

• CHAPTER I •

Masculinity in Romance



MASCULINITY is a persistent concern in Chaucer's tales deriving from romance, although it often seems a subtext to more evidently political and social issues. The *Knight's Tale*, for example, begins with a briefly sketched contrast between Theseus's conquest of the Amazons and his pity on the widows of the siege of Thebes. Why does he subdue one group of women and aid the next? A plausible reading of the difference in terms of social issues might center on the wise Athenian's concern to redress disorders, in the first case the unnatural rule of women and in the second case the desecration of bodies and the reversals of Fortune suffered by the widows. Amazonia and Thebes have perpetrated disorder; there is a significant parallel between Theseus's responses to the two foreign encounters. From the perspective of gender it could be added that there is as well a significant contrast between his responses to the two encounters with women. Conquering and marrying the Amazon queen is a sexual as well as a political action, one that eroticizes masculine dominance and feminine submission. In contrast, taking pity on the widows of Thebes reveals in Theseus a compassion that may seem feminine, complicating his masculinity. Similarly, Palamon and Arcite are most evidently political adversaries to Theseus. Their Theban blood carries the destructive rivalry of Polynices and Eteocles from Thebes into Athens, and their desire for Emelye challenges Theseus's authority. Yet the Thebans' rivalries have implications as well for their masculinity, as the young men measure their desire for Emelye against Theseus's ability to constrain it and as their desire becomes both a component of their chivalric relation with one another and a constitutive feature of their sexual identities. This chapter's three divisions look for the gendered subtext to such interactions.

My first concern is to suggest how romances use gender difference to establish masculine identity. Not only does heterosexual courtship become an important arena for self-definition, romances elaborate a range of distinctions between men's and women's social comportment, duties, and rights that gender the concept of identity so important to the early development of the genre. Masculine and feminine identity differ in that the centrality and complexity assigned to masculinity in romance makes it more than simply the reverse of femininity. Difference from woman does not, paradoxically, exile from man all traits associated with the feminine.

After a brief look at the function of difference in elaborating masculinity, this chapter turns to two complications in that paradigm. The tendency to identify masculine with universal experience meets a countertendency in romance in the constraints the community places on heroic autonomy. These are not merely external; the hero of romance is constituted so fundamentally by his culture that he resembles the postmodern subject more closely than the Lockean individual. Self-definition involves recognizing and accepting the social composition of personal identity.

Courtship in romance expands masculine interactions in that it is secondary to them and reproduces them in crossgendered and eroticized form. Courtship clarifies the ambivalently adversarial and desiring relations between men in the genre's version of chivalric culture. Where courtship and chivalry intersect, they may appear to be in competition; but finally courtship extends masculine identity by providing a new arena of interaction for men.

As the leading form for long fictions in the later Middle Ages, romance was so pervasive an influence that Chaucer's awareness of the genre can hardly be in question. The place of romance in Chaucer's conceptions of gender alone is so prominent and nuanced that I cannot touch on many of its aspects. Those I have chosen are so normative in the genre that they might be illustrated from numerous texts. In this first chapter I treat a few illustrations in some detail; in later chapters the references are usually briefer. Throughout, my aim is not to imply Chaucer's knowledge of particular texts but to assume his awareness of the genre's shape and history, rather as we might assume a twentieth-century writer's awareness of the novel, and to choose illustrations that

are reasonably familiar to twentieth-century readers or particularly apposite to the Chaucerian tales under discussion.

MASCULINITY AS A FUNCTION OF DIFFERENCE

From the perspective of gender difference, masculinity is a composite of traits that contrast to feminine ones, such as bravery in contrast to timidity, and traits that are identified as feminine but are absorbed into masculinity, such as pity. This first aspect of masculine identity is not specific to romance. Examples can be drawn from numerous genres and historical behaviors to illustrate the double definition of masculinity by opposition and by relation to femininity, but the two episodes that open the *Knight's Tale*, in which Theseus defeats the Amazons and takes pity on the women bereaved by the siege of Thebes, illustrate the process in miniature.

A salient feature of romance is its figuring of women as the desired opposites of men. In a study of *Eneas* in relation to its precedents, Stephen Nichols argues that the representation of courtship crucially distinguishes romance, marking the point at which the isolation of love lyric and the univocality of earlier narrative writing yield to a dialogue between the lover and the resisting, unknowable woman who "subjects love to interpretations other than those flattering constructions placed on it by the bemused lover in his solitary lyric reverie. . . . The voice of the beloved may be the first intimation of alterity intruding into the monologism of the lover" (49-50). Feminine difference is also the focus of Jean-Charles Huchet's account of *Eneas*: Lavine "incarne l'alterité dont le héros et le roman ont besoin, qui pour voyager, qui pour s'écrire" (incarnates the alterity needed by the hero and the romance, the former in order to journey, the latter in order to be written) (*Roman médiéval*, 218). For both critics the assertion of woman's difference from man informs the genre's poetics as well as its configurations of gender.

Romance plots often extend the strangeness of woman's sexual difference into an ethnic, religious, or political identity that opposes that of the hero. Eneas's Trojan lineage, Bevis of Hampton's Christianity, and Theseus's Athenian wisdom gain clarity in oppositional (and then accommodating) relationships to the Latin Lavine, pagan Josian, and Amazonian Hippolyta. Eneas's self-defi-

nition takes place through his adversarial yet desiring relation to the woman whose land he is seeking to colonize. The initial opposition to Eneas's desire is strongly feminine: Lavine's mother stands against her husband's wish and the gods' decree in resisting Eneas's suit, asserting that Trojans are sodomitical and treacherous.¹ Eneas refutes the maternal accusation in his heterosexual devotion to Lavine, fusing the proof of his masculinity with a demonstration of Trojan trustworthiness.

Before the specifics of plot, a recurring set of differences between men and women in romance constructs masculine identity by alienating from it the traits assigned to femininity. The tower chamber from which Lavine watches and reacts to events is the center of a feminine sphere that marks the fields and the fighting below as a masculine space. Womanly timidity, passivity, and pity confirm the masculinity of bravery, initiative, and severity. Amazons reverse the process by rejecting feminine traits for their masculine counterparts; the defeat of the Amazons dramatizes masculinity establishing its claim to difference and ascendancy over the feminine. The briefly told episode that begins the *Knight's Tale* barely recalls this significance, developed at length in Boccaccio's *Teseida* and the *romans antiques*.² The following chapter traces the disappearance of Amazonian prowess from romance as the Amazons regain their beauty and enter into courtship. In the *Knight's Tale* the two qualities assigned to Hippolyta, that she is "faire" and "hardy" (I 882), refer as briefly as possible to the contradictory feminine attractiveness native to her and the masculine courage she adopts; and the notation that Theseus

¹ For a discussion of the episode, which together with Eneas's and Lavine's thoughts of love constitutes the romance poet's major departure from Virgil's *Aeneid*, see the third section of the present chapter.

Translations in all chapters are mine unless otherwise noted.

² See chapter 2 and Boccaccio, *Teseida*: Hippolyta leads the Amazons "although a woman" and in order to do so exiles from herself all "feminine fear": "La quale, ancora che femina fosse / e di bellezze piena oltre misura, / prese la signoria, e si rimosse / da sé ciascuna femina paura . . ." (bk. 1, st. 9). Noting that her followers practice "uomini fatti, non femine," she attributes their rejection of Cupid to their desire to show manly courage ("per voler virile animo mostrare," bk. 1, st. 24). Courage in these formulations remains so firmly a masculine trait that its adoption does not enlarge but rather suppresses and distorts the Amazons' femininity. Timidity, beauty, and love are the traits natural to the women, who are restored to themselves by contact with Theseus and his men (bk. 1, sts. 132-33).

conquered Scythia "with his wysdom and his chivalrie" (I 865) chooses traits specific to masculinity in the binary paradigm that exiles irrationality and timidity to an idea of the feminine. Although brief, the *Knight's Tale's* first episode invokes a familiar instance of defining gender by differentiation.

The assertion of difference between man and woman is fundamental to romance not only as a means of defining the masculine self by contrast with the feminine other but as a precondition for expanding identity beyond the limitations difference imposes. Conceiving genders by binary opposition has a diminishing as well as a defining effect, restricting masculinity in the process of clarifying it. A counterprocess recuperates for masculinity some traits associated with women. The womanly intercessions that inspire Theseus's pity in the *Knight's Tale* illustrate this expansive process. The widows of the siege of Thebes introduce a conventional role for women as inspirers of masculine pity or mercy, a role more fully evoked when Theseus comes upon Palamon and Arcite in combat, condemns them to death, but instead shows mercy on them when the queen and all her women intercede for the lovers. In the earlier scene, Theseus's anger turns to pity less evidently as a man's response to the pleas of women than as a ruler's response to injustice, or a thoughtful person's response to the vagaries of Fortune. He inquires "What folk been ye," apparently without regard to their sex, yet they identify themselves in gendered terms as "us wrecched wommen" and as widows of the siege of Thebes (I 905, 921, 936). Their closing plea to "Have on us wrecched women som mercy, / And latoure sorwe synken in thyn herte" (I 950-51) and the causal connection between Theseus's perception of "hem so pitous and so maat" and his own "herte pitous" (I 953, 955) begin to make the association between femininity and masculine pity that the scene in the grove works out more fully.

Both scenes partake of a cultural topos reaching beyond romance to the biblical model of Esther and the historical interventions ascribed to Queen Philippa on behalf of the burghers of Calais and to Queen Anne on behalf of various malefactors including Simon Burley and participants in the Rising of 1381.³ The

³ Specific historical allusions in the *Knight's Tale* to actions of Anne and Philippa have long since been proposed (see note to ll. 1742-60 in the *Riverside*

topos tempers a ruler's severity by inspiring pity in him through the pleas of women who are moved specifically by their gendered identity: the ladies weep over Palamon and Arcite "for ver-ray wommanhede," and Theseus's response begins in "compassioun / Of wommen" rather than of the young men (I 1748, 1770-71).

One way of understanding Theseus's response in terms of gender is to posit a limitation in masculinity that contact with the feminine redresses. Jill Mann has recently analyzed pity and patience in the *Canterbury Tales*, particularly the *Knight's* and *Franklin's* tales, in these terms. Her model of the "feminised hero" takes passive qualities such as pity to be so firmly linked to womanliness that they remain gender-marked even when adopted into male behavior: "The 'compassioun' Theseus feels for women is itself a womanly quality implanted in him. It feminises him without rendering him effeminate," she argues (*Geoffrey Chaucer*, 174; see also 87-127, 165-85). An attractive implication of this analysis, Mann points out, is the escape it offers from reading genders as implicit hierarchies in which tenderer emotions are inferior because exclusively feminine. Indeed, Mann claims for Chaucer an escape from gender divisions themselves: "A feminist reading of Chaucer needs, not to perpetuate the sterile antitheses between active and passive, to stigmatise female passivity only to find that the obverse of this is approval of male activity, but rather to recuperate Chaucer's careful integration of activity and passivity into a fully human ideal that erases male/female role-divisions" (185). Mann's approach is a welcome departure from the critical simplification and consequent impasse to which she refers, but the handling of gender-marked traits in romance suggests to me that the "fully human ideal" is finally masculine. Traits marked feminine can indeed be integrated into masculine behavior, but the current does not run in reverse from masculine into feminine identity, and the complications of masculine behavior that femininity figures contribute to enlarging and universalizing rather than feminizing the masculine experience.

Chaucer). Paul Strohm's chapter "Queens as Intercessors" undertakes a wider investigation of interceding queens in relation to the *Knight's Tale* that has the advantage of providing a cultural context for intercession without requiring Chaucer's reference to a specific instance: *Hochon's Arrow*, 95-119.

When Theseus sees the Theban widows "so pitous and so maat" and leaps off his horse "with herte pitous" (I 953, 955), it does indeed appear that the pitiful position of women has generated Theseus's pity, has invited in the ruler a tender behavior that masculinity prohibits. The cultural convention of interceding queens and the longer scene of intercession for Palamon and Arcite clarify, however, that a ruler may use intercession as the occasion for showing pity while considering it nonetheless part of his own repertoire of adjudicating impulses. Indeed, the very conventionality of feminine intercession suggests a scripted role assigned to queens within the larger scene of rulers' justice. Queen Anne had not even arrived in England when Richard II began pardoning rebels in her name (*Peasants' Revolt*, 313-14, 332). Whether or not the historical Richard tended to severity and the historical Anne to mercy, a standing cultural pattern made it appropriate for rulers to attribute pardon and leniency to women's inspiration.

The intercession of Hippolyta and her ladies connects their plea for mercy to their "verray wommanhede" through their submissive gestures of kneeling and striving to kiss Theseus's feet and their attempt to divert his attention from the young men to themselves, transforming anger into pity: "Have mercy, lord, upon us wommen alle!" (I 1748, 1757) As women they express pity and they are fit occasions for pity. However, in the dynamic of the scene (as in historical instances) their gender is not mercy's ultimate repository. The interceding women come to resemble not agents of mercy but allegorical figures in a psychomachy of the ruler's decision making. Rather than expressing an exclusively feminine impulse, the scene locates pity in women as a way of describing the subordinate place it holds in the all-encompassing masculine deliberation. Theseus does not designate mercy a feminine but rather a lordly response:

And softe unto hymself he seyde, "Fy
 Upon a lord that wol have no mercy,
 But been a leon, bothe in word and dede,
 To hem that been in repentaunce and drede,
 As wel as to a proud despitous man
 That wol mayntene that he first began.
 That lord hath litel of discrecioun,

That in swich cas kan no divisoun
 But weyeth pride and humblesse after oon." (I 1773-81)

Theseus's version of the unmerciful man is the lion, the less than human; the lord is rightly merciful although he is first of all just. His identification of mercy with masculinity despite the kneeling women before him reinforces the narration of the tale, signaling the narrator's masculine perspective whether we identify him as the Knight or Chaucer or a less embodied voice. Before Theseus speaks, the narrator has first degendered pity in the aphorism for Theseus's change of mood, "pitee renneth soone in gentil herte," and then glossed pity as a function of reason: "although that his ire hir gilt accused, / Yet in his resoun he hem bothe excused" (I 1761, 1765-66). Already pity is associated not with women but with the masculine faculty of reason. The progression from anger to mercy through women's intercession indicates that the ruler's impulse to mercy is subordinate to his impulse to justice, but both are masculine—that is, "fully human" in the traditional gendering that conflates maleness and humanity as the universal experience. The women's plea dramatizes an opposition not from but within man, a facet of his lordship.⁴ Identifying pity, patience, and tenderness with women, even as it defines masculinity by opposition, prepares for an idea of masculinity that itself encompasses oppositional traits in subordinate relation to severity and decisiveness.

Romances do not provide parallel depictions of women who successfully integrate masculine traits into femininity, reinforcing the gender inequivalence figured when traits identified with femininity are absorbed into masculine complexity. Women can imitate masculine behavior, but the imitation remains just that; ruling and fighting do not become feminine behaviors when they are practiced by women. For example, the Theban women who inspire Theseus's pity at the beginning of the *Knight's Tale* join his attack on Creon in the *Roman de Thèbes*:

⁴ Strohm, treating historical instances of intercession, makes the valuable point that "female intercession is gratifying to men and answers the dictates of male desire, but it remains less than completely subsumed so long as it continues actively to specify the coordinates of actual female behavior in the world" (*Hochon's Arrow*, 105).

Li dus assaut mout vassaument
 La cité o tote sa gent,
 Il meïsmes o un mouton
 Les murs quassot tot environ:
 Donc veïssiez femnes ramper,
 O mauz d'acier les murs fausser,
 Le mortier gratent trop fortment,
 Pertus i firent plus de cent,
 Ne lor chaleit quis oceïst,
 Ne qui onques mal lor feïst:
 Mout se combateient fortment.
 Grant pitié en aveient gent:
 Por les femnes fortment ploroent,
 De l'assaillir mout se penoent.⁵

[The duke boldly attacked the city with all his men; he himself broke the walls all around with a battering ram. Then you could have seen the women climbing and cracking the walls with steel hammers; they scratched at the mortar ferociously and made more than a hundred holes in it. They didn't care about being killed or injured but fought very stoutly. The men took great pity of it; they wept much on account of the women and threw themselves into the assault.]

The women play a significant role not militarily, their tapping and scratching only a faint echo of Theseus's battering ram, but by inspiring pity among the men who then undertake the significant work of the assault. That "gent," people, designates the men who weep for "les femnes" contributes to universalizing the masculine experience and subordinating the feminine to it. Even the women's fearlessness derives from their devotion to their dead husbands and lovers. It is a shadow of lost masculine courage rather than a new feminine trait, a distant echo as is the tapping of their hammers to Theseus's battering ram.

In women rulers and warriors as well, leadership and chivalry

⁵ *Thèbes*, ed. Constans, 10073-86 (edition based on MS Brit. Lib. Add. 34114). Compare Bib. Nat. f. fr. 784, *Thèbes*, ed. Raynaud de Lage, ll. 10443-63, for which a similar argument could be made. Wise, 127-37, argues for Chaucer's use of *Thèbes* in the *Knights Tale's* account of the end of the siege of Thebes. See also Nolan.

remain masculine and coexist uneasily with these characters' identity as women. The Dido of *Eneas* loses her ability to rule when she begins to love Eneas:

Molt soloit bien terre tenir
 et bien soloit guerre baillir,
 or a tot mis an nonchaloir
 et an obli par non savoir.
 Amors li a fait oblier
 terre a tenir et a garder. . . .
 Cele qui maintenoit l'onor
 a tot guerpi por soe amor. (1409-14, 1431-32)

[She had known well how to govern the land and make war but now she let everything slide and be forgotten in her heedlessness. Love has made her forget to govern and keep her land. . . . She who had maintained her land has given up everything for love.]

In failing to integrate love with rule Dido fulfills her sister Anna's aphorism that "Ne puet estre longue par fenne / bien maintenu enor ne regne" (a land or realm cannot be governed well for long by a woman) (1349-50). Dido's surrender to love contrasts with Eneas's success at simultaneously conquering Italy and courting Lavine, gendering the integration of love and rule as a masculine capacity by contrast with Dido's womanly failure to do so. The warrior Camille resembles Dido in that she successfully pursues chivalry by isolating herself from men; she responds to the sexual taunting of an adversary, "mialz sai abatre un chevalier / que acoler ne dosnoier; / ne mc sai pas combatre anverse" (I know better how to defeat a knight than to kiss or make love; I do not know how to do battle on my back) (7123-25). Chivalry and rule remain masculine behaviors that divide the women who practice them from their gendered identity as lovers of men.

For Dido's and Camille's isolation from men when they rule and fight signals not only the masculine gendering of those practices but also the feminine gendering of love. One of the major expansions masculinity achieves in romance transforms the feminine suffering and submission of love into a formative masculine experience. Waiting, longing, and victimization in love may sound oddly feminine in an early romance hero such as Eneas,

whose lament directly echoes Lavine's and recalls the women's laments in Ovid's *Heroides*.⁶ In later plots, particularly in the line of influence through the *Romance of the Rose* to Chaucer, love-suffering becomes more characteristically masculine than feminine. Later chapters examine the play of genders around love in romances. Here my focus is on the wider cultural process by which traits relegated to femininity in binary gender distinctions can be reabsorbed into masculine identity.

Theseus's defeat of the Amazons and marriage to Hippolyta locate the feminine outside the realm of chivalry and rule, thereby associating that realm with the masculine. The tale's second episode, in which weeping women beg for his pity, makes a subordinate place in masculine behavior for softer emotions that have been relegated to womanhood. These narrative realities—that masculinity is expanded rather than feminized by the practice of pity and that masculine behaviors do not become feminine when practiced by women—contribute to centering romance on the masculine subject, and to identifying masculine experience with human experience in general.

HERO OR SUBJECT?

That romance treats masculine experience as if it were universal does not free masculinity from constraints and contradictions. Although the genre's heroes strive to establish an identity distinct from all others, their identity is not only contingent on public recognition but deeply implicated in that of the community. Critical studies have investigated how the heroes of romance must negotiate tensions between private desires on the one hand and

⁶ According to Yunck, Lavine's sufferings suit the Ovidian treatment "since Ovid was largely concerned with feminine love psychology," but the similar treatment does not suit Eneas: "most modern readers will find this Eneas, groaning, self-pitying, and bed-ridden in the throes of his love agony, something of a grotesque" (*Eneas: A Twelfth-Century French Romance*, 36-37). The groaning and self-pity that seem right in a feminine voice seem "grotesque" in a masculine one precisely because they are gendered feminine in the sources and are just undergoing absorption into masculinity. The explanation cited by Yunck from Adler, that Eneas's middle age and experience are what render his love-suffering grotesque, evades the significance of the *Eneas* poet's crossgendering of Ovid's "feminine love psychology."

social constraints on the other (e.g., Hanning, *Individual*; Ferrante, *Conflict*; Bloch, *Etymologies*). My emphasis is slightly different. Despite the dramatized tension, romances depict chivalric society actively producing its members such that the self is significantly an aspect of the community. As important to romances' version of masculine identity as the tension between self and society is the process of internalization by which men incorporate the constraints of community into their own identities.

No feature of romances is more evident than their focus on a hero, a central character with whose destiny the plot is concerned. Heroes of romance may need assistance in youth and correction in maturity, but their achievements invite admiration even when narrators take a certain ironic distance from them (see D. H. Green; Haidu; Jauss, "Negativität"). In contemporary descriptions romance is definitively "of" the hero, concerning him and pertaining to him: "Off Hauelok, Horne, and of Wade; / In Romaunces that of hem ben made," as the *Laud Troy Book* puts it, or as in *Richard Coer de Lyon*,

Ffele romaunses men maken newe,
Off goode knyghtes, stronge and trewe;
Off here dedys men rede romaunce,
Boþe in Engeland and in Ffraunce. . . .

(see *Sources and Analogues*, 556-59)

The *Tale of Sir Thopas* similarly designates the genre by naming its heroes, and imitates the conventional strategy of claiming superiority to previous works by comparing one hero to another:

Men speken of romances of prys,
Of Horn child and of Ypotys,
Of Beves and sir Gy,
Of sir Lybeux and Pleyndamour—
But sir Thopas, he bereth the flour
Of roial chivalry.

(VII 897-902)

Yet to be the flower of chivalry and the focus of plot does not fully describe the hero of romance. The contingency of heroic merit on a range of social relations qualifies the impression of autonomy conferred by the dominant place assigned to titular characters in generic descriptions. The solitary adventures on which "Lybeux"

(the Handsome) departs to establish his identity do so because he sends all his defeated adversaries back to Arthur, who gave him his temporary name, and submits his bride to Arthur's approval. Lybeaus's identity consists in the recognition he wins from the court, from Arthur as much as from his lost father Gawain. The relation of heroic figures to their lords, followers, and lovers varies so widely in romance that it evades formulation as a generic motif, yet that relation is integral to the notion of the romance hero.

At one extreme of the genre's possibilities, the hero's will subsume the community's need, so that his self-interested actions guarantee his society's well-being. Many Anglo-Norman and Middle English romances such as the Bevis and Horn stories cited in *Sir Thopas* follow this model. In striving to regain their patrimonies, Bevis and Horn defeat pagan armies and oppose tyrannical kings to the benefit of all their countrymen. Alternatively, in *Guy of Warwick*, the Tristan and Lancelot romances, and many romances about young love, the hero's will tends to be at odds with the public order, creating crises of identity that are difficult or impossible to resolve. Guy's beloved Felice demands that he leave court until he has become the best knight in the world, but his parents and his lord oppose Felice's command on the ground that he owes them superior allegiance. Guy himself, once married, repents of his adventures for love and undertakes compensatory feats for good causes in defense of Christian, feudal, and national rights. Although Guy's efforts like Horn's build his reputation, his efforts and his reputation are deeply involved in familial and institutional relations.

Indeed, the term *hero*, with its implications of isolating uniqueness and autonomy, is not fully appropriate to these characters' strongly interdependent identities.⁷ The adventuring knight constructs a distinct identity through his choices and actions, but his

⁷ Noting not only the naïveté and need for assistance that make romance heroes' progress educative but also the genre's focus on "events which are closer to states of being than to acts," Jameson argues that "the very category of the 'hero' as such belongs more properly to a dramatic literature, and that we therefore need to mark the contemplative nature of romance as narrative by the choice of some other term for the human figuration of which its pattern is in part woven": "Magical Narratives," 139; corresponding to *Political Unconscious*, 112-13.

trajectory toward distinction must be made known to others because identity is finally in the gift of the community.

The Canterbury tales that draw heavily on romance show a particular interest in the relation between identity and community. *Sir Thopas* takes the dominance of titular heroes so literally that the problem of interrelations vanishes, and with it the meaning of heroic gestures. Thopas has a father, but filial duty, patrimony, and family honor receive no challenge; Thopas is in love, but his devotion to an elf-queen is neither in conflict with his dynastic and feudal obligations nor an occasion for self-transformation. Middle English romance is not an imposing referent for *Sir Thopas*, but its exemplars do make sense of their heroes' actions by relating them to demands of family, nation, and secular self-redemption. The *Tale of Sir Thopas* parodies romance in part by isolating the central character, stranding him on an empty stage where his rushing about looks absurdly autonomous.

Other tales decenter the position of hero by doubling characters in that position. Palamon and Arcite occupy together a primary role that could also be claimed by Theseus; the *Squire's Tale* promises to have two equivalent protagonists, at least, in Algarsyf and Cambalo; and Aurelius tries to double the absent Arveragus in the *Franklin's Tale*. So persistent is Chaucer's doubling that an explanation for it on the level of genre should be sought.⁸ It could be seen as an intensification or a revision of the tendency to provide titular characters with close companions. A few romances such as *Amis and Amiloun* have two protagonists, and many feature close friends such as Guy's Terri and Horn's Athulf; often friendship gets involved in courtship with interesting implications for gender that I discuss in the last section of this chapter.⁹ Friendship is an important issue for the *Knight's Tale*, but more

⁸ Mann's chapter "The Feminised Hero" (*Geoffrey Chaucer*, 165-85) argues that the lack of a single hero in various tales is a way of emphasizing a model of suffering and patience over a model of the active and aggressive hero. I agree that doubling characters in the position of hero questions the possibility of autonomous action, but I argue that rather than feminizing men, the doubling examines (as the romance genre examines) certain constraints on masculine identity in relation to community.

⁹ Leicester, 221-42, understands the *Knight's Tale's* plot shift from Theseus to Palamon and Arcite as an instance of shifting from an epic to a romantic vision, from the attack on Creon in which "the image of the hero tends to overpower the

generally Chaucer's dispersal of the romance hero's role into two or more protagonists encourages us to consider their relatedness as an aspect of their identity.

The *Franklin's Tale* explores interrelation as a characteristic of identity by nudging its apparent hero Arveragus to the edge of the action, doubling him in the suitor Aurelius, and revealing each man's identity to be contingent on public norms and perceptions. Aurelius first distinguishes himself in conventional courtliness as he "syngeth, daunceth passynge any man / That is, or was, sith that the world bigan" (V 929-30). His behavior is so paradigmatic that Dorigen does not interpret his "general compleynyng" (V 945) as expressing a particular desire for her. The array of formal expressions he has chosen—"layes, / Songes, compleintes, roundels, virelayes" (V 947-48)—finally yields to his more pointed declaration:

I wolde that day that youre Arveragus
Wente over the see, that I, Aurelius,
Hadde went ther nevere I sholde have come agayn.
For wel I woot my servyce is in vayn. . . . (V 969-72)

Even in his expression of personal desire, the lover aligns himself with the husband to express his longing. The effect is inextricably comparative and competitive; identity turns as much on similarity as on distinction.

Honor, the most important of masculine virtues in romance, is likewise both personal and public (Brewer, "Honour"; Blamires). The account of Arveragus's return from seeking worship in arms makes his achievement a function of its recognition: "Arveragus, with heele and greet honour, / As he that was of chivalrie the flour, / Is comen hoom, and othere worthy men" (V 1087-89). The subtly effective construction "as he that was," in contrast to "who was," communicates the achievement in terms of similarity. Arveragus is the flower of chivalry above all others, but still in comparison to some ideal or set of similars. The "other worthy men" accompanying him are both his fellows in arms and the ground of contrast for his achievement. Like Aurelius in his love for Dorigen, Arveragus must define himself by excelling at recog-

larger forces in whose name he putatively acts" (227) to the complications of relatedness in friendship and love.

nized behaviors, in relation to other men who similarly define themselves.

Indeed, to say that romance heroes signify through their confrontations with the world may still be to imagine heroes too autonomously and their confrontations too unilaterally. Aurelius does confront forces external to him, but he is also generated by them. His excellence at singing and dancing, like Arveragus's worship in arms, instantiates not only the paradigms of chivalric culture as it is represented in romance, but that culture's claim to produce individuals who are meritorious precisely in their paradigmatic behavior. Lee Patterson's illuminating discussion of subjectivity in the *Knight's Tale* begins from the premise that "chivalry entailed a form of selfhood insistently, even exclusively, public. It stressed a collective or corporate self-definition and so ignored the merely personal or individual." For Patterson the Knight's formulaic *General Prologue* portrait reflects a chivalric validation of public over individual identity, and it is the Knight's entry into tale-telling that releases him "into the problematic of self-definition that motivates the *Canterbury Tales*" (Chaucer, 168-69). This problematic motivates romances as well, although differently from the *Canterbury Tales* as a whole. The very range of subjectivities the pilgrims come to represent, as well as the transgressiveness of a Pardoner or a Wife of Bath, contrast with romance's relatively positive vision of identity's contingency on shared chivalric principles. Romances specify that the collectivity does not simply recognize but generates masculine identity and that the social constitution of individuals is a positive cultural pattern, one that sustains community by bringing men into its law and ultimately by reproducing its law within masculine consciousness.

Thus the modern resonances of the term *individual* and of the critical dyad *individual/society* can be misleading in discussions of romance. The postmedieval conception of the individual, as developed in relation to the Enlightenment and the rise of the novel, is that persons are self-determining agents who exist independently of their competitive environment.¹⁰ As a counterbalance

¹⁰ The classic study on the relation between the novel and Enlightenment ideas of the individual is Watt; McKeon reassesses Watt and emphasizes the persistence of romance in the novel.

to that atomistic Lockean version of the "individual," it is helpful to measure identity in romance against the postmodern version of the "subject." Both "individual" and "subject" are concepts developed in and for postmedieval periods, but identity as romance imagines it may have more in common with the postmodern than the Lockean model.

Theories of the subject are diverse in many respects but concur in rejecting the idea that the individual is a self-determining being whose essential identity persists beneath its reformation by culture and ideology. In contrast, postmodernists urge that the human subject is the site of many intersecting social discourses and practices that have in the subject a constitutive rather than a reforming or educative power. Subjects are constructed by their cultures rather than confronted with them. Michel Foucault's work, because its orientation is historical and its focus is on how societies regulate their subjects, invites comparison to romance's version of the relation between self and community. Foucault's subject is pervasively formed and controlled by a universe of forces but most crucially by the modern state. For Foucault the objectifications that produce the subject are modern phenomena from which the medieval period is in contrast relatively free; the forces at work on the subject are so powerful, and in Foucault's rhetoric so sinister, that the subject's tendency to internalize control in self-regulation is but the final instance of the compelling power exerted upon it.¹¹

Medieval romance, importantly informed by chivalric ideology, pictures a less coercive process in which the subject both instantiates the collectivity and responds to it by shaping the requirements of collective identity. Postmodern theory, at least in its earlier stages, sees the subject so completely a product of large social forces that meaningful resistance and indeed agency of any kind become virtually unimaginable.¹² Still, the postmodern con-

¹¹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish, History of Sexuality*, and "The Subject and Power"; on other postmodern theories of the subject see Smith.

¹² Recent theorists have worked to enlarge the subject's agency while preserving the framing perception that social discourses and practices produce their subjects. Alcoff argues that postmodern insights can be taken to define "positionality," the subject's "external situation" rather than "internal characteristics," so that the subject can take action either within or against that situation (433). Agency is also

ception that social practices generate the consciousness of historical subjects answers well to depictions of men in romance, and it is a valuable counterbalance to the conception of the essential, transhistorical individual who exists in confrontation with the world. As an example, one aspect of Foucault's ideas about self-regulation clarifies the place of judicial procedures in romance. In several works but predominantly in *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault argues that institutional regulation can induce in the subject a self-regulation that perpetuates institutional power from within. The seventeenth century saw the origins of a "disciplinary society" which sought to exercise a thorough and detailed control that contrasted to the intermittent discipline of earlier societies; one instrument of the pervasive control exerted by the new disciplinary society was a "panoptical" surveillance of its prisoner/soldier/student subjects so implacable and minute as to finally induce self-surveillance in them (195-228). Although many specifics distinguish Foucault's modern cases from any medieval ones, the place of judicial procedures in romance offers a parallel to Foucault's observation that self-surveillance follows from institutional regulation.

In Chaucer's use of romance, judicial encounters follow a trajectory from subjecting men to institutional judgment toward producing in them an internalized standard of self-judgment. The trajectory is of long standing in the genre; from the twelfth century onward romances frequently feature judicial trials, duels, and ordeals and extend the adversarial and deliberative character of judicial procedure into the wider plot of courtship and chivalric adventure. Specific judicial encounters may set protagonists in opposition to malicious accusers, political and amorous rivals, and even their own feudal lords, but by placing these encounters in the wider scene of events, romances transfer deliberation from the judicial to the personal in knights' self-testing on adventure and in lovers' interrogating monologues. For Bloch the inquest, with its verbal depositions and counterarguments, is an "implicit legal model underlying romance" (*Medieval French*, 199; see 189-214); in Haidu's terms "the essential conflict is not between the

a major concern for Smith (on Foucault see esp. 168n) and for the contributors to *Feminism and Foucault*.

individual and the world, but in what the individual himself desires" (106). I concur in rejecting the dichotomy between individual and world and further reject the concept of the autonomous individual. Identity in romance partakes of the collectivity and resistance to social forces gives way to self-regulation not as a concession to power through which power reproduces itself but as an enlightened recognition of the interdependence of subject and society. The *Knights Tale* illustrates the earlier stages of the process and the *Franklin's Tale* its further development.

Theseus interrupts the two lovers fighting in the grove "withouten juge or oother officere" (I 1712) in his capacity as the ruler under whose eye all disputes should be adjudicated. Theseus echoes Arcite's phrase in transforming the private duel over Emelye into a public tournament that will "darreyne hire by bataille" (I 1609, 1853). The *Squire's Tale* obscurely forecasts a similar adjudication for "Cambalo, / That faught in lystes with the bretheren two / For Canacee er that he myghte hire wynne" (V 667-69). The spectacle with which Theseus replaces the duel brings Palamon and Arcite under the control of Theseus and the collective gaze of the chivalric community, whose judgmental relation to the spectacle reinforces and prepares for Theseus's final judgment. The seating in the lists is so arranged "That whan a man was set on o degree, / He letted nat his felawe for to see" (I 1891-92); before the fighting, groups of people attempt to predict who will fight well based on their arms and physiques (I 2513-20, 2590-93); as the fighting begins, "Ther seen men who kan juste and who kan ryde" (I 2604). The contestants' visibility makes them available to judgment.

Theseus's round lists might be considered a precursor of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon, the circular prison observed from a central point which for Foucault epitomizes the modern state's method of controlling groups in architectural spaces that provide for unidirectional surveillance. The lists are panoptical in bringing the lovers' willful resistance to Theseus's law under institutional visibility and regulation.¹³ The obscured actions of the gods provide

¹³ The lists are, however, a structure for one occasion and Theseus's role is not transferable, in contrast to Foucault's panoptical surveillance, which is perpetual and can be carried out by any (or no) functionary since the observer is hidden from the observed.

an analogue to the unidirectional surveillance that characterizes the modern Panopticon. But the lists do not objectify and isolate their subjects to the same extent. Observers interact productively with combatants in the gift of Emelye, in the look she and Arcite exchange at his victory, and in the adulation of the crowd for all the participants. Further, the purpose of containment in the lists is not to control the rivalry between Palamon and Arcite by isolating it, but to incorporate the rivalry they have considered private into the chivalric community in the broadest terms:

For every wight that lovede chivalrye
 And wolde, his thankes, han a passant name,
 Hath preyed that he myghte been of that game,
 And wel was hym that therto chosen was,
 For if ther fille tomorwe swich a cas,
 Ye knowen wel that every lusty knyght
 That loveth paramours and hath his myght,
 Were it in Engelond or elleswhere,
 They wolde, hir thankes, wilnen to be there—
 To fighte for a lady, benedicitee!
 It were a lusty sighte for to see.

(I 2106-16)

The hundred knights each man brings to the tournament are not merely supporters of the lovers' separate claims but men themselves moved by chivalry and love, and men typical of others "in Engelond or elleswhere." The particularity of desire that Palamon and Arcite claimed each for himself dissolves into the common experience of their estate. The episode pictures subjects constituted similarly by chivalric culture, subjects whose similarities arise from willed subscription to that culture's values. Although the subject of postmodern theories is shaped more passively, even unilaterally, by the modern world, the conception that identity arises from social context illuminates the judicial combat better than the conception that autonomous individuals struggle against society. Palamon and Arcite's submission to judicial combat expresses the communal component in their own identities that makes the tournament an appropriate way to work out their fate.

The final effect of panoptical surveillance according to Foucault is that those subjected to it reproduce it within themselves. The panoptical experience is so irresistible that it becomes inter-

nalized in self-reform. For Foucault, earlier centuries in which control operated intermittently and repressively did not know this circularity by which control extends itself, recruiting its very objects into its processes. But romances do dramatize an analogous internalization of legal constraint, and declare it to be a positive and enabling process, as a few examples of characters' articulated relations to judicial procedure may show.

Palamon and Arcite's eager submission to judicial combat implies a perceived consonance between its adjudication and their own desires. The *Wife of Bath's Tale* acts out a fuller internalization by which the imposition of public judgment moves the subject toward self-reform. The knight condemned for rape in Arthur's court wins pardon from the court of ladies and the queen "sittyng as a justise" (III 1028) through his (merely rote) acknowledgment that women desire sovereignty—an acknowledgment that would (if internalized) render rape impossible. The question posed to him by his old wife repeats the judicial situation in requiring an answer of the knight that again recognizes women's desire for sovereignty. Here the rule of the court fades into self-rule, first in the wife's mocking metaphor for the knight's behavior to her:

... O deere housbonde, benedicitee!
 Fareth every knyght thus with his wyf as ye?
 Is this the lawe of kyng Arthures hous?
 Is every knyght of his so dangerous? (III 1087-90)

Linking the normative behavior of "every knyght" to the "lawe of kyng Arthures hous" recalls the court's condemnation of the knight's aberrant behavior, in part by positing for Arthur's knights an internalized code of constraint at the opposite extreme from rape. The imagined knights' "lawe," however comic, forecasts the wife's arguments for living by internalized standards. In her curtain lecture birth is unimportant without "gentil dedes" and "vertuous lyvyng"; wealth obscures merit but poverty can instruct a man "his God and eek hymself to knowe" (III 1115, 1122, 1202). The old wife urges the knight to conduct himself (and to judge her) according to principles shared by the truly gentle—the plural "we," "us," and "oure" that speak through the wife—in a move parallel to incorporating Palamon and Arcite's "fichte for

a lady" into the paradigm of chivalric culture at large. The Wife of Bath's knight chooses to make himself doubly subject to his culture in answering his wife's question "as yow liketh, it suffiseth me" (III 1235). Only by accepting that the knight has listened to his wife and been changed by her words can we explain the difference between "My love? . . . nay, my dampnacioun!" and "My lady and my love, and wyf so deere, / I put me in youre wise governance" (III 1067, 1230-31). Unless he is "glosing" her like Jankyn, which is unlikely in view of his thoughtful sigh (III 1228), the old wife has talked him into loving and respecting her. In conceding sovereignty to his wife he accepts her culturally authoritative arguments concerning the regulated behavior of true gentility; more specifically he surrenders the fiction of autonomy that alone could have justified his crime.

The *Franklin's Tale* completes the internalization of judicial procedure by submitting characters who are concerned with governing themselves to the judgment of the audience. Arveragus and Dorigen make private vows that parallel those of their marriage, occasioning the narrator's long comment on self-governance ("After the tyme most be temperaunce / To every wight that kan on governaunce" [V 785-86]). Legal terminology infiltrates the characters' language concerning their personal pledges:

I yow rlesse, madame, into youre hond
 Quyt every serement and every bond
 That ye han maad to me as heerbiforn,
 Sith thilke tyme which that ye were born. (V 1533-36)

... I wole of hym assaye,
 At certeyn dayes, yeer by yeer, to paye. . . . (V 1567-68)

... wolde ye vouche sauf, upon seuretee,
 Two yeer or thre for to respiten me. . . . (V 1581-82)

Have I nat holden covenant unto thee? (V 1587)

Sire, I relese thee thy thousand pound. . . . (V 1613)

Speaking in legal terms of bond and covenant, release and acquittal, surety and oath incorporates a public standard of reliability into personal behavior, particularly in combination with the characters' tendency to generalize themselves in statements such as

Trouthe is the hyeste thyng that man may kepe. (V 1479)

Thus kan a squier doon a gentil dede
As wel as kan a knyght, withouten drede. (V 1543-44)

Thou art a squier, and he is a knyght;
But God forbede, for his blisful myght,
But if a clerk koude doon a gentil dede
As wel as any of yow, it is no drede! (V 1609-12)

Each man speaks at decisive moments in terms of social groups to which his particular actions should measure up.¹⁴ Self-regulation leads to behavior the characters agree is gentle and generous; the closing invitation to the audience to judge "whiche was the mooste fre" (III 1622) perpetuates the idea of shared standards of behavior that can underlie judgments in courts as in courts of law. To be gentle is to "kan on governance," to regulate one's behavior more subtly and thoroughly than feudal law itself.

Scenes of judgment and self-judgment provide one of many indications that, however independently capable a romance hero may appear, his identity derives from the chivalric community and constantly refers him to the community's standards. Another illustration could be developed from the discourse of love, aptly termed a "class dialect" in Larry Benson's wide-ranging historical and literary studies ("Courtly Love," 243; *Malory's "Morte Darthur"*). When Arcite declares that "Love is a gretter lawe, by my pan, / Than may be yeve to any erthely man" (I 1165-66), he intends the metaphor to license his freedom to love as he chooses. But love also has the force of "lawe" in that it brings all lovers under the sway of elaborated poetic conventions that figure their experience and shape their behavior. All lovers are said to feel particular, symptomatic pains and pleasures; love (figured as a feudal lord and a god) constrains his subjects even as he creates them: "he kan maken, at his owene gyse, / Of everich herte as that hym list divyse" (I 1789-90). The intimate experiences of the heart are shared social experiences that constrain as well as enlarge masculine identity.

¹⁴ Knapp, 126-28, discusses in similar terms how law is internalized in the *Wife of Bath's Tale*.

The third section of this chapter treats one such constraint, placed on masculinity at the very origin of courtship when male friendship may seem to challenge heterosexuality's claim to ascendancy.

"FOR LOVE AND
FOR ENCREES OF CHIVALRYE"

The scene in which Lavine reveals to her mother that she loves Eneas, with its full-blown physical symptoms of love and its breathless stammering of Eneas's name syllable by syllable, has long been recognized as paradigmatic for romancers who follow (e.g., Dressler; Fourrier, 334-35; *Ipomedon*, ed. Holden, 55-56).¹⁵ A less discussed aspect of that scene, the mother's response that Eneas is a sodomite, also resonates through ensuing romances in their tendency to mark courtship's origin on the site of relations among men, whether erotic or social. Here I will trace three ways in which courtship superimposes itself on male relations. The accusation that Eneas "priseroit mialz un garçon / que toi ne altre acoler" (would prefer to embrace a boy rather than you or any woman) (8572-73), the alignment of love and chivalry as parallel paths to self-realization, and the challenge love poses to chivalric companionship make an issue of the ways in which two orientations, toward heterosexual courtship on the one hand and masculine relations on the other, occupy overlapping terrain in men's allegiances. Here critics have noted the element of conflict, but I would like to explore instead the analogies that connect rather than simply opposing the demands of courtship and male friendship.¹⁶ So viewed, courtship appears a secondary formation, a palimpsest text that overwrites masculine relations without fully obscuring them. Supplementing and deriving from them, courtship reveals ambivalently combative and desiring bonds among men as well as between men and women.

¹⁵ A short version of the following discussion was published as "Brotherhood and the Construction of Courtship."

¹⁶ Scaglione exemplifies most recently the perception of conflict in romances between chivalric and sexual relations: "the ideal noble knight must be a great fighter to be a worthy lover, but can hardly be both at the same time. . . . We must fight to qualify for love, yet we cannot love while we fight" (11-12).

Lavine's mother's reaction against her daughter's declaration of love associates sodomy with treachery:

Que as tu dit, fole desvee?
 Sez tu vers cui tu t'es donee?
 Cil cuiverz est de tel nature
 qu'il n'a gaires de femmes cure. . . .
 o feme ne set il joër,
 ne parlerast pas a guichet;
 molt aime fraise de vallet;
 an ce sont Troien norri.
 Molt par as foiblemant choisi.
 N'as tu oï comfaiement
 il mena Dido malement?
 Unques feme n'ot bien de lui,
 n'en avras tu, si com ge cui,
 d'un traïtor, d'un sodomite. (8565-68, 8574-83)

[What have you said, insane fool? Do you know to whom you've given yourself? This wretch is of the sort who hardly care for women. . . . He doesn't know how to play with a woman, nor would he speak at that little barred gate, but he likes very much the meat of a young man. The Trojans are raised on this. You've chosen very poorly. Haven't you heard how badly he treated Dido? Never has a woman had any good from him, nor will you as I believe, from a traitor and a sodomite.]

Political enmity between the Latin queen and the invading Trojans can explain the queen's hostility to Eneas and, more specifically, her condemnation of his earlier treacheries such as abandoning Dido. Ethnic hostility could further motivate the charge, as the queen's assertion that Trojans are raised in sodomy illustrates, but that hostility does not account so well for Lavine's expression of the same fears later in the courtship or for the charges of homoerotic orientation that reappear in other works such as *Lanval*, *Gylle de Chyn*, and *Perceval* when men turn down the advances of demanding women.¹⁷

¹⁷ Marie de France, *Lanval*, ll. 277-92; Gautier de Tournay, *Gylle de Chyn*, ll. 3535-62; Gerbert de Montreuil, *Continuation de Perceval* 1.1554-1601; see also Heldris de Cornuälle, *Silence*, ll. 3935-49.

In all these cases the charge of sodomy arises when heterosexuality is striving to establish a claim on men. The discourse of courtship between men and women that develops in later medieval lyric and romance does not have an exact homoerotic counterpart. Medievalists (albeit with less categorical assurance than modernists) presently concur that "homosexual" identity is a modern development and that in medieval periods homoerotic behavior was understood as a habit or perversion that did not challenge the binary gender distinction.¹⁸ In contrast, male-female eroticism was becoming, in medieval literature and culture generally, a richly elaborated focus of identity. The contrast helps explain why Lavine's mother does not accuse Eneas simply of misogyny with regard to Dido, but instead with a passion for boys that the affair with Dido might seem to refute. Even an inveterate sodomite is to be imagined as a deviant heterosexual.¹⁹ Masculine intimacy is seen as a threat to courtship, and not simply as its exclusive opposite. Lavine's mother warns that male-male eroticism will dominate and determine male-female eroticism:

s'il lo pooit par toi atraire,
 nel troveroit ja si estrange
 qu'il ne feïst asez tel change,
 que il feïst son bon de toi
 por ce qu'il lo sofrist de soi;
 bien lo lairoit sor toi monter,
 s'il repueit sor lui troter. . . . (8588-94)

[If he could attract (a boy) by means of you, he wouldn't find it strange to make a trade such that the other one could do as he liked

¹⁸ Cormier and Kuster, responding to John Boswell's argument for homosexual subcultures in *Christianity, Social Tolerance*; see also the essays by Boswell, David M. Halperin, and Robert Padgug in *Hidden from History*. Greenberg titles his chapters on ancient and medieval periods "Before Homosexuality." Brundage also questions a number of Boswell's arguments on the status of homoerotic behavior in the Middle Ages.

¹⁹ Although the term *heterosexual* could be said to have no meaning before the term *homosexual*, I use the former in order to acknowledge the identity-generating complex of meanings that surround male-female courtship in the late Middle Ages, and I eschew the latter in favor of more limited descriptive terms such as *homoerotic* and *homosocial* for sexual and social relations among men in the Middle Ages.

with you because he permitted it himself; he would gladly let the other mount you if he could in turn mount him.]

This scenario departs from the clerical argument that informs some of the queen's remarks, the argument that contrasts unproductive sodomy to fruitful heterosexuality (on that argument see Cormier, 216–28; Boswell, 137–66; Bullough). Here sodomy subsumes heterosexuality into its own economy rather than excluding it. Lavine's sexuality will be merely the instrument of the primary relation between men.

Although attributed to the exotic Trojans, the relations in the queen's scenario provide an unsympathetic version of the contemporary historical pattern of passage from the condition of chivalric "youth" to courtship and marriage. *Eneas* can be read as a literary transformation of the historical situation of *juvenes*, younger sons who were excluded from inheritance and who made their fortunes in bands of fellow knights, marrying late if they were sufficiently bold and fortunate to win an heiress. Jean-Charles Huchet has analyzed Eneas's career in terms of Georges Duby's research on the *juvenes* of twelfth-century France (Huchet, *Roman médiéval*, 27–38; Duby, "Jeunes"). Huchet, however, does not note Duby's later implications that erotic relations of some kind united these bands of youths, such that courtship "may have masked the essential—or rather, projected into the realm of sport the inverted image of the essential: amorous exchanges between warriors" (*William Marshal*, 47). Across many cultures, homoerotic behavior is not unusual in groups of young men, if only as a stage preceding heterosexual adulthood. Gervase of Canterbury, Henry of Huntingdon, Guillaume de Nangis, and John of Salisbury note sodomy among other noble depravities in contemporary courts; Orderic Vitalis typifies the chroniclers' views in considering sodomy a male weakness among many, rather than a defining sexual orientation: he regrets that in the time of William Rufus young men, in contrast to their forebears, "shamelessly gave themselves up to the filth of sodomy. . . . Our wanton youth is sunk in effeminacy, and courtiers, fawning, seek the favours of women with every kind of lewdness" (4:188–89; see also Goodich, 4–6; Cormier and Kuster, 593–94; *History of Private Life*, 591–92; Jacquart and Thomasset, 88–89, 105–7). For Or-

deric and other chroniclers sodomy corrupts sexuality and blurs sexual orientation, but for romances the accusation of sodomy has a clarifying function, that of validating heterosexuality by claiming its only alternative is disgraceful.²⁰

The medieval discourse of chivalric relations avoids the overtly sexual in its terms of allegiance, loyalty, and brotherhood, just as the text of *Eneas* does not sustain feminine suspicions in the relations among warriors depicted beyond the women's monologues. Yet the work's suppressed invocation of erotic bonds among knights recalls the possibility of such bonds in contemporary knighthood. In broader terms of gendered allegiance, the competition between opposite- and same-sex orientations that the women's monologues imagine throws particular emphasis on Eneas's later hesitancy to communicate with Lavine when he is with his men:

Tot a veü quant que manda,
molt s'en fist liez, bien lo cela:
ne volt que sa gent lo saüst
ne que nus d'aus l'apercüst. . . .
Il l'esgardot molt dolcement,
s'il ne s'atarjast por la gent;
ne regardot pas de droit oil. [8871–74, 8887–89]

[He saw everything she had sent him (in her letter) and was very glad of it, but he hid it well: he didn't wish his men to know it or for any of them to notice the letter. . . . He looked at her very sweetly but didn't linger on account of his men; he didn't look at her directly.]

Even when his men notice Lavine's interest in Eneas and point her out on the battlements with jocular warnings, Eneas avoids interaction with Lavine:

Un po s'an sozrist Eneas,
qui antandi tres bien lor gas,
et nequedant si s'an gardot
que voiant aus l'oil n'i tornot,

²⁰ For discussions of the *Eneas* plot as a whole in terms of erotic and social allegiances see Gaunt, Burgwinkle. Gaunt, 20–21, usefully invokes Rubin's "obligatory heterosexuality" to explain the strategy of sodomy accusations.

mais al trespas li refaisoit
 alcun sanblant que il l'amoit,
 quant n'antandoient pas a lui. (9253-59)

[Eneas, who well understood their jokes, smiled a little; he nonetheless refrained from looking toward her in their sight, but in passing he made some sign that he loved her when his men weren't paying attention to him.]

Eneas's behavior sustains the feminine suspicion that masculine relations compete in some sense with heterosexual relations.²¹ The one kind of relation hides from the other: among men Eneas's courtship is the object of smiles, even of his own smile, despite the devotion he simultaneously feels for Lavine. The group of male companions mocking the isolated Lavine provides a context for her fear that Eneas's masculine circle excludes her:

Molt me prisast mialz Eneas,
 se j'aüsse fanduz les dras
 et qu'eüsse braies chalcies
 et lasnieres estroit liees.
 Il a asez garçons o soi,
 lo peor aime mialz de moi. . . . (9155-60)

[Eneas would have liked me much better if I had split my robes and worn breeches and tightly tied thongs. He has many boys with him; he loves the worst of them more than me.]

Lavine's fantasy of crossdressing assumes neither that male-male eroticism is exclusive of male-female eroticism (as in the modern notion of "homosexual" identity) nor that male-male eroticism is simply interchangeable with male-female eroticism (as the clerical diatribes claim). That is, Lavine imagines competing with those Eneas loves better than her, not instead of her, by dressing like a boy, not becoming a boy. Lavine's sexual rivalry with boys is only one, perhaps delusory expression of a substantial social

²¹ Gaunt attributes this competition to a generic shift in process in *Eneas* from epic, which values bonds among men, to romance, which makes a hero's heterosexual bond primary. The position has merit, but the persistence of such competition in later romances argues that the genre typically engages heroes in balancing chivalric and romantic allegiances.

competition in *Eneas* between masculine loyalties and heterosexual love. The discourse of courtship in this and similar romances both constrains masculine loyalties by suggesting they are sexually transgressive and glorifies heterosexuality as sodomy's alternative, a culturally sanctioned and elaborated source of identity in contrast to sodomy's illicit irregularity.

By founding courtship on banishing homoeroticism, *Eneas* begins to imagine the difficulties masculine identity must negotiate to establish a heterosexual union within a society that strongly values bonds among men.²² Many later romances associate chivalric bonds and courtship without invoking the limit case of sodomy. Aligning success in heterosexual love with chivalric accomplishments generates well-recognized tensions and oppositions in romance between private fulfillment and public renown. The alignment also involves a consonance between love and chivalry that contributes to defining masculine identity by bringing to light an ambivalence in each relation. It might seem that a knight of romance like those of epic would love his companions and compete with his adversaries, but particularly in relation to courtships, chivalric interactions in romance reveal themselves to be both combative and desiring, while love takes on the language and dynamics of combat.

Chrétien de Troyes's *Erec et Enide* provides familiar examples of a peculiar intimacy between knights that appears when women come into the calculus of prowess. In his adventures with Enide, Erec is defining his relation to her through entering into active and complex relations with adversaries. Although Erec does defeat adversaries who are simply hostile, his major encounters with Yder son of Nuht, Guivret li Petiz, and Maboagrain pit him against men who become through combat his companions and friends. Their gestures in combat mirror one another and their hostilities end in mutual recognition:

Asanblé sont au chief del pont;
 la s'antre vienent et desfient,

²² Sedgwick's discussion, although specifically focused on heterosexual and homosocial components in nineteenth-century masculinity, is useful also for earlier periods.

as fers des lances s'antré anvient
 anbedui de totes lor forces.
 Ne lor valurent deus escorces
 li escu qui as cos lor pendent:
 li cuir ronpent et les es fandent
 et des haubers ronpent les mailles,
 si qu'anbedui jusqu'as antrailles
 sont anglaivé et anferré. . . .
 "Andui avons mestier de mire,
 et j'ai ci pres un mien recet,
 n'i a pas sis liues ne set,
 la vos voel avoec moi mener,
 si ferons noz plaies sener." (3758-67, 3878-82)

[They come together at the head of the bridge; there they face and challenge each other. With all their strength they attack each other with their iron-tipped lances. Their shields hanging from their necks were no more good to them than husks; they tear the straps and break the boards and split the links of each others' hauberks so that both of them are pierced through to the entrails. . . . "We both need a doctor, and I have a refuge nearby, not six or seven leagues from here; I want to take you there with me, and we'll have our wounds dressed."]

The mutuality of Erec's and Guivret's blows is the basis of their mutual respect and desire for each other's friendship. This kind of encounter is not characteristic of epic and chronicle. Fredric Jameson attributes the friendly resolution of such combats to an emerging sense of class identity among knights in the twelfth century that made the older notion of an evil adversary less expressive of chivalric consciousness than the romance version of an adversary who proves to be akin to the hero.²³ Guivret and Erec wrap one another's wounds in strips of cloth torn from their cloth-

²³ Citing Yder's case from *Yvain*, Jameson argues that "romance in its original strong form may then be understood as . . . a symbolic answer to the perplexing question of how my enemy can be thought of as being *evil* (that is, as other than myself and marked by some absolute difference), when what is responsible for his being so characterized is quite simply the *identity* of his own conduct with mine, the which—points of honor, challenges, tests of strength—he reflects as in a mirror image": *Political Unconscious*, 118 (his italics).

ing; repentant Yder joins the court of King Arthur; defeated Maboagrain reveals that he spent his youth in Erec's own household and that all his family will rejoice at Erec's victory over him. In a less military register, the *Franklin's Tale* still invites the Jamesonian reading, its competition among men illustrating in their own interpretation not so much their differences as their shared merit and values. The emergent class identity that Jameson notes overlaps significantly with gender identity in that women are so often the occasion for conflict and interaction among men in romance. Erec overcomes Yder in defending Enide's beauty, Guivret in a series of adventures for which Enide is a kind of bait, and Maboagrain in response to his challenge that Erec is not worthy to approach his lady. In each case we can read the woman as "la métonymie du seigneur," in Christiane Marchello-Nizia's formulation, the projected embodiment of chivalric honor over which the contestants dispute (980). I suggest further that the heterosexual relation imitates the chivalric one, expanding and complicating knightly identity.

The analogy between love and combat reaches back to troubadour lyric for its rhetorical formulations and to chronicles for the topos that women are the audience for chivalric behavior and their favors its reward.²⁴ Courtship in romance, configured as combat's metaphoric recasting as well as its motivation, follows the logic of chivalric encounters in which adversarial struggle gives way to accord. Although the proud lady whose resistance at last melts is the most familiar figure to cite, romance can discover the same dynamic in a variety of cases, even that of the helpful wife Enide. Erec has forbidden her to speak as a way of testing her motives for speaking: is she concerned for her own standing and safety or for Erec's? When she warns Erec of Guivret's approach,

Ele li dit, il la menace;
 mes n'a talant que mal li face,
 qu'il aparçoit et conquist bien
 qu'ele l'ainme sor tote rien,
 et il li tant que plus ne puet. (3751-55)

²⁴ On lyric and metaphoric violence see Bloch, *Medieval French*, 153-61; two familiar instances from chronicle are Geoffrey of Monmouth, 164, and Wace, 10511-42.

[She speaks to him and he threatens her, but he has no desire to hurt her because he perceives and knows well that she loves him above everything, and so does he love her completely.]

Open threats that yield eventually to love and alliance characterize as well the relations between Erec and his important challengers. During the combat with Guivret, Enide shows her love by tearing at herself, mimicking the wounds Erec is giving and receiving as if to himself in mirrored combat.²⁵ She is the object of his threat but experiences his pain; she is his opponent and (like his opponent) his double as well. What do these equivalences imply? They might encourage an erotic reading of combat: its mutuality and contact might suggest displaced passion, and the destruction of armor a displaced representation of undressing. But such erotics, as in *Eneas*, are so suppressed as to appear mere false constructions aroused by courtship's intrusion into a previously masculine space. The parallels between combat and courtship work more strongly in the opposite direction, such that courtship appears a development from chivalric relations, an overt sexualizing and regendering of chivalry's combative and fraternal components. Enide in an earlier scene echoes the adversarial challenge of groups of men, "de chevaliers et de sergenz" (of the knights and the men-at-arms), who doubt Erec's valor after marriage; she herself provides a relation both adversarial and desiring for Erec.²⁶ During their adventures the inner conflict she feels between fear of Erec's injunction to silence and desire for his safety casts her love in the terms of combat (e.g., ll. 2962–78, 3708–50). Tearing at herself and weeping as she watches Erec fight Guivret, Enide is not only metonymically restaging their conflict but also revealing its affective complexity. Lavine's jealous sense of competition with boys similarly points to affectivity among men even as Eneas is consolidating his heterosexuality. But unlike Lavine, who feels threatened by courtship's analogies to bonds among men, Enide

²⁵ Christine Darrohn has worked out this analysis in her conference paper "They reach for each other": Violent Bonding in *Erec et Enide*" (Fordham Medieval Conference, 1994).

²⁶ The masculine opinion Enide respeaks to Erec is that of "si compaignon," "trestoz li barnages," and "de chevaliers et de sergenz" according to the narration (2439, 2455, 2459).

respeaks and refigures masculine interactions such that her relation to Erec feeds back into his chivalric activity.

A third way of building courtship into men's relations is the triangulated erotic rivalry of two men for one woman. Chaucer's Canacee, Dorigen, and Emelye take part in this structure, although the final lines of the *Squire's Tale* only begin to introduce Canacee's case. Those of Dorigen and Emelye illustrate that the relation between men in specifically erotic triangles is strong and complex, and is more the focus of development for the tale than is the relation of either man to the woman in question. Aurelius refers to Arveragus in his first declaration to Dorigen, as we have seen, comparing himself to his rival. On comparative grounds Dorigen's status as "another mannes wyf" makes her desirable (V 1004). Aurelius does note her sorrow when Arveragus sends her to him, but his mercy on her depends on his acquiescence to Arveragus, who inspires him and to whom the squire addresses his decision: "Madame, seyth to youre lord Arveragus / That sith I se his grete gentillesse / To yow, and eek I se wel youre distresse. . . ." (V 1526–28) By conceding Dorigen to Arveragus but framing his concession as a "gentil dede" (V 1543) equivalent to that of his rival, Aurelius emphasizes the comparative over the competitive aspect of his relation to Arveragus. Their rivalry, working itself out in courtship and gentle deeds rather than chivalric encounters, resolves like Erec's rivalries through emulation into accord.

In the *Knight's Tale* masculine allegiance precedes a love that appears to invert and destroy friendship. Arcite, as we have seen, denies any integration of the love experience with masculine allegiances ("Love is a gretter lawe, by my pan, / Than may be yeve to any erthely man"), and the narrator's proverb concurs that "love ne lordshipe / Wol noight, his thankes, have no felaweshipe" (I 1625–26). In such a plot it may seem implausible to argue that love is overwritten on fellowship, that love is a secondary formation that clarifies and develops masculine relations. However, by combining the romance paradigms that the origin of courtship refuses fellowship (here illustrated from *Eneas*) and that courtship develops within chivalric relations (here illustrated from *Erec et Enide*), the *Knight's Tale* positions love as a productive expansion of Palamon and Arcite's experience of brotherhood.

As in *Eneas*, masculine relations in the *Knight's Tale* become problematic at the point of courtship's origin. Supplementing the queen's accusation of sodomy is Eneas's complaint against his brother Cupid:

Amor me fet molt grant oltrage,
 qui me moine an tel maniere:
 sos ciel n'a si vil chanberiere
 que il menast plus a desroi
 ne plus vilment que il fait moi,
 qui sui ses frere et il est miens.
 De lui me deüst venir biens,
 tot mal me fait et tot me mate,
 voirs est que prié mal achate. (8940-48)

[Love, who is treating me thus, is doing me a very great wrong: there is no chambermaid so base under heaven whom he would mistreat more vilely than he is mistreating me, who am his brother as he is mine. Good things should come to me from him, but he is doing me every wrong and utterly defeating me. Truly my friendship gets little reward.]

As love transforms brotherhood into opposition, Eneas imagines even his gender misapprehended by this brother who treats him worse than he would a chambermaid. Palamon expresses a similar sense of wrong, of the proper order reversed, in his claim that Arcite's oath of brotherhood should prevail over his competitive love for Emelye.

Eneas's complaint has the privilege over subsequent romantic complaints that Cupid, a son of Venus, is indeed his own brother, such that the onslaught of love is evidently and even comically at odds with brotherhood in the most immediate sense. Other lovers consistently reimagine falling in love as an encounter between the lover and the God of Love rather than the woman herself. When Arcite complains in the grove that "Love hath his fryr dart so brennyngly / Ystiked thurgh my trewe, careful herte," he too reformulates the adversarial aspect of love as a masculine contest (I 1564-65). Arcite expresses love in terms of combat to clarify the heterosexual experience in terms of familiar masculine experience: love is a new species of combat. The rhetorical device perpetuates the association between Palamon and Arcite's belea-

guered fraternity and their love for Emelye, and not only by expressing the onslaught of love as a masculine struggle between lover and Love. Arcite's image of love's arrow piercing his heart presages the rivalry Palamon feels on hearing his cousin's confession: "[he] thoughte that thurgh his herte / He felte a coold swerd sodeynliche glyde" (I 1574-75). The wounded heart aligns Arcite's unrequited love and Palamon's betrayed brotherhood as analogous cases, locating masculine rivalry on the site of courtship by translating the latter into the language of the former.

A second rhetorical parallel perpetuates courtship's involvement in brotherhood. From the earliest romances the monologues and complaints of lovers draw on lyric for a rhetoric of isolation and suffering. Among the most familiar lyric devices taken into romance is the address to an absent and uncaring object of love. Lavine indulges in lyric apostrophe when she addresses Eneas as she first realizes she is in love, "Amis, ne retourneroiz mie? / Molt vos est po de vostre amie" (Beloved, will you never return? You care very little for your friend) (8355-56).²⁷ Such apostrophes, far from implying a listening presence, are predicated on the addressee's absence. When apostrophe enters romance plots, it can produce an ambiguous tension between the lover's self-isolating lyricism and the beloved's accessibility to speech. Arcite illustrates the ambiguity in passing years of service to Emelye without addressing to her the kind of complaint he delivers (therefore can still deliver) in the grove: "Ye sleen me with youre eyen, Emelye! / Ye been the cause wherfore that I dye" (I 1567-68). This rhetorical topos of willed isolation also marks the friends' apostrophes to one another on Arcite's release from prison. Although Arcite's lament addresses "O deere cosyn Palamon" and Palamon's addresses "Arcita, cosyn myn," each speaks inconsolably to himself rather than to his brother, as the closing lines of each monologue indicate: Arcite ends his lament with a second apostrophe not to Palamon but to the similarly absent beloved ("Syn that I may nat seen you, Emelye, / I nam but deed, ther nys no remedye"), and Palamon ends his lament with the third-person notation that he is dying "For jalousie and fere of hym Arcite"

²⁷ On the emergence of romance in relation to lyric and other genres see Nichols, Kay, 171-211; Kelly, 306-20; Ferrante, "Conflict of Lyric Conventions and Romance Form."

[I 1234, 1273-74, 1281, 1333]. Romantic love has set each young man in lyric isolation from his brother as well as from his beloved. The event of Arcite's release concretizes a separation already recognized in the rhetoric of complaint and apostrophe.

That love and friendship share a rhetoric and compete for allegiance in the *Knight's Tale* raises the possibility, as in *Eneas*, of an erotic component in friendship that is analogous but hostile to romantic love.²⁸ The young men's reconciliation on Arcite's deathbed tallies with David Halperin's argument that in classical texts "death is the climax of [male] friendship, the occasion of the most extreme expressions of tenderness. . . . Indeed, it is not too much to say that death is to friendship what marriage is to romance" (79).²⁹ More overtly, heterosexual desire introduces open hostility into brotherhood, complicating and heightening Palamon and Arcite's affective relation far beyond the neonatal simplicity of the image first introducing them as "Two yonge knyghtes liggyng by and by, / Bothe in oon armes" (I 1011-12) on the battlefield at Thebes. The trouble within their brotherhood will be resolved when they leave complaint to become engaged in events. The friendship of Theseus and Perotheus—in its productive mutuality an ironic contrast to that of Palamon and Arcite—sets events in motion with Arcite's release. The resolution to the young friends' interrelated alienation and desire is chivalric, the duel and tournament affirming the capacity of masculine relations to further and resolve courtships.

Palamon and Arcite's duel in the grove begins to recall Erec's major encounters in commingling hostility with allegiance. Arm-

²⁸ According to Dellamora, 152-53, Pater, 7, understood Palamon and Arcite's friendship to be erotic. Colin Morris, 96-120, has examined the many parallels between terms of male friendship and heterosexual courtship. He emphasizes contrasts, whereas Boswell, e.g., 188-200, believes expressions of male friendship to be directly erotic.

²⁹ Halperin proposes that as depicted in the texts he considers, male friendship borrows imagery from sexual and political vocabularies "to identify and define itself" (84), whereas I propose the reverse, that heterosexual interaction patterns itself on male relations. Jaeger argues that the vocabulary of friendship in monastic and clerical writing is the basis of the vernacular vocabulary of secular courtesy and heterosexual love developed in the eleventh and twelfth centuries (*Origins of Courtliness*, 127-75; "Amour des rois"). From this rhetorical perspective, courtship is again a secondary formation on masculine relations.

ing, that ritual of masculine dressing so important to romance that it occupies all of the second fit of *Sir Thopas*, reintroduces a simulacrum of brotherly behavior:

Ther nas no good day, ne so saluyng,
But streight, withouten word or rehersyng,
Everich of hem heelp for to armen oother
As frendly as he were his owene brother. . . . (I 1649-52)

Dispensing with words and salutations seems to be the precondition for the gestures of arming that reintroduce brotherhood even in the context of enmity. The duel is, paradoxically, the point of reentry into brotherhood, as the shared chivalric code of fair play dictates the rivals' mutual aid in preparing for battle. Their enmity continues to evoke their earlier fellowship in Palamon's expressions of mutuality as he denounces the two of them to Theseus: "We have the deeth disserved bothe two. / Two woful wrecches been we, two caytyves" (I 1716-17). The language of enmity and courtship's metaphoric language of despair are indistinguishable when Palamon begs Theseus to "sle me first, for seinte charitee! / But sle my felawe eek as wel as me" (I 1721-22). Theseus, however, resists the young men's alienation both in noting that love is a common ground of experience uniting all three men to other lovers and in arranging a tournament that gives expression to Palamon and Arcite's rivalry within the wider frame of shared chivalric values.

The tournament restores the positive valence of masculine companionship, first by mitigating each lover's isolation through the company of fellows he assembles. Arcite implies that his prayer to Mars speaks for the men with whom he will fight, in promising that for victory "in thy temple I wol my baner honge / And alle the armes of my compaignye" (I 2410-11). The narration emphasizes that knights there and elsewhere would strive "to fighte for a lady," or more precisely, to join such an occasion "for love and for encrees of chivalrye" (I 2115, 2184). The motive is common to participants on both sides, and the whole undertaking is implicated in the sustenance of the state, their own estate, and the law. In the tournament, a public spectacle that serves social purposes such as displaying Theseus's power, enacting the aristocracy's common purposes, and submitting a private dispute to

judicial authority, the adversaries can indeed be admonished that fighting is their duty: "Tho were the gates shet, and cried was loude: / 'Do now youre devoir, yonge knyghtes proude!' " (I 2597-98)

The greatest success of the tournament, as for Erec's encounters with his most important adversaries, is that it furthers courtship by perpetuating and deepening the relations among knights. Like the mutual blows that express shared merits in Erec's combats, the shared purpose of the knights on both sides of Theseus's tournament leads to their easy reconciliation at its end. The occasion itself was honorable, so that even those who fell or were captured share in honor:

Ne ther was holden no disconfitynge
 But as a justes or a tourneyng;
 For soothly ther was no disconfiture. . . .
 For which anon duc Theseus leet crye,
 To stynten alle rancour and envye,
 The gree as wel of o syde as of oother,
 And eyther syde ylik as ootheres brother. . . .

(I 2719-21, 2731-34)

The adversaries who become "ylik as ootheres brother" adumbrate Arcite's reconciliation with Palamon, providing a wider context than the deathbed for Arcite's account of their enmity as a thing of the past ("I have heer with my cosyne Palamon / Had strif and rancour many a day agon" [I 2783-84]). Love has opposed brotherhood in this plot, but in conceding Emelye to Palamon, in inviting their union as he dies, Arcite subsumes Emelye into a restored economy of brotherhood. The tournament has set the brothers on opposite sides, apparently reversing the condition in which they were found "liggyng by and by, / Bothe in oon armes," but in effect the tournament has expanded the brothers' chivalric experience by incorporating love as an occasion for their rivalry and reconciliation. Here as in many romances, men negotiate the difficult demand that they establish a heterosexual bond but maintain strong homosocial bonds by building the former into the latter, redoubling and extending masculine relations through courtship.

Feminine Mimicry and Masquerade



ROMANCES, in contrast to much medieval literature, abound in representations of women. This chapter argues that in their female characters romances work out both a version of femininity generated by masculine courtship and a critique of that version of femininity. Female characters, moreover, themselves stage this critique within the terms of their social construction. Dorigen confronted with Aurelius's suit, the abandoned falcon of the *Squire's Tale*, the Amazons of the *Knight's Tale*, and the Wife of Bath's shape-shifting fairy deploy the language and paradigms of conventional femininity to press against their positioning within it. Placing Chaucer's characters in the company of others from a variety of romances clarifies the strategies each woman uses to articulate and question her lot. In each case, respeaking and remanipulating familiar gender paradigms offers ways around them.

The representation of women is a central problem of feminist criticism. In what sense are women visible or absent in literary language? What is the relation of a discourse such as that of courtship in romance to the historical identities of medieval (or modern) women? An early paradigm of impressive explanatory force was Simone de Beauvoir's conception of woman as the Other of masculine identity, the category of strangeness that by opposition founds a coherent meaning for masculinity. "Once the subject seeks to assert himself, the Other, who limits and denies him, is none the less a necessity to him: he attains himself only through that reality which he is not, which is something other than himself" (139). This conception of woman as a "second" sex that consolidates the identity of men is modified by recent French feminists for whom the representation of woman in the realm of masculine discourse is altogether impossible; the feminine can-