscript of the Middle English *Guy* in which the histories of Guy and Reinbrun form one continuous romance'. Reminding us that the Auchinleck and Cambridge University manuscripts are the only ones which deal with this later material she goes on to say that in the Cambridge version it is 'as in the Auchinleck, set off separately, as if it were a separate item, following the conclusion of the story of Guy'. Pamela Robinson, who joins McSparran in the introduction to the facsimile of MS CU Ff.2.38 describes the point of separation thus: 'the scribe stops copying *Guy* at line 10786 on f.231r, col.a, leaving the second column blank; he resumes copying at line 10787 on f.231v, col.a. He begins the resumed text with a 4-line filled lombard and copies the first line in display script so that one's immediate impression is that he is beginning a new story'. McSparran concludes, 'the Middle English versions of *Guy of Warwick* deserve closer analysis, and it may be that the degree of originality of the Auchinleck scribes with respect to their treatment of *Reinbrun* needs reassessment'.[232] While I am not in complete agreement with McSparran and Robinson on the matter of the separateness of the later Reinbrun material in the Cambridge manuscript, I hope that this chapter will clarify the achievement of the Auchinleck treatment of *Guy*.

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[231] Cunningham and Mordkoff, p.281 n.1. See also Mehl's remark, my note 10.

[232] McSparran and Robinson, p.xi (McSparran) and p.xxv (Robinson).

The Auchinleck anomaly, then, could be an accident born of the practicalities of composition, or it could be a calculated response to the nature of the material. With regard to its effect Fewster might seem to sit on the fence when she remarks that this is 'a break which could suggest two romances' but that there is 'enough continuity of subject and theme to suggest that they are two halves of a single one'.[233] It is possible however that ambiguity is precisely the effect that the Auchinleck poet wanted to create and that, ironically, the inability of scholars to agree on his purpose and effect, or even that "he" was one person, is an indication of his success.

If this is the case then the metrical break was deliberately made, deliberately placed, and deliberately ambivalent. One important effect is to promote audience awareness of certain patterns in the story, patterns which clarify and reinforce the explicit meaning in the poet's material. The two patterns most significant here are the basic and frequently met fairytale shape outlined by Propp, and repetition in threes with the final instance as the most important for the narrative. Although the constituents of both sorts of patterns are present in other versions of the romance their potential for contributing to meaning is by no means as fully realised there.

The Auchinleck *Guy* arranges Guy's story in the shape of two fairytales of the sort to which Propp draws attention and places them consecutively. Twice the hero leaves home having suffered a lack, has adventures which centre on combat and through which the lack is remedied, and is later reunited with his lady. The shape is that of the fairytale even though the fairytale-type happy-ever-after marriage which ends the first sequence becomes a short period of bliss which turns out to be the impetus for a second

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[233] Fewster, p.83.

departure from home – a double pattern not by any means unknown to the fairytale. The happy-ever-after ending which is the culmination of the second sequence is the bliss of eternity in heaven after death rather than fairytale happiness centred in this world. The rejection of the Reinbrun material highlights the existence of this pattern because it removes the clutter of subject matter which, woven into the main line of Guy's story, obscures the symmetry of the two parts. The interlace of the other versions is rejected in the Auchinleck in favour of a fairytale, linear structure.

It would have been convenient to have been able at this stage to point out that the metrical break simply highlights the fact of the double fairytale structure, but since it occurs before rather than after Guy's marriage to Felice – and weddings are the natural end of a great many fairytale sequences – this cannot be the case. Although it does point up the bipartite structure of Guy's story in a general way, its precise positioning can be explained only with more detailed reference to Propp's scheme of the fairytale.

Each part of the poem commences with what is analogous to Propp's 'initial situation', into which stable condition a desire, lack, or misfortune is introduced, and because of which the hero leaves home and the tale proper begins. In the first part Guy as a young man is a promising pupil in the art of noble living in an earl's household. Suddenly he falls in love with Felice, the earl's daughter, but she will not return his love until he is the best knight in the world. The hero consequently lacks both Felice's love and, linked to this, the status of being known as the best knight in the world. This second lack comprises two parts: firstly Guy must become a knight both in word and in deed; secondly he must become the best knight. Both requirements prompt him to leave home on separate occasions. The beginning of *Guy* 2 is rather different. Guy is living happily with Felice who is now his wife. Suddenly Guy realises that in fighting for

Felice's sake rather than for that of God, he has repaid God's goodness towards him with nothing. What he lacks now is God's approbation and because of this he leaves home as a pilgrim.

From each initial situation Guy's story passes straight on to the stage of Propp's fairytale scheme in which the hero and villain join in combat. After Guy's first departure from home he fights in the Rouen tournament, the villain's role being taken by the many knights in the competition. They are defeated and Guy is proven as a knight: thus the first lack is remedied. But on his return home a second lack in the shape of Felice's demand that he become the best knight in the world presents itself and initiates his second departure to the Continent. The long string of events which follows divides itself quite clearly into six well-defined episodes. At the heart of each is the pattern familiar from fairytale: the hero and villain join in combat and the villain is defeated, the villain's role often here being played collectively by an enemy host. The cumulative effect of these episodes is Guy's renown as the best knight in the world, and so the second lack is remedied. Guy, in the manner of fairytale heroes, returns home, marries his beloved, and is given lands, the equivalent of ascending the throne in fairytales.

When Guy leaves home in *Guy* 2 there follow three well-defined episodes which, like those in *Guy* 1, have at their centres hero-villain combat. The cumulative effect of these episodes is, as before, the negation of the lack which sent Guy from home. It is made clear that Guy has earned God's approbation when an angelic messenger arrives to prepare Guy for his journey to heaven. There is a brief reunion with Felice (by eye contact) before the hero ascends not an earthly throne but to heaven where Felice is soon to join him and where they can live happily ever after.

This comparison with Propp's fairytale morphology makes clear the fact that the hero's marriage is structurally pivotal. It forms the climactic element of the first fairytale structure but at the same time it is the initial situation which triggers the repetition of the structural sequence. This dual function is reflected at the verbal level. As the happy culmination of a long period of striving, his marriage represents for Guy all that is significant in his struggle, in particular the nature of his motivation; but therein lie the seeds of his future discontent. The positioning of the metrical break before and not after the marriage emphasises its pivotal function. Because the audience knows that a tale of this sort usually ends in marriage, the implication that a new story is beginning before the end of the first jars against expectations and reinforces the implication that the marriage is not just an ending but a beginning too; not simply the triumphant reward for a long effort but the cause of a new effort. At the same time what follows will not be a wholly new story: it arises from and takes its full significance from its links with the first.

Because the bipartite nature of Guy's story is made clear in the Auchinleck version its audience is drawn to make comparison between the two parts of the story.[234] Each part has similar adventure episodes centring on hero-villain combat, the immediate motivation for which is often much the same. At both Arascoun against the emperor in *Guy* 1 and in the fight against Amoraunt in *Guy* 2, Guy fights on behalf of men who have killed their lords' sons in self-defence and are now suffering the lords' vengeance. And the killing of the Northumberland dragon in *Guy* 1 and the defeat of Colbrand in *Guy* 2 both involve the killing of monsters which pose a national threat. These close similarities only serve to underline the differences between the two parts. Guy's

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[234] Compare Fewster, p.83.

personal motives for undertaking combat differ in each part, as well as his mode of dress, travel, and so on, and we are supposed to believe by the end that Guy's behaviour in *Guy* 2 is better – both for him as an individual and for society – than the first. One of the ways in which the Auchinleck poet reinforces this message is by the use of trebling, which he uses differently in each part of the poem. The difference is effective because of the symmetry of the bipartite-type structure which leads us naturally to compare the two.

The most obvious grouping of three episodes is that in *Guy* 2 where the removal of the extraneous clutter of the Reinbrun material allows the three hero-and-villain-in-combat episodes to be placed consecutively. This is not so in the other versions. The three episodes share a very similar internal structure. Each opens with the hero learning why combat is necessary and that he, personally, is being sought. He agrees to help the victim (Earl Jonas in the first episode, Tirri in the second, England in the third). He meets the monarch who will have his support, either because Guy is to be his champion or because the monarch must see justice done. It is made clear that Guy's true identity is unrecognised, and he refuses to don rich clothes. He is armed, the enemy described, the fight begins. During a lull in the battle an episode occurs which illustrates the inherent wickedness of Guy's opponent: Amoraunt takes a drink himself and refuses one to the parched hero; Berard has Guy cast into the ocean at dead of night, bed and all; Colbrand refuses the disarmed Guy a weapon with which to continue the fight. Combat resumes after the lull and the enemy is defeated. The victim is restored, the hero refuses a reward, his identity is revealed to one person, he insists on leaving and does so. There are variants but they are few. For example the enemy is described earlier in the Tirri episode and Tirri's dream is inserted into the sequence early on. And in the third episode King Athelstan is both supportive monarch and victim (insofar as he

represents England), so in this episode Guy's meeting with the monarch doubles with his meeting with the victim rather than following it. But such variations are never so great as to detract from the general feeling of sameness in the episodes as a group.

Comparing this with the effect of the internal structuring of the corresponding episodes in *Guy* 1 the contrast is striking, for each one is structured differently. For example, in the first episode, where Duke Otous ambushes Guy, combat between hero and villain (the latter role is here taken by Otous's men) occurs at the beginning. The rest of the episode is concerned with the separation and reunion of the hero and his good friend, Herhaud. By contrast the third episode, set in Constantinople, involves two sets of villainy embodied in two sets of enemies. There is the open hostility of the Saracen host, and the covert plotting of the individual, Morgador. Hero-villain combat is alternated between the two. Battle between Guy and the Saracens early in the episode is followed by Morgador's first plot against Guy which fails. Guy and the Saracens go into battle a second time and then Morgador plots against Guy a second time, this time contriving to send him alone into the enemy camp. A third battle between Guy and the Saracens is the inevitable result and in Guy's victory lies Morgador's failure. Morgador's final move against Guy is his attack on Guy's pet lion and because of it Guy kills him. Thus in each case it is in the third and final confrontation that the villain is properly defeated. To call Morgador's moves against Guy "confrontation" may seem, because of their covert nature, something of a contradiction, but this, in essence, is what they are. The internal structure of the Constantinople episode is thus markedly different from the Otous episode and although space does not allow me to show it here the other four episodes of *Guy* 1 are structured differently again.

The close similarity in the order of events which make up the combat episodes in *Guy* 2 is therefore in marked contrast to the variable arrangements in the corresponding episodes in *Guy* 1. There are some differences within the episodes in *Guy* 2 but never so much as to disturb our sense that an orderly, even pre-determined pattern is unfolding. The internal repetition suggests order and control, a suggestion which is enhanced by the consecutive trebling. This has the effect that the episodes quickly feel both familiar and comforting, in the way that a ritual feels comfortingly familiar and predictable. And we can sense the relationship of the trebled episodes because of the obvious structural similarities. There is no such feeling to be had from the corresponding sequence in *Guy* 1 where, because of the variation in the arrangement of events, they seem to bear little unspoken relation to one another except that they centre on a single hero.

This is not to suggest that Guy's adventures before marriage are grouped together randomly and have in consequence no relation: other patterns are in fact at work to make us feel otherwise. Because of the repetition of the combat scenes, and because we have heard or read such stories before, we do not expect the hero to lose any of his fights, and because of this there is the sense of a traditional pattern being worked out. This is compounded by the use of trebling in *Guy* 1 as a whole: there is trebling internally within some episodes as I have already noted, trebling which contributes to our sense of the autonomy of each episode and which may be pertinent to our interpretation of it. But more importantly there is trebling which embraces the whole section: Guy's refusal of a lady at Rouen, another at Constantinople, and his marriage to a third, Felice, is one example; another is when Guy, having gained the promise of Felice's love claims her three times, twice resulting in his leaving home to win fame, and only on the third occasion resulting in their marriage. Such trebling is intensifying:

the refusal of the second lady is more difficult than that of the first just as it is increasingly difficult to carry out Felice's demands, but in both sequences the emphasis is on the third and final instance when the hero gets his reward. Trebling of this sort allows us to feel that the hero is creeping towards his goal despite what might easily otherwise be seen as a confusing hotchpotch of events and it reminds us of the overall pattern which holds these events together. But it differs from that in *Guy* 2 not least for the obvious reason that it repeats single incidents, and over a wide spread of events, as opposed to the repetition of a series of autonomous incidents always following the same order with each group placed consecutively.

The narrative in *Guy* 1 then is patterned in such a way that the adventure episodes are linked to the whole while preserving the hotchpotch effect of the whole untouched. In contrast *Guy* 2 uses trebling to counteract any sense of randomness and to suggest control and orderliness. This ritualistic quality in *Guy* 2 reinforces the implication in that part of the poem that Guy's life as lived there has a meaningful purposefulness as against his previous life which, if not lacking in direction, is potentially disorientating, as his near marriage (a near miss) to the princess at Constantinople amply illustrates. The patterning reinforces the thematic content.

If the last episode in a trebled sequence carries the narrative weight then the most telling image of *Guy* 2 is the one of Guy saving England. Here the hero is clearly human, directed by God it is true, but without the strong hints of supernatural, divine qualities which he gathers about him in the Tirri episode (where onlookers think he may be an angel specially sent to rid them of Berard). On his final combat hangs the fate of the English nation; the boundaries of this immediate motive are not pushed outwards to encompass the good of Christianity as well as justice for an individual as happens in the

Earl Jonas episode, or into moral questions of social behaviour as in the Tirri episode. The final image of Guy in combat with which we are left and from which the narrative moves forwards into a new phase, is one in which Guy is unambiguously human, fighting in a clearly secular nationalist cause, and evidently with God's approval. We are left with a strong feeling that earthly concern for England's well-being is legitimate and that God and men need each other if England is to be a decent place. This is certainly not a poem, as other commentators have noted, which advocates complete withdrawal from the world, despite the influence on *Guy* 2 of the story of St Alexis's life.[235]

So we come to Guy's death. It comes at the end of the Auchinleck and Caius versions but is some 1,250 lines from the end of the Cambridge University version. Guy's death in the latter is marked by a prayer, and as I have already mentioned there follows a blank column in the manuscript before the narrative resumes to tell of the further adventures of Herhaud and Reinbrun. The scribal idiosyncrasy of the Cambridge University version which in Robinson's opinion gives the 'immediate impression […] that he is beginning a new story' would, together with the prayer which follows Guy's death, encourage a physical and mental pause and with this the sense that we are about to move on to a new stage in the narrative. But it does not have the authority of a new beginning as does the start of the Auchinleck *Reinbrun* with its new opening topos and so on, and the material with which it deals is in fact a continuation of a story already begun: Reinbrun is not here elevated to the status of a hero at the centre of his own self-contained tale as he is in MS Auchinleck. Certainly the Cambridge University poet seems to feel that Guy's death is momentous enough not to be allowed to give the impression of being one more incident in a long string of incidents. But how much

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[235] For example, Susan Crane Dannenbaum, '*Guy of Warwick* and the Question of Exemplary Romance', *Genre*, 17 (Winter, 1984), 351-74 (pp.357- 63).

more is Guy's holy death emphasised as the rightful culmination of a period of striving in the Auchinleck version, where its structural position at the end of the self-contained fairytale sequence with its single-hero focus, lends it weight. It is a happy-ever-after ending for the hero in the place where we know it should be in such a story: unequivocally at the end. As such it gives a firm and satisfying sense of closure. The Caius manuscript also ends with Guy's death but it has abandoned Herhaud in prison in Africa and this is where it leaves him: a weakness in a romance where connections are important and loose ends are on the whole avoided.[236]

The metrical break and structural differences in the Auchinleck *Guy* are explicable in terms of the arrangement of material within the poem as a whole and suggest that the poet was sensitive to traditional narrative patterns and their relation to meaning. So what of the Family Pattern, at least partially present, in *Guy*? What is its significance and does this differ from its significance in the other versions?

As has been noted previously, although elements of the Family Pattern are discernible in the Auchinleck *Guy* it is not present in its complete form. It starts after Guy's marriage with the protagonist in an adult role. Felice is separated from Guy, the father of her child, when Guy leaves home; that child, Reinbrun, is reared away from home; a long time passes; finally there is a parental, though not family, reunion. The separation of the Reinbrun story concentrates attention onto the adult relationships of the Family Pattern.

Amongst the romances, *Guy* is well rationalised at the verbal level: there are not many places where it is not a near-naturalistic story, plausible with a relatively small

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[236] The remaining text is an addition to what has been reproduced with some changes from 'Narrative Patterning and *Guy of Warwick*', see note 1.

suspension of disbelief. On the whole, enmity and love are manifested through fighting and marriage, journeys are undertaken on foot or horseback, disguise and cunning are human and credible, and so on. As a consequence the poem does not invite us to view it as a symbolic story; nevertheless *Guy* 1 is the tale of a young man's development through childhood to maturity and marriage with the customary problems of dominant father and sibling figures.

In *Guy* 1, Herhaud is quickly established as a helpful father-figure, teacher, guardian, and companion to Guy. Early on, Guy establishes his symbolic superiority to Herhaud by having him thoroughly vanquished (killed, as we are led to believe), though distancing himself from the killing by arranging for a contemporary, Otous, to be responsible.

Otous is in part a rebellious sibling-figure. At Guy's very first tournament he and his peers (all sibling-figures) get the measure of each other.[237] Guy proves his superiority by winning the tournament but the envious Otous (895-96) never accepts this. His black villainy, revealed later by his ambush of the wounded Guy, allows Guy to justify their enmity at the literal level. Remembering that character splits may have multiple significance, in a sense Otous also represents the darker side of Guy's own nature, one who tolerates no check on the assertion of his will. Otous is, too, the dark side of knighthood: his dangerous strength is not contained by scruple. The protagonist refuses to compromise with this aspect of his own personality and wishes it dead, but this proves difficult to achieve. Even when Otous is killed all that he represents re-emerges in the person of his nephew Berard who lives on to fight his cause. It is the dark side of Guy's own nature which is responsible for negating the power of his father over him by

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[237] Many of the peers who figure throughout the poem are here: Gayer, Otous, Reyner, Lowayn, Gaudiner.

arranging the death of his father in the person of Herhaud, and it is only because Herhaud is a friendly father-figure and therefore no threat to the protagonist, that he allows him to live.

If Otous is Guy's darker side, then Tirri is a favoured aspect. Being favoured, he is weak and unthreatening. He emerges from amongst Guy's many contemporaries to become someone with whom Guy is at pains to bind himself closely: they plight their troth as 'worn breþer' (4908), undertaking mutual support at Guy's instigation (4905-28). Tirri's reputation is that of a knight second in valour only to Guy (5109-12) yet despite this his success and happiness in life are totally dependent on Guy. It is Tirri's frequent failure to see beyond appearances and his tendency to underestimate the power of evil which often lead him into trouble, while Guy's perspicacity, his recognition that evil cannot compromise, only dissimulate, and his willingness to dissimulate himself in a good cause, give Guy the greater success against evil. Tirri, as a projection of the protagonist, lacks those particular qualities which allow a hero to achieve the perfect social integration of maturity. Tirri himself is only able to marry and take up his rightful position as earl because of Guy's strength in compensation for his own weakness.[238]

Relations between the protagonist, his father, and sibling-protagonist figures are at the centre of all the episodes leading up to Guy's marriage.[239] At a symbolic level they tell of the protagonist jostling for dominance both with his contemporaries and within himself as one aspect of his character asserts itself over another. By the time he returns

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[238] During Tirri's elopement his lack of urgency results in the near capture of the lovers and ultimately their separation, and Tirri himself later describes his naivety at that time as 'gret child-hod' (4617). Later, deceived by Otous's gestures of goodwill, Tirri is thrown into Otous's prison; Guy however, always suspicious of Otous, remains free to rescue his friend (by the judicious use of disguise). Fewster, with reference to the similarities between the stories of Guy and Tirri but without reference to the Family Pattern argues that Tirri is 'an alter ego figure to Guy', 'a parallel but failing version of Guy himself', p.97.

[239] The Northumberland dragon is a sibling-figure; with its unrestrained aggression and huge destructive power it embodies the qualities of the sibling-villains of *Guy* 1, drawing them together in one memorable image.

to Felice he has established his identity, stamped his authority on his world, and shown his fitness for marriage.

When the Family Pattern (truncated though it turns out to be), commences in *Guy* 2 it is in many respects familiar. When Guy leaves home a woman is separated from the father of her child. Guy is responsible for the separation and, like other Family Pattern fathers, he shows an ambivalence towards his wife. While he blames her for the wrongs which his love for her have led him to commit (stanzas 24/25) and thus for their separation, this does not appear to alter his love for her (stanzas 32/33). Like Bevis and Isumbras, other Family Pattern father-protagonists, Guy leaves home himself.

Like most other Family Pattern mothers Felice is a model of virtue although unlike them she does not leave home. While females are influential in *Guy*, their experience is of little interest: Felice is significant only insofar as she is a projection of Guy's feeling about her in relation to himself. Guy perceives his wife as remaining loyal to him throughout, the poem showing her distress at his leaving home and later her exemplary behaviour in his memory. But crucially his complaint against her at the symbolic level is not that she is distracted from him by motherhood; rather he rejects her influence over him. As a woman she has been crucial to his identity as best knight, an identity he now rejects as falling short of ideal. It is to reforge his identity that he leaves home, abandoning his old identity, and abandoning her.

Guy's attitude to his son, though he is as yet unborn, is one of protector and provider, though he distances himself from the role even before Reinbrun's birth, by appointing Herhaud, already established as a benevolent father-figure, to be his child's teacher and helper. Throughout the romance Guy provides for his son by commending him to the

care of others who thereby become father-figures.[240]   There is no interest in the experiences of the child in the Auchinleck *Guy* (although we learn in retrospect that he is stolen from home) where these are recounted as a separate romance and where Guy never meets his son.

Unfettered by family ties, Guy approaches again the adult world. He keeps his formerly attained status of best knight but arranges to be unrecognisable as such.   While childhood is spent striving for supremacy over one's parents and peers, adult life is spent striving to maintain that supremacy. But although Guy wishes to remain superior, he spurns reputation as being a powerful element of superiority and travels incognito.

The archetypes of youth do not entirely lose their potency for the adult. Relationships in the adult world are seen in terms of the prototypes of childhood, the father and sibling-protagonist figures which shaped Guy's development from child to adulthood. The three main figures in the first major episode following Guy's departure from home as a pilgrim, Jonas, Triamour and the sultan, are Guy's peers (like him adults and fathers), and are modelled on the father-figures, threatening or otherwise, of his youth. Their relations with their sons are all crucial. Jonas is a formerly strong father-figure who has lost status and become weak; his sons are weak but good. Triamour, though threatening to Jonas, has moved from strength to weakness in terms of his general position in the world through the action of his son. The sultan is a strong figure whose son is evil. Strong or weak, the well-being (life and reputation) of the son depends upon the father, and the fate of father is closely bound to that of the son. Although arising from the actions of the sons, the central quarrel of the episode is between the fathers and it is Guy, also a father, who brings about a just conclusion. Later, in Guy's final combat

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[240]   See stanzas 31, 228 and 276. In fact all Guy's relations with Reinbrun take place by proxy as even the briefest look at *Reinbrun* makes clear: for Reinbrun the protagonist father-figures abound but there is no father in person.

against Colbrand, Guy fights as champion for the English king, another father-figure. However exciting and important the experiences of youth, the adult world is the world of real power.

The central episode of *Guy* 2 deals with the recurring necessity of the assertion of good over evil within oneself. So here relations between protagonist splits come to the fore. Tirri keeps the symbolic relationship to Guy that he acquired in *Guy* 1 and Berard takes on that of his uncle, Otous. The struggle between different elements of personality is as crucial in adulthood as in childhood.

Tirri is consistent as a character throughout the poem. In *Guy* 2, dispirited in the face of difficulty, fearful and suspicious, he is no match for the evil Berard and unable to see past appearances to the true identity of his pilgrim companion. In opposition to Tirri stands Berard. His most outstanding feature is his propensity to act in an overheated, unmeasured way. This lack of courtesy later hardens into lawlessness when he threatens the emperor with war (stanzas 173/4, stanza 203). He is several times associated with madness or wildness, both lying outside the bounds of civilised behaviour which allows the harmonious co-existence of individuals.[241] Berard's selfish desires lead him to operate outside the code which binds society, and his strength makes him as dangerous as the mad or the wild. Symbolically he is an aspect of masculinity as dangerous in maturity as in youth.

The emperor, a father-figure to the extent that this is presented as peer rivalry, harnesses Berard's power although ultimately cannot control him. And in so far as the episode suggests that the supremacy of one aspect of personality over another is ultimately a

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[241] Madness: stanzas 175 (5-6), 178 (1-2); 208 (1-2). Wildness: stanza 173 (1-3).

matter for the individual; the great strength required of Guy to defeat Berard suggests the immensity of the inner struggle.[242]

Tirri's function as a projection of the protagonist is more strongly suggested in *Guy* 2 than previously. When they meet here they are in obviously similar situations: each has fallen from riches to rags and shares a common enemy in Berard, Tirri suffering for Guy's deed against Otous. Crucially, though, Guy's poverty is voluntary while Tirri's is enforced. To Tirri poverty brings distress and renders him powerless; to Guy poverty allows freedom and power. In Tirri Guy creates a figure of himself in the common condition of many, decent but weak, doomed to suffer at the hands of the strong and unscrupulous. As in *Guy* 1, Tirri's well-being depends on Guy: it is Guy's resolve and bravery in the face of Berard's enmity which lead to Tirri's restoration.[243]

The parental reunion which precedes Guy's death is minimal by any standards since Guy can only look at Felice before he dies. Unusually for the romances the father controls the timing of the reunion. Although the Family Pattern has until now formed the framework for events, the typical ending has been distorted so as to show how Guy's final identity is free of dependency on personal family relationships. Human love is not longer his ultimate motivation. This is entirely consistent with the sharp focus, at the symbolic level, on the hero's concern for himself and the nature of his manliness.

A second distortion lies in the fact that the final reunion does not include Guy's son. It is a familiar feature of the fairytales and romances of this study that the hero's youthful

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[242] As in the fight against Colbrand, Tirri's perception of Guy as an angel is an indication of Guy's high self-esteem at this point.

[243] Tirri does have something to contribute: from his sleeping mouth comes the ermine which leads Guy to the marvellous sword with which he defeats Berard (stanza 162).

efforts culminate in marriage and the attainment of worldly power; the twin peaks of achievement are one domestic and one worldly. In maturity, each is an area of ongoing adult activity. The Family Pattern is a model of domestic relations, incorporating worldly affairs into a family context. The readjustment of male identity in terms of worldly status, required on the attainment of fatherhood with its attendant new responsibilities and new relationships, is one of the Pattern's familiar themes. The protagonist-figure in *Guy* 2 is one whose story concentrates on his worldly role as a mature man of power; importantly this is power in a man who has already established his reputation amongst other men. *Guy* 2 ignores the problem which fathers must face of the threat and challenge of their sons as they grow up, since in the normal run of things sons must become equal to their fathers as adults, and equality with Reinbrun would be incompatible with Guy's need to be supreme amongst men. The packaging of Reinbrun's story into a separate romance with Herhaud as chief father-figure allows Reinbrun to come to maturity without ever clashing with his real father. Most importantly, it protects Guy from being displaced by his son. Relations with his son are an issue from which the protagonist distances himself and a family reunion is, not surprisingly in view of this, undesirable given the symbolic meaning of such an event.

In general the Family Pattern tells an optimistic family tale. *Guy* 2 takes the framework it offers and develops one aspect of the web of experiences of which it is constructed, but rejects the end as being inconsistent with the message it wishes to convey. While it may be argued that self-esteem based on one's identity in the world, if positive, underpins successful relations within the family, *Guy* 2 charts the protagonist's struggle to achieve high self-esteem in a way which minimises the importance of family relations. High self-worth, expressed at the literal level as divine approval of Guy, is

the only worthwhile goal. The resulting story is not therefore in the spirit of the complete Family Pattern in which each family member has significance.

The Cambridge University and Caius versions of *Guy*, by interlacing Reinbrun's story with that of his father, remind us of Reinbrun's existence and divert us from attention to Guy's struggle as the matter of most importance. Yet these versions do not have a family reunion either, and symbolically their meaning is much the same as that in the Auchinleck *Guy*. The Auchinleck structure, which is more sharply focussed on Guy, better supports the symbolic meaning, and through this the literal message, of *Guy* 2 as the interlaced versions do not. The Auchinleck poet shows an awareness of traditional narrative devices and that he is, perhaps surprisingly in view of the highly rationalised surface of the poem, a sophisticate in their employment.

CHAPTER 6

CHAUCER: 'THE CLERK'S TALE' AND ITS RELATION TO THE FAMILY

PATTERN TRADITION IN THE MIDDLE ENGLISH ROMANCES.

For a final look at the Family Pattern in Middle English narrative I turn away from popular verse romances to look at what Chaucer made of it in 'The Clerk's Tale'. Given the preference for borrowing and adaptation in medieval authors it should not be surprising to find the Family Pattern among the stories of *The Canterbury Tales*. This chapter will argue that the 'The Clerk's Tale' makes use of a Family Pattern of the sort found in fairytale and romance, and it is only if it is read in the context of this tradition that its puzzles may be resolved. The Griselda story makes uncomfortable reading because of the extreme and callous behaviour of its two main characters, and this behaviour has long been felt to require a satisfactory explanation.

In 'The Clerk's Tale' Griselda, a mother, is separated from Walter, the father of her children. She is apparently rejected by him and sent back to her father's house some twelve years after the birth of their first child. (Such an extended gap between the birth of a child and the parental separation finds a parallel in *Horn*.). The children are reared away from home, being sent by Walter to Bologna in their infancy, and a long time passes before they return home to a happy family reunion.

'The Clerk's Tale' concerns those years of family life from the birth of children to their reaching adulthood, marked in other such stories by their becoming

marriageable. However, as in several other Family Pattern stories, the events leading up to the marriage of the future parents are recounted first. The courtship, if such Walter's abbreviated suit to Griselda can be called, and the Family Pattern, or pre- and post-marriage parts of the story, are structurally distinct but thematically related since it is through the events of the Family Pattern that Griselda keeps the promise she made to Walter before their wedding.

Chaucer's source for 'The Clerk's Tale', which he wrote probably between 1392 and 1395, was Petrarch's story, 'De obedientia ac fide uxoria mythologia'. Petrarch had, in 1373, translated from Italian into Latin the last of the tales in Boccaccio's *The Decameron* and included it, as part of a letter addressed to Boccaccio, in his collection, *Epistolae de rebus senilibus*[244]. Boccaccio, who had completed *The Decameron* some twenty years earlier, had in all probability set down in writing, perhaps for the first time, a tale the elements of which were already widespread in oral tradition throughout Europe[245].

In 1374, Petrarch revised his version and it is this revision which seems to have been the direct link with Chaucer. Although there is some disagreement over precisely which manuscript Chaucer used as his source, scholars agree that it

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[244] The dating of 'The Clerk's Tale' follows Larry D. Benson's section of the introduction to *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p.xxv. The title of Petrarch's tale translates as 'A Fable of Wifely Obedience and Faithfulness'. This translation and much other detail regarding sources is from *Riverside Chaucer*, p.880. The translation of Petrarch's version to which I refer is by R. D. French, as first published in his book, *A Chaucer Handbook* (New York: Appleton Crofts, 1927), pp.291 – 311, and reproduced in *Chaucer: Sources and Backgrounds*, ed. by Robert P. Miller (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp.137 – 52. French's translation is based on the Basle print of 1581. He emends the text where it seems corrupt, sometimes (his notes make clear) using Chaucer, where his text showed different and / or non – corrupt readings (French, p.291, note 74). The translation of Boccaccio's version to which I refer is *Giovanni Boccaccio: The Decameron*, trans. and introduced by G. H. McWilliam (London: Penguin, 1972), pp.813 – 24.

[245] William Edwin Bettridge and Francis Lee Utley discuss the difficulties of trying to identify a precise folktale source for Boccaccio's tale of Griselda. They identify a group of Turkish and Greek stories with elements similar to those of the Griselda story of the sort to which, they speculate, Boccaccio may have been exposed; see 'New Light on the Origin of the Griselda Story', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, XIII (Summer, 1971), 153 – 208. In so doing they challenge the previously widely accepted view which follows G. L. Kittredge and others in linking the tale to the Patience group of the Cupid and Psyche folktales. This article directs any interested reader to other work on the subject, in particular that of a principal exponent of the earlier hypothesis, whose work I have not seen, namely Dudley Griffith, *The Origin of the Griselda Story* (Seattle, 1931).

reflected the 1374 version[246]. In addition Chaucer referred to an anonymous French translation of Petrarch's version of 1373 which is thought to be preserved in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS fr.12459 (Paris MS fr. 12459) of uncertain date[247]. Considerable attention has already been paid to Chaucer's relations with his sources; here comparison will be made only where it throws light on his particular use of the Family Pattern.[248].

Before the story proper starts, the hero's credentials are presented. This is part of the standard opening procedure of Middle English romances, whether or not they are Family Pattern stories. Following this familiar process, 'The Clerk's Tale' pays attention to physical, mental, and social attributes, presenting in Walter a typical romance hero with his youth, strength, pleasing appearance, noble descent, and courteous manner.

Therwith he was, to speke as of lynage,

The gentilleste yborn of Lumbardye,

A fair persone, and strong, and yong of age,

And ful of honour and of curteisye;

Discreet ynogh his contree for to gye. (71-75)[249]

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[246] J. Burke Severs argues in his book, *The Literary Relationships of Chaucer's 'Clerkes Tale'*, Yale Studies in English, *96* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942), pp.59 – 101, that the 24 Latin MSS and prints he examined fall into four categories, of which the group he calls 'a', 'comes closer than any other group to yielding the true, revised, Petrarchan text of 1374', p. 101. The Basle 1581 print falls into this group (p.46, note 8). Germaine Dempster, 'Chaucer's Manuscript of Petrarch's Version of the Griselda Story', *Modern Philology*, 41, (1943 – 44), 6 –16, argues that Chaucer's source MS was a different one, closest to a MS in Severs's group 'b'. This group also reflects Petrarch's 1374 version (*Literary Relationships*, p.98).

[247] The Old French text used is reproduced as part of J. Burke Severs' article, *The Clerk's Tale*, in *Sources and Analogues of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales,* ed. by W. F. Bryan and Germaine Dempster (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1941), pp.288 – 331 (pp.297 – 331). Severs, in *Literary Relationships*, pp.135 – 211, argues that of the 20 MSS considered by him, Bibliothèque Nationale Paris MS fr. 12459 is the one which 'most frequently reflects the readings in Chaucer's poem', p.192.

[248] See for example Helen Cooper, *The Canterbury Tales*, Oxford Guides to Chaucer, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp.188-191. Cooper gives further references on the subject.

[249] The text used throughout is the above-mentioned *Riverside Chaucer*, pp.138-53.

But then, unusually, a fault is explicitly noted in the hero by the narrator, who here makes the first of many comments critical of Walter's behaviour.

I blame hym thus: that he considered noght

In tyme comynge what myghte hym bityde,

But on his lust present was al his thoght,

As for to hauke and hunte on every syde.

Wel ny alle othere cures leet he slyde,

And eek he nolde – and that was worst of alle –

Wedde no wyf, for noght that may bifalle. (78-84)

Walter's lack of concern for the future is a fault felt acutely by his subjects as well as the narrator. His subjects' anxiety for an heir and a stable future sets in motion the events leading up to Walter's marriage. His subjects plead eloquently with him that he should:

'Delivere us out of al this bisy drede,

And taak a wyf, for hye Goddes sake!

For if it so bifelle, as God forbede,

That thurgh youre deeth youre lyne sholde slake,

And that a straunge successour sholde take

Youre heritage, O wo were us alyve!

Wherfore we pray you hastily to wyve.' (134-40)[250]

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[250] A similar anxiety is expressed by a ruler in *Octavian* N, 64-69.

Note that Walter's disregard for the future also constitutes a failure to accord with the values encapsulated in the Family Pattern by which social and family stability are maintained throughout generations. The failure is significant at both literal and symbolic levels.

The opening lines initially appear to establish Walter as the poem's protagonist, the character upon whom our attention is focused and whose fortunes in marriage we will follow through until the end of the story. As the story progresses, however, the protagonist seems to be not Walter but Griselda: her plight and behaviour is often the focus of attention at the literal level, and she commands enormous sympathy for her treatment at Walter's hands. Chaucer in particular, although taking the lead from his sources, enlarges sympathy for Griselda, and contributes to a view of this as Griselda's story, the tale of patient Griselda. Walter is indeed an unusual protagonist in that few would instinctively tend to identify with him. Boccaccio, Petrarch, the Old French writer, and Chaucer all say that they cannot understand his behaviour.[251] The dreadful nature of this drives one towards sympathy for Griselda even if it is difficult to identify with her responses.

It is crucial, however, that Walter is recognised as the true protagonist, for he is in fact the creator of the story at the symbolic level, and as such is the one who governs the nature of character and event. Once recognised as the true centre of the story in his role as Family Pattern husband and father, Walter's behaviour is no longer mystifying and Griselda's responses are no longer baffling. Although 'The Clerk's Tale' is a symbolic Family Pattern story it is related in strongly realistic

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251 Bocaccio's narrator says Walter's actions were 'remarkable … for their senseless brutality' (*The Decameron*, translated by G. H. McWilliam, Harmondsworth, 1972, p.813); Petrarch says his desire was 'more strange than laudable…to try more deeply the fidelity of his dear wife, which had been sufficiently made known by experience' (Miller, p.145). O/F calls Walter's motivation 'ymaginacion merveilluse' (Severs' The Clerk's Tale, p.311). For the purpose of this chapter it is not necessary to enter arguments about how far the four authors in The Clerk's Tale are separate from Chaucer, the narrator; I shall therefore treat them as one and the same.

mode so that the audience is inevitably led to view it as a realistic tale. However, the tension thus created results in uncertainty and confusion for the audience. The story of Walter and Griselda is not to be explained comfortably in terms of real life, even as exceptional real life events, because these two are symbolic figures in a symbolic story.

At the start of the story Walter, as its protagonist-creator, perceives himself to be at the centre of a happy, stable world, enjoying all the benefits of youth, wealth, and power. Into this 'initial situation' is introduced a lack: traditionally enough, the hero lacks a wife. But Walter is in two minds about marriage and as usual in such stories ambivalent feeling is manifest through separate characters. His reluctance to give up his bachelor freedom is expressed through his role as protagonist so we can take this to be a feeling fundamental to him (and his extreme behaviour later bears this out); nevertheless he accepts the necessity of attending to the future through marriage, a feeling which, as the story's protagonist-creator, he arranges to be expressed through his people.

Walter reconciles his ambivalent feelings to the point where he can decide of his 'free wyl' (150) to marry. Crucially, his drive for control continues to be his primary characteristic in his role as protagonist. He insists on choosing his own wife and unsurprisingly chooses the woman most likely to be able to satisfy his primary requirements which are obedience and children. He meets no opposition to the marriage. Janicula is in no way a threatening father-figure, and Walter is not required to win Griselda by means of tasks or other ordeals. Extraordinary though it may be in terms of realism, Walter's wish for total power means that he arranges

events so that even Griselda is unaware that she is to be the bride until a few minutes before the wedding.

Although it is condensed, the first part of 'The Clerk's Tale' has a Proppian structure. The hero lacks a wife, he leaves home, acquires a bride, marries, and returns home. Significantly, Walter does not have to win Griselda through confrontation; rather he requests the object of his desire in a way which cannot be refused[252]. Walter has not been tested for his worth as a husband although his peremptory method of gaining a wife does demonstrate his significant characteristics which is, after all, the function of testing.

After the marriage of Walter and Griselda, which brings the first move to a close, the Family Pattern begins. Events are patterned traditionally. The severance of happy relations between husband and wife is abrupt and linked to the arrival of their first child. It is 'whan that this child had souked but a throwe' (450) that Walter first feels the need to try his wife. Later, the connection between Walter's desire and the baby's existence, which has been suggested by the timing of the test, is made explicit, although again his anxiety is displaced. He tells Griselda that his people are unhappy at the idea of future subjection to a pauper's daughter:

'… I desire, as I have doon bifore,

To lyve my lyf with hem in reste and pees.

I may nat in this caas be recchelees;

I moot doon with thy doghter for the beste,

Nat as I wolde, but as my peple leste.' (486-90)

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[252] Janicula cannot refuse Walter his daughter if he is to remain Walter's 'feithful lige man' (Severs' The Clerk's Tale, p.310); see pp.304 – 15.

Again Walter is using his subjects to express one aspect of his ambivalent feeling, here by misrepresentation rather than by speaking through a character. Walter's fabrication is a rationalisation of his desire as a husband to be rid of the child which has come to dominate his wife's attention, but it is also, more overtly, a means of testing his wife's loyalty to him. While consistent with the surface level themes of the story, this concern with his wife's loyalty is a reflection of his underlying desire, so typical of Family Pattern husbands, to command his wife's total and undistracted devotion. Walter has previously made clear what form that loyalty should take:

'I seye this: be ye redy with good herte

To al my lust, and that I frely may,

As me best thynketh, do yow laughe or smerte,

And nevere ye to grucche it, nyght ne day?

And eek when I sey "ye," ne sey nat "nay,"

Neither by word ne frownyng contenance?' (351-56)

It is difficult to think of another instance of the Family Pattern in which the tacit expectations of the husband, which belong to the underlying drama, are given such forceful expression on the surface level of the story. Indeed, Walter illustrates beautifully how deeply unattractive is the character that results from the undisguised manifestation of a husband's underlying wishes; aspects of motivation normally implicit in husband-figures are shown here unambiguously.[253]

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[253] Severs, p.5 – 6 (Lit. Rels. of Chaucer's The Clerk's Tale) points out that 'there are present in the tale of Griselda certain vestigial relics of the pre-literary form – elements which, either illogical or impertinent in the literary versions, become fully comprehensible only when we realise that they are traces of the primitive folk tale' p.5. Although he is by no means referring to the symbolic elements of the story, he includes as one of these 'relics' William's "inhumanly cruel and apparently motiveless testing" of Griselda which seem "illogical and inexplicable" unless "viewed as the demands of an other-world creature, himself bound by supernatural laws beyond his power to alter or abrogate, [when] they become easily comprehensible". p. 5 – 6. In this he

As usual in the Family Pattern, the trouble between husband and wife springs from the husband.

Whan that this child had souked but a throwe,

This markys in his herte longeth so

To tempte his wyf, hir sadnesse for to knowe,

That he ne myghte out of his herte throwe

This merveillous desir his wyf t'assaye;

Nedelees, God woot, he thoghte hire for t'affraye. (450-55)

Walter's hostility towards his wife, like that of some romance husbands, appears to be irrational and inexplicable[254]. The Clerk calls it 'merveillous' (454) and remarks that such a trial was unnecessary, going on (in a passage in which Chaucer expands on his sources) to condemn Walter's behaviour. But in terms of the symbolic drama Walter's determined action is neither 'merveillous' nor unnecessary. The main threat to Walter the husband's model wife is their children who have the potential not only to divert their mother's attention from him, particularly during the years of their greatest dependency, but also to develop wills of their own which might claim her separate allegiance. It is unsurprising, then, that he needs repeatedly to put her loyalty to him to the test.

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apparently follows D. D. Griffith, *The Origin of the Griselda Story*, Seattle 1931, University of Washington Publications in Lang. and Literature, viii, pp. 68 – 72) which I have not seen. Severs, in '*Literary Relations'*, points out that, 'there are present in the tale of Griselda certain vestigial relics of the pre-literary form – elements which, either illogical or impertinent in the literary versions, become fully comprehensible only when we realise that they are traces of the primitive folk tale', p.5. Although he is by no means referring to the symbolic elements of the story, he includes as one of these 'relics' Walter's 'inhumanly cruel and apparently motiveless testing' of Griselda which seem 'illogical and inexplicable' unless 'viewed as the demands of an other-world creature, himself bound by supernatural laws beyond his power to alter or abrogate, [when] they become easily comprehensible', pp.5-6. In this he apparently follows D. D. Griffith, *The Origin of the Griselda Story,* pp. 68-72.

[254] Shakespeare makes much of this feature of the experience of Family Pattern husbands in *The Winter's Tale* by showing that Leontes' jealousy of Hermione and Polixenes is unfounded and a product of his imagination.

The lapse of time between the initial rupture of the happy marital relationship and its restoration is an interval filled in many of the romances by an account of the children growing up, or the husband's search for his wife. Instead of these, 'The Clerk's Tale' extends the wife's ordeal from the birth of the children to the family reunion, keeping the focus on the marital relationship by use of the traditional device of trebling. Parental confrontation, which usually leads swiftly to parental separation while the child is still young, is here twice repeated over a period of years so that separation takes place shortly before the concluding reunion.

The opening of each new test episode is heavily marked by an explicit statement of intent by the Clerk and by the repetition, in close conjunction, of the words 'markys', 'tempte', and 'wyf'. Firstly:

Ther fil, as it bifalleth tymes mo,

Whan that this child had souked but a throwe,

This markys in his herte longeth so

To tempte his wyf, . . .   (449-52)

Secondly:

                              . . . on a day

This markys caughte yet another lest

To tempte his wyf . . .   (618-20)

Thirdly:

After his wikke usage,

This markys, yet his wyf to tempte moore . . .

Ful boistously hath seyd hire this sentence. (785-91)

Although some aspects are condensed (most notably the description of the removal of the child from Griselda), and some are expanded (in particular Griselda's response to Walter), the second test episode is recognisably a repeat of the first, with events following the same pattern and the same agents filling the same roles (albeit that a different child is taken). The third episode stands apart: although similar in its broad structure, it differs obviously at the surface level. At the deep structural level it begins familiarly with Walter's verbal challenge to Griselda and her response, continuing with an account of the test as action. Here, however, no children are involved, the mother herself leaves home, the role of Walter's strong and wicked henchman has disappeared, and Griselda's weak and good father is given a role which has had no previous parallel. In none of this does Chaucer depart significantly from his sources insofar as structure is concerned; but he does change things at the variable level of the narrative. This is significant, and I will return to examine this point in more detail later.

The girl child is taken from Griselda first. At the literal level she is the least valued of the children. When she is born the Clerk remarks:

Al had hire levere have born a knave child;

Glad was this markys and the folk therfore,

For though a mayde child coome al bifore,

She may unto a knave child atteyne

By liklihede, syn she nys nat bareyne. (444-48)

The apparently more important son is removed in the second test. The third test is different in kind because it sees the removal of Griselda herself from the family home and from Walter. There is a sense of progression through the tests as they move towards the climactic, final episode: first the children and ultimately the wife are banished and this creates a dynamic movement towards the heart of the marriage, at the very essence of the relationship between husband and wife. This is Olrik's Achtergewicht. As often happens it is because the final episode is different in some way from the ones which precede it that it offers the possibility of change so allowing the narrative to move forwards. Here, the arrival of a woman generally believed to be Walter's new bride introduces a new element into the tests: the fact that she is really his daughter allows the family reunion to take place. The revelation of the identity of the children at one stroke ties up the loose ends left from all the tests: it restores the children removed previously and removes the threat to the marriage which was apparently contained in the third. By righting the wrongs perpetrated in all the tests and removing the means to further wrongs it plays a major part in drawing the story firmly to a close.

These episodes, which show at the literal level the protagonist testing his beloved, structurally (according to the Proppian model) are not tests at all but a struggle between the hero and villain. This is not to say that Griselda is to be thought of as literally a villain; clearly not. Yet she does, in Walter's eyes, pose a threat to the fulfilment of his desire to exercise his will in unchallenged freedom. Walter is in some ways the supremely confident hero, a husband and father-figure sure of his

standing in the world; but he lacks any guarantee of his freedom, and this lack governs the second move. The initial situation of a happy marriage is interrupted by his desire to try his wife, a desire entirely in keeping with the defining characteristic of the hero as he was in the first move. Consequently he challenges the one person who might threaten his freedom by the expression of her own will.

It may seem curious, even perverse, to regard Griselda as a villain, but it must be remembered that in this analysis the roles are cast at a deep level by Walter according to his point of view. Insofar as the hero's beloved can also be opposed to him as a villain, Propp notes that one character may take part in more than one 'sphere of action',[255] and in terms of the Family Pattern it is normal for husband and wife to be at odds at some point in the drama. Here the protagonist asserts himself over the villain Griselda by imposing his will over hers. Although there is of course no literal struggle because Griselda offers no resistance, the outcome of the struggle at the underlying level (Walter's successful assertion of himself), stands in ironic relation to the literal level. At this level it is Griselda who "wins" the struggle with her husband, paradoxically through the assertion of her own will which leads her to submit to his.

In keeping with Walter's status as protagonist-creator of the poem and his overwhelming desire for sovereignty, Walter is never without the power of retrieving Griselda. Physical separation is arranged so as to be minimal in terms of time as well as distance and when he is ready, Walter organises the family reunion. In his ability to do this he is unusual: Family Pattern husbands are usually separated from their wives at an early stage. Although they may themselves have contributed

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[255] See Propp, pp.79-83 on 'spheres of action'.

to the separation, Family Pattern husbands come later to lament the absence of their wives and are powerless to remedy the situation. Consistent with his desire to remain in control, Walter does not suffer the impotence, however remorseful, which afflicts many of his counterparts. Instead, his response to Griselda's suffering - pity - is one which does not leave him powerless and may indeed prompt action.[256] His pity is not an inwardly directed emotion in response to his own unhappiness but an outwardly directed response to the condition and behaviour of another.

Although not common, feelings of pity at the sufferings of their wives, are not unknown in other Family Pattern husbands: for instance, Octavian's pity for his wife prompts him to modify her punishment from death to banishment (*Octavian (N)*, 268-76). There pity prompts action but as a localised motive with localised effect. With Walter things are different. Pity has already motivated Walter to agree to his people's request to marry (142) and it is his consistent response to Griselda's suffering, although at first it fails to produce action.

When he is told of Griselda's response to the removal of her daughter:

Somwhat this lord hadde routhe in his manere,
But nathelees his purpos heeld he stille,
As lordes doon, whan they wol han hir wille.   (579-81)

Again on his wife's humble and dignified acceptance of her banishment from home, Walter is so moved that he 'wente his wey, for routhe and for pitee' (893). But at last, after Griselda's lack of resentment in her acceptance of Walter's apparent new bride, his pity prompts him to bring about the end of Griselda's suffering:

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[256] Walter feels pity in Petrarch's version but Chaucer develops its significance as motivation.

And whan this Walter saugh hire pacience,

Hir glade chiere, and no malice at al,

And he so ofte had doon to hire offence,

And she ay sad and constant as a wal,

Continuynge evere hire innocence overal,

This sturdy markys gan his herte dresse

To rewen upon hire wyfly stedfastnesse.

'This is ynogh, Grisilde myn,' quod he; . . .

'Now knowe I, dere wyf, thy stedfastnesse' –

And hire in armes took and gan hire kesse.   (1044-57)

By this stage in events, audiences are probably thinking that Walter's open trust in his wife has not come before time. Because he retains control of Griselda's experiences throughout, Walter is a less sympathetic husband than those in the romances who pay for their grievous mistreatment of their wives with personal suffering. We know that Walter can choose whether or not to act upon his feelings of pity and because he so often chooses to prolong the agony for Griselda, it is hard for the reader of the story to see his unkindness as justifiable.

But this is, we remember, a symbolic story, following a pattern in which the wife's loyalty is crucial to the development of the underlying drama, and in this respect Walter is no more in control of the reunion than any other Family Pattern husband. It is no surprise to those alert to the symbolic sequence that the reunion marks the end of Walter's need to try his wife, despite the fact that he seems to have

undergone no great development of character himself, since the timing of the reunion depends on the resolution of tensions in an underlying drama which are part of a fixed pattern. The timing is governed by the children reaching adulthood, signalled by the revelation of their identities. Now their demands on their mother can cease so that Walter need no longer require proof that her primary allegiance lies with him. In particular, it is their daughter's reaching marriageable age which explains the timing of Walter's change of heart towards his wife.

Adulthood for the Family Pattern female is signalled by her readiness to marry. It is not important that this girl's actual age is eleven years[257]. The boy child does not have

adult status either literally or symbolically when his identity is revealed, his function in the narrative being so limited that he is merely an extension, so to speak, of his sister. The children in this story are not the chief interest and we are told very little about them growing up. They leave home at an early age to be brought up by foster parents during which time their identity is not generally known. What little we do know of them is typical of Family Pattern children and their significance here is largely that of children coming between husband and wife.

In the eyes of the world the birth of a son is often more important than that of a daughter, a fact reflected in this story at the literal level and which we have seen has structural importance in the narrative. But in fact in terms of the symbolic drama the daughter is here a more significant character than her brother. She exists in the story both at the literal level as a child and at the symbolic level as a split of Griselda. She is, both literally and symbolically, Walter's creation; symbolically

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[257] Although this is absurdly young for marriage by modern, Western standards, the Wife of Bath for example tells us that she first married at the age of twelve, 'The Wife of Bath's Prologue' (4), *Riverside Chaucer*, p.105.

because she is Walter's projection of the innocence, the powerlessness, the beauty, and the desirability of his wife. She, the woman he does not have to test, moves closer towards supposed marriage with Walter as Griselda herself moves closer towards final proof of her worth. Just at the moment when Walter appears to be ready to marry his daughter, the need for a Griselda substitute disappears and he finally accepts Griselda as his wife. Importantly, Walter is protected at both the literal and symbolic levels from the implication of incestuous desire for his daughter by the attribution of a powerful and conscious purpose of testing Griselda; incest is not an issue in this story.

The graduated series of wife-tests leading to the climax of the hero's victory and reaffirmation of his marriage, and the Family Pattern structure with its carefully placed climax of the reunion, each assert a different conclusion: Walter is and is not in control. That this contradiction remains unresolved contributes to the tensions that permeate 'The Clerk's Tale'.

So what of Griselda, the mother-figure? Most Family Pattern mothers suffer exile, imprisonment and so on, either at the hands of their husband or with his implicit consent, with consequences that last for many years, but they are finally reunited with their husbands without a word of reproach. This is true of Griselda.

As with Walter, what defines Griselda is one characteristic of her Family Pattern counterparts. Broadly she shares their exemplary virtue, though for Griselda this has more than localised significance; specifically she unwaveringly subjects her own will to that of Walter, keeping the promise she made him before marriage and thus demonstrating her constancy. As a mother a contrary claim is made on her

attention and affections by the children, but while she loves her children (694-95) she never allows her maternal feelings priority, even to the point where she allows Walter to remove her children altogether and opens herself to the charge of monstrosity. Griselda's 'stedfastnesse' is essential to her integrity and lies at the heart of her suffering. For all Family Pattern mothers, constancy is a prerequisite for the family reunion, although never so obviously as in 'The Clerk's Tale'.[258] And just as the

characterisation of Walter reveals the underlying motivation of a Family Pattern father, the story shows equally that the protagonist's model wife, in her willing subjection to him, is as unsympathetic a personality as his own.

Chaucer counteracts this unsympathetic view of Griselda in part by emphasising her ability to suffer. It is clear that the happy outcome is dependant on her fortitude but at the literal level Walter's aggressive manipulation of Griselda is counterbalanced and eventually overwhelmed by Griselda's heroic capacity for suffering. Additionally Chaucer develops the Christian associations often linked to Family Pattern mothers in the romances where forbearance, selflessness and humility in the face of suffering are often linked to Christian piety or divine protection: witness Desonell in *Torrent* who renews her trust in God even as a direct result of the most dire adversity (1870-96), or Florent's mother in *Octavian (N)* who rescues her child from a ferocious lioness 'thorow Goddys grace' (460). Griselda stands in line with this tradition but again this aspect of her character is enriched. Referring to her humble birth the Clerk evokes a reminder of the birth of Christ Himself:

But hye God somtyme senden kan

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[258] see 1044-57.

His grace into a litel oxes stalle.   (206-07)

Besides suggesting a parallel between Griselda and Christ this image gives authority to the idea that goodness is not the sole province of the wealthy[259]. The biblical image of the 'oxes stalle', not found in Chaucer's sources, is evoked again in lines 395-99, (see below) and the association of Griselda with Christ is further strengthened later:

So wise and rype wordes hadde she,

And juggementz of so greet equitee,

That she from hevene sent was, as men wende,

Peple to save and every wrong t'amende.   (438-41)

This final couplet suggests Griselda as Christ-like, a significant development from Chaucer's sources which state in more general terms that Griselda was sent from heaven for the common good.[260]

Other traditional narrative elements are extended in significance for thematic purpose too. Recognition of a character's true identity normally takes place only when his or her outward appearance corresponds to their social rank; however in 'The Clerk's Tale' the familiar characteristics of clothing, physical beauty, behaviour, birth, and social standing, which constitute key elements of identity, centre on a mother-figure whose identity is never in doubt – except to Walter, who

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[259] Walter has suggested his belief in this earlier (155-58).

[260] The poem as an illustration of the relationship between God and man and related matters has received a great deal of critical consideration and I am not the first to notice that Griselda is Christ-like. For an overview of critical readings and further references see Cooper, pp.193-97.

needs to know if Griselda's identity (as true and loyal wife) is what she has said it is.

When Griselda dons her marriage clothes her situation echoes that of fairytale heroines like Cinderella who, in rags-to-riches wondertales, are rescued from poverty to marry

their prince. Griselda's transformed appearance on her wedding day, astonishing all those around her, reflects the protagonist's view of her worth.[261] Although here rich clothing does not reflect the protagonist's feeling about herself, as is often the case in such stories, the symbolic language is familiar to us.

Walter's idea of the perfect wife is one who willingly submits so wholly that her will is subsumed into his, and it is after Griselda has promised this that her appearance is transformed.[262] In effect she puts on Walter's will having cast aside her own as one might a garment and later this idea is given explicit expression at the literal level.

'For as I lefte at hoom al my clothyng,

Whan I first cam to yow, right so,' quod she,

'Lefte I my wyl and al my libertee,

And took youre clothyng; wherfore I yow preye,

Dooth youre plesaunce; I wol youre lust obeye.'   (654-58)

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[261] For a different view of Chaucer's use of clothing in the story see Gilmartin, Cooper.

[262] Griselda promises: 'as ye wole youreself, right so wol I. / And heere I swere that nevere willyngly, / In werk ne thoght, I nyl yow disobeye' (361-363).

In this speech, which derives from Petrarch, Griselda's rich attire is shown to be an explicit symbol of her willing submission to Walter. The fact that it is also a traditional symbol of worth and beauty reinforces what we are told explicitly about Walter's view of beauty and worth.

Later, when Griselda removes her rich clothes and leaves for her father's house clad only in a shift, she is placed firmly in the romance tradition of wives cast out. The pathetic vulnerability of mothers, which Griselda shares at this stage with her romance counterparts, is evoked through the several references to her nakedness as she makes her way to her former home. She shares too the dignity of the other exiles, in this case expressed through her own appeal to Walter that he will not insist that she goes 'smoklees' (875).

Loss of rich clothing might be expected to symbolise a refusal to be bound further by Walter's will and subsequent loss of worth in the protagonist's eyes, but in fact it does neither. Rather, Griselda's removal of her rich clothing before leaving home is an explicit response to Walter's will, who has demanded that she takes her dowry and returns to her father's house (806-09). The simple garment she wears when she is banished to her former home is in exchange for the 'maydenhede' which she cannot retrieve, and so she returns there with no more than that which she brought to her marriage – her dowry: 'feith, and nakednesse, and maydenhede' (866). This scene reminds us that bowing willingly to Walter's will is an expression of Griselda's own will as it has been from the beginning. The underlying integrity which has been a mark of her beauty throughout remains unblemished.

In traditional terms, Griselda's departure dressed simply in a 'smok' suggests her return to the world of the undervalued and powerless. But the explicit symbolism shows how she, through that action, demonstrates her worth, the essence of her value and the source of the high esteem in which she is held by Walter. Ultimately it is this worth which gives her the right to have her rich clothing restored in the traditional affirmation of integrity. It is from her eschewal of independent power that Griselda's beauty – in the protagonist's eyes – derives. When, along with her restoration to her rightful position as Walter's wife, Griselda's rich clothes are eventually restored to her and she is 'honured as hire oghte' (1120), there is a strong feeling of harmony and of equilibrium restored. Even if we cannot agree with Walter on what constitutes womanly perfection, the satisfactory resolution of a traditional pattern reassures us.

While Griselda's poverty, in severe contrast to Walter's wealth, aligns her closely to many wondertale heroines rather than to those of romance, for physical beauty and exemplary virtue Griselda is not unusual amongst the peer-lovers of romance, although these are attributes normally confined to the upper classes. The story is also clearly familiar with the assumption running through the romances, that inner virtue as well as outer beauty is the prerogative of the higher social classes. Of Griselda it is said early in the poem,

God hath swich favour sent hire of his grace

That it ne semed nat by liklynesse

That she was born and fed in rudenesse,

As in a cote or in an oxe-stalle,

But norissed in an emperoures halle. (395-99)

However, 'The Clerk's Tale' extends the significance of Griselda's poverty stricken start in life by making clear that her fortitude is directly dependent on her poverty (211-17).

Griselda herself later makes this connection, beseeching Walter not to torment his new bride as he has done her, for since she is well-bred:

'She koude nat adversitee endure

As koude a povre fostred creature.'   (1042-43)

Suffering inflicted by poverty, so the story teaches us, can lead us to patience, a virtue learned, not inherited. The significance of poverty on the surface level of the story is taken far beyond the symbolic wondertale element on which it is based. Straightforward glorification of wealth and material beauty, is rejected as well as the notion that virtue and appearances are inextricably interdependent.

Nonetheless, the parallel use of traditional symbolism means that when Griselda dons her fine clothes for the final time, the beauty of virtue, which has been firmly located in poverty, is extended to a redeemed upper class of the rich and powerful.

'The Clerk's Tale', then, is a Family Pattern with its two main characters falling wholly within the Family Pattern tradition. In fact, both Walter and Griselda represent the symbolic essence of parent-as-lover figures with singular lack of disguise. Of course, this comes at the price of making them unsympathetic characters and their actions unpleasant and difficult to understand. Neither Chaucer

nor Petrarch appears comfortable with either of the main characters: Walter's behaviour is condemned; and Griselda is not recommended as a model[263].

Chaucer's version of the story shows a marked interest in Griselda, even more so than Petrarch's, whose lead in developing a realistic portrayal of character and situation Chaucer follows. For instance, when she is expelled from her home in the final "test" she makes a speech (852-61, Chaucer's addition) in which she makes clear that she is not unmoved by the contrast between Walter's behaviour when they were first married and now. In addition Chaucer takes greater pains than his sources to dispel any idea of Griselda as an uncaring mother by adding 35 lines of his own focusing mainly on her joy at being reunited with her children (1079-113) and highlighting her pathetic appeal[264]. Thus on the surface level at least Griselda becomes a more rounded figure than in previous portraits; stubborn, it is true, but human, not monstrous, and therefore a more sympathetic character than she might otherwise be. She is juxtaposed against a Walter who displays even less sympathy to his wife than Petrarch's protagonist, increasing the pathos of her situation as a result.

Chaucer's development of the character of Griselda shows him responding to the story's surface level as he finds it transmitted through Petrarch rather than to its power as a symbolic drama. He makes some minor structural changes to clarify the narrative progression, insignificant in terms of the Family Pattern, but his major contribution to the story is in thematic development, extending and deepening what he finds in his sources.

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[263] For example: Chaucer, 451-62 makes more forceful comments found in Petrarch, p.145. Boccaccio is silent on the point.

[264] Perhaps the role of suffering woman was what attracted Chaucer to this story – Family Pattern stories often have such a figure. 'The Man of Law's Tale' also focuses on a suffering woman – Constance.

The overall effect of these developments is that Griselda's suffering and her responses become the main (explicit) interest of the story. In fact however, as we have seen, this is Walter's story. If we do not read it as such we may never feel his actions are in any way explicable, except perhaps by the dictates of perversity. The same may be also said for Griselda's suppression of her maternal feelings. This disjunction between the symbolic and literal story creates a tension within 'The Clerk's Tale' which is heightened by the extraordinary realism of the rendition and the frequent interjections of bemusement or condemnation from the narrator regarding characters' behaviour. (Again this is a feature which Chaucer develops from Petrarch.) Ultimately the storyteller, be it the Clerk or Chaucer, admits that Griselda cannot be found in real life (1164-69 and 1180-82).

In 'The Clerk's Tale', Chaucer has created a work of art of great richness and subtlety which is of enduring interest. To what extent the narrator is felt to be sympathetic or even alive to the nuances of the underlying drama is debatable, but certainly as far as the Family Pattern itself is concerned, 'The Clerk's Tale' shows that this Pattern, which remains central and integral, the driving force of the story, is a capable vehicle for sophisticated ideas.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

This study set out to investigate the influence of traditional narrative on medieval literature, but the breadth of narrative type embraced by its title meant that an immediate narrowing of focus would have to take place if it were not to become unwieldy. The fairytale was chosen for attention from the wide variety of genres encompassed within traditional narrative, and from medieval literature its close cousin, Middle English romance. I wanted to find out to what extent certain traditional narrative features appear in romance. What effects, if any, do they have? Might it be that the traditional narrative features, commonly regarded with disparagement in romance, be in fact strengths, as capable of telling quite complex and subtle stories as effectively as more naturalistic means?

Middle English verse romance was chosen because fairytale features are readily apparent in many examples even on a cursory reading, and I identified in several of them a particular story pattern found in a number of both romances and the fairytale: the Family Pattern. This exists as a narrative shape, discernible in individual stories by peeling away the details at the literal level which give it expression. From the number of illustrations which I give from fairytale and romance, it is apparent that there is a fair degree of variety and versatility in renditions of the Family Pattern while at the same time the events and situations which give expression to each of the basic elements of the Family Pattern are often very similar in type. The remarkable coherence of the Family Pattern in fairytales and the romances lends weight to a view of this as a symbolic pattern: inner experience is projected out onto the surface of the story, and given expression as the literal level of the narrative.

The study looked closely at the structural and stylistic characteristics of fairytale narrative and their influence in my chosen group of romances. Despite appearances, and their very real differences, the two genres nevertheless have a close relationship, sharing many identifiable narrative features. Both favour highly repetitive and predictable patterns, like groups of three, polarisation, or the introduction of difficulty into a stable situation and the subsequent move through struggle or tests to arrive at the return of stability and a happy ending. Strongly drawn, improbably exaggerated situation and character are commonplace along with stock characters; these narratives appear to have no interest in what we might call realistic, psychologically individualised personality. They eschew what is abstract in favour of the concrete, projecting the intangible, such as emotion, into tangible form. The universal and commonplace are preferred to the personalised. The supernatural figures highly in both genres but is only one of the ways in which each genre pays little attention to a naturalistic portrayal of the world. These narrative features are characteristic of fairytale and romance, clearly discernible in a large number of narratives despite considerable variation in the way individual stories are told.

Fairytale and romance flaunt their implausibility; they wear it openly, but nevertheless demand attention and audience involvement. We travel through the tale with the storyteller as guide, expected usually to identify with the hero from whom all other characters take their significance. Such stories quickly become comfortingly familiar, even where the particular story is a new one; because the universal is favoured it is easy to identify or condemn and we can usually be sure that good will triumph over evil, or that our hero will win through in the end.

Through the use of such narrative features storytellers are able to suggest and convey meaning. Trebling rarely involves repetition without variation: much more common is repetition with variation, so that the final instance of a sequence contains some small variation by which the narrative advances. Polarisation creates tension; beautiful clothes may suggest inner beauty. Since it is a symbolic story, the Family Pattern combines comfortably with other traditional story narrative techniques by which meaning is not worn openly; however, like them it can be an effective means of communication. A skilful storyteller can utilise the potential for meaning contained in these narrative devices to enhance the tale: this may be done well, or badly.

My case studies show how in the romances the Family Pattern proves to be a useful narrative shape to tell stories which are, at the literal level, concerned with contemporary issues such as concerns for future stability through patrilinear governance, the place of male aggression in a well-ordered society, and the contribution of the individual to stable and just societies. Of course any society is made up of individuals and the Family Pattern remains very much concerned with individual experience, albeit of a universal kind. The Family Pattern itself is intrinsically optimistic, with struggle and tension leading ultimately to calm and stability. Some storytellers utilise the power of this narrative progression to enrich and reinforce the particular tale they are telling; others seem perhaps not to notice it, or to find its message uncomfortable, giving rise to disturbing tensions between the literal and symbolic levels of stories.

My four case studies looked at the Family Pattern from each of the four possible viewpoints: son, daughter, mother, father. The first, *William*, is a drama of growing up.

It shows an author skilfully manipulating a double Proppian structure with separate central figures, one of whom is the protagonist and the other a split of the protagonist, bringing them together at the end in a socially well integrated hero perfectly suited to fulfil the role determined by his identity as king. While at one level *William* is simply a charming and curious fantasy, the traditional narrative devices of trebling, externalisation (most strikingly in the animal identity motifs), the Proppian double structure and use of splitting are skilfully combined to present a coherent treatment of such weighty matters as the individual's subordination and control of his aggressive instincts for the social good, and the impact of romantic love on the individual and its implications for the part he or she plays in society. The poet emphasises his traditional structure by dispensing with unnecessary detail from his sources and carefully controlling the narrative sweep towards perfection. Traditional narrative techniques are harnessed in the cause of the poet's main didactic concern at the literal level: the role of the individual in society.

Emaré demonstrates an equally happy marriage of traditional narrative features with the poem's more overt message. It contains two Family Patterns, one nested inside the other, with the first not resolved until after the completion of the second. The double Family Pattern makes it clear that union with the peer-lover, although a happy ending to one story is, if it results in parenthood, but the prelude to the beginning of another period of difficulty before the child reaches adulthood and harmony is restored.

As in *William*, a prominent feature of *Emaré* is its preference for externalisation. This is evident, for example, in the mysterious robe and sea journeys which give concrete form to inner qualities (like sexuality), or states of mind (like the turmoil of taking on a new identity such as motherhood), in ways consistent with the literal level of the story.

Patterning in this poem is very strong: events like the protagonist's first wild sea journey repeat themselves in the second part, and the close repetition ensures that this does not go unnoticed. Juxtaposition and polarisation suggest meanings not made explicit. Splitting is also prominent, with the protagonist's relations with her parents and peer-lover under the spotlight as she experiences the strengths and weaknesses of her feminine identity. Identity is defined by role and appearance rather than inner psychological complexity.

As in *William*, *Emaré* uses traditional narrative techniques to deal with subtle and complex issues, in this case the ambiguities inherent in female sexual identity, and the contribution of a seemingly powerless woman to the well-being of a male dominated society. William and Emaré may be representative characters rather than well rounded individuals, but this very fact makes them more accessible as role models.

In *Guy*, the Family Pattern is not quite complete and initially it is not clear whether or not this is meaningful. Here is a poem well rationalised at the literal level and brim full of detail, distracting our attention from the traditional narrative features, which are present in all versions although used with particular sensitivity by the Auchinleck poet only.

Comparison of the Auchinleck *Guy* with other manuscript versions is particularly illuminating because it illustrates how poets are not necessarily alive to traditional narrative techniques as tools to convey meaning. The Auchinleck poet, whom the evidence suggests to be sensitive, as the authors of the other versions are not, organises the material so as to bring into sharp focus the protagonist's story without the distraction of events surrounding his son. This reorganisation allows the meaning

inherent in, particularly, the repeated Proppian structure, trebling, and splitting, to assert itself and reinforce the message at the poem's literal level.

Just as in *William* and *Emaré,* we see concern for the role of the individual in society. Examining *Guy* with traditional narrative features in mind gives us insight into the meaning of the poem and the ways in which these techniques and patterns can reinforce the overt message. It is interesting that the Auchinleck poet skilfully manipulates his material so that the (truncated) Family Pattern and traditional methods reinforce his message, yet his message at the literal level is not one with which the Family Pattern, with its emphasis on human relationships, sits entirely comfortably.

My final example, 'The Clerk's Tale', was chosen because it is part of the consciously literary enterprise of the *Canterbury Tales*, yet shares with the anonymous verse romances many traditional narrative features: a Proppian structure, splitting, trebling, externalisation, repetition with variation are all present in this Family Pattern poem.

Perhaps the most arresting feature is the portrayal of the two main characters. The husband's need to have his wife remain loyal to him above all others even after the children are born, and his wife's ability to do this despite her strong maternal feeling, are essential features of the symbolic drama. But these features are singularly unappealing when projected onto the literal level of the narrative as driving the behaviour of the central characters, undisguised by splitting or displacement. The behaviour of Walter and Griselda jars the sensibilities of the audience, particularly because we receive plenty of encouragement from the storyteller to read the story as realistic.

The characters stand within the Family Pattern tradition but carry heavy thematic loads, particularly Griselda. Chaucer seems very concerned to make her a sympathetic character, even although this conflicts with the way she behaves. In the end Griselda's suffering in the face of Walter's seeming perversity becomes the main focus of the poem at the literal level but despite the pathos, Griselda's behaviour may seem scarcely credible in a mother. Tensions between the literal and symbolic levels of this poem seem to me to remain unresolved; the narrator seems uncomfortable with the symbolic aspects of the story, wishing to mitigate their effects as far as possible. Nonetheless, the message of the Family Pattern shrieks so loudly that it drowns out the significance which is imposed on it at the literal level.

This study presents strong evidence for the existence of the Family Pattern in fairytale and romance, and by close attention to individual Family Pattern romances shows how deeply integrated into a romance traditional narrative features may be. Techniques like repetition with variation, or projection of the abstract into the concrete may be used to suggest meaning which develops the symbolic drama and/or the story at the literal level. By interpreting a story as a creation in the mind of the protagonist and looking at how far other traditional features correlate with that interpretation, we may be able to see that a romance, perhaps apparently contrived, fantastic, repetitive and predictable, is a far richer and more complex blend than at first appeared.

This may go some way to explaining the endurance and popularity of Family Pattern romance narratives in the Middle Ages: viewed in this way they are not simply fanciful escapism but are interesting as sophisticated works of art, dealing with issues which are both contemporary and timeless, deeply felt by the individual, of wide concern socially, expressing the values, concerns, and dilemmas of a society.

The regular appearance of the Family Pattern in Middle English romance suggests that it struck a chord. We may suppose that it held an appeal probably at least in part because it dealt with families, an area of direct and immediate concern in a strongly patrilinear society. Broadly speaking, family relationships have been, at least in traditional western societies, universal and so this is a pattern which seems to reflect common relations between family members in a universally recognisable situation, telling a symbolic story.

Approaching stories through traditional narrative features, while it necessitates burrowing beneath the literal level of poems, is not to deny or diminish what is happening at that level. In fact the study shows that at their most effective, traditional narrative methods can be used to reinforce the literal meaning of a story. The fact that not all the poems in which traditional narrative features can be found make the most of their ability to convey meaning, suggests that with certain narrators their use is conscious - or at least that certain storytellers are sensitive to their potential.

This study shows that the influence of traditional narrative on medieval literature extends far beyond taking up amusing stories and dressing them in hauberk and gauntlet. Traditional narrative features are embedded in certain of the vernacular verse romances where, in the hands of the most skilful narrators they suggest and reinforce meaning, an integral and essential part of the poem as work of art. The recognition of this provides us with a key to revealing the richness of these many-faceted and fascinating narratives.

'The Little Slut*'*

A small house, three daughters, and their mother. Two sisters thought themselves grand ladies; as for the youngest the two sisters used to hide her in the coal-hole so that no one would see her. They could not bear her, because she was so slatternly. They were ashamed to see her. Whenever any one visited the house they used to hide her. The two sisters would say: 'Begone, hide thyself, little slut!'

The two sisters used to go to church. One Sunday the two sisters went to church, came home, and began to talk about a prince whom they had seen there. The young girl overheard them.

Sunday came round again. The two sisters went to church while the young one stopped at home alone. A little old woman came to the door to beg. The young girl bade her enter, and made her some tea. After she had finished the old woman called the girl outside.

There was a white pebble near the door. Said the old woman: 'Take that white pebble and fling it against yonder rock. Thou wilt see a door there; open it and go in. Thou wilt see a chamber; thou wilt see apparel; thou wilt see a pair of golden slippers. Attire thyself, and come out, and pass on to the next place. Thou wilt see a little horse, lead him outside, mount him, and ride to the church. Do not go far within, sit by the door, and let thy horse be tethered near it. Come out before the rest. The young prince will follow thee; he will try to catch thee and to find out who thou art. Hurry home, restore the clothes to the place thou didst take them from, return, and say naught.'

For three weeks the young girl did as the old woman bade her. A grand lady entered the church, and there was no one present who knew her. Everyone was gazing at her, and the prince fell ill with longing to know who she was. He kept his eyes fixed upon her, and he pursued her to see whether he knew her. She had gone too far for him to see who she was.

The last week the old woman said to the young girl: 'Mark what thou shalt do now. Do as I tell thee. Go to church, and when thou goest there leave still earlier; the prince will follow thee. One slipper will fall from thy foot, and he will come after thee and find it.'

Everything fell out as the old woman had said. The girl went home, put back all her finery, and dressed herself in her old clothes. The two sisters came home and began to talk about the prince. And the young one was listening to them. Out she came and asked the two sisters whether she might go to church to see the prince. 'No, thou dirty swine, go and hide thyself.'

The prince knew not what to do to find the lady. He prepared a great banquet and sent throughout the land to invite all young ladies to be present. The young ladies had no idea what the prince wanted.

The day arrived when the banquet was to be held. There was the prince in the reception chamber. All the ladies came up to his chair. One lady sat down. The prince took the slipper and tried it on her foot. It did not fit. Out she went. Another lady approached. It did not fit. He tried them all, and there was none there whom the shoe would fit. The

two sisters were there. The eldest sister, who was yearning for the prince, chopped a piece off her foot; she would have given her life to get him.

The prince asked: 'Where are all the serving-maids?' One wench entered. She would not do. Then another girl. She would not do. Now the Little Slut comes in. The prince threw down the slipper. The young girl held out her foot. On went the slipper, and the prince recognised her. The eldest sister could have killed her, but she was afraid.

Lo! there were great preparations for the wedding. The wedding-day arrived. They left the church and returned home. There was a great company of lords and ladies feasting in the castle. All was over and the guests departed.

They lived together for a year. The lady was with child. She was put to bed. She bore a daughter. The eldest sister was sent for to come up to the castle to look after her. She brought a puppy up to the lady's room. She took away the child and left the dog in bed beside the young lady. The eldest sister took the baby home and gave it to her mother. The prince saw the puppy and was horrified. But he said nothing then.

The lady was with child again. She was put to bed. She bore a son. The eldest sister was sent for to come up to the castle. She returned to the castle to look after her sister. Again the eldest sister brought a puppy with her. She put it in the bed and took away the baby boy. She carried him off and gave him to her mother. Then she returned to the castle to look after her sister.

The prince came home. He went up to see his wife. The eldest sister was there. She lifted the blankets and drew forth the puppy. 'Is not this a disgrace!   A lady to give

birth to a puppy!' The prince spoke no more. He summoned his serving-men: 'Get ye down and make ready to burn her.' His wife implored him to spare her once more. 'If it should prove thus again I will take the consequences.' Everything was made up, the lady was set free.

A year or two afterwards the lady was with child again. She was put to bed. She bore another son. The eldest sister was sent for to come up to the castle. She brought a puppy up to the castle; she put the puppy in the bed, took away the child, and sent him down to her mother.

The eldest girl was looking after her sister. The prince came up to see his wife. The eldest sister lifted the blankets, drew forth the puppy and showed it to the prince. 'Heavens!' he exclaimed, 'what a disgrace for a lady to give birth to a puppy!' The prince leapt to his feet in her bed-chamber. 'Where are the men-servants?' They were sent for. They came there to drag her out of bed, and down to be burnt.

Lo! The little old woman once more! The little old woman spoke to her. 'Fear not. I am here. Thou shalt have thy children back again, all three.'

The lady was to be burnt. She was carried out of doors. The prince came out of the castle. He paused to consider what he should do. His heart was too tender towards his wife to watch her burn. He went away, and left her to be burnt by his men-servants.

'Nay,' quoth the lady, 'ye cannot burn me; my dear God is good and He will watch over me.' She kept a stout heart because of what the old woman had said to her. 'Let her go!' said the old woman. She was set free. 'Thou shalt become a young sow in the

midst of the forest.' As soon as the word was spoken the lady was turned into a young sow.

The old woman told the young sow: 'Thou wilt be slain; the prince and some of his men will pursue thee to the death. They will cut out thy liver and hang it beside the gate of the castle. Whoever takes it and repeats these words will get whatever he desires. Fear not. Thou wilt be restored to life, and wilt regain thy husband and thy children.'

She was in the forest for years, and (then) the prince's servants found her. They had seen her for some days. They went home and told their master that there was a sow there that they had never seen before. 'We will go and look for her. We will slay her to-morrow.' The sow knew that the nobles and their men were in pursuit of her. She hid herself.

Let us return to the children. Here are the three alone in the forest whom the two sisters had turned adrift when their grand-mother died. The sow found them. She spoke to the children. 'They are following me,' quoth the sow, 'to slay me.' The mother instructed her eldest child: 'When I am slain, go down to the castle and ask for a piece of (my) liver. Take the piece of liver, and thou wilt get whatever thou desirest. I will return again to you. It was my sister who caused all this trouble.'

They found the sow and slew her. The prince told them to bring her liver to the castle. They took her liver, and it was hung up beside the gate.

The eldest girl went down to the river-side with her two little brothers. They sat down by the river. 'Is not this a pleasant spot?' said the girl to her brother. 'Would it were

ours!' quoth the boy. 'Well, I can get it. I am going down to the castle.' 'Do not stay long, sister.' The eldest girl went to the castle, as the sow had bidden. The sow had told the girl if she desired anything to go down to the castle to get a piece of (her) liver, and her wish would be granted. She went and got the liver.

Back she came. 'Now then, brother, come hither. I will show thee something. Wouldst thou like a cottage here?' 'I would, sister.' She told her brother what the sow had said. As soon as the word was spoken, there stood the cottage.

The three took up their abode in the cottage. They were there for years. A stranger called to light his pipe and stared at the three children. He knew not who they were. He went down to the castle and told the prince about the cottage and the three children. He told the prince that the three children were girt with golden belts. The prince offered the man a reward if he would bring the three belts to him. 'I will go there at once.'

He set off and reached the cottage. He knocked at the door; out came the sister. The stranger asked for a light for his pipe. 'Come in,' quoth the boy. 'No,' said the girl. 'The man will do naught, sister, let him come.'

The stranger came in and asked the younger boy to let him look at his belt. 'Nay, brother, do not take off thy belt.' 'Sister, the man will do no harm.' He got the belt. He next asked the elder boy. 'Nay,' said his sister, 'do not take off they belt.' He took it off and gave it to the stranger. He asked the girl for her belt. 'No,' replied the girl, 'I will never take off my belt.'

The man went down to the castle and gave the two belts to the prince. 'I could not get the belt from the maiden, she would not part with it.'

As soon as the belts had been handed over, the two boys became swans upon the river. The girl was left all alone now. She recalled what the sow had told her. In the morning she went down to the castle to get a piece of the liver. Home returned the girl. 'May my two brothers resume their former shapes!' As soon as the word was spoken she recovered her two brothers.

The sister was speaking to the elder brother. 'There now, brother, if only our mother were here! We will get our mother back.' 'Never,' said the elder boy; 'no, that is a thing that cannot be done.' 'Indeed,' quoth the girl, 'get her back again I will.'

The girl went out to the river, taking the liver with her. 'I want my mother back again.' Immediately the word was spoken she recovered her mother. The girl fell down in her amazement.

They went together to the house and the mother kissed her two sons. 'How didst thou bring me here?' she asked her daughter. 'I will tell thee, mother. A young sow came to me after thou hadst been slain. She told me to go to the castle and get a piece of liver.' 'So it was,' agreed her mother; 'canst thou bring back thy father?' 'Yes,' quoth the girl, 'I will bring him back.' 'When?' asked the mother. The girl went outside. 'Where art thou going?' asked her mother. 'I will return, I am not going far.'

The girl went to the river-side. 'I wish my father restored to us.' The word was spoken: there stood her father. He embraced his daughter, and hurried into the cottage. His wife

was speechless with amazement. She recovered her senses. The prince spoke to his wife: 'Let us go home to the castle!'

'How didst thou contrive to bring me here?' asked her husband. 'I will tell thee. Dost thou remember the liver which hung beside the castle gate?' 'I do,' said the prince. 'After I had been slain our daughter went to the castle to get a small piece of (my) liver, and when the word was spoken, lo! her wish was granted.'

His wife and children and the prince went down to the castle. They dwelt there for years, and the children grew up. Then the girl travelled for years in foreign lands in order to see the world. She came home. Her father and mother were overjoyed to see her return. Both the parents died, and the children are living in the castle to this day.

There! those were all the adventures the children passed through. There is no more to add. We have reached home with the help of God. That is all!

'The White Duck'

A certain prince married a beautiful princess, but before he had had time to feast his eyes upon her and listen to her sweet speech, he was compelled to separate from her, go on a far journey, and leave his wife in the hands of strangers. What was there to do? It is said that you cannot spend your life in embraces. The princess wept a great deal, and the prince comforted her a great deal, admonishing her not to leave the women's apartments, not to keep company with evil people, and not to listen to evil words. The princess promised to do all this. The prince departed; the princess locked herself in her room and did not go out.

After a long time or a short time, a woman came to her. She seemed so simple and kindly! 'Why are you pining away here?' she said. 'You should at least have a peep at God's world and take a walk in your garden, to dispel your grief and get a breath of fresh air.' For a long time the princess refused, but in the end she thought: 'Surely there is no harm in taking a walk in the garden!' And out she went. In the garden there was a spring of crystalline water. 'The day is so hot,' said the woman, 'the sun is blazing, and the water is cool. It bubbles so invitingly; why should we not bathe in it?' 'No, no,' said the princess, 'I do not want to!' But then she thought: 'There is no harm in having a bath.' She slipped off her gown and jumped into the water. No sooner had she plunged in than the woman struck her on the back, saying: 'Swim now as a white duck!' And the princess turned into a white duck. The witch straightway attired herself in the princess' garment, adorned and painted herself, and sat down to await the prince. As soon as the puppy barked and the little bell rang, she ran out to meet the prince, rushed toward him, kissed him, and fondled him. He was overjoyed, stretched out his arms towards her, and did not realise that she was not his wife.

Meanwhile the white duck laid eggs and hatched its young. Two were handsome and the third a starveling. And her babies grew into little children; she brought them up and they began to swim on the little stream, to catch little goldfish, to gather little rags, to sew little coats, and to jump up on the banks and look at the meadows. 'Oh, don't go there, my children,' the mother said. The children disobeyed her; one day they played in the grass, the next day they ran over the meadow, ever farther and farther, until they reached the prince's courtyard. The witch recognised them by their smell and gritted her teeth; she called the children, gave them food and drink and put them to sleep, and then ordered a fire to be lighted, kettles to be hung over it, and knives to be sharpened. The two handsome brothers lay down and fell asleep. But the little starveling, whom the mother had ordered them to carry in their bosoms that he might not catch cold – the starveling did not sleep, and heard and saw everything. In the night the witch came to their door and asked: 'Are you asleep, little children, or not?' The starveling answered: 'We sleep and don't sleep. We think that someone wants to slaughter us all; a fire of hazel logs is being made, boiling kettles are hanging, steel knives are being sharpened.' 'They are not sleeping,' said the witch.

She went away, walked and walked about, and again came to the door: 'Are you asleep, little children, or not?' The starveling said again: 'We sleep and don't sleep. We think that someone wants to slaughter us all; a fire of hazel logs is being made, boiling kettles are hanging, steel knives are being sharpened.' 'Why is it always the same voice?' thought the witch. She softly opened the door and saw that both the handsome brothers were sound asleep. She touched them with the hand of a corpse and they died.

Next morning the white duck called her children, but they did not come. She felt anguish in her heart, she fluttered her wings and flew to the prince's courtyard. There, as white as kerchiefs, as cold as little fish, the two brothers lay side by side. She rushed to them, spread her wings, and put them around her children, and cried with a mother's voice:

Quack, quack, quack, my children,

Quack, quack, quack, my little doves!

I nursed you with fears,

I fed you with tears,

I spent dark nights without sleep,

And for worry over you did not eat.

'My wife, do you hear this extraordinary thing?' said the prince. 'The duck is lamenting.' 'You only fancy it!' said the false wife. 'Have the duck driven out of the courtyard.' The duck was driven out but she flew back to her children and said:

Quack, quack, my children,

Quack, quack, my little doves!

An old witch took your life,

An old snake, a false wife,

Because of her wicked ruse

Your true father you did lose;

She put us in the swift stream,

Turned us into white ducks,

And calls herself the queen.

'This is strange,' thought the prince, and he cried: 'Catch this white duck!' Everyone rushed to catch her, but the white duck flew about and would not let herself be caught; the prince himself went out and she fell on his hands. He took her by a little wing and said: 'White birch tree stand behind me, lovely maiden stand before me.' A white birch stood behind him, and a lovely maiden stood before him, and in the lovely maiden the prince recognised his young wife. At once a magpie was caught, two little bladders were tied to her, and she was ordered to fill one with the water of life and the other with the water of speech. The magpie flew away and brought back the waters. The children were sprinkled with the water of life and they shuddered; they were sprinkled with the water of speech and they began to speak. And now the prince had all his family, and they began to live and prosper and forget the evil days. As for the witch, she was tied to the tail of a horse and dragged over a field; where a leg was torn off her, a fire iron stood; where an arm was torn off, a rake stood; where her head was torn off, a bush grew. Birds came swooping down and pecked up her flesh, a wind arose and scattered her bones, and not a trace or a memory was left of her.

'The Woman With Her Hands Cut Off'

Once upon a time there were a brother and a sister left living alone together. They loved each other very much. They had promised each other that they would never marry, neither one nor the other, so as not to leave each other.

Now the brother found someone to marry. One fine day he said to his sister, 'Guess what, sister? I have found someone to marry.'

'If she is right for you, this is marvellous. Get married, brother.'

However, this woman was spiteful.

The sister went and lived in a house farther away, and the brother and his wife lived in the father's house.

Now the woman said to her husband, 'You've no idea what's happened. Tonight I dreamed of your wicked sister. She had strangled your mares.'

Her husband got up and went to look in the stables. The mares were dead. 'Oh,' he said, 'it's really true.'

The next night his wife said to him, 'You've no idea what's happened. I dreamed again that your wicked sister had knocked over your wine barrels and that all the wine was spilled on the floor.'

The husband got up and went to look in the cellar. All the barrels were knocked over, and the wine was spilled on the ground and in the cellar. But the brother said nothing of this to his sister. Every day he went to see her at her house.

'Good day, sister!'

'Good day, brother!'

Five or six days went by.

The woman said to her husband, 'I dreamed tonight that your wicked sister had come here. She had killed our child. The knife was under the door.'

The husband got up.

'You have only to look at the knife,' said his wife.

The husband went up to the door and found the knife. It was covered with blood.

He went and found his sister. Anger forced him to speak. 'Ah, you spiteful wretch! So you want me dead. You have killed my mares. You have knocked over my barrels, and I have said nothing. Now you have killed our child with this knife. Look! I have brought you the knife.'

The sister said nothing. Then her brother grabbed his sister and cut her hand off at the wrist to punish her. So she said to him, 'Don't say anything, wicked brother. When

you jump over the hedge with the help of a ladder, you will get a splinter in your knee. Only I will be able to take it out.'

Her brother, who was on his way home, lost his temper and cut off her other hand at the wrist. So the poor girl was walking around like that. She could no longer eat, as she had no hands. It so happened that as she walked she found herself in the King's garden. In it there were beautiful apples and pears. She hid herself, and then during the night she tried to catch them in her mouth as best she could, to eat them. The next day she hid in the garden during the daytime. This happened several times running.

The King said to his mother, 'I am going to hide in order to see the creature who is eating my apples and pears.'

So the King hid in the garden. At midnight he saw the young girl who had come to catch the pears and apples in her mouth. She was all in rags. Her clothes barely covered her. The King went off without making any noise.

The next day he said to his mother, 'Do you know? I have found the creature who is eating my apples and pears. You will give me dresses to clothe her in. She has no hands.'

The King brought the clothes the Queen had given him to her, and then he took the young girl home with him.

A few days later he said to his mother, 'I want to marry her.' The mother did not wish this at all, but her son wanted the girl so much! In the end they got married.

Not long after, a great war took place. The King went off with his armies to make war and do battle. The King's wicked mother still refused to see her daughter-in-law, so she had her led into the woods by servants, and when the poor girl found herself there alone, it was only to give birth to two little boys.

At that moment the Holy Virgin and St. John and St. Paul appeared at her side to help with the birth.

Later the Holy Virgin was godmother to the two little twins, and each one had a godfather. Then St. John and St. Paul christened the two children.

The Holy Virgin said to St. John, 'What are you offering your godchild?'

St. John said, 'I, well, I offer him a fine castle in these woods.'

The Holy Virgin said to St. Paul, 'What are you offering your godchild?'

'Ah, well, that the castle should lack nothing, neither furniture, personal belongings, nor even servants,' said St. Paul.

So the Holy Virgin said, 'Well, then, I ask that the mother be given back her two hands.'

The mother's hands were restored. In front of her was a fine castle, and nothing was lacking in this castle, and so she stayed there with her two children.

Seven years later the war was over. The King went home. He asked to see his wife. His mother answered, 'She went off into the woods and has never been seen since.'

The King left to find his wife in the woods. He reached the woods near the castle, of which he knew nothing. He saw two little boys playing there. (They had grown tall, those twins.) He asked them, 'Where is your father?'

'We have never known a father.'

'And Mummy?'

The twins' mother appeared. Naturally the King found himself staring at her. He asked her whether she had seen a woman (his poor wife, of course) who had no hands. She answered, 'No.'

'You look like her,' said the King.

'You say she has no hands,' she said. 'I have some.'

The young woman talked to the King for a while, and then she made herself known to him. The King was very happy.

Then she remembered that she had promised her brother she would go and look after him once she had her hands back. She had a horse saddled, and then the two of them, she and her husband, were led to her brother in their finest coach.

There must have been at least ten children in the courtyard, each dirtier and more ragged than the other. Even the threshold of his house was filthy. A woman who was all dirty and in rags came and asked them what this coach was, stopping at his house.

The sister got out of it and said to her, 'How do you do, Madam?'

'Ah, how do you do, Madam?'

'Is your husband here?'

'Oh yes, Madam. It is seven years today that he is lying in bed. He is still in bed, and no one can cure him.'

'May I see him?'

'Yes, Madam.' Then she went into the wretched room where her brother was in bed.

'Can you get up, Sir?'
'I cannot get up.'

'Just a little, that's all. Let me see your leg.'

There was a splinter imbedded in his knee, which was all swollen up.

The sister put her hand on the knee. The splinter flew up into the air, and so the brother recognised his sister. He started to cry and beg her forgiveness, and then he explained to her, 'My wife is to blame for my cutting off your hands. It is she who made me think you were the cause of all my misadventures.'

His sister told him her story, and in the end they burned the spiteful sister-in-law.

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