The Discourse of masculinity in Three Thirteenth-Century French Grail romances: the *Perlesvaus*, the Didot-*Perceval*, and Manessier's continuation of the *Conte du Graal*.

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own composition and contains no work that has been previously submitted for any other degree of professional qualification.

Abstract

This thesis aims to demonstrate the construction of masculinity in Grail romances, investigating the manner in which models of masculinity are created in relation to other models and the discourse of the masculine with the feminine. The investigation into the construction of masculinity necessitates an examination of the evolution of chivalry, evaluating the influence of theologians such as John of Salisbury, the manifestation of the Church's view of chivalry in the Grail texts and its importance in creating an ideology of chivalry. This is the starting point from where an assessment of the construction of masculinity can begin, firstly by a study of the discourse of the ideal model of masculinity with a similar model, a case in which like is compared with like, incorporating a discussion of friendship derived from the Ciceronian model and that of Aelred of Rievaulx through which is developed the notion of perfection in an individual inspiring other individuals leading on to the Girardian concept of the mimesis of desire as a mechanism by which the ideal model is imitated by similar models.

Contrast is another means of the construction of the masculine ideal and the first point of call in the creation of the ideal model of masculinity is the interactions of the masculine with the feminine. These interactions serve the promotion of masculine subjectivity at the expense of the feminine and the interaction furthers bonds between men that lead to imitation of the model by rendering an alternative model of masculinity identical to that of the hero, or the ideal model.

The concept of the bonding reducing difference between individuals so that they all come to resemble the hero leads to the final investigation into the depiction of models that are opposite, or differ from that presented by the hero and the treatment of such models within the romance itself. Can alternative models of masculinity function and succeed within a romance in conjunction with the model of ideal masculinity offered by the hero?

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Introduction

This thesis investigates the literary construction of the ideal man in three Grail romances, and poses the question: can there be positive models to the hero within a text that offer any viable alternative of ideal masculinity?

The three romances in question are the *Perlesvaus*, the Didot-Perceval and Manessier's *Continuation* of the *Conte du Graal*, all offering differing presentations of the Grail theme from the "crusade-style" of the *Perlesvaus* to the vengeance-motivated quest of Manessier's *Continuation*.

The *Perlesvaus* is a romance composed, according to the varying theories of William Nitze, Jean Frappier, R. Levy and others, from around 1203 to as late as 1250, and discussed by T. E. Kelly in his study of the *Perlesvaus*.[1] The narrative forms a type of continuation from the *Conte du Graal*, in that the failure of Perceval to ask the Grail Question, in addition to the theme of the conflict between Perceval and the Red Knight, comprise the starting points of the romance. The text also incorporates the important theme of the lineage of the Grail Family, the history of Joseph of Arimathea, establishing the credentials of Perlesvaus as *le Buen Chevalier* and creating a romance in which the hero already possesses the attributes of an ideal knight. The narrative is concerned with the rectification of an earlier fault; the quest is presented as a corporate act and there is the implication, particularly as the romance focuses initially upon Gauvain and his journey to the Grail Castle, that some of the other knights are qualified, at least partially, to undertake the Grail Quest and experience some success. It is the nature of the Grail Quest, as a plural undertaking, that renders the comparative definition of the masculinity of the central hero against another type of masculine an essential component of the narrative.

The Didot-*Perceval*, unlike the *Perlesvaus* with its multiplication of heroes and ensuing structure of *entrelacement*, focuses exclusively on Perceval, although it

[1] Thomas E. Kelly, *Le Haut Livre du Graal: Perlesvaus, a structural study* (Geneva: Droz, 1974), p. 9.

does offer the possibility of multilineal narrative strands as all the knights at Arthur's court embark upon the Grail Quest. Once Perceval has successfully completed the quest, the narrative turns to Arthur and his activities as a war leader, a section "based ultimately on Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* and shows no trace of the influence of Chrétien and Wauchier".[2] Rupert T. Pickens states regarding the Didot-*Perceval* that it "contains a significant amount of material re-worked from Chrétien and the Second Continuation as well as Robert de Boron",[3] adding that there are resemblances between the Didot-*Perceval*, the *Perlesvaus*, and Manessier's *Continuation* indicating that the Didot-*Perceval* served as a source. William Roach, in the introduction to the Didot-*Perceval*, offers a theory regarding its genesis that it is an "interpolated and rewritten version of a fairly faithful prose rendering of Robert's original 'branches' dealing with the last days of Perceval and Arthur",[4] concluding that Robert's original *Perceval* was written "between the extreme limits of 1190 and 1212; and that the extant interpolated form of it must be earlier than Manessier".[5]

The Third Continuation of Chrétien's *Conte du Graal* by Manessier[6] is itself a continuation of the Second Continuation, attributed to Wauchier de Denain, who did not finish the account of Perceval's successful visit to the Grail Castle. Corin Corley states that Manessier's *Continuation* was written after the non-cyclic Prose-*Lancelot* but before the cyclic version, a notion that is reinforced by the inclusion of characters from the prose work without introduction (Bors, Hector, Lionel, Agloval).[7] Manessier's *Continuation* also contains material from the Second Continuation, in the Gauvain section detailing the quest of Gauvain to avenge the death of Silimac, a knight murdered in the Second Continuation. William Roach, in the preface to his edition of Manessier's *Continuation*, favours the theory that there was an earlier common version of both the Prose-*Lancelot* and Manessier's *Continuation* over the borrowing by Manessier of material from the prose cycle, commenting that "it is

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[2] Didot-*Perceval*, ed. by William Roach (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1941), p. 103.
[3] Rupert T. Pickens, 'Mais de çou ne parole pas Crestiens de Troyes: a re-examination of the Didot-*Perceval*', *Romania*, 105 (1984), 492-510, (p. 495).
[4] *The Didot-Perceval*, ed. by *William* Roach (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1941), p. 16.
[5] Roach, p. 130.
[6] *The Continuations of the Old French* Perceval *of Chrétien de Troyes*, volume 5, the Third Continuation by Manessier, ed. by William Roach (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1983).
[7] Corin Corley, 'Manessier's Continuation of Perceval and the Prose Lancelot Cycle', *Modern Language Review*, 51 (1986), 574-591.

usually more logical to assume that a simple, direct story preceded an elaborate allegorical or symbolical presentation of the same events, than to believe that the more complex version was divested of its rhetorical or interpretative elaborations and reduced to a plain unadorned chronicle".[8] He dates Manessier's *Continuation* as not earlier than 1211 and probably a decade or more after that date.[9] Like Roach, Jean Marx claims that the author(s) of the Prose-*Lancelot* and Manessier drew on common sources also suggesting that Manessier may have borrowed the Biau Mauvais from the *Perlesvaus*. In conclusion Marx states:

> "il ne nous paraît pas établi que Manessier ait connu ni la *Queste*, ni le *Lancelot en Prose*. Il nous paraît beaucoup plus vraisemblable que fidèle à la conception générale, au cadre, au type de merveilleux et aux procédés littéraires des autres continuations, il ait utilisé des textes qui ont été connus plus tard aussi par les auteurs du grand cycle en prose, ce qui expliquerait les rencontres à priori assez frappantes entre les deux textes d'épisodes et de personnages."[10]

Marx's assertion is disputed by Corley, who enumerates similarities between certain episodes of Manessier's *Continuation* and those of the Prose-*Lancelot*.[11]

The focus of Grail romances differs from those we consider "typical" or "representative" of romance as a genre, in that the chivalric inspiration of knights is not generally love but centres on the Grail as inspiration and reward for prowess. Robert W. Hanning defines romance as a form that "embodies the conviction of its audience that self-consciousness is the key to successful activity in the cause of self-fulfilment and the awareness of its audience of a tension between experienced, private needs and imposed public or external values"[12] while Erich Auerbach states that the "series of adventures is thus raised to the status of a fated and graduated test of election; it becomes the basis of a doctrine of personal perfection through a

[8] Roach, p. xi.
[9] Roach, p. xiii.
[10] Jean Marx, 'Étude sur les rapports de la 3e continuation du *Conte du Graal* de Chrétien de Troyes avec le cycle du *Lancelot en Prose* en général et la *Queste del Saint Graal* en particulier', *Romania,* 84 (1963), 451-477, (p. 476).
[11] Corley, 'Manessier's Continuation of Perceval', p. 575.
[12] Robert W. Hanning, 'The Social Significance of Twelfth Century Chivalric Romance', *Medievalia et Humanistica*, 3 (1972), 3-29, (pp. 3-4).

development dictated by fate".[13] Fate can be interchanged with God in some of the Grail romances, particularly the *Perlesvaus*. The purpose of a hero of romance is to journey into the forest, away from Arthurian society, to prove his worth through chivalric exploits, often motivated by love, which secure his standing within the chivalric system and also serve to further society as a whole. When Grail romances are considered in the light of theory pertaining to verse romances, concerned with *fin'amor* and the establishment of a hero within chivalric society through actions inspired by a beloved lady, then the differences between Grail romances and other romances in the treatment of common themes are brought to light. Essentially, the Grail romances present an alternative model of chivalry to those romances wherein the subject matter is principally focused upon love due to the religious inspiration of the Grail Quest and the concomitant notions of virginity and chastity. The perspective on the interactions between men and women in the three works studied shifts, creating what can be termed a "Grail" ideology of gender.

Ideology is a "narrative that makes explicit, in idealizing and apparently contemporaneous terms, the outdated or obsolescent values of an earlier system, in the service of a newer system that in practice undermines the basis of those values",[14] a definition that Eve Kosofsky-Sedgwick expands further stating the "whole point of ideology is to negotiate invisibly between contradictory elements in the status quo, concealing the very existence of contradictions in the present by for instance, recasting them in diachronic terms as a historical narrative of origins".[15] The Grail romances offer an alternative world to reality yet present the social mechanisms that create order in the real world, favouring one type of social mechanism, that of the feudal system, idealised as chivalry, over others. The interplay of gender, be it across genders or within one gender, serves to reinforce an order represented as desirable for chivalric society; a society, that, as rooted in violence, glorifies the particular type of masculinity that serves it best; creating a gender ideology in which there is a strict set of expectations to which each gender must conform. As David Gilmore has observed

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[13] Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: the representation of reality in Western literature*, trans. by Willard Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), p. 136.
[14] Eve Kososfsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English literature and male homosocial desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), p. 70.
[15] Sedgwick, *Between Men*, p. 119.

"gender ideologies are social facts, collective representations that pressure people into acting in certain ways".[16]

The problem that initially confronts scholars is one of definitions: those of male/female; masculine/feminine; and sex/gender; consensus has not wholly been reached upon these definitions. Gayle Rubin makes a preliminary definition of gender and sex as:

> A "sex/gender system" is the set of arrangements by which a society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity, and in which these transformed sexual needs are satisfied.[17]

She expands upon this to continue

> Gender is a socially imposed division of the sexes. It is a product of the social relations of sexuality. Kinship systems rest upon marriage. They therefore transform males and females into "men" and "women," each an incomplete half which can only find wholeness when united with the other.[18]

Judith Butler disagrees with the concept of the sex/gender; nature/culture division pointing out that

> If gender consists of the social meanings that sex assumes then sex does not *accrue* social meanings as additive properties but, rather, *is replaced by* the social meaning it takes on; sex is relinquished in the course of that assumption, and gender emerges, not as a term in a continued relationship of opposition to sex, but as the term which absorbs and displaces "sex".[19]

In addition there is the problem of biology: how far can biological difference account for roles of males and females in society? In the introduction to *Women, Culture, and Society*, Michelle Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere assert that "biology becomes important largely as it is interpreted by the norms and expectations of human culture and society",[20] concluding that:

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[16] David Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making: cultural concepts of masculinity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 224.
[17] Gayle Rubin, 'The Traffic in Women: notes on the "Political Economy" of sex,' in *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, ed. by Rayna R. Reiter (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), pp. 157-210, (p. 159).
[18] Rubin, 'The Traffic in Women', p. 179.
[19] Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: on the discursive limits of "sex"* (New York; London: Routledge, 1993), p. 5.
[20] Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo & Louise Lamphere (eds), *Women, Culture, and Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), introduction, p. 4.

> Human activities and feelings are organized, not by biology directly, but by the interaction of biological propensities and those various and culture specific expectations, plans, and symbols that coordinate our actions and so permit our species to survive. The implication of such an argument for understanding human sex roles is that biological differences between the sexes may not have necessary social and behavioural implications. What is male and what is female will depend upon interpretations of biology that are associated with any culture's mode of life.[21]

Sex is to be considered as distinct from gender: gender cannot be said to replace sex. However, the two can coexist. Joan Wallach Scott puts forward a core definition of gender that rests on an integral connection between two propositions:

> Gender is a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, and gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power.[22]

Scott continues, stating that changes in the organisation of social relationships always correspond to changes in representations of power.[23] Power is firmly in the realm of the masculine, articulated in the realm of gender, for example, in the legitimising of war and the concomitant appeals to manhood.[24]

There are myriad factors that effect the construction of masculinity for "...gender is not fixed in advance of social interaction but is constructed in interaction..."[25] In Grail romance we see the ideal of successful violence becoming the dominant and worthy form of masculinity, over other examples (such as religious devotion – useful in this world only as a means of giving information; aiding the knight on his quest). The inspiration to perform feats of violence in the service of the community comes from two sources, both engendering similar behaviour – love of God and love of a woman. Connell continues that there are also "relations between the different kinds of masculinity: relations of alliance, dominance, and subordination. These relationships are constructed through practices that exclude and include, that

[21] Rosaldo & Lamphere, *Women, Culture, and Society*, p. 5.
[22] Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 42.
[23] Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, p. 42.
[24] Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, pp. 48-49.
[25] R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), p. 35.

intimidate, exploit and so on. There is a gender politics within masculinity".[26] Certainly, there are competing types of masculinity within Grail romance beyond the opposition of *chevalerie* and *clergie*, while the feudal system itself works upon such principles outlined by Connell above. In addition, women are exploited as a means to increase male prestige being uniformly excluded from the value system, utilised either to facilitate bonding between men or appearing as obstacles that threaten the stability of masculine-oriented society. Gender division in Grail romance is a clear binary division based upon sex roles: men active, women passive. However, while knighthood is the dominant form of masculinity it is not presented without an awareness of other forms of masculinity, some are then excluded, but others survive.

The basic premise of relations between genders is that women function to facilitate bonds between men. It has been well documented in the anthropological field that women are objects of exchange, serving as gifts to further the bonds and interaction of men, and therefore of society:

> The bride, the gift, the object of exchange constitutes "a sign and a value" that opens a channel of exchange that not only serves the *functional* purpose of facilitating trade but performs the *symbolic* or *ritualistic* purpose of consolidating the internal bonds, the collective identity of each clan differentiated through the act.[27]

Judith Butler further adds that the bride does not have an identity saying that she "*reflects* masculine identity precisely through being the site of its absence,"[28] an issue also treated by Luce Irigaray:

> For woman is traditionally a use-value for men, an exchange value among men; in other words, a commodity. As such she remains the guardian of material substance, whose price will be established in terms of the standard of their work and of their need/desire, by "subjects:" workers, merchants, consumers. Women are marked phallicly by their fathers, husbands, procurers. And this branding determines their value in sexual commerce. Women is never anything but the locus of a more or less competitive exchange between two men...[29]

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[26] Connell, *Masculinities*, p. 37.
[27] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 38-39.
[28] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 39.
[29] Luce Irigaray, *This Sex which is not One*, trans. by Catherine Porter (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 31-32.

Nancy Chodorow, in assessing the development of "femininity," comments that "women in most societies are *defined* relationally (as someone's wife, mother, daughter, daughter-in-law; even a nun becomes a Bride of Christ)".[30] Thus the female is constructed as a commodity, a means of establishing social interactions between men creating an image of femininity that reflects the role of women as a currency, an ideal we see in Medieval literature.

> The result of a gift of women is more profound than the result of other gift transactions, because the relationship thus established is not just one of reciprocity, but one of kinship.[31]

The lady is posited as desirable, an object to be achieved, mainly silent, and a willing participant in her role as object of exchange. In examining the situation E. Jane Burns observes that

> The elaborate ideology of courtliness that conditions so many medieval texts fashions an ideal of femininity that actually alienates female identity, often using it as a foil to stage primary relations of power between men.[32]

The concept of chivalry is perceived as inexorably linked to love. W. Baird defines the chivalry topos in these terms:

> The knight's prowess inspires the love of a lady while, in return, the mere fact of being loved can inspire the knight to even greater prowess[33]

while Siegfried Christoph lays down the conception of women being the mirror in which the masculine ideal is reflected:

> In order to properly honor a knight, the woman must herself be a person of honor. In this way women are drawn into the domain of honor, as peers who are capable of recognizing and acknowledging honorable deeds. Men honor

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[30] Nancy Chodorow, 'Family Structure and Feminine Personality', in *Woman, Culture, and Society*, pp. 43-66, (pp. 57-58).
[31] Rubin, 'The Traffic in Women', p. 173.
[32] E. Jane Burns, *Bodytalk: when women speak in Old French literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), p. 13.
[33] W. Baird, 'The Three Women of the *Vengeance Raguidel*', *Modern Language Review*, 75 (1980), 269-274, (p. 269).

> women by fighting on their behalf, women honor men by legitimizing men's deeds in a public context.[34]

All hierarchies are predicated on gender in as much as the prestige and position of men is determined by their appropriation of women.[35] As honour in society is a masculine sphere then in order for a woman to be perceived as honourable she must conform to masculine values and notions. The idealised figure of woman is utilised by men to confirm and increase their own honour and status.[36]

E. Jane Burns also discusses the notion that it is the image of the woman that defines maleness, that the idealised male self is "reflected in a mirror of female proportions"[37] with the feudal metaphor of the *domna* being a means of subjugating the female within masculine discourse. Simon Gaunt declares that "if in romance, male characters develop, evolve, and assume new identities through love and their relationship with female characters, it follows that what the engagement with femininity really articulates is the construction within a male discourse of masculinity through its relationship with femininity construed as other".[38] Thus Lancelot is defined by his love for Guenevere, even in a romance such as the *Perlesvaus* where such interactions are acknowledged as possible but avoided in general. Sarah Kay raises the point of the plurality of femininity and the fact that certain aspects of femininity are shared between some men and most women, adding that "dans les oeuvres courtoises, la différence sexuelle joue un rôle de premier plan; c'est en présence d'une femme, ou mieux, en fonction du désir hétérosexuel, donc un désir de l'Autre féminin, que se définit la masculinité".[39] Roberta Krueger further comments on the new masculine ideal that arises within chivalric romance:

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[34] Siegfried Christoph, 'Honor, Shame and Gender', in *Arthurian Romance and Gender: selected proceedings of the XVIIth International Arthurian Congress,* ed. by Freidrich Wolfzettel (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1995), pp. 26-33, (p. 31).
[35] Simon Gaunt, 'From Epic to Romance: gender and sexuality in the Roman d'Enéas', *Romanic Review*, 83 (1992), 1-27, (p. 1).
[36] Christoph, 'Honor, Shame and Gender', pp. 26-33.
[37] Burns, 'The Man behind the Lady in Troubadour Lyric', *Romance Notes*, 25 (1984-5), 254-270, (p. 254).
[38] Simon Gaunt, *Gender and Genre in Medieval French Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 72.
[39] Sarah Kay, 'La représentation de la féminité dans les chansons de geste', in *Charlemagne in the North: proceedings of the twelfth international conference of the Société Rencesvals*, ed. by Philip Bennett, Anne Elizabeth Cobby, and Graham Runnalls (Edinburgh: Société Rencesvals, British Branch, 1993), pp. 223-240, (p. 224).

> The combination of physical strength, unwavering courage, material largesse, political fidelity, refined behaviour, and amorous sensibility requisite in the perfect knight created an ideal of masculinity whose legacy remains imprinted at some level on our culture today. Courtly femininity was constructed as the natural counterpart of the new masculine courtly ideal.

This ideal comprises what Krueger terms a "conservative gender ideology," an ideology that is not always the norm in romance, there being occasions when the interaction between the masculine and feminine is uneasy and not complementary.[40]

The religious motivation of the Grail Quest itself is a further factor in the construction of Grail masculinity. Because of the importance placed upon chastity certain masculine-feminine interactions that form the mainstay of other chivalric romances are seen as incompatible with the Grail Quest itself rendering the interaction between the genders uneasy. The romance theme of the female as silent object of masculine desire, thereby initiating action, is itself undesirable, in conflict with the religious ideology of the texts, yet the primary role of the female remains an object role. Feminine subjectivity, to act as the subject, to speak, to control a situation, to direct action, in other words, to appropriate the masculine role, is universally represented as undesirable.

There are two threads to this thesis: firstly, the construction of the masculine by relationships of men with other men; and secondly, the relationship between the genders and the role that women play in Grail romance. This entails an investigation into the rise of knighthood as a dominant ideology of masculinity in chapter one, looking at the formation of chivalry and the effect of the Church in the creation of a literary ideal. In chapters two and four, relationships between men are focused upon, examining, in chapter two, the bond of friendship between knights, while in chapter four, the manner in which the hero is constructed in relation to those who are different forms the mainstay of the chapter. Chapter three focuses upon women in the Grail romances, the roles they play and the consequences for the construction of masculinity.

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[40] Roberta Krueger, *Women Readers and the Ideology of Gender in Old French Verse Romance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 70.

In this investigation I aim to demonstrate that the masculine figure within the Grail romances is constructed not only by the recognised romance figuration of the masculine subject derived in opposition to women represented as the Other, in which masculine subjectivity is defined by the exchanges of women as objects, but also through a mechanism of replication and imitation, a factor to which, the multiplication of heroes in the Grail texts lends itself well. The multiplication of heroes enables an analysis of possible difference between individual knights upon the same quest in response to the question: are all the questing knights identical? Do they all conform to the dominant ideal of masculinity generated by the text?

Chivalry and the Grail Romances

In order to study the construction of the ideal figure of masculinity in the Grail romances it is first essential to consider the socio-cultural background that propagated the conventional figure of a knight in search of adventure. The knight is considered a model of the illusive concept of chivalry itself consisting of a hazy and free-flowing set of conventions by which the hero of a romance is seen to abide.

The answers to the question "what is chivalry?" are multiple. Douglas Kelly comments that

> in Twelfth-Century romance, the knight is still prominent but the notion of "chevalerie" has taken on qualities other than that of riding a horse and using a sword and lance with deadly skill; the knights of the Round Table epitomize a courtly, civilizing, even pacifying role. King, Church, and lower classes are to be maintained by the knight whose distinction extends into the realms of courtesy, counsel, love and even direct mystical communion with God.[1]

Furthermore "the aristocracy now represents a tradition parallel to but still largely distinct from that of Christianity".[2] This is where the Grail romances enter the scenario, fusing the ideals of secular chivalry, aimed at promoting the interests of the nobility with the interests of the Church, forming a new type of chivalry that is Grail chivalry. The first chapter briefly outlines the socio-historical development of chivalry from its violent roots grounded in feudal necessity to cultural ideal leading on to an overview of the position of the Church, its endorsement of "celestial chivalry" as it is termed in *La Queste del Saint Graal*;[3] the melding of chivalry to the cultural ideal, with a brief consideration of the theories of Bernard de Clairvaux, John of Salisbury and Alain de Lille in order to enumerate the varying ideals and their manifestation in the Grail romances.

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[1] Douglas Kelly, 'Romance and the Vanity of Chrétien de Troyes', in *Romance: generic transformation from Chrétien de Troyes to Cervantes* (Hanover NH.: University Press of New England, 1985), pp. 74-90 (p. 78).
[2] Kelly, 'Romance and the Vanity of Chrétien de Troyes', p. 78.
[3] *La Queste del Saint Graal*, ed. by Albert Pauphilet, 2nd edn (Paris: Champion, 1984), 143: 10.

The Evolution of Chivalry

There is, in the course of three centuries, an evolution of knighthood (in contemporary commentaries and literature) from origins concerned with military function to an ideal that was both a justification and reinforcement of knighthood, an ideal that appears as chivalry. Chivalry is viewed as an attempt to educate and control by the Church, but also is regarded as self-promotion by the nobility, idealising ritualised violence as the prerogative of class. Richard W. Kaeuper observes that the use of the term "chivalry" may refer to any of three meanings:

> First, the term could mean nothing more theoretical or ethical than deeds of great valour and endurance on some field of combat, that is, heroic work with sword, shield, and lance. Second, the term could mean a group of knights. In the simplest sense this may be the body of elite warriors present on some particular field of battle. In a more abstract sense the term might refer to the entire social body of knights considered as a group stretching across space and time. Third, chivalry might be used to mean a knightly code of behaviour.[4]

Maurice Keen has shown that the term *miles* was originally used in charters to denote the standing of an individual and to distinguish less wealthy men from the great counts and castellans.[5] Peter Haidu asserts that knights were originally armed men on horseback enforcing the right of the castellan to claim taxes and were an effective means of intimidating and subjugating the peasantry[6] while Tony Hunt states that the earliest meanings of *miles* and *militia* signified nothing more than *vassus*, in other words, someone standing in a feudal relationship with another, taking the form of military service:

> The commonest meanings which may safely be attributed to the term in the tenth and eleventh centuries are (1) warrior, (2) vassal and (3) armed retainer.[7]

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[4] Richard W. Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 4.

[5] Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 27.

[6] Peter Haidu, *The Subject of Violence: the Song of Roland and the birth of the state* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), p. 52.

[7] Tony Hunt, 'The Emergence of the Knight in France and England 1000-1200', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 17 (1981), 93-114, (p. 95).

According to Mathew Strickland the term *miles* "irrespective of the material or social status of the holder of the title *miles* … denoted common membership of a *militia*",[8] adding that the term "denoted *function*, and a function which clearly carried with it connotations of martial prowess".[9]

Due to the function of knights, their prominence in a society in which order was maintained by violence, the knights themselves accrued social prestige, gaining hereditary control by the late twelfth century:

> From an open class without juridical status, distinct therefore from the nobility, the knights came to form a group which by the end of the twelfth century was on the verge of becoming a caste, a closed socio-juridical class quite different from the corporation of warriors and armed retainers which had existed two centuries earlier.[10]

The change in status and role of the knight in society was one of a movement from the function of "organised pillage"[11] to that of the idealised figure of twelfth-century romance.

Georges Duby posits the emergence of the term *chevalier* at around 1150 to denote military service on horseback, a term then appropriated by the nobility.[12] In the early twelfth century, these greater men also began to identify themselves as *milites*, implying that the higher and lesser nobility were drawing together in terms of a social cohesion.[13] By adopting the title *miles*, the nobility further increased the prestige of the term by converting the socio-economic characteristics of knighthood into aesthetico-ethical ones and giving the *cortois-vilain* opposition a moral basis.[14] In considering themselves a class apart, firstly due to their basic function, a function that later became imbued with ritual significance conveying social authority and status; and secondly, through perpetuating the notion that status engenders moral worth (worth that is then maintained through lineage), the nobility became a closed and elite caste; a caste that sees chivalry, however imprecise the concept, as its idealised function. Hunt identifies 1180 as the date after which "clear socio-juridical nuances begin to modify the

[8] Mathew Strickland, *War and Chivalry: the conduct and perception of war in England and Normandy, 1066-1217* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 143.
[9] Strickland, *War and Chivalry*, p. 143.
[10] Hunt, 'The Emergence of the Knight in France and England 1000-1200', p. 96.
[11] Haidu, *The Subject of Violence*, p. 51.
[12] George Duby, 'La noblesse dans la France médiévale: une enquête à poursuivre', in *Hommes et Structures du Moyen Age* (Mouton: Paris, 1973), pp. 146-166.
[13] Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 27.
[14] Hunt, 'The Emergence of the Knight in France and England', p. 100.

narrow, feudal presentation of the knight",[15] placing the turning point in the romances of Chrétien:

> The catalytic role played by Crestien's romances in the adoption of the title *miles* by the nobility of the early thirteenth century is explained by the fact that his heroes are *nobiles*...whose careers are depicted as those of the *milites*.[16]

The Church had already divided the community into categories or orders of society, distinguishing the section of the population whose function it was to bear arms and enforce the right of the feudal lord; a consequence of the attempts of the Church in the eleventh century to regulate warfare as it recognised the necessity of protection. The role of armed protection, at first the responsibility of the king, extended to lesser men who undertook the defence of the Church's lands and to enforce the justice of the Church. In addition, the Crusades played a fundamental role in altering the status and function of knights, conferring upon them the title *miles Christi*, a title that previously had referred only to those who directly served the Church — ascetics and monks. The notion of *miles Christi* thus expanded to include any man who became actively and physically a defender of the faith through the sword.[17] Jean Flori, in referring to the articles of P. Rousset, points out that "le rôle de la croisade sacralis[ait] les laïcs et fais[ait] d'eux, à l'égal des moines, des *milites Christi*".[18]

The justification of knighthood was, in part, predicated upon the attitude of the Church but was also founded upon the notion that to be a knight, a role now appropriated by the nobility, indicated moral worth. Kaeuper comments that chivalric literature shows perceptions of order and violence, giving prominence to acts of disruptive violence and problems of control.

> Belief in the right kind of violence carried out vigorously by the right people is a cornerstone of this literature.[19]

As the concept of chivalry developed into the socio-political ideal of late twelfth and early thirteenth-century literature, it became laden with symbolism and ritual as manifested in the

[15] Hunt, 'The Emergence of the Knight in France and England', p. 98.
[16] Hunt, 'The Emergence of the Knight in France and England', p. 99.
[17] Joachim Bumke, *The Concept of Knighthood in the Middle Ages*, trans. by W.T.H. and Erika Jackson (New York: A.M.S. Press, 1982), p. 91.
[18] Jean Flori, *L'Essor de la chevalerie* (Geneva: Droz, 1986), p. 38.
[19] Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence*, p. 22.

text *L'Ordene de Chevalerie*. The work "demonstrates a new mystico-symbolic tendency in the treatment of knighthood"[20] and the symbolic interpretation of the knighting ceremony is characteristic of the literature of the first part of the thirteenth century.

In the *Ordene de Chevalerie* the knight, Hue, agrees to instruct the pagan, Saladin, in the significance of the preparations for being knighted and the concept of knighthood itself. He explains the ritual of bathing as baptism (115-123), equates the preparation of a fine bed (131-136) with the fine bed in Paradise that a knight will win through acts of chivalry while the white sheets of the bed are a reminder that cleanliness is next to Godliness (144-146), the red robe symbolises the fact that blood must be shed to uphold God and Christianity (155-156), the black horse is a constant reminder of death in order to overcome pride (169-171), the small white belt is to recall the knight to the fact he must preserve his chastity (180-182), the sword has two edges to signify that a knight must maintain justice and loyalty, protect the poor and the weak – these are deeds of charity (211-219), while the white cap placed upon the head of Saladin symbolises that the soul should also remain white and pure. Hue then informs Saladin of the four mainstays of perfect chivalry. Firstly, a knight should not witness false judgement (264-266); secondly, he should never deprive women of his protection (275-276); thirdly, that he shall practice abstinence and fasting on Fridays; and lastly, that he must hear mass everyday. Finally, Hue ponders upon the function of chivalry, declaring that:

> Et se n'estoit chevalerie
> Petit voudroit no seignorie
> Quar il desfendent Sainte Yglise
> E si nous tienent bien justice
> De cels qui nous vuelent mal fere. (431-435)

He adds a few lines later that knights should be honoured above all men except those who perform the sacrament (477-480), a statement that is significant in demonstrating the evolution of the concept of knighthood; as knighthood, in the *Ordene de Chevalerie*, now not only validates lordship but also supplants it in its role of moral upholder of Christian society.

The *Ordene de Chevalerie* promotes a code of conduct and ideology of Christian chivalry that is a long way from the origins of knighthood; an ideology that is persistent in literature, particularly the Grail romances, that can be see to

[20] Keith Busby, *Raoul de Hodenc, Le Roman des eles: the anonymous Ordene de Chevalerie* (Amsterdam: J. Benjamins, 1983), p. 88.

> reflect accurately the confidence of Christian knighthood that its way of life was one pleasing to God and chivalry an order instituted directly by Him…this was not an idea confined to the narrow frame of reference of the crusade but one to which all chivalrous activity was seen equally as relevant: the loyal service of an honoured lord or lady, the succour of the unjustly oppressed, the hardships of the knight-errant on his travels, and even endurance of the trials of joust and tourney, as well as the defence of the Holy places.[21]

Jean Frappier views one of the causes of the union between chivalry and religion in the Grail romances as a response on the part of the nobility faced with the decline of their power and the rise of the monarchy and bourgeoisie, inspiring in literature a celebration of knighthood, elevating the prestige of chivalry, reinforced by ritual ceremony and the fictional deeds of the Arthurian court. He states that the Grail texts

> parlent en effet d'une chevalerie messianique, enracinée dans les temps bibliques, présente à la Passion, prédestinée, digne d'approcher, presque sans médiation, des mystères de la foi et d'accéder à la connaissance du divin.[22]

adding that:

> L'irréalité même des exploits accomplis par les chevaliers errants nous laisse entre-voir une noblesse qui a renoncé en partie à son activité pour se réfugier dans la contemplation de hauts faits imaginaires.[23]

Frappier views this as one of the causes of the aspects which see the union of chivalry and religion in the Grail romances but the Grail romances themselves vary and reflect this new ethic to differing extents. Like Frappier, Kaeuper also considers that the knightly class appropriated religion commenting that knights "absorbed such ideas as were broadly compatible with the virtual worship of prowess and with the high sense of their own divinely approved status and mission; they likewise downplayed or simply ignored most strictures that were not compatible with their sense of honour and entitlement",[24] leading to the evolution of a form of chivalry founded upon a fusion of prowess and piety; deeds undertaken for God that not only resulted in the increase in the honour of a knight but also divine approbation.[25]

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[21] Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 62.
[22] Jean Frappier, *Autour du Graal* (Geneva: Droz, 1977), p. 93.
[23] Frappier, *Autour du Graal*, p. 93.
[24] Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence*, p. 47
[25] For example, to all intents and purposes knights in chivalric literature, particularly *La Queste*, act like knights of a religious order, although they may take the general vows, such as chastity, and exhibit a steadfast desire to continue the quest until they see the Grail, they do not belong to a religious order: they have not given up their individual freedom of action, nor do they espouse poverty, each serves God. See Helen Nicholson, *Love, War, and the Grail* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), p 103.

In the thirteenth century, the notion of chivalry purely for the service of God is epitomised in *La Queste del Saint Graal* in the figure of Galaad. The Grail experience becomes an "intensely personal, anti-social, and self annihilating quasi-mystical vision of God-made-man in the sacrifice of the Mass, available only to the purest and holiest of knights",[26] the ultimate expression of which is achieved in *La Queste* with the subjugation of the individual to God described in Galaad's experiences in Sarras and at Corbenic. The exclusive emphasis within the Grail romances (to differing extents) on the abnegation of self for the higher purpose of carrying out God's will on earth demonstrates the compliance of the authors with the trend of contemporary religious philosophies, as is clearly seen in *La Queste* with its Cistercian philosophies and ideals concerning the behaviour and aims of knights.[27] The ideal knight, the hero of these romances, will conform to an ideal propagated within currents of Christian thought depending on how far the author himself subscribes to and was influenced by these philosophies. Perceval as Grail Hero and therefore the embodiment of these cultural ideologies, in his assorted incarnations, presents varying portraits of the ideal knight: from the more secular oriented, chivalric learning process of the Didot-*Perceval* to the violent crusader of the *Perlesvaus*.

The Amalgamation of Chivalry and Religion

For religious men the highest achievement is evidently a life of contemplation necessitating separation from society. However, an approved and worthy substitute for the ultimate Christian life is one of permanent military service on behalf of the Church, praised and exemplified by Bernard in *De Laude Novae Militiae*, written in 1128 to promote the emerging Order of the Temple, at the expense of the *militia secularis*, disparaged for their long hair, decorous arms, perpetration of homicide, and their participation in causes that have no justification. It is the latter type of knight that we see the hero in conflict with in the romances; the enemy knight is usually seeking renown, not fighting a just cause, often not Christian (in *Perlesvaus*), or is persecuting the weak. The hero and his ilk are seen to protect the land not only from exterior attack but also from the activities of the type of knight

[26] Robert W. Hanning, *The Individual in Twelfth-Century Romance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), p. 239.
[27] Alfred Pauphilet, in his introduction to *La Queste del Saint Graal*, states that "ses descriptions des religieux, ses allusions précises aux règles et usages monastiques, même ses opinions en matière de dogme et liturgie, tout concorde avec ce qu'on sait de l'ordre de Cîteaux au début du XIIIe siècle" (p. x).

perceived as undesirable by the Church. John of Salisbury, in *Policraticus* (written 1159), considers "la militia comme une profession nécessaire et même honorable, voulue et instituée par Dieu";[28] it is the duty of knights to protect the Church and the unarmed people. Georges Duby defined this role, that of the maintenance of the *pax Dei*, as the protection of "tous les chrétiens désarmés, donc vulnérables, c'est-à-dire les moines, les clercs et la masse des pauvres",[29] Like Bernard, John condemned the excesses of courtly knights and denounced the practices and attitudes of courtly society in *Policraticus* although, unlike Bernard, John sees a value in secular *militia*, as the service of princes results in salvation. The *Policraticus*, while referring back to exemplars of the past, aims to present a manual of correct behaviour and adherence to allotted duty.[30] An essential principle of John's writings is the notion of the king as God's representative on earth,[31] which centres his theories on the secular state and the position of the *militia* within it. John's argument is founded upon the notion of fundamental obedience to God as supreme lord, encompassing the ideal that through obedience to feudal lords or "princes" whom God has installed to rule the world, the *militia* serve God himself, an act of salvation in itself. The metaphor used by John, that of the State represented by the human body, "expresses the common medieval conception of society as *Ecclesia* in the wider meaning of this word, with two authorities, that means, for John, two sets of officials, the spiritual and the secular, which have to work together in unity".[32] John is concerned with the "functional interdependence"[33] of members of society in which the duties of each are clear and defined; as R. R. Bezzola has remarked, the *Policraticus* is a manual of government[34] wherein the functions of sections of society are drawn up according to the priorities and values of the author and his ecclesiastical philosophy. However, John does concentrate upon the importance of faith and loyalty to God of a soldier, in specifically citing the duties of an ordained soldier. He does not, however, make any distinction between the duties of those he had termed "secular soldiers" and those termed "spiritual soldiers" both types being instructed

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[28] Flori, *L'Essor de la chevalerie*, p. 286.
[29] Georges Duby, *Le Dimanche des Bouvines* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1973), p. 82.
[30] Erich Köhler, *L'Aventure chevaleresque; idéal et realité dans le roman courtois; études sur la forme des plus anciens poèmes d'Arthur et du Graal*, trans. by Eliane Kaufholz (Paris: Éditions Gallimards, 1974), pp. 57-58.
[31] Hans Liebeshütz, *Mediaeval Humanism in the Life and Writings of John of Salisbury* (London: Warburg Institute, University of London, 1950), p. 50.
[32] Liebshütz, *Mediaeval Humanism in the Life and Writings of John of Salisbury*, p. 40.
[33] *The Statesman's Book of John of Salisbury*, trans. & ed. by John Dickinson (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1927), p. xix.
[34] Reto R. Bezzola, *Les Origines et la formation de la littérature courtoise en occident 500-1200*, 3 vols (Paris: Champion, 1963), I, p. 24.

> to defend the Church, to assail infidelity, to venerate the priesthood, to protect the poor from injury, to pacify the province, to pour out their blood for their brothers (as the formula of their oath instructs them), and, if need be, to lay down their lives." (*Policraticus*, VI: VIII.)

The term *miles* is rendered "soldier" in the English translation but John is clearly referring to knights, as Jean Flori asserts, drawing attention to the numerous references to horses, lances, shields, and armour.[35] Flori also comments upon John's use of the term *militia*:

> Son image de la *militia* est donc teintée de couleurs antiques.[36] Elle ressemble à l'armée romaine. C'est pourtant bien de la chevalerie qu'il s'agit. A condition de bien prendre garde que, chez John of Salisbury encore, *militare* signifie avant tout servir. C'est à dire que la première fonction de la *militia* consiste à servir le prince choisi par Dieu. C'est sa raison d'être.[37]

John evokes the basic principles of his ideology of knighthood in service to God and the Church as he continues that "...soldiers that do these things are 'saints', and the more loyal to their prince in proportion as they more zealously keep the faith of God, and they advance the more successfully the honor of their own valor as they seek the more faithfully in all things the glory of their God" (*Policraticus*, VI: VIII).

While performing an essential function within a secular state, a knight is fundamentally a religious instrument, furthering the interests of his leader insofar as these correspond to the perceived wishes of God. It is quite clear that knights, who to all outward appearances serve their lord and seem to be concerned with purely secular interests, comply with this ideology by adhering to the military oath. For John says of secular knights that

> though some of them do not regard themselves as bound to the Church by a solemn oath, because today by general custom no such oath is actually taken, yet there is none who is not in fact under an obligation to the Church by virtue of a tacit oath if not an express one. (*Policraticus*, VI: X)

A secular knight may appear to serve only his leader but he is also under an irrefutable obligation to the Church because of his profession and all that is associated with it. In obeying

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[35] Flori, *L'Essor de la chevalerie*, p. 283.

[36] Flori cites the *Institutio Trajana* as an influence, *L'Essor de la chevalerie*, p. 283. Dickinson also notes that John claimed the text as an influence although no text at present exists or is referred to (*The Statesman's Book of John of Salisbury*, p. xxi).

[37] Flori, *L'Essor de la chevalerie*, p. 283.

princes, whom God has instituted to rule and who are answerable to the Church, the *militia* serves God himself, the idea of service forming their salvation. The leader, however, is the minister of common interest and must extend the influence of the Church while protecting it from assault by infidels; furthermore, it is his duty to protect widows and orphans:

> He does rightly when he raises aloft the roof-tree of the Church, when he extends abroad the worship of religion, when he abases the proud and exalts the humble, when he is generous to the needy, more sparing toward the wealthy, when he metes out reward to virtue and punishment to vice with a just and equal balance, when justice walks ever before him, and sets his steps in the way of prudence and the other virtues. (*Policraticus*, VI: XXVI)

John regards the king as "the image of God on earth and declares his power to be the power of God, even when it is abused by its human bearer,"[38] an ideology that illustrates how a knight can remain in the secular world, fulfilling his social function of armed protection, devoting his life to the service of God and the Church through service to the king. Thus it is unnecessary to isolate himself from society in order to serve God, as in a religious order.

John is concerned with the workings of Church and state together, perceiving their interdependence, and focusing upon the absorption of the individual into the mechanisms of society, of its acceptance and contentment with its role within the societal organism.[39] On the other hand, Bernard of Clairvaux, advocate of the Templar order, promotes the importance of the direct service of God over that of the state, preferably in solitary contemplation but if not, then in a military order which exhibits traits of a religious order. Bernard shifts the emphasis from the monastic rule of personal obedience to corporate discipline,[40] being "contre tout individualisme égoïste".[41] The Cistercian ideal of the subjugation of the individual to the wishes and devotion of God and the championing of the emerging Templar order publicised the new ideal that it was possible to remain devoted absolutely to God within what had been perceived as an inferior mode of life to monastic asceticism. Bernard says of the knights that "ils semblent n'avoir qu'une âme et qu'un coeur tant ils savent renoncer à leur volonté propre et rester aveuglément soumis à leur chef".[42] The suppression of individuality and personality

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[38] Liebeshütz, *Medieval Humanism in the Life and Writings of John of Salisbury*, p. 50.
[39] *The Statesman's Book of John of Salisbury*, p. xxii.
[40] R.W. Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970), p. 270.
[41] Bernard de Clairvaux, *Textes politiques: choisis et traduits du latin par Paul Zumthor* (Paris: Union Générale d'Editions, 1986), p.10.
[42] 'Eloge de la nouvelle milice' in *Saint Bernard de Clairvaux: textes politiques: choisis et traduits du latin par Paul Zumthor* (Paris: Union Générale d'Editions, 1986), pp. 202-3.

was necessary in an order founded on the Benedictine concept of absolute obedience and the new Knights of the Temple took on the attributes of ascetic monasticism but retained the fundamental activities of knights. For Bernard, the Knights Templar formed a living ideal of what knights should be, taking vows as in a monastic order of poverty, chastity and obedience in addition to the oath to succour pilgrims on the way to Jerusalem.[43]

Secular knighthood and the way of life associated with it had been condemned by Bernard in his writings in accordance with the current trends of thought within the Church, particularly concerning tournaments. In the Second Lateran Council of 1139 it was decreed that

> ces détestables joutes et foires où les chevaliers ont coutume de se fixer rendez-vous et de s'assembler pour faire montre de leurs forces et d'une téméraire bravoure, d'où résultent souvent mort d'homme et danger pour les âmes, nous les prohibons absolument. Si l'un des participants y trouve la mort, sans lui refuser pénitence et viatique s'il les demande, on le tiendra cependant à l'écart de la sépulture ecclésiastique.[44]

By the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, however, the harmful effects were alleviated by stricter control in the short term, yet in the long run tournaments were mitigated, an indication that the conflict between religion and chivalry was being resolved.[45] Strickland observes that enormous importance is placed upon the tournament, in terms of training and the development of notions of conduct and solidarity among knights,[46] but there is no significant reference to tournaments in literature before the romances of Chrétien de Troyes.[47] Chrétien made considerable modifications to the motivation of the combatants to "change the tournament from a mere rough sport into an admirable chivalric activity",[48] an activity in which the hero can demonstrate his virtues (embodied by prowess), achieve personal glory and public renown, while maintaining his moral superiority in shunning the negative practices of tournaments: booty and bloodshed. In the *Perlesvaus*, tournaments have a valid function,

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[43] Guy de Valois, 'Quelques observations sur la toute primitive observance des Templiers', in *Mélanges Saint Bernard* (Dijon: Marlier 1954), pp. 32-40.
[44] Raymonde Foreville, *Latran I, II, III, et Latran IV* (Paris: Éditions de l'Orante 1965), p. 191.
[45] David Carlson, 'Religious Writers and Church Councils on Chivalry', in *The Study of Chivalry*, ed. by Howell Chickering & Thomas H Seiter (Kalamazoo: Mediaeval Institute Publications, 1988), pp. 141-171.
[46] Strickland, *War and Chivalry*, p. 17.
[47] Larry D. Benson, 'The Tournament in the Romances of Chrétien de Troyes and *l'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*', in *Chivalric Literature*, ed. by Larry D. Benson & John Leyerle (Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, 1980), pp. 1-24 (p. 2).
[48] Benson, 'The Tournament in the Romances of Chrétien de Troyes', p. 14.

being more than a ritual designed purely for the combatants to gain honour; success in the tournament results in the start of a further adventure, such as the avenging of a relative in the episode of the Tornoi de la Vermelle Lande or the retrieval of a religious relic, as in the episode of the Cercle d'Or. However, the importance placed on tournaments in secular literature reflects the preoccupation and place accorded to tournaments in the minds of the nobility; the tournament becomes a significant moment in the career of the hero, one in which he establishes or reinforces his reputation before the public. The place of tournaments as a forum for the display of prowess (and the concomitant notion of worth) is especially clear in Manessier's *Continuation* in the section detailing the metamorphosis of the Biau Mauvais from derided outcast to acclaimed member of masculine society via his participation and success in a tournament; an aspect that is examined further in Chapter four.

Secular knighthood or the "milice profane" as Bernard terms it[49] was lamented as an ill of society, concerned with the worthless pursuit of expensive private wars, and obsession with decorative appearance as a mark of chivalric stature. Modern knights are vain, self-seeking, and ultimately sinful, a sentiment that is evidenced in the Didot-*Perceval* in the comments of Perceval's sister pertaining to the nature of knights:

> "Biaus frere, jou ai molt grant paor de vous qui ensi alés car molt estes jovnes, et li cevalier qui vont par le païs si sont molt crüel et molt felon, et saciés que se il pueent il vos ociront por le vostre ceval gaagnier." (E: 179. 677-681)

The censure of secular, self-serving knights in the Didot-*Perceval* echoes the opinions of Bernard who declares that

> j'ai contre vous un grief plus grave, et dont votre conscience de chevaliers devrait s'épouvanter: je pense à la frivolité des motifs qui vous poussent à la guerre. Pourquoi en effet prenez-vous les armes? Pour satisfaire un mouvement d'humeur, une colère irraisonnée, un désir de gloire ou de conquête. Pensez-vous qu'on puisse faire son salut en tuant ou en mourant pour de semblables motifs?[50]

The denunciation of Bernard is also reflected in the philosophy of John of Salisbury, who equally condemned "braggart soldiers" as vain, concerned with the superficial, decorative trappings of knighthood, identifying appearance as an indication of chivalric standing (*Policraticus*, VI: III). The only true justification and motive for war is to further and defend

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[49] 'Eloge de la nouvelle milice', II, p.198

[50] 'Eloge de la nouvelle milice', II, p. 198.

Christianity, and to protect the weak, while those who fight for other reasons "commettent peut-être le péché mortel qui les damnera".[51] The ideal of the knight of Christ, lauded by Bernard, that appears in such literature as *La Queste del Saint Graal*, provides the example to which other, dutiful, Christian knights, who care for their salvation, should aspire: that of service of the Church; and, in order to regulate knights in the service of the Church, Bernard designated a controlling role to the clergy, one in which they direct and supervise those who act on their behalf:

> Tous les pouvoirs appartiennent donc à l'Eglise. Les *milites* qui sont les instruments du pouvoir temporel sont donc indirectement au service de l'Eglise. C'est en cela seulement que leur fonction peut être valorisée.[52]

An important aspect of chivalric activity in the service of the Church was that of the redemption of sin, an ethic that also resolved the earlier problem facing the Church: the philosophy of pacifism that rendered difficult the task of reconciling this stance with the necessity of killing as part of war. Bernard defines homicide as caused by the "unique désir de tuer"[53] and more specifically, a desire to kill motivated by hatred, pride or anger, the result of which is the stain of mortal sin upon the soul. The killing of an adversary is rendered a sin, a view that is reinforced by the opinion of the hermit on the nature of the sin of homicide in the Didot-*Perceval*.[54]

Within the doctrine of the Church it was permissible to kill enemies, enemies of the Church itself; however, in the discourses of Bernard he concedes "il serait préférable de ne pas occire les païens si on pouvait autrement les empêcher d'opprimer les fidèles".[55] It is certainly preferable to spare Christian antagonists who have the potential for redemption, as do the opponents of Perceval in the Didot-*Perceval*, rendering the hermit uncle correct in his statement that to kill a fellow knight is a sin. In the Didot-*Perceval*, the adversary is a knight

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[51] 'Eloge de la nouvelle milice', I, p. 201
[52] Flori, *L'Essor de la chevalerie*, p. 214.
[53] 'Eloge de la nouvelle milice', I, p.201
[54] The hermit says to Perceval: "Or gardés que vos soiés preudom et vos proi que cevalier ocire ne vos caille, mais deportés les et soufrés en maintes manieres por l'ame a la vostre mere. Et proiés a nostre Segnor que il ait de vos pitié car saciés que por la dolor que vostre mere ot de vos est ele morte. Or si vos proi que il vous en soviegne et soiés curieus de vos garder de pecier ne de faire vilainne oeuvre, car vos estes d'une lignie qui molt a nostre Segnor amé, et il les a tant essauciés que il lor a doné sa car et son sanc a garder" (E: 182. 737-744).
[55] Flori, *L'Essor de la chevalerie*, p. 210.

similar to Perceval himself, moreover through surrender and return to Arthur's court there is the possibility for enemy knights to become valued members of the Arthurian court.

With the exception of the instructions of the hermit, the Didot-*Perceval* is not didactic as is the *Perlesvaus*, in that there are not the allegorical interpretations of events given by hermits; rather the episodes have a courtly flavour, demonstrating Perceval's maturing magnanimity, a prime courtly requirement, in addition to fulfilling a fundamental principle of the Church. The role of the hermit and of Merlin is to keep Perceval on course, to assist in his development from impetuous and impatient young knight to a mature, courteous knight able both in prowess and intellect to ask the Grail Question and rectify his initial fault.

Continuing his deliberation upon the sparing or killing of enemies Bernard also asserts:

> Les chevaliers du Christ livrent en pleine sécurité le combat de leur Seigneur, n'ayant à craindre ni le péché s'ils tuent, ni la condamnation s'ils périssent; c'est en effet pour le Christ seul qu'ils donnent la mort et qu'ils la reçoivent: pour Le glorifier ou pour s'unir à Lui...En tuant un malfaiteur, ils ne commettent pas d'homicide, mais suppriment un mal, et se manifestent comme les exécuteurs des menaces divines et les défenseurs de la chrétienté.[56]

Accordingly the killing of pagan adversaries is undisputedly justified, in life, and in literature; certainly in the *Perlesvaus* it goes some way to excuse the slaughter of defeated pagans and the overall lack of mercy shown by characters towards their enemies. The killing of adversaries in the *Perlesvaus* can further be justified if one takes the expression "un malfaiteur" to mean a sinner, someone acting contrary to Christian ethics whether they be a Christian themselves or not. T. E. Kelly asserts that all adversaries in the *Perlesvaus* are essentially advocating the *Viez Loi* by their aggressive acts against the Grail Family, moreover the rebel barons of the Madaglan section who "by their hostile opposition to the champions of the New Law must ultimately be thought of as choosing the Old Law".[57] He defines the New Law in the *Perlesvaus* as referring to Christianity while the Old Law "encompasses not only the *old* Judaic law but also the *false* law of Paganism, as evidenced by the allegorical explanation of the Sealed Heads, which Gauvain hears at the Chastiax del

[56] 'Eloge de la nouvelle milice', III, p. 202.
[57] Kelly, *Le Haut Livre du Graal:Perlesvaus*, p. 101.

Enqueste".[58] Those knights who do not act in the service of God, those that Bernard termed *malice profane*, can also be viewed as perpetuating the *Viez Loi*. Consequently it is acceptable to kill such enemies rather than show mercy, for such an act would be seen to condone sin, but if an infidel is repentant, he is to be spared,[59] an ethic that also appears in the *Perlesvaus*: Gauvain offers the pagan king the choice between death and conversion while Perlesvaus is responsible for the conversion of two pagan women: the lady of the Chastel Enragié, and Queen Jandree. It seems that the *Perlesvaus* is moving on from Bernard's philosophy, for pacifism and conversion are the preferred form of action but only if there appears to be no possibility at all of a pagan threat to Christianity; furthermore, whether mercy is given depends very much upon the nature of the crime committed. In the case of King Gurguran, who is a passive figure, certainly one who does not seek to impose his religion onto Christians, conversion is an easy matter, while those who represent the aggressive side of paganism are not, on the whole, shown mercy.

Echoes of Bernard's philosophy of knighthood occur to differing extents in the Grail romances. David Carlson writes of *La Queste* that it "seems a conscious rendition in fiction of the didactic points made in Bernard's *De Laude*"[60] while the discourse on chivalry made by the Dame du Lac in the Lancelot-*propre* of the Prose *Lancelot* is more reminiscent of the theories of John of Salisbury in that she appears to be concerned with the function of the knight within civic society, although the importance of defence and maintenance of the Church is also emphasised. Jean Markale, in *Lancelot et la chevalerie arthurienne*, concludes with regard to the speech by the Dame du Lac that

> les paroles prononcées par Vivien consacrent une mainmise absolue de l'Église sur la chevalerie, et elles justifient par avance toutes les aventures qui se dérouleront au moment de la *Quête du saint Graal*. [61]

The difference between the philosophies of John and of Bernard is that the doctrine of Bernard is a crusading doctrine, primarily concerned with the furthering of Christianity by warrior-monks (whose existence is justified only by this purpose), and less concerned with

[58] Et li chief des chevaliers seelé en or senefiant la Novele Loi, et li chief seelé en argent senefiant les Giués, et li chief seelé en plon la fausse loi des Sarazins. De ces trois manieres de gens est establiz li monde. (109: 2170-2173)

[59] 'Eloge de la nouvelle milice', III, p. 202.

[60] Carlson, 'Religious Writers and Church Councils on Chivalry', p. 158.

[61] Jean Markale, *Lancelot et la chevalerie arthurienne* (Paris: Imago, 1987), p. 170.

the place and role of knights within the institution of the Church and the relationship of the Church and state.

The Attributes of the Perfect Knight

Bernard generated the metaphor of the Knight of Christ, deriving the construction from St Paul,[62] to illuminate the virtues necessary for the knight in the service of Christianity:

> Que le chevalier du Christ s'arme du bouclier de la patience et, à droite, à gauche, l'oppose aux coups de l'ennemi; de la cuirasse de l'humilité, où s'abrite le coeur le plus intime de lui-même; et, pour l'assaut auquel nous excite l'Apôtre, de la lance de la charité qui, se faisant toute à tous, poursuit le combat de Dieu. Que le casque du salut (qui est l'espérance) recouvre sa tête (qui est la fine pointe de l'âme); qu'il manie l'épée de la parole de Dieu, sur le destrier des bons désirs.[63]

The virtues required to make a perfect man were also enumerated in the works of Alain de Lille, in the *Anticlaudianus* and the *De Planctu Naturae*, the treatment of which bears some relation to those qualities necessary for the perfect knight, particularly in the more overtly religious texts like *La Queste* and the *Perlesvaus.* In the *Anticlaudianus*, Nature attempts to redeem her earlier, imperfect achievements by the creation of a perfect man while the intervention of God to provide a perfect soul is fundamental in his creation conveying the power with which to withstand vices. Alain also details the virtues which rally round Nature in her effort to create the perfect man: concord, favour, youth, laughter, temperance, moderation, reason, honesty, decorum, prudence, piety, sincerity, largesse, and nobility. Nobility in the works of Alain does not mean a nobility of soul but indicates noble lineage,[64] an attribute that is a prerequisite of a perfect, virtuous man; a philosophy reminiscent of the ideal of chivalry presented in the Lancelot- *propre* in the speech of the Dame du Lac.[65] Elspeth Kennedy examines the account of chivalry given by the Dame du Lac to Lancelot, including the conflict of the importance of noble ancestry with the ideal that it is man's moral

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[62] Ephesians, VI. 14-18, *The New English Bible*, 2dn edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970). St Paul writes that Christians should "fasten on the belt of truth; for coat of mail put on integrity; let the shoes on your feet be the gospel of peace, to give you firm footing; and with all these take up the great shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take salvation for helmet; for sword, take that which the Spirit gives you – the words that come from God."

[63] 'Sentences', in *Saint Bernard de Clairvaux: textes politiques*, p. 209.

[64] James J. Sheridan, *Anticlaudianus* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1973), p. 40.

[65] Elspeth Kennedy, 'Social and Political Ideas in the French Prose Lancelot', *Medium Aevum*, 26 (1957), 90-106.

qualities which are of superior importance. The concept of noble ancestry as a prerequisite for nobility of soul is an ideal that pervades chivalric romance, purely concerned with those of the ruling class;[66] moreover the Dame du Lac specifically states that it was for their strength and virtue alone that the first knights were chosen. Kennedy then adds that for the writer of the Lancelot-*propre*, it is evident that conventional distinctions between class were very real, if not natural, and, like kings, created by the will of God.[67] Markale also recalls us to the notion that the social orders have been established by God in the first place, evolving according to a divine plan.[68] Frappier has already drawn attention to the point that the emphasis on the equation of nobility and moral worth is an attempt by the nobility to justify and reinforce their status by the sanctification of knighthood in the Grail romances. The insertion of the notion of lineage and the privilege of birth, a wholly feudal concern, and predestination, the linking of the Grail Family genealogy to that of the New and Old Testaments, renders lineage of the utmost importance.[69] Perceval's lineage qualifies him for the role of Grail Hero over the other Arthurian knights, especially Gauvain, and in *La Queste* lineage also qualifies Galaad as the Grail Hero. In the Didot-*Perceval*, Perceval's hermit uncle informs the hero that " vous estes d'une lignie qui molt a nostre Segnor amé" (E: 182. 743). The preoccupation with the correct lineage of the hero reinforces the theme of predestination, which implies that events unfold according to the will of God said by the narrator of the *Perlesvaus* to alter the landscape in order to create yet more adventures for the knights (282: 6615-21). It is also suggested by the Roi Hermite that the initial failure of Perlesvaus at the Grail Castle is also part of the divine plan.[70]

However, although nobility in the writings of Alain may refer to lineage rather than intellectual qualities, Alain places importance upon

> not nobility of lineage, not the charm of beauty, not the abandoned love of riches, not glory from accomplishments, not the highest worldly honour, not strength of body, not the presumptuous importunity of men, not unrestrained temerity ... but virtue of soul, constancy of mind, nobility attained not by birth but cultivated in the heart, interior beauty, a host of virtues, rule of life, poverty in worldly goods, contempt of position.[71]

[66] Köhler, *L'Aventure chevaleresque*, pp. 21-28.
[67] E. Kennedy, 'Social and Political Ideals in the French Prose Lancelot', p. 104.
[68] Jean Markale, *Lancelot et la chevalerie arthurienne*, p. 165.
[69] Frappier, *Autour du Graal*, pp. 94-103.
[70] "...Biau nies uos avez droit car il chei en langor par uos. Et se uos i ffussiez puis alez ce dient li plusor il fust puis gariz mes ie ne le sai mie certeinement mes ie cuit que danmedieu uost ainsint sa langor et sa mort car se sa uolente i fust uos eussiez feite la demande mes il le uost ainsint." (Nitze, notes on 6072, p.261)
[71] *Anticlaudianus*. The foot note here clarifies virtue as "an acquired facility for doing the right thing," p. 139.

The declaration of Alain contrasts with the notion in Grail romance that virtue is derived from lineage and confirmed by action, rendering a particular knight more "perfect" for the task than another similar knight, as evinced in the figures of Perlesvaus and Gauvain in the *Perlesvaus*. In action, Perlesvaus is not superior to Gauvain: both possess virtues necessary for an ideal knight, but it is lineage that marks Perlesvaus as the Grail Hero. The sanctity of the lineage of the Grail Family is a recurring theme; it is Dandrane's enumeration of her own lineage, relating the actions of Joseph d'Arimathie and the favour it has with God, that causes the cloth to descend in the Aitre Perilleus (224: 5121-5134).

In *De Planctu Naturae* Alain orders the virtues of chastity, temperance, largesse, and humility into a hierarchy within the broader category of charity.[72] The supreme importance placed on the virtue of chastity is due to the equation of virginity with unshakeable faith and the ultimate sign of sacrifice and devotion to God, demonstrating the extent of an individual's dedication to God, defining his worth .[73] The hierarchy of virtues is followed, to a certain extent, in the Grail romances, with a particular importance placed on chastity in the *Perlesvaus*. Perlesvaus is said to be chaste:

> Buens chevaliers fu sans faille, car il fu chastes e virges de son cors, e hardiz du cuer e poissanz, e si ot teches sanz vilenie..." (23: 15-17 also 178: 3943-4, 260: 6046)

The description of the chastity of Perlesvaus shows the place chastity holds among the attributes a virtuous knight must possess, providing a literary parallel to the vows of the Knights Templar, those of chastity, poverty and obedience.[74]

In addition to chastity, the virtue of *largesce*, of prime importance within the hierarchy of virtues ordered by Alain and one that originates from feudal necessity, is transformed into an essential moral virtue, as Köhler observes:

> Nous avons vu que l'ancienne obligation de fidélité fondée sur la cession effective de fiefs évoluait, dans la mesure où les véritables vassaux devenaient une minorité, vers un système de relations basées sur des vertus morales générales dont la *largesce* était le point culminant.[75]

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[72] Philippe Delhaye, 'La vertu et les vertus dans les oeuvres d'Alain de Lille', *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale*, 6 (1963), 13-26, (p. 16).
[73] Kelly, *Le Haut Livre du Graal: Perlesvaus*, p.143 and Bloch, *Medieval Misogyny and the Invention of Western Romantic Love*, p. 81.
[74] Guy de Valois, 'Quelques observations sur la toute primitive observance de Templiers', p. 34.
[75] Köhler, *L'Aventure chevaleresque*, p. 37.

Largesce is then progressively moralised and idealised to the point where it becomes a model virtue encompassing the Christian values of humility and *caritas*.[76] Lancelot and Gauvain repeatedly manifest this virtue in the *Perlesvaus*, as they distribute goods acquired through their victories to the Chevalier au Povre Chastel and his family, while Arthur is rebuked when he fails to uphold the ideal of the distribution of wealth, a failure that is manifested in the non-observance of significant days in the Christian calendar.

The basic philosophy of the perfect man underlies the literary creation of the Grail Heroes: armed with virtues, and a soul given by God, the perfect man is equipped to combat the vices, described in the *Anticlaudianus* as the battle of a knight against personified enemies, similar to Galaad battling opponents in the didactic, allegorical text, *La Queste,* and of Perlesvaus in his battles against the Roi del Chastel Mortel and the Noir Hermite. Galaad is the perfect knight of *La Queste*, already in possession of the necessary attributes before the quest begins. His two companions strive to reach his level but both are destined to fail: Bors principally because of his lapsed chastity; and Perceval, who does possesses that qualification, in addition to learning to trust his faith and use discretion,[77] but cannot achieve the highest level of perfection because he is not created perfect as is Galaad. The concept of the perfect man implies that all others are imperfect, a notion which also occurs in *De Planctu Naturae*; therefore it is impossible for other men to attain perfection (*Anticlaudianus*, p. 55).

The contrasting of individuals with one who is depicted as superior is seen in the hierarchy of knights within the Grail romances, particularly the *Perlesvaus*, where, despite continuous valorous actions on the part of Gauvain, Lancelot, Meliot, and Arthur, and, despite the praise given by characters in the romance and by the narrator, they are not "the one:" Perlesvaus is "li Buens Chevaliers" predestined to succeed. The Roi Hermite explains why Gauvain and Lancelot were prevented from entering the Chastel Torniant and achieving the same level of perfection as Perlesvaus:

> "...se il fusent ausi chaste com vos estes, il i fusent entrez, car il sont li mellor chevalier dou monde, s'il ne fusent luxurios." (260: 6046-8)

The explanation of the Roi Hermite focuses upon the possession of the desirable virtues as necessary to achieve perfection, echoing the theory of Alain, but he overlooks the fact that it

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[76] Köhler, *L'Aventure chevaleresque*, p. 36.
[77] Matarasso, *The Redemption of Chivalry*, p. 99.

is lineage in addition to virtue that qualifies the hero as the Grail Knight. The girl who accompanied the three knights informed them that only the knight who had conquered the Cercle d'Or and the Grail Castle could enter the Chastel Torniant rendering it impossible for Gauvain and Lancelot to attempt a quest destined for Perlesvaus whether they possessed the requisite virtues or not. The concept that lineage engenders virtue is not infallible; lineage alone does not a laudable knight make, a notion that renders the Roi del Chastel Mortel so reprehensible an enemy. As a member of the Grail Family, the favoured lineage, advocating the *Viez Loi* by force, he makes an odious figure, an anti-Perlesvaus, becoming one of the principal adversaries in the romance, the defeat of whom is a significant moment in the career of the hero.

The enumeration of the virtues of Perlesvaus, in comparison with those who fall short of the ideal serves to establish Perlesvaus as the superior knight, superior through lineage, predestination and virtue, revealed in the number of prophecies that proclaim Perlesvaus as Grail Hero and conqueror of the Grail Castle. As Perlesvaus and Joseus approach the Grail Castle those within

> savoient bien que Perlesvaus le conquerroit, car il estoit prophetizé piecha que cil qui cel escu porteroit conquerroit le Graal sor celui qui Deu renoieroit. (262-263: 6114-6)

Aside from the initial fault, Perlesvaus never wavers in the course of his quest; never tempted by women, unlike Perceval in Manessier's *Continuation*, in which appears a re-working of the temptation of Perceval of *La Queste*. Chastity is the principal virtue for an ideal knight, expressed by the Roi Hermite but it is one that Perlesvaus already possesses, rendering him close to perfection: he does not evolve in the course of the romance; he does not gain any virtues he did not already possess. The *Perlesvaus* contrasts to the other versions of Perceval in romance, those that reflect the Chrétien tradition of the *niceté* of Perceval, in which the Grail Quest is an educative quest. The principal lesson of Manessier's *Continuation* and the Didot-*Perceval* is the control of violence, with importance placed on the acquisition of the attribute of mercy rather than the killing of an opponent. Perlesvaus, on the other hand, is a knight of action not evolution; it is through action alone that he achieves his obligations and duty to God, to uphold Christianity and to protect his family, before he can retire from the world. While the other Arthurian knights, primarily Gauvain and Lancelot, conform partially to the Cistercian ideal of the Knight of Christ, constantly undertaking adventures which result

in the furthering of the New Law and the defence of the weak from *malfaiteurs*,[78] they do not quite live up to the theoretical ideal of Bernard de Clairvaux, nor to the ideal of Galaad as he appears in *La Queste*. Lancelot is flawed by his love for Guenevere and his refusal to repent of that love, even following the death of the Queen. He believes in the mercy of God and in the hope he will be granted forgiveness as he performs such great deeds in the service of God (168:3683-169:3688). It is noteworthy that, in a text where mercy rarely surfaces and does not appear to be part of the religious philosophy of the knights, it is the one thing on which Lancelot believes he can depend. However, his optimistic reliance on the mercy of God is something the hermit does not share, hoping instead that God will give both Lancelot and Guenevere the strength to repent in order to receive forgiveness, while this in itself implies that the mercy of God cannot wholly be counted upon:

> "-Ha! beax douz amis, fet li hermites, nule rien ne vos vaurroit ce que je diroie, et Damedeu li doinst tel volenté et a vos autresi que vos puissiez fere le plesir au Sauveor et les ames sauver; mes itant vos di je bien, se vos gesiez en l'ostel au riche Roi Pescheor, que del Graal ne verriez vos mie, por le mortel pechié qui vos gist ou cuer." (169: 3688-3693)

Gauvain, however, is an exemplar of chivalry in this text, furthering the New Law in his conversion of the pagan king, Gurgaran, and also impeccable in his secular chivalric actions. He is comparable to Perlesvaus in prowess, evidenced in his performance against Perlesvaus at the Tornoi de la Vermelle Lande in which he appears the equal of Perlesvaus. He does not yield to temptation refusing the advances of the two *puceles* of the Tent, but, like Perlesvaus, he fails at the Grail Castle. In general he appears a sound candidate for the title of *Li Buens Chevaliers* were it not for the fact he is not of the correct lineage[79] in addition to his traditional reputation that ultimately debars him from success.

The generalised aim propagated by the hermits of the Didot-*Perceval* and Manessier's *Continuation*, that of the ban on the killing of a fellow knight, forms a contrast to the lessons of the hermits found in *La Queste* and the intermittent allegory of the *Perlesvaus*, but reflects the fundamental aspirations of a more secular knighthood, those who function within secular

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[78] 'Eloge de la nouvelle milice' III, p. 202.
[79] Keith Busby, '"Uns Buens Chevaliers" ou "Li Buens Chevaliers?" Perlesvaus et Gauvain dans le *Perlesvaus*', in *Lancelot, Yvain, et Gauvain* (Paris: Colloque Arthurien Belge de Wégimont, Editions A.G. Nizet, 1984), pp. 29-42.

society with responsibilities to God and the state. According to John of Salisbury, the function of *milites* within society is that they

> ...may execute the judgement that is committed to them to execute; wherein each follows not his own will but the deliberate decision of God, then angels and men, in accordance with equity and for the public utility. (*Policraticus*, VI: VIII)

The theme of the Grail Quest gives the Didot-*Perceval* its religious orientation but appears to be a reminder of the general exigencies and philosophies of Christianity. Perceval's hermit-uncle urges Perceval to guard against sin:

> "Or si vos proi que il vous en soviegne et soiés curieus de vos garder de pecier ne de faire vilainne oeuvre, car vos estes d'une lignie qui molt a nostre Segnor amé." (E: 182. 741-743)

But exactly what is the nature and authority of the Grail Quest in the Didot-*Perceval*? What does Perceval learn in the course of his quest? What does Arthurian society gain?

The Manifestation of Religious Ideology of Chivalry in the Grail Romances

At the opening of the Didot-*Perceval*, Perceval is described as "li plus biaus cevaliers de toute la maisnie Artu le roi" (E: 145. 107). He is acclaimed by Arthur and by the other knights and enters into the tournament at Arthur's court at the instigation of the sister of Gauvain, defeating all his opponents. The narrator says of his combat with Sagremor that he "molt sot de teus afaires" (E: 147. 149).

According to Arthur, the empty seat at the Round Table is for "li mieldres cevaliers del monde" (E: 149. 179) but despite the acclaim Perceval receives and the desire of the knights that he should sit in the empty seat, Arthur does not agree, replying to Perceval's request:

> il ne s'asseroit mie, car il l'en poroit bien meschaïr, car el liu vuit s'asist ja uns faus deciples, qui maintenant que il fu assis fu fondus en terre. "Et se je vos en donoie le don, si ne vos i devés vos mie asseïr." (E: 149. 181-184)

Perceval becomes angry ("s'en coreça" E: 149. 185) and demands that Arthur give him leave or "je ne serai plus de le vostre maisnie" (E: 149. 186-187). Gauvain hears this and is "molt dolanz car il amoit molt Perceval" (E: 149. 188) and urges Arthur to grant the boon; likewise Lancelot and the twelve peers until Arthur capitulates.

The supernatural voice that passes judgement following the sundering of the seat firstly blames and rebukes Arthur who has "faite la plus grande mesprison que onques rois qui en Bretagne fust fesist, car tu a trespassé le commandement que Merlins t'avoit ensagnié" (E: 150. 198-200). Perceval then receives his reprimand as he has "fait le plus grant hardement que onques mais nus hom fesist, et dont il charra en la forçor painne del monde" (E: 150. 201-2) and were it not for his lineage he would receive a grave punishment (E: 150. 203-7). The first part of the declaration by the voice is not so grievous but the second part condemns Perceval and includes the other knights of the Round Table (E: 150. 202-203) for encouraging Perceval and urging Arthur to do wrong. The voice then informs the knights exactly what is required of them to complete the Grail Quest, what the question is and to whom it must be asked. Gauvain, Sagremor, Erec, and the other knights all make the same vow as Perceval;[80] there is nothing to distinguish the knights at first. However, only Perceval keeps his vow (up to a point) and continues with the Grail Quest while the others give up.

The quest itself is directed by God (unlike in Manessier's *Continuation*) and the hero is predestined, according to the words of the hermit-uncle who, in his discourse to Perceval, makes it clear that only Perceval can succeed in this quest:

> "...et est cil vaissiaus només Graaus; et m'a dit que nostre Sire dist que a vos doit revenir et vos le covenra tant querre que vos l'arés trové." (E: 180. 705-707)

Yet the adventures and requirements demanded for this quest are not specifically sacred. The voice from God following Perceval's presumptuous actions regarding the *siege perileux* merely requires that the successful knight of the Round Table

> ...ait tant fait d'armes et de bontés et de proueces de çaus meïsme qui sont assis a cele Table. Et quant cil cevaliers sera si essauciés sor tos homes, et ara le pris de le

[80] Quant li rois l'a oï et cil qui a la Table Reonde seoient, si s'en merveillierent molt e dissent bien tout que jamais n'aresteront desci adont que il aront trovee la maison au rice Roi Pescheor et si demanderont de quoi li Graaus sert. Et Percevaus li Galois jure bien que jamais ne gira une nuit la u il gira autre dusqu'adont que il l'ara trovee. Et autretel dist mesire Gavains et Erés et Saigremors, et tot cil qui a la Table Reonde seoient. (E: 151. 221-7)

chevalerie del siecle, quant il ara | tant fait si l'asenera Dex a le maison le rice Roi Pescheor, et lors quant il avra demandé que on en fait et cui on en sert de cel Graal, lors quant il ara çou demandé si sera li Rois Pescheor garis, et sera li piere rasoldee del liu de le Table Reonde, et charont li encantement qui hui cest jor sont en la terre de Bretagne. (E: 151. 213-221).

The exact requirements of the quest are ambiguous to say the least but presumably within these loose boundaries lies the implication that *proueces* constitute positive chivalrous actions of a type approved by God or rather the Church. However, it is hard to see in the adventures that befall Perceval (his encounters with Urbain, the Orguelleus, the Cevalier del Tombel and the Tornoi del Blanc Castel) anything particularly beneficial to the promotion of Christian chivalry. For a start, Perceval fails to return Urbain and the Cevalier del Tombel to Arthurian (Christian) society while the Tornoi del Blanc Castel is one instigated at the whims of a lady wishing to find a husband, where Perceval's desire to outshine the other knights causes him to break the vow essential to the Grail Quest. The episode of the Tornoi del Blanc Castel is a secular episode in which Perceval champions one of the daughters of the *vavasor* of the castle, and defeats the other knights of the Round Table. It is in this episode that Perceval falters in his quest, breaking the vow he made upon embarking, now prepared to stay another night at the Blanc Castel. Merlin intervenes and sets him on his way recalling Perceval to the fact that he has broken his vow made to God at the commencement of his quest to which Perceval replies that it was through forgetfulness.

Et Merlins li dist: "Dont t'est il plus legier a pardouner." (E: 238. 1807-1808)

Merlin relents and sends Perceval on a short cut to the Grail Castle rather than the long way, which would take Perceval another year. It appears that the vow is irrelevant as Perceval achieves the *pris del siecle* through his success at the Blanc Castel, suggested by Merlin on his visit to Arthur's court.[81]

In the Didot-*Perceval*, the secular adventures that occur and the secular tournaments that are recounted, are given authority and justification by having them set in a Grail world, components of a quest initiated by divine will, conveying authority upon these types of

[81] As Merlin informs Arthur of the events surrounding the succession of Perceval at the Grail Castle, he adds to Gauvain that it was Perceval who had defeated him at the Blanc Castel, confirming the superior prowess of Perceval to the Arthurian court (E: 1914-1916).

secular adventures, normally extraneous to the ethos of Christian chivalry as it appears in the writings of Bernard and John. Ultimately, Perceval is questing under the directive and with the approval of God.

Manessier's *Continuation* differs from the Didot-*Perceval* in that the motivation of the quest is primarily a matter of vengeance for a treacherous crime against the Grail Family and is not instigated by God directly. At the Grail Castle, the Roi Pescheor relates the history of his wounding and the murder of his brother through the treachery of Partinal. Perceval then declares:

> "Car le non savoir covandroit
> Celui qui vanjance am prandroit,
> Que des que l'afere est seur moi,
> Durement deu savoir m'esmoi." (32935-8)

The motivation of Perceval's quest then becomes clear: it is a matter of the avenging of a heinous crime perpetrated against the Grail Family which, as guardian of the Grail, has divine blessing, acquiring a status that is equated with the Church itself. The Grail Family is a symbol of Christianity and the knight guilty of an attack upon members of the lineage of Joseph d'Arimathie must be brought to justice, a theme that also persists throughout the *Perlesvaus*: the protection and defence of the Grail Family can be regarded as the protection and service of the Church. What is more, Goondesert, the brother of the Roi Pescheor, was killed in a treacherous and covert manner: Partinal disguised himself in the armour of one of the retinue of the victorious Goondesert, in order to murder the victor. R. Howard Bloch states that the notion of murder "necessarily implies treachery, a killing in which the guilty party, through ruse or surprise, knowingly takes unfair advantage of his victim"[82] which certainly is the case here, rendering Perceval's declaration to secure "vanjance" a matter of obtaining justice for a crime.

At the Grail Castle, Perceval also declares his intention to bring an end to the evil custom of the Chapelle de la Main Noire, which has brought about the deaths of more than four thousand knights. The Roi Pescheor also recounts the significance of the chapel, relating how Espinogrés, the uncle of Partinal and the enemy over whom Goondesert had been

[82] R. Howard Bloch, *Medieval French Literature and Law* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), p. 35.

victorious, had murdered his mother in the chapel serving to reinforce the evil nature of the family of Partinal and its opposition to the holy nature of the Grail Family.

In the Chapelle de la Main Noire, Perceval's only viable defence against the diabolic hand is to make the sign of the cross. His lance is broken as he first attempts to overcome the black hand and his sword proves to be ineffective. With his usual means of combat against *malfaiteurs* useless, Perceval falls back upon his faith, an action that proves to be the only effective means of combating the enemy. He makes the sign of the cross three times and at the third time, the chapel burns and Perceval is victorious. The Chapelle de la Main Noire is the first in a series of adventures where faith alone is effective: first Perceval then Bors succeed in preserving their faith against the machinations of the devil. Unable to overcome Perceval by force, the devil then tests Perceval, in the episode where, his horse having been stolen, Perceval is subjected to a ride of terror upon a black horse until he makes the sign of the cross and overcomes the devil. Finally, he is tempted by the devil in the form of Blanchefleur and only overcomes the temptation at the last minute when he sees the hilt of his sword and it reminds him to make the sign of the cross. Perceval's faith is tested and remains steadfast. These episodes serve to further emphasise, beyond merely depicting attending Mass as a duty, the absolute necessity of faith as a fundamental motivation and resource of knights. This theme is explored in the encounter of Perceval with the old hermit of the Chapelle de la Main Noire, where the lifestyle of knights is called into question.
In response to the hermit asking his name, Perceval replies

> ..."Un chevalier suis, sire,
> Compainz de la Reonde Table,
> Foi que doi Dieu l'esperitable;
> Et vois errant aval la terre
> Por pris et por honor conquerre." (37780-37784)

The philosophy of Perceval is reminiscent of those knights condemned by the Church, who simply seek renown and glory, although Perceval does at least refer to God, albeit in a formulaic manner. However, the old hermit is not impressed by Perceval's credo of chivalry and cannot understand what Perceval means, so Perceval expands his initial explanation:

> "... Ce vos sai ge bien dire,
> Fait Percevaux, se Diex me voie
> Qant je vois cheminant ma voie

> Por ancontrer les avantures,
> Si an truis, tiex foiz est, de dures.
> A maint chevalier me combat,
> Maint an ocis, maint an abat
> Et maint an ai retenu pris;
> Einsins vois acroissant mon pris." (37786-37794)

Perceval's elaboration does not add much to the original declaration beyond the fact that he increases prowess and standing by engaging in combat and overcoming other knights. By referring to God and through the nature of his adventures, in which he maintains the social order by putting a stop to those engaged in criminal activity, Perceval confirms his place within the higher groups of knighthood, partially redeeming his motivation for action (the remainder of his definition of chivalry fits into the category of secular and undesirable knighthood, that of knights who serve no social function and fight solely for renown). The hermit then responds:

> "Biaux douz amis, fait li hermites,
> Mervoilles me contez et dites,
> Qui dites que vos conquerez,
> An chevalier que conquerez,
> Annor et pris. Se Diex m'amant,
> Ainz i conquerez dampnemant
> A vostre ame trestot apert
> Et cil qui ainsins s'ame pert,
> A, ce m'est avis, tout perdu." (37795-37803)

Following this revelation Perceval is shocked to learn his soul is in danger because of his lifestyle but the hermit continues to condemn the chivalric way of life, pointing out

> "Ces alees et ces venues
> Qu'avez si longuemant tenues
> Vos covient guerpir et laissier
> Et vostre orgoil[leux] cuer plessier." (37811-14)

The hermit then advises Perceval that he must not kill other knights and he must confess his sins or his soul will be damned. The advice of the hermit is indicative of the attempts by the Church to control activities that are potentially negative and disruptive to society in focusing knights upon their true duty: service to the Church. The episode of the Chapelle de la Main Noire and the teachings of the old hermit alter Perceval's perception of himself, moving from the type of secular knight condemned by Bernard to one who conforms to the Christian ideal with faith taking priority over desire to increase *pris* and *honor*.

The emphasis upon mercy as a religious virtue rather than a duty, one designed to avoid the sin of homicide, finds a contrast in the *Conte du Graal* in which mercy is advocated to Perceval by Gornemant de Gohort as a requirement of secular chivalry as much as it is a requirement of religiously oriented chivalry in Manessier's *Continuation*. The appropriation of religious edicts into the courtly sphere in the *Conte du Graal* is indicative of the manner in which the formation of the code of chivalry emphasised morality as an incentive for behaviour, resolving the problem of homicide by placing a secular, courtly value on the requirement of mercy:[83] it becomes a means of demonstrating nobility of character. The ritual of mercy repeatedly appears in Manessier as a secular value, delineating the magnanimity of the victor (but is also a means of increasing renown), until the intervention of the hermit confers upon the ritual of mercy the status of a religious edict. Marie-Luce Chênerie states that:

> en admettant que le chevalier arthurien agisse par délégation royale, sur appel du faible use légitimement du droit de guerre privé reconnu à la noblesse, dans une guerre juste, etc., qu'il ne soit donc coupable ni de meurtre ni d'homicide, il reste qu'il est voué à la souillure du sang versé, inhérénte au métier des armes. L'impératif de la merci remédie à cela tout en étant présenté comme une prescription qui émanerait des guerriers nobles, et valable en quelque sorte pour les membres d'un même ordre.[84]

Chênerie then examines the definition of chivalry given by Gornemant de Gohort and concludes that "le vocabulaire des adjurations indique fort bien que la grâce est demandée au nom de cette noblesse qui conditionne le titre du chevalier".[85] Mercy becomes the prerogative of class and signifies the nobility of the participants in the ritual, self-defined as knights. Likewise, the hermit in Manessier's *Continuation* takes the general view that knights by definition are worthy, therefore it is unlawful to kill a fellow knight, who has the potential for reform and repentance as expressed by Bernard in 'Eloge de la nouvelle milice III', p. 202. The hermit thus maintains the concept of sin resulting from homicide, a view that corresponds to the stance of the *Ordene de Chevalerie* where it is said that knights are to be honoured above all men except those of the Church (431-435). However, as demonstrated by several examples in Manessier, it is evident that not all knights are worthy, with the potential to

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[83] *Le Conte du Graal*, ed. by Charles Méla (Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1990), vs 1597-1605. The ritual of mercy also has the function of the propagation of the honour of the victor; the spared, defeated knight is dispatched to spread the news of his defeat; in this way, the honour of the victor is increased, his achievements become widely known. The importance of the ritual of mercy as a mechanism for the increase of honour of a knight is explored further in Chapter three, pp. 141-147.
[84]Marie-Luce Chênerie, *Le Chevalier errant dans les romans arthuriens en vers des XIIe et XIIIe siècles* (Geneva: Droz, 1986), p. 318.
[85] Chênerie, *Le Chevalier errant*, p. 319.

reform, rendering it necessary for Perceval to kill certain enemies despite the teachings of the old hermit. In the episode concerning the Biau Mauvais, the two knights encounter a group of knights about to burn two women and in the ensuing combat the enemy knights are killed. Despite the lesson of the hermit at the Chapelle de la Main Noire, it appears it is acceptable to kill such renegade knights as these, guilty of two significant crimes: persecution of the weak and homicide. Such an episode is frequent in Manessier and serves to reiterate the scenario in which a knight is best employed in the role defined for him by the Church. In this particular episode, added proof of the baseness of the group of knights is seen by the fact that one of them shoots Perceval with a poisoned arrow, an act that is viewed as treacherous.[86] The knights killed by Perceval correspond to Bernard's category of *méchants* ('Eloge de la nouvelle milice', III, p. 202) whom it is acceptable to kill in the course of dispensing justice and protecting the populace, the role John gives to knighthood *(Policraticus*, VI: VIII). Knights guilty of lesser crimes, such as the besieging of a castle in order to force a marriage and gain the lands of the lady within, are pardoned and in these circumstances the situation is always resolved through single combat. Single combat is an organised ritual in which certain codes of behaviour operate; compliance with these codes demonstrates the willingness of the *malfaiteur* to obey the rules that govern chivalry and act in accordance with the exigencies of society. If the perpetrator is willing to enter into single combat and abide by the rules, then there is the potential for rehabilitation.

The lesson of the circumvention of engaging in single combat when the opponent has not committed a serious crime is further demonstrated in the episode of the combat of Lionel, Bors, and Calogrenant, and reinforced by the episode of the combat between Perceval and Hestor. Lionel, following what he perceives to be betrayal by Bors for electing to save a *pucele* over himself, is consumed by anger that ultimately has tragic consequences. As Calogrenant attempts to prevent Lionel from killing his brother, he, himself, is killed by Lionel. Bors then appeals to God and through divine intervention the brothers are reconciled. At a nearby hermitage, the hermit explains to Bors that

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[86] George Fenwick Jones observes that there was a general upper-class scorn of the use of bows and arrows, perceived as lower-class weapons used in hunting and by infantry causing a resentment on the part of the nobility of the ability of low-born yeomen to kill their social betters in battle; consequently the use of arrows against Christians had been forbidden by the Church in 1139 although how far this was upheld in reality is another matter. See: *The Ethos of the Song of Roland* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1963), p. 17.

"… ennemi et deable
Qui s'estoit, biau tres doz amis,
El cors a vostre frere mis
Qui vos voloit fere morir." (40910-40913)

Lionel, temporarily possessed by the devil, commits the crime against which the old hermit has warned. Hestor, too, rashly attacks Perceval with no justification while Perceval, like Bors, attempts to reason, saying that he does not wish to fight Hestor despite the fact that "preux iestes, ce croi, et vassal" (41396), for Hestor's arms and horse are in such a dilapidated state that Perceval wishes to avoid a combat, especially as "N'avez de conbatre mestier" (41403). Perceval's response serves to incite Hestor to commence the combat and despite his poor horse and arms, the engagement is fierce and both knights are grievously wounded. Again, the matter is resolved through divine intervention and the appearance of the Grail revives both knights. While Hestor is not said to be possessed, his behaviour is similar to that of Lionel, in that he will not be dissuaded by reason, intent upon his irrational course of action. Combat is necessary only if the opponent is perpetrating some crime, in other words, combat should be instigated only in order to preserve the social order. Single combat should lead to the defeated party requesting mercy; moreover, as Perceval's advocation of pacifism in the episode of Hestor demonstrates, combat between two knights who encounter each other in the Forest is not necessary, renown in Manessier's *Continuation* is not won through random skirmishes "por pris et por honor conquerre" (37784) but through positive, social activity.

The primary aim of the Arthurian knights in the *Perlesvaus* is to further and uphold the New Law, Christianity, within and without the Arthurian realm, creating an atmosphere akin to a crusade. Quoting from J-Ch. Payen, who commented that the Old Law is undeniably the realm of evil, Kelly concludes:

> The non-Christian world in the romance is thus clearly assimilated to the diabolical and is, with few exceptions, a damned world, incapable of conversion.[87]

Faith and the promotion of Christianity is the ideal path for knighthood. However, unlike in *La Queste*, spiritual chivalry is not preached in opposition to secular chivalry: in the *Perlesvaus* secular chivalry is subordinated to spiritual chivalry.[88]

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[87] Kelly, *Le Haut Livre du Graal: Perlesvaus*, p. 101.
[88] Kelly, *Le Haut Livre du Graal: Perlesvaus*, p. 159.

From the opening of the *Perlesvaus* the author informs us of the ennobling tales that will be related in the text, which evidently aspires to teach by example, a factor reinforced by the author's insistence on the sacredness of the text:

> ... e de Dieu si muet li hauz contes du Graal; e tuit cil qui l'oent le doivent entendre, e oblier totes les vilenies qu'il ont en leur cuer, car il iert molt porfitables a toz cex qui de cuer l'orront. Por les preudomes e por les buens chevaliers dont orra ramentevoir les fez...(23: 10-13)

Yet it becomes immediately apparent that Arthur's court is in decline, explained by the author as a consequence of his failure to do great deeds, specifically his failure to hold court at the great religious festivals of Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost (26: 69-73). The hermit at the chapel of St. Augustine also repeats this criticism of Arthur in his sermon to the King, condemning Arthur as "li essanples de vilenie" (37: 329-344). The neglect of the celebration of religion appears to be at the root of Arthur's sin and the reason for the shame into which he has fallen; Arthur has failed in his duty as king and the representative of God to uphold the religion of his people and fulfil his obligations towards them. Furthermore his failure is specifically embodied in Arthur's lack of *largesce*. *Largesce* in romance literature is a concept in which "les intérêts de toutes les couches de la chevalerie convergent…c'est elle qui révèle le mieux les conditions objectives de l'élaboration d'un idéal courtois".[89] The king is the embodiment of the virtues of a culture, the representation of these values and a source of inspiration of those values in others. The act of the distribution of wealth is seen as a virtue, one that incurs the loyalty of vassals, an act that is also equated with the concept of *caritas* given that the distribution of wealth indicates humility in the distributor. *Largesce* is a moralised attribute necessary to the feudal system, one that is progressively associated with virtue, becoming "une vertu cardinale",[90] and the one quality that symbolises the ethos of the Arthurian realm.[91]

According to the philosophy of John of Salisbury, the king must "raise aloft the roof-tree of the Church, when he extends abroad the worship of religion" (*Policraticus*, VI: XXVI). He is the minister of the common interest but also the representative of an ideal:

[89] Köhler, *L'Aventure chevaleresque*, p. 28.
[90] Dominique Boutet, *Charlemagne et Arthur, ou le roi imaginaire* (Paris: Champion, 1992), p. 205.
[91] Köhler, *L'Aventure chevaleresque,* p. 38.

> Arthur n'est *jamais* un roi souverain, un véritable roi; il est *toujours* le symbole d'un État féodal idéal représenté comme garant d'un ordre humain parfait et proposé comme tel.[92]

The inability of Arthur to fulfil the concept of kingship is manifested in his failure to observe the feast days with the associated notion of the distribution of *largesce.* However, following the sermon of the hermit, he vows to redress his neglect of his duties. The condemnation of Arthur for his failure to uphold Christian celebrations is further reinforced by a voice in the wilderness, which relays God's command that Arthur should hold court immediately. Arthur holds court at Pentecost, an action that concludes his redemptive pilgrimage to the Chapel of St Augustine, demonstrating his re-acquired ability to distribute *largesce*, and the equilibrium of the court, at least, is resumed.

Arthur, throughout the *Perlesvaus*, is a faultless knight but a king with faults; faults that he rectifies through prowess, until the Brien des Illes section. The two pilgrimages that Arthur makes in the *Perlesvaus* serve to reaffirm his status as described by the narrator at the opening of the romance. Arthur must become again the ideal king before the troubles facing his realm can be tackled.

Joseus in the *Perlesvaus*

In the *Perlesvaus* appears the figure of Joseus, a combination of hermit and knight, one who corresponds more to the ideal of Bernard's *miles Christi* than perhaps even Perlesvaus. Joseus differs from the common representation of a hermit, in that he is not merely a static figure who shelters knights and dispenses wisdom, rather he has an active role to play in furthering the quest of Perlesvaus. However, he is first and foremost a hermit.

Hermits play a significant role in romance and are highly regarded: Guenevere says of the hermit of the Chapel of St Augustine:

> "... mes li plus preudome ermites qui soit o roiaume de Gales a son abitacle lez la chapele, ne ne vit fors de la gloire Dieu." (27: 98-99)

[92] Köhler, *L'Aventure chevaleresque,* p. 26.

All the hermits live in solitary contemplation, sustained by the glory of God, forming one part of the religious monastic ideal for

> the contemplative life was the privilege of the monk, the end for which he forsook all else and became the athlete of God. He considered it the highest goal and there were few in the Middle Ages who would have disputed this assessment.[93]

Hermits are usually members of the nobility themselves, many are said to have been former knights, indicative of the conception of superiority of class held by the nobility, whereby the lower classes are excluded or appear only as a negative representation in a literature that aims to promote solidarity between members of the same class and maintain their interests:

> Arthurian romances, part consciously, part instinctively, remould the traditional portrait of the Hermit-Saint in the light of their own priorities and thereby reveal something of the fundamentally exclusive, aristocratic spirit of Arthurian literature as a whole.[94]

Robert Deschaux reports views on the role of hermits in *La Queste* and *Perlesvaus* noting that Jean Frappier in *Autour du Graal* observed that the hermit

> se rattache par la naissance à la classe des seigneurs et des chevaliers et qu'il est, pratiquement, le seul représentant du clergé à y jouer un rôle spirituel d'auxiliaire ou de guide, dans une parfaite orthodoxie et sans la moindre indulgence pour les égarements de la chevalerie mondaine. Et Jean Frappier notait avec finesse non seulement la "joie intime" qui double souvent le "devoir de charité" dans l'accueil hospitalier que l'ermite réserve au chevalier, mais aussi "le parallélisme pyschologique" que suggèrent la vie solitaire de l'un et l'aventure individuelle de l'autre.[95]

Deschaux reiterates the point that hermits in the romances are at the service of knights: they shelter and advise knights, give communion, arm knights, and heal knights but for all their devotion and the dedication of their life to God, they do not achieve the same rewards as knights,[96] they do not receive divine favour as does the hero. Questing is still seen as the valid path to achieving the ultimate spiritual goal, although achievement of that goal is limited to

[93] Matarasso, *The Redemption of Chivalry*, p. 146.
[94] Angus J. Kennedy, 'The Portrayal of the Hermit-Saint in French Arthurian Romance: the remoulding of a stock character', in *An Arthurian Tapestry: Essays published in Memory of Lewis Thorpe*, ed. by Kenneth Varty (Glasgow: British Branch of the International Arthurian Society, 1981), pp. 69-82, (p. 69).
[95] Robert Deschaux, 'Le personnage de l'ermite dans *La Queste del Saint Graal* et dans le Haut Livre du Graal: *Perlesvaus*', in *Actes du 14e Congrès International Arthurien*, (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 1984), pp. 172-181, (p. 173).
[96] Deschaux, 'Le personnage de l'ermite', p. 180.

the Grail Knight himself. Furthermore, once the quest has been accomplished the knight retires from the world and lives a life of contemplation in the Grail Castle. Angus J. Kennedy states that many knights "regard the eremitical life as a logical extension of the chivalric life, as a kind of "celestial" chivalry whose sole aim is the life of the spirit and the glorification of God".[97] Certainly, for the Grail Knight himself, questing is a means to a spiritual end. The true Christian ending for knights is to enter the religious mode of life and, as in secular life, become an exemplum.[98] This finds its realisation in the figure of Perceval and his ultimate destiny in withdrawing from the world and living a life of contemplation in the Grail Castle.

Angus J. Kennedy also identifies three groups of motifs in the portrayal of the hermit-saint. Firstly, there are the stereotypical elements that render the hermit a

> venerable old man endowed with wisdom and moral authority, called upon to act as a guide, counsellor and interpreter of God's will, rewarded for his endeavours by the divine gifts of prophecy and healing, enjoying a privileged relationship with the animal world and, above all, having direct access to the company of God and his angels who reveal themselves to him in visible tangible form.[99]

Secondly, there is realistic observation, such as the withdrawal from the world into solitary contemplation that can also represent "an escape from the adversities and brutalities of contemporary life".[100] However, this is not the case in the *Perlesvaus* where the hermits are at risk of attack from knights and the Roi Hermite is eventually murdered. Finally, the third group is that of Arthurian fantasy in which the hermits of Logres inhabit a mysterious world that is different to that of the *Vitae Patrum*, a collection of texts that give an authoritative image of solitary life.[101] Angus J. Kennedy offers in conclusion the notion that the traits manifested by the hermits in romance "all bear eloquent witness to the authorial assumption that the knight's guide and spiritual mentor ought to be a rather special person, shown to have close psychological, family, and cultural ties with the group in society that was thought to really matter".[102] Richard Kaeuper also comments that "hermits combined a maximum of recognised piety – involvement in the life of the laity with a minimal possession or exercise of ecclesiastical authority".[103] Hermits that are related to the hero are frequent and have

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[97] Angus J. Kennedy, 'The Portrayal of the Hermit-Saint', p. 73.
[98] Köhler, *L'Aventure chevaleresque*, p. 47.
[99] Angus J. Kennedy, 'The Portrayal of the Hermit-Saint', p. 70.
[100] Angus J. Kennedy, 'The Portrayal of the Hermit-Saint', p. 70.
[101] Angus J. Kennedy, 'The Portrayal of the Hermit-Saint', p. 71.
[102] Angus J. Kennedy, 'The Portrayal of the Hermit-Saint', p. 78.
[103] Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe*, p. 59.

significant roles in the guidance of the knight. The two hermits that play a recurring and prominent role in the *Perlesvaus* are also of the Grail Family and the importance of their lineage is stressed.

It is during Lancelot's encounter with Joseus in Branch VII that the attitude and lifestyle of this hermit is presented in detail. Joseus lives in the Forest, with only a *valet* for protection, keeping a lance, sword, hauberk and javelin for defence against brigands. Lancelot finds it quite difficult to believe that a hermit is able to defend himself against attack, certainly without killing until Joseus explains:

> "...quant robeor nos vien[en]t si nos armon. Se j'en puis .i. tenir as mains il ne me puet eschaper. No vallez si est auques hardiz, si l'ocit tantost o il l'atorne tel qu'il ne se puet aider." (165: 3587-3590)

Joseus adheres to the ideal of pacifism for he says:

> "Dex m'en desfende d'ome ocirre et afoler." (165: 3585-6)

While Lancelot perceives that it is only the fact that he is a hermit which restrains him from harming his adversaries:

> "Par mon chief, fet Lanceloz, je voi bien que se vos ne fussiez hermites que vos feïssiez tot tel."(165: 3590-91)

Joseus provides an example of a hermit who has no need of knights to defend him and his religion, a hermit who enters into conflicts with enemies but still maintains the Church ideal of pacifism, reconciling the necessity of combat in self-defence with the requirements of his faith. It could be said that Joseus in fact embodies the dilemma of the Church when faced with the problem of attack by hostile entities: it is possible to remain faithful to the edict of pacifism only by delegating the real violence to others. When the hermitage is attacked by robbers that night, Joseus and his valet are more than able to defend themselves, capturing the robbers without any aid from Lancelot. Yet the harsh punishment of the robbers is delegated to the knight for "Ja Dex ne li aït qui avra pitié de larron" (166: 3614-5) and the hermit remains free of the actual responsibility of dispatching enemies. The knight performs the role of the dispenser of justice of the Church and enforces punishment (*Policraticus*, VI: VIII).

Joseus performs a dual role: that of hermit and warrior, maintaining his own spiritual progression through solitary contemplation but also upholding order in the realm through violence, participating directly in combat, and in the furthering of the New Law by aiding Perlesvaus in his assault on the Grail Castle. The valet describes Joseus' valour in terms generally used to describe that of knights:

"...que je ne cuit si fort ne si hardi en tot li roiaume de Logres com il est." (165: 3592-3593)

while Lancelot regrets that such a man is not a knight (166: 3617-3619).

Joseus directly contributes to Perlesvaus' conquest of the Grail Castle in which the author's attitude towards the treatment of enemies of the Church is clearly stated. Twelve hermits accompany Perlesvaus and at first they remain as spectators as he launches his attack on the bridges of the Grail Castle, Joseus declaring that he would go to Perlesvaus' aid if he did not believe it was a sin. However, the other hermits reassure him he need not be troubled by any sin resulting from participating in the rout of the Grail Castle:

> " Joseus... dist as autres hermites qu'il li irroit volentiers aidier s'il n' i avoit pechié, e il li distrent que de cel pechié n'ait il garde." (264: 6139-6141)

The stance of the hermits, that of the justification in the killing of unrepentant enemies, corresponds with the philosophy of Bernard de Clairvaux ('Eloge de la nouvelle milice', III, p. 202). The concept of harsh retribution against the sinner or infidel is confirmed in the role of the lion with which Perlesvaus achieves the conquest of the Grail Castle. The Roi Hermite informs Perlesvaus that the lion is sent from God, and through the lion the wishes of God can be construed (201: 6088-202: 6094). During the conquest of the castle, Perlesvaus hesitates in killing the surrendered enemies when he finds no attempt at defence until it becomes clear that the lion has no compunction about slaughtering them (266: 6205-267: 6211). However, in the course of the episode the philosophy is enforced that while it is acceptable and just to kill enemies who are treacherous and show no sign of repentance, mercy should be shown to those who are willing to repent. On the third bridge, two knights beg for the mercy of Joseus and Perlesvaus and on the advice of Joseus, Perlesvaus agrees to spare them for they insist they will change their faith (265: 6159-6164).

Joseus illustrates an ideal, a militant hermit needing no knights for protection, and one who actively participates in the furthering of the New Law. He adheres to the Church's principle of non-killing and, being a hermit, is superior to many knights in that he is not involved in the secular activities of knights - the aimless pursuit of renown. Perhaps Joseus corresponds more to Bernard's ideal of the Knight of Christ than other knights of the Round Table in that the time he does not spend in combat he passes in devotion to God. In the *Perlesvaus*, the teachings and the examples of the hermits are

> designed to make of the knight a kind of warrior-saint, and to infuse into the warrior ideal something of the austerity and vigour of the eremitical life itself, not for its own sake, but because self-denial is the one virtue required of the knight if he is to make himself truly worthy of participating in collective military service in the cause of the Holy Church.[104]

As Jean Frappier noted in *Autour du Graal*, there is a certain parallel between the life of a hermit and the solitary wanderings of a Knight of Christ, both individually seeking proximity to God, while concerning Joseus himself, he writes that the figure "réussit à concilier sa vocation religieuse et son besoin d'action guerrière, car il ne peut éteindre en lui la valeur chevaleresque de son lignage".[105] Joseus is a Perlesvaus figure, sharing the same lineage, while the crime of Perceval, that of matricide, is displaced onto Joseus in this text. Despite withdrawing from the world into a hermitage, Joseus achieves his greatest deeds through action, particularly that of chivalric action, rather than solitary contemplation in order to become closer to God. The message of the *Perlesvaus*, that it is through chivalric action that Christianity is maintained and furthered (and it is to those who undertake this quest that the greatest rewards are granted), is emphasised by the figure of Joseus, who, although offering an alternative to knighthood receives more validation through his participation in combat in which he is indistinguishable from a knight. Knight errantry is the mode of life that concerns the author and his audience, illustrated in the examples of Perlesvaus, Gauvain, and Lancelot, as a worthy ideal.

The overall religious message of the *Perlesvaus* is beyond doubt.[106] As in Manessier's *Continuation*, the theme of vengeance for crimes against the Grail Family is predominant but

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[104] Angus J. Kennedy, 'The Portrayal of the Hermit-Saint', p. 65.
[105] Frappier, *Autour du Graal* (pp. 119-123), p. 122.
[106] Antoinette Saly states that "le héros du *Haut Livre* sera moins un quêteur du Graal qu'un vengeur des torts causés à son lignage, y compris dans sa reconquête du Graal." 'Perceval-Perlesvaus: la figure de Perceval dans

by its very essence, the motif of vengeance is inferior in religious justification to one such as furthering the Christian faith or defence of the Church, as, according to Bernard:

> C'est en vain que vous vous glorifiez de vos succès, si dans le fond de votre coeur l'orgueil ou la colère ont dominé sur vous. Mais peut-être n'étiez-vous animé ni de cet esprit de vengeance, ni de ce désir de vaincre, et n'avez-vous tué que pour défendre votre vie..." ('Eloge de la nouvelle milice', I, p. 201)

But T. E. Kelly justifies Perlesvaus' quest for vengeance by relating such a quest to the Old Testament concept of private vengeance and the notion of the Blood Avenger/Redeemer:

> The saviour-figure (Perlesvaus) cannot complete his salvific mission, whereby the Grail realm and the Arthurian kingdom are released from the bond of evil until after he has avenged the wrong done to the Veve Dame. Within this context the themes of revenge and reconquest are thus seen to be complementary.[107]

Despite the secularity of tone in Manessier's *Continuation* and the Didot-*Perceval*, the ultimate focus of the knights for their actions is God, as Perceval learns at the Chapelle de la Main Noire in Manessier, while the quest in the Didot-*Perceval* is directed by God. John praises soldiers who execute justice in the name of God, defining them as "saints, and are the more loyal to their prince in proportion as they more zealously keep the faith of God; and they advance the more successfully the honor of their own valor as they seek the more faithfully in all things the glory of their God" (*Policraticus*, VI. VIII), an ideal of knighthood that is applicable to both the more "secular" romances. Perceval, in the encounter with Hestor, demonstrates that he knows there is the right time, the right place, and certainly the right type of adversary to engage in combat. In Manessier's *Continuation* it becomes evident that an adversary must be undertaking some form of activity seen as reprehensible and anti-social that warrants physical intervention on the part of the knight; a lesson that clarifies the role of knights as dispensers of justice and protectors of the populace and Church (represented by the Grail Family).

The Didot-*Perceval* and Manessier's *Continuation* also exhibit the ideal expounded in *l'Ordene de Chevalerie* that a knight should not witness false judgement (as Gauvain intervenes to save an innocent person from punishment); should never deprive women of his

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le *Haut Livre du Graal*', 'Perceval-Perlesvaus: la figure de Perceval dans *Le Haut Livre du Graal*', *Travaux de Linguistique et de Littérature*, 24 (1986), 7-18, (p.7).

[107] Kelly, *Le Haut Livre du Graal: Perlesvaus*, p. 135.

protection (there are numerous examples in Manessier); should hear mass every day, and, what is more, knights are to be honoured above all men except religious men. Perlesvaus adheres to the ideal of Bernard de Clairvaux as a Knight of Christ, dedicated to the defence and proliferation of the true faith.

Conclusion

The rules of chivalry are, in general "the necessity of generosity, piety, service of worthy causes such as the protection of widows, orphans, the helpless and the poor; injunction against slaying a helpless adversary or taking advantage of one's enemy; exhortations to pursue glory and praise rather than profit, to avoid perjury and false counsel."[108] This is the role to which knights may show adherence to greater or lesser extents; to deviate from the requirements of chivalry in some manner will be perceived as undesirable.

Chivalry, the moralised function of knighthood, sets out the perceived role of a knight, what he is expected to do in certain situations, the basic rules of life to which he will conform (hear mass, serve the Church, and protect non-combatants), underscoring the concept of masculinity in romance: an ideal man will exhibit a desire to perform these functions, a desire that stems from sources other than the personal glory that ensues from feats of arms. Chivalry is therefore an inescapable part of the construction of the ideal man in romance, a concept concerned with the necessity of depicting knighthood as a true and valid role within society. Furthermore, because the underlying function of a knight is that of action, physical ability becomes the primary trait leading to the creation of a figure of masculinity that combines the original function of knighthood, the maintenance of power through force, with the ideal promoted by the nobility that lineage engenders moral worth; a figure that also exhibits the intellectual values of Christianity. It is the virtue of chastity that denotes Perlesvaus as superior to his fellows, his virtues elucidated at the opening of the romance, serving to depict Perlesvaus as one who inspires others. The virtues of Perlesvaus, and also of Perceval in

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[108] Bloch, *Medieval French Literature and Law*, p. 197.

Manessier, through admiration and imitation, generate friendship between knights creating the fraternity of the Round Table.

UNIV.

The Concept of Friendship in the Grail Romances: The Hero and His Likeness

Friendship is a term that covers a wide range of interactions between personages in the Grail romances, ranging from simple bonds created by class and ideals to intellectual friendship founded upon a perception of worth in another. Knights of the Round Table demonstrate friendships initially based upon a common bond of companionship, or *compagnonnage*, exhibiting what is termed homosocial desire. Homosocial desire, as defined by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "can be applied to such activities as 'male bonding'".[1] Male bonding is, of course, necessary for the propagation of patriarchal society, the very mechanism of which depends on relationships between men. Sedgwick continues that "in any male-dominated society, there is a special relationship between male homosocial (*including* homosexual) desire and the structures for maintaining and transmitting patriarchal power: a relationship founded on an inherent and potentially active structural congruence".[2] Friendship, particularly in its most basic form, the bonding between men in order to further their own ends, is therefore necessary to maintain masculine hegemony, a concept that "refers to the cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life. At any given time, one form of masculinity rather than others is culturally exalted".[3] Grail literature, as noted by Frappier,[4] appropriated religion to bolster the ideal of the nobility in which knighthood is represented as the dominant and successful masculinity. By showing individuals as desirable to others (as friends or as objects of love) the ideal is propagated and reinforced.

Feudal society is structured on reciprocal relationships between men: those of lord and vassal as Erich Köhler has demonstrated in *L'Aventure chevaleresque*, reiterated by R. Howard Bloch in *Medieval French Literature and Law*. Bloch cites *largesce* in

[1] Sedgwick, *Between Men*, p. 1.
[2] Sedgwick, *Between Men*, p. 25.
[3] Connell, *Masculinities*, p. 77.
[4] See Chapter one, p. 17.

particular as an example of the manner in which the feudal values that consolidate bonds between men for the functioning of feudal society become infused, in chivalric literature, with moral values.[5] The manifestation of such values that, in reality are an obligation, necessary to maintain the fabric of society, in chivalric literature render the individual (the knight) worthy and morally superior to an individual who does not display such values. Initially, alliances arise from the need for self-preservation in addition to the potential advantages such bonds may bring; such alliances are based on class, precipitating a bonding that gains its solidarity from the feudal system of reciprocal actions glossed as friendship.[6]

Arthurian society is predicated upon bonds between men to create the fraternity of the community that is the Round Table and the *maisnie* of Arthur; a society that manifests the sum of chivalric ideals. It is essential for the success of a society that there are such bonds between individual members in the face of external forces that threaten the fabric of each idealised community; knights are companions-in-arms against a common enemy and, in essence, *compagnonnage* is a question of utility rather than true friendship. Individuals themselves may form alliances based upon class association, rendering *compagnonnage* a basic form of friendship, a preliminary stage towards a more elevated form of friendship, *amitié,* that initiates from intellect, involving reactions to and perception of, values in another individual wherein reason is required of the parties involved. Mme de Combarieu du Grès posits *amitié* as a force that unites two men, one that involves an element of choice founded upon admiration, esteem, and affection differing from *compagnonnage* which, in principal, unites more men and is based upon a bond of class,[7] the *milites*, who perceive themselves as a cohesive class, with an identifiable and clear function.

The concept of friendship evolved from the classical period, being adapted and utilised by the early Christian writers from St Paul and St Augustine to Aelred of

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[5] Bloch, *Medieval French Literature and Law*, p. 221.
[6] Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 146, in which he discusses the notion of knights seeing themselves as a cohesive class, also Georges Duby, 'La noblesse dans la France médiévale: une enquête à poursuivre,' in *Hommes et structures du Moyen Age: recueil d'articles* (Mouton: Paris, 1973), pp. 145-166.
[7] Combarieu du Grès, *L'Idéal humain*, p. 255.

Rievaulx, Robert Grosseteste and Thomas Aquinas. St Augustine valued the type of friendship, *vera amicitia*, of which the source was God, who, through the Holy Spirit reaches out and offers men charity and grace through which they, having become friends of God, can become *veri amici.*[8] Friendship in the classical treatises was concerned with the attempts of the individual to achieve self-improvement with the ultimate goal of perfection based upon a friendship sited on a horizontal axis between men of like virtue. In the works of the theologians friendship became a notion of self-improvement achieved through a relationship with God aligned on a vertical axis, in addition to those on the horizontal axis that facilitate self-amelioration.

This chapter treats the phenomenon of friendship from classical and early Christian philosophies, in particular the *Laelius, De Amicitia* of Cicero and the incorporation of such ideals into the philosophies of Christian spiritual friendship as propounded by Aelred of Rievaulx, before focusing upon the manifestation and modification of these ideals in the three Grail romances and the implications of friendship on the construction of masculinity.

Cicero and Aelred: Theories of Friendship

The relationship between true and ordinary friendship became a point of disagreement between the ancient philosophers who divided into two schools of thought. Plato, some Stoics, and the Epricureans on the one hand propounded the notion that the virtuous seek friendship because of its utility in aiding their quest for ultimate happiness, while Cicero and Aristotle held that ideal friendship begins with virtue; true friendship is an end in itself, the means by which the virtuous man improves his character and approaches perfect wisdom. Utility is a necessary characteristic of virtue, an individual proves his virtue by usefulness (service) to his friend.[9] Reginald Hyatte further states:

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[8] Reginald Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship: the idealization of friendship in medieval and early Renaissance literature* (Lieden: Brill, 1994), p. 46.
[9] Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*, p. 5.

> *Amicitia vera* exists only between good men, drawn to one another because of their similarity and love of goodness; it conforms to universal nature in that it is like elemental harmony, the love of family members and social concord; it consists in unanimity on all human and divine matters and perfect mutual benevolence; beneficence strengthens it; pleasure and usefulness accompany the ideal, but they are not its source, and *amicitia perfecta* is a necessary ingredient of the *summum bonum*.[10]

Fundamental to the theory of Cicero is the notion that true friendship can exist only among the virtuous (*De Amicitia*, v: 17[11]); that virtue in itself is the source of friendship without which friendship cannot exist (*De Amicitia*, vi: 20). Virtue delineates perfect friendship, superior to other forms, a friendship that "...springs rather from nature than from need and from an inclination of the soul joined with a feeling of love rather than from calculation of how much profit the friendship is likely to afford" (*De Amicitia*, viii: 27). *Amicitia* is defined as a friendship that "does not arise from need and weakness but from love which is derived from nature itself".[12] Love is a central motivator in the inception and maintenance of friendship with friendship itself being a form of love:

> For it is love (*amor*), from which the word "friendship" (*amicitia*) is derived, that leads to the establishing of goodwill. (*De Amicitia*, viii: 26)

The greatest advantages come from friendship:

> ... the sentiments of love and of kindly affection spring from nature, when intimation has been given of moral worth; for when men have conceived a longing for this virtue they bend towards it and move closer to it, so that, by familiar association with him whom they have begun to love, they may enjoy his character, equal him in affection, become readier to deserve than to demand his favours, and vie with him in a rivalry of virtue. (*De Amicitia*, ix: 32)

Consequently, friendship, although a force arising from nature, involves a certain amount of perception on the part of the individual concerned. The importance of the part played by reason (the intellect or "integrity") in the inception of love is a notion essential to the

[10] Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship,* p. 27.
[11] *Cicero's Three Books of Offices of Moral Duties*, ed. by Cyrus R. Edmonds (London: Bohn, 1856).
[12] Karen Lee Singh, 'On Friendship', *The Philosophical Books of Cicero*, ed. by Paul Mackendrick (London: Duckworth, 1989), pp. 213-223, (p. 214).

whole concept of ideal friendship. Cicero declares that "if the force of integrity is so great that we love it, whether in those we have never seen, or, more wonderful still, even in an enemy, what wonder that men's souls are stirred when they think they see clearly the virtue and goodness of those with whom a close intimacy is possible?" (*De Amicitia*, ix: 29). Cicero's definition of friendship (ix: 32) is based on the fact that a worthy man inspires a desire for virtue in others; while the friendship may be unequal at first, friendship itself is a means through which an individual can achieve self-improvement and attain the worth of the one who first inspired him, an element that appears in the Grail romances, particularly in the examples of the Couart Chevalier and Biau Mauvais, demonstrating that through association with the hero (the one who already possesses moral worth in abundance) others can improve themselves.

In opposition to the type of perfect friendship, Cicero identifies inferior forms in which friendship is used for gain or pleasure, as a means to an end. Friendship for gain appears under the guise of true friendship but is inferior because it has not originated from nature, is not inspired by virtue and has "...become an object of desire, on account of weakness or want, so that by giving and receiving of favours each may receive from another and mutually repay what he is himself incapable of acquiring" (*De Amicitia*, viii: 26, also ix: 30). Reginald Hyatte, in commenting upon Cicero's development of true and inferior friendships, observes that

> Pleasure and usefulness are the source of imperfect friendships. True friends are rivals in virtue and through their mutual benevolence and beneficence and convergence of their wills, they help each other attain to ever higher levels of goodness and wisdom. The highest levels can only be reached with a friend's aid.[13]

La Queste del Saint Graal in particular demonstrates the ideal of true, perfect friendship, for it is through their friendship and association with Galaad that Perceval and Bors achieve success in the Grail Quest (although not the ultimate success reserved for Galaad).

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[13] Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*, p. 29.

Cicero's theory of true friendship is one that is confined to class. He states that "men of our class are generous and liberal, not for the purpose of demanding payment – for we do not put our favours at interest, but are by nature given to acts of kindness – so we believe that friendship is desirable, not because we are influenced by the hope of gain, but because its entire profit is the love itself" (*De Amicitia*, ix: 31). Men of Cicero's class, the upper classes, are more naturally inclined towards true friendship than men of lower classes who will always be hoping for some gain from the situation while the lower classes and women are excluded from his formulations; Cicero describes the type of people who seek inferior friendships for gain as "helpless women more than men... the poor more than the rich, and the unfortunate more than those who are fortunate" (*De Amicitia*, xiii: 46). In conclusion, those who have no material needs, nor needs of protection, are suited to true friendship. However, in Christian friendship, it was possible for true friendship to exist between a man and a woman, but only certain individuals qualified for this type of friendship: those who had renounced sexuality and were therefore, effectively, of the same, masculine, gender.

The value placed upon Dandrane in the *Perlesvaus* is derived from her staunch maintenance of her virginity; it is due to this status, in addition to her lineage, that she completes her task at the Aitre Perrileus. However, the friendships depicted as ideal, intellectual friendships, approximating *amicitia* in the Grail romances occur only between knights, rendering friendship exclusive to those of a particular caste and gender.

The classical treatises on friendship, particularly *De Amicitia*, had a fundamental influence on the Cistercians and the twelfth-century concept of ideal, spiritual friendship. Early Christian writers adapted classical treatises on friendship to suit their own philosophies, and, as Hyatte points out, from these writers, particularly St Augustine, originated the foundations for the later corpus dealing with the ideal of spiritual friendship.[14] Cicero spoke of "la bienveillance amicale et la paix qui en résulte"[15] and Augustine transposes these themes into the Christian ethic:

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[14] Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*, p. 46.
[15] Maurice Testard, *Saint Augustin et Cicéron*, 2 vols (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1958), I, p. 214.

> la paix devient la paix céleste, et l'amitié devient l'ordre chrétien de la charité qui est d'abord union à Dieu, en qui s'établit l'union des hommes.[16]

Classical friendship has as its source and inspiration virtue itself; this virtue being the virtue of Nature that is at once the source of ideal friendship and its ultimate goal — the means of achieving perfect wisdom; while the spiritual friendship of Augustine sees God as the source, offering charity and grace that enables the individual to move, through horizontal love, to a vertical friendship with God as the ultimate aim. Hyatte defines *amicitia spiritualis* as

> the preferential affection that joins two or a few Christian friends through the medium of God's love.[17]

God becomes the source of friendship, rather than Cicero's Nature, and the spiritual intimacy of friends is one path towards knowledge of God, adapting the view of Cicero that friendship is a fundamental stage in attaining true virtue (*De Amicitia*, xxii: 83), while virtuous friendships on the horizontal axis are gifts from God. *De Amicitia*, vi: 20 is interpreted as a consensus between men in earthly matters only if they first agree on divine and spiritual matters, a shift that limits friendship to religious and intellectual men.

Brian P. McGuire[18] and Reginald Hyatte give comprehensive studies of the evolution of friendship in monastic writings. Hyatte notes the increased interest in *amicitia* from the middle of the eleventh to the early twelfth century culminating in the works of Bernard of Clairvaux and Aelred of Rievaulx. Bernard, in *On the Necessity of Loving God,* in his letters, and *Song of Songs* quoted fifteen terms from *De Amicitia*, substituting the love of God for Ciceronian virtue.[19] Bernard speaks of the four steps towards loving God defining the first stage as the point at which a man loves himself for his own sake until he realises he cannot exist alone. The second stage follows this

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[16] Testard, *Saint Augustin et Cicéron,* pp. 290-1.
[17] Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*, p. 61.
[18] Brian P. McGuire, *Friendship and Community: the monastic experience, 350-1250* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1988).
[19] Jean Leclercq, *Monks and Love in Twelfth-Century France: psycho-historical essays* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), pp. 62-64.

realisation, leading a man to love God, not for God's sake but for the sake of himself. However, this step towards God results in a knowledge of God leading to the third stage wherein a man loves God for God's sake, no longer for his own sake. Bernard views the fourth stage as virtually unattainable: a man loving himself for God's sake.[20] Hyatte goes on to state that the primary conditions necessary for the emergence of this friendship are

> love of God, humble self-love, and charity towards others, to which is added the spiritual love, originating from God, of another for reason of her or his Christian goodness or capacity for virtue.[21]

Lionel J. Friedman also asserts that Aelred "considers *amicitia* to be a gift of divine wisdom and of divine nature as well as a reflection of the unity and peace of the Divinity".[22]Aelred obviously relied heavily on the *De Amicitia*, allusions to the work abound throughout *De Spirituali Amicitia*; according to J. Dubois,[23] it is estimated that a third of Cicero's work is contained in Aelred's while Hyatte, in his assessment of the *amicitia spiritualis* of Aelred and its evolution from Cicero and other classical sources, asserts that Aelred

> collates passages and models from *Laelius* with biblical and patristic writings that complete Cicero's ideas, that show them as the beginnings which Christian truth brings to the ends of God's love and love of fellow men.[24]

Aelred's spiritual friendship develops the ideas of Cicero, adapting the classical concepts to fulfil Christian ideals; whereas Cicero's concept of true friendship resulted in the attainment of virtue, Aelred's Christian adaptation places union with God as its ultimate goal making spiritual friendship a preparation for *amicitia Dei* (*De Spirituali*

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[20] 'Letters of St. Bernard', (letter 12), *Treatises II: The Steps of Humility and Pride on Loving God,* trans. by M. Ambrose Conway (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1980), 115-121.
[21] Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*, p. 61.
[22] Lionel J. Friedman, 'Jean de Meun and Ethelred of Rievaulx', *L'Esprit Créateur*, 2 (1962), 135-142, (p. 138).
[23] J. Dubois, *L'Amitié spirituelle* (Bruges: Beyart, 1948).
[24] Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*, p. 48.

Amicitia, 2: 14).[25] As in Cicero, true friendship can exist only between those who are good:

> It can begin among the good, progress among the better and be consummated among the perfect. (*De Spirituali Amicitia*, 2: 38)

Like Cicero, whose writings treated the manifestations of friendship within society, restricted to those individuals capable of forming such a friendship, men of equal rank belonging to the upper classes of society, Aelred's definition of spiritual friendship is concerned with friendship between those who are qualified to enter such a friendship, such as those within a monastic order, although class is not a prerequisite for spiritual friendship. Aelred differentiates between monastic charity, love of all others within the order, and spiritual friendship, the fundamental difference being the exchange of confidences between two or a few worthy individuals.[26]

Aelred expounds the concept of charity as love, defining charity as the enjoyment of natural affection towards another:

> For love is a certain "affection" of the rational soul whereby it seeks and eagerly strives after some object to possess it and enjoy it. Having attained its object through love, it enjoys it with a certain interior sweetness, embraces it, and preserves it. (*De Spirituali Amicitia,* 1: 19)

He describes the difference between friendship and charity:

> For divine authority approves that more are to be received into the bosom of charity than into the embrace of friendship. For we are compelled by the law of charity to receive in the embrace of love not only our friends but also our enemies. But only those do we call friends to whom we can fearlessly entrust our heart and all its secrets; those, too, who in turn, are bound to us by the same laws of faith and security. (*De Spirituali Amicitia*, 1: 32)

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[25] Aelred of Rievaulx, *De Spirituali Amicitia*, ed. by Mary Eugenia Laker (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1977).
[26] Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*, p. 62.

Like Cicero, Aelred devotes a good deal of attention to the forms of inferior friendships. He opposes cupidity to charity, and identifies three types of friendship: carnal, worldly, and spiritual:

> The carnal springs from mutual harmony in vice; the worldly is kindled by the hope of gain; and the spiritual is cemented by similarity of life, morals, and pursuits among the just. (*De Spirituali Amicitia*, 1: 38)

At the beginning of book three, Aelred reiterates his notion of true friendship, also detailing other inferior forms of friendship:

> The fountain and source of friendship is love. There can be love without friendship, but friendship without love is impossible. Love proceeds either from nature, or from duty, from reason alone, or from affection alone, and sometimes from both simultaneously - from nature, as a mother loves her child; from duty, when through giving and receiving, some men are joined by special affection; from reason alone, as we love our enemies, not as the result of a spontaneous inclination of the heart but from the necessity of precept; from affection alone, when anyone, because of bodily qualities only, such as beauty, strength, eloquence, inclines the affection of others to himself. From reason and affection simultaneously, when he, whom reason urges should be loved because of the excellence of his virtue, steals into the soul of another by the mildness of his character and the charm of a praiseworthy life. In this way reason unites with affection so that the love is pure because of reason and sweet because of affection. (*De Spirituali Amicitia*, 3: 2-3)

Love/friendship based on spiritual considerations is superior to friendships deriving from sensory considerations (*De Spirituali Amicitia*, 3: 5). True friendship has to be affection accompanied by reason, a concept defined as *affectus* "a spontaneous and pleasant attraction for someone amplified by a reason-accompanied affection whereby something is lovingly sought and desired for its own sake and an attainment is intimately and gratefully enjoyed, is cherished and kept safe".[27] This spontaneous affection from Nature (in Cicero) or from God is accompanied by the intellectual capacity to reason the nature of the affection.

[27]Amédée Hallier *The Monastic Theory of Aelred of Rievaulx*, trans. by Columban Heaney (n.p.: Irish University Press, 1969), pp. 29-30.

Aelred also turns his attention to simple camaraderie, proposed as being less demanding of heroic virtue than spiritual friendship. Aelred concludes that camaraderie is an inferior form of friendship but if it is free from vice then it should be tolerated in the hope that it will grow into a genuine spiritual friendship (*De Spirituali Amicitia*, 3: 85-87), a definition that has implications for the friendships that appear in the Grail romances, as Aelred's concept of camaraderie could very well be applied to chivalric *compagnonnage*. In Medieval literature

> having a friend was considered the hallmark of chivalric virtue, a necessary attribute of the hero, whether in the epic (Roland and Oliver) or the novel (Erec and Guivret).[28]

This form of friendship is depicted in the epic *Ami et Amile*[29] in which the ideal of friendship involves the highest sacrifices for each other that friends can make, sacrifices that transgress all moral and religious bounds; for although Ami and Amile place their friendship above all else, they still receive divine favour, demonstrating that friendship, founded upon *compagnonnage,* can ultimately bring good and in the end brings the two men to God.[30] *Compagnonnage* is an important and recurring theme in the *chansons de geste* although friendship itself does not take precedence over higher concerns such as duty, loyalty, and observance of Christian exigencies. Hyatte points out that Ami and Amile do not love one another for the sake of God, a requisite of the ultimate spiritual friendship,[31] rather the friendship itself is validated by God. Simon Gaunt has also noted that in *Ami et Amile,* because "the bond of companionship transcends all other bonds, whatever they do is right simply because they remain loyal to each other".[32] The chivalric friendship of Ami and Amile is a fundamental motivating force behind the action of the narrative, a friendship that is rewarded by God, signaling that, in this epic, *amitié* is the most valuable relationship that can exist. William Calin concludes that for "both protagonists war gives way to love, which in turn gives way to God, or in different terms,

[28] William Calin, *The Epic Quest: studies in four Old French chansons de geste* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1966), p. 70.
[29] *Ami et Amile*, ed. by Peter F. Dembowski (Paris: Champion, 1969).
[30] Calin, *The Epic Quest*, pp. 57-117.
[31] Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*, p. 124.
[32] Gaunt, *Gender and Genre in Medieval French Literature,* p. 47.

love of feudal life is transformed into love of family only to become *caritas*, love of God"[33] indicating that *compagnonnage* can result in a higher, more worthy Christian friendship in accordance with the views of Aelred.

The popularity of theories of friendship in the medieval period on the whole can be measured by the example of the *Roman de la Rose*, a romance whose influence itself on succeeding generations of writers was considerable,[34] in which the theories of Aelred and Cicero are discussed, and the ideal of true *amitié* presented as worthy. Lionel J. Friedman comments that

> the use of Aelred is clearly demonstrable in one part of the *Rose*. Jean de Meun popularised the theories of spiritual friendship advanced by the earlier Cistercian.[35]

Although a text principally concerned with heterosexual love, showing the influence of Andreas Capellanus' *De Amore*, the *Roman de la Rose* also treats other forms of friendships; the discourse of *Reson* concerns the superiority of *amitié* over the carnal love which Amant aims to pursue. The treatises of Cicero and then of Aelred consistently place fundamental importance on the part played by reason in the development of true friendship; that friendship is inspired by God or Nature and maintained by reason, a concept reiterated in the *Rose* where the view point of *Reson* shows the extent of the influence of Aelred.[36] *Amitié* is seen as preferable to carnal heterosexual love according to the precepts of Aelredian doctrine although it is not the option chosen by Amant.

Reson informs Amant that Nature has given love to man and beast (carnal love), then explains the higher forms of love (4685-768):[37]

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[33] Calin, *The Epic Quest*, p. 98.
[34] Jillian M. L. Hill, *The Medieval Debate on Jean de Meung's Roman de la Rose: morality versus art* (Lampeter: Mellen, 1991), p. x.
[35] Friedman, 'Jean de Meun and Ethelred of Rievaulx', p. 135.
[36] John W. Flemming, *Reason and the Lover* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 83.
[37] Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Roman de la Rose*, ed. by Armand Strubel (Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1992).

> Amitiez est nommee l'une:
> C'est bonne volentez commune
> Des genz entr'eus, sanz descordance
> Selonc la dieu benivolance. (4681-4684)

The concept of charity is incorporated into the notion of *amitié*. Jean de Meun expands on *amitié* and the values that must be present for true friendship:

> Et soit entr'eus communité
> De tous leur biens en charité,
> Si que par nule entencion
> N'i puisse avoir excepcion.
> Ne soit l'uns d'aidier l'autre lenz
> Comme hons ferm, sages et celenz,
> Et loiaus, car riens ne vaudroit
> Li sens ou loiautez faudroit. (4685-4692)

Jean then specifically states, through the discourse of *Reson*, that it is through *amitié* that one can "parfaitement amer" (4698).

The concept of *amitié* as an ideal path towards spiritual enlightenment or social achievement is also illustrated in *La Queste del Saint Graal.* Reginald Hyatte states that *La Queste* presents illustrations of spiritualised friendship that follow much the same process of development that characterises Aelred's model.[38] In both, selection is based on the presence of Christian virtue: God acts as the selector, tester, and approver of friendship; the friends give each other confidence in earthly and spiritual matters, and their mutual affection grows, as does their friendship with God.[39] Galaad represents the ideal to which the other knights aspire and whom they desire to befriend (accompany); the friendship of Galaad, Bors, and Perceval in *La Queste* is presented as an ideal of spiritual chivalric friendship. The friends are bonded by their Christian virtues, an active means by which they progress upon the path of spiritual enlightenment. Hyatte concludes that the friendship of the three knights does conform to the patterns of spiritual friendship discussed by Aelred in that they have been brought together by God; their mutual

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[38] Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*, p. 98.
[39] Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*, pp. 98-99.

admiration and love is rational being based upon observation of virtue, and they share the "similarity of life, morals and pursuits characteristic of Aelred's spiritual friendship".[40]

Friendship in the Grail Romances

Compagnonnage

All knights are members of a fraternal union with the potential for friendship. *Compagnonnage* is the basic form of friendship that cements the fraternity of knights, equated with the inferior friendship described by Aelred as a potential basis of spiritual friendship; essentially all friendships between knights have their root in camaraderie. Principally knights befriend each other because they are all knights and can recognise each other as members of a particular social group. Belonging to a recognised group implies that they should, at least, possess some (or all) of the attributes valued in society that render them worthy of the admiration of others, even if they merely possess the minimal values of a knight: social standing and valour; values that constitute a starting point upon which friendship can develop. When Perceval encounters Sagremor in Manessier's *Continuation*, despite the dilapidated appearance of Sagremor's horse he is still recognisable as a knight and so Perceval greets him as such, addressing Sagremor as "Biaux sire" (33212). Once the two knights have learned the identity of the other, they are overjoyed at their reunion (33241-51) and address each other as "amis" (33252).

Being identified as a knight is repeatedly the sole incentive for combat, although such motivation is often represented as empty and purposeless. If death results from combat (unnecessary if the code of surrender is followed correctly), it can instigate a cycle of feudal or clan warfare, a situation that is found in the *Perlesvaus*. Such an engagement is often acknowledged as ritual and one in which the hero may participate reluctantly or not at all as we see in Manessier's *Continuation* when Perceval encounters

[40] Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*, p. 81.

the shabby Hestor and exhibits no desire to enter into a combat with a fellow knight for no reason (41403). Likewise, Dinadan, in the Prose-*Tristan*, questions the convention of automatic combat between two strange knights, taking the position of "véritable adversaire et critique de l'idéologie arthurienne".[41] Dinadan's position in the Prose-Tristan and Perceval's attitude in Manessier's *Continuation* stand in contrast to the situation in the *Perlesvaus*, in which knights attack each other in the Forest without warning and with little or no justification, symptomatic of the failure of Perlesvaus at the Grail Castle. The hermit at the Chapel of St Augustine explains to Arthur that it is because of his sin that he cannot enter the chapel and participate in mass (37: 330-333), attributing directly the source of Arthur's sin and the misfortunes that have befallen the Arthurian world to the failure of Perlesvaus at the Grail castle.

> ...por ce qu'il ne le demanda, sont totes les terres de guerre escommeües, ne chevalier n'e[n] contre autre en forest q'il ne quere sus e ocie s'il puet... (38: 353-4)

By depicting knights behaving in a manner contrary to the ideal, the author conveys the extreme disarray of the land, criticising the convention of ritual combat in the forest for the sake of prestige and implying that, as evidenced in the attitude of Dinadan and Perceval, combat should be undertaken for a more worthy cause than an increase in the honour of the individual.

The episode of the Couart Chevalier/Biau Mauvais also demonstrates the importance of being recognised as a knight. Gauvain "molt se merveille de lui qant il le voit" (78: 1357-8) and the Couart Chevalier names himself, identifying himself as a knight and asks Gauvain not to harm him. Gauvain accepts that he is a knight despite his unorthodox appearance. He does not condemn the Couart Chevalier, as Perceval does in Manessier's *Continuation*, instead, Gauvain informs the Couart Chevalier he has nothing to fear from him, addressing him as "Sire chevaliers" (78: 1362-3) in the process. When

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[41] Eugène Vinaver, 'Un chevalier errant à la recherche du sens du monde; quelques remarques sur le caractère de Dinadan dans le *Tristan en prose*', in *Mélanges de linguistique romane et de philologie médiévale offerts à M. Maurice Delbouille*, 2 vols (Gembloux: Éditions J. Duculot, 1964), II, pp. 677-686, (p. 678).

the Couart Chevalier recognises Gauvain's shield, this inspires him to ride his horse and wear his armour correctly (79: 1371-2). In the presence of one who is of great worth, according to the value system of chivalry, the Couart Chevalier responds to his example, aware of the signification of Gauvain's shield, the shield of Maccabeus and his pre-destined role:

> Li chevaliers voit l'escu Monseigneur Gavain e le connut. "Sire, fet il, ge sé bien qui vos estes. Or descendré ge e chevaucheré a droit e remetré mes armes a point, car ge sé bien que vos estes Messire Gavains, ne nus devoit conquere cel escu se vos non. (78-79: 1368-1372)

It is indicative of the romance's hierarchy of worthy knights that although Gauvain inspires the Couart Chevalier to adopt the correct appearance of a knight, it is Perlesvaus who inspires him to act in a worthy fashion, reinforcing the role of Gauvain as one who achieves only partial success in the Grail Quest as a whole.

Gauvain sees the Couart Chevalier as no threat, is indeed amused by the other knight, while the Couart Chevalier, once assured that he is in no danger and aware of the identity of Gauvain, responds in a friendly manner and gives Gauvain the information he desires and also his lance. Gauvain and the Couart Chevalier behave towards each other according to the rules of knightly etiquette or courtesy that can also be called "friendly."

Knights who do act towards each other as enemies, should formally challenge each other first, citing the reason for the combat (usually some perceived wrong which justifies their desire to attack). The codes of conduct that should be employed when knights encounter each other in the forest can be seen in the combat of Lancelot and Perlesvaus. Perlesvaus attacks Lancelot without specifying the reason for the attack, only warning Lancelot to defend himself:

> "Sire chevalier, couvrez vos de vostre escu por vos garantir autresi conme je faz del mien por mon cors desfendre, car je vos desfi sanz ocirre." (140: 2965-2967)

Lancelot, however, wants to know the reason for this attack

> "Beau frere, que vos ai je mesfet?" (140: 2973)

At this point Perlesvaus now falls silent despite the repeated demands of Lancelot to insist on knowing the reason for the combat

> "...qui vos estes et de coi vos me haez, que vos m'avez navré molt tres durement, si vos ai trouvé ruiste chevalier et de grant pooir." (141: 2986-2988)

Perlesvaus does not conform to the traditional rules of combat between strange knights, giving no reason to justify his attack. Lancelot himself states that he would never have fought this knight if he had not been attacked first for there would have been no reason (142: 3008-3010), an attitude similar to that of Perceval in Manessier's *Continuation* when faced with Hestor who is determined to engage in combat with a disinclined Perceval (41403).

It is necessary, therefore, for there to be some justification for knights to attack each other in the forest, otherwise there is no reason why they should not be friends in the most basic sense of the term. However, combat can be instrumental in establishing a bond between knights with the defeated knight becoming a friend to the victor, instigating a form of friendship that corresponds, to a certain extent, with the inferior form of friendship cited by Aelred (*De Spirituali Amicitia*, 3: 85-87). Such a friendship is the prerogative of a caste that has an ideology founded upon a cult of prowess and prestige that is dependent upon the implicit knowledge of codes of conduct that initiate friendly behaviour and *compagnonnage* between those of the same status. Richard Kaeuper observes

> Certainly the pattern of truly savage fighting, respect, reconciliation and great affection between two knights is repeated often enough at least to raise questions about a process of bonding that would be a powerful element in understanding the primacy of prowess in chivalry.[42]

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[42] Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Society*, p. 216.

Combat can be essential in establishing a bond between two knights but only if the correct codes of behaviour are followed during combat and the crime committed by an enemy knight is not one that is contrary to the motivations of the narrative. After his defeat by Gauvain, the Partiz Chevalier begs for mercy then becomes Gauvain's vassal (79: 1393-1395). The bond established between Gauvain and the Partiz Chevalier, however, is a long way from true friendship and is characteristic of an inferior friendship based upon duty and reciprocal service (*De Spirituali Amicitia*, 3: 2). The ritual of single combat, with its rules of engagement that govern what would otherwise be mindless violence, in fact serves as a means of reinforcing masculine bonds. Single combat, while primarily a means of increasing the worth of the victor, also serves the purpose of furthering masculine hegemony by creating bonds between those viewed as elite. The implications of single combat, especially the propagation of masculine hegemony that results from the ritual of mercy are also discussed further in chapter three.[43]

Bonding will occur only between knights who know how to act in such situations, those who can enter into a dialogue and follow the rituals of surrender and mercy. Moreover, despite whatever crimes they may have committed, after defeat enemy knights are frequently admitted into the fraternity of the Round Table, a feature that appears repetitively in Manessier's *Continuation* as seen, for example, in Perceval's victory over the would-be abductor of Dodinel's *amie*, whom Perceval dispatches to Arthur's court where, despite learning the nature of his crimes, in this case abduction, he is pardoned and welcomed to the Round Table. The knight explains that his shame stems from his defeat by Perceval and not from the nature of his actions,

> "Mon duel, mon annui et ma honte
> Vos cont, car vers moi la conquist
> Percevaux…" (39482-4)

which is also how Arthur sees the situation, telling the knight not to worry as he was defeated by such a *prodome* (39503-4). Arthur welcomes all the knights defeated by Perceval for various crimes, and the defeated knights appear to be able to salvage some honour from the situation, their shame being a result of their defeat rather than of their

[43] See Chapter three, pp. 141-147.

thwarted antisocial activities. Adhering to a code of conduct in fulfilling the oaths given to Perceval and returning to Arthur's court as prisoners, they are pardoned, welcomed into the social order and offered the opportunity of rehabilitation, resulting in the formation of masculine bonds that cement Arthurian society.

This type of friendship or alliance serves as a base upon which other, higher types of friendship can be founded, in accordance with the notions of Cicero and Aelred. Friendship can also arise due to the system of reciprocal service between knights; one deed initiates a return gesture that can continue indefinitely, commonly due to the reciprocal service between a vassal and his lord, or because of service given owing to the bond of caste. Aelred speaks of a form of friendship inferior to spiritual friendship proceeding from duty "when through giving and receiving, some men are joined by special affection" (*De Spirituali Amicitia*, 3: 2), a form of friendship that is, to a certain extent, applicable to the relationship between Lancelot and the Chevalier au Vert Escu in the *Perlesvaus*.

In the episode of Lancelot and the Chevalier au Vert Escu a knight who had brought the news of Lancelot to the Povre Chastel and who had enlisted the aid of Gauvain, was killed while aiding Lancelot in combat against four knights who had mistaken him for Gauvain, whereupon Lancelot and Gauvain bury him at the Povre Chastel. Later, when Lancelot is journeying alone through the Forest, he encounters a knight who, on learning that Lancelot comes from the court of King Arthur, demands news of his brother, who also bears a green shield. It appears that the knight who died from wounds received while aiding Lancelot is the twin brother of the knight whom Lancelot encounters. Lancelot says of the dead knight:

> "...je n'amai onques nul chevalier tant en si poi de conpaigie, car il m'aida a garantir de la mort." (127: 2652-2653)

Lancelot adds that he will repay the service; the dead knight had helped to save Lancelot's own life, so Lancelot will help to protect the dead knight's land, reassuring the

brother that "…je vos present mon cors et abandon ma chevalerie en toz les lex ou il vos plaira" (128: 2661-2662).

Lancelot fulfils his promise in defeating the Sire de la Roche who had seized the knight's castle. Yet Lancelot does not withdraw his offer of service after he has completed his mission but pledges always to be in the knight's service since his brother gave up his life to save that of Lancelot (129-130: 2699-2700).

The motivation for the behaviour of Lancelot stems from the service already done him by the dead knight whose sacrifice has created a debt that Lancelot will never be able to repay. *Compagnonnage*, initially risen out of necessity in the face of adversity results, through this extreme sacrifice, in a debt of service that Lancelot feels he is continuously obliged to repay.

The notion of friendship in return for service rendered also appears in the relationship between Lancelot, Gauvain and the Povre Chevalier. Both Gauvain and Lancelot spend the night at the Povre Chastel and are touched by the generosity of their host in the face of the poverty of his house. Following the defeat of the robbers of the forest and the rescue of Lancelot by Perlesvaus and Gauvain, spoils from the robbers' hoard are sent to the Povre Chastel. What begins as a conventional motive of service in return for hospitality offered instigates a pattern of reciprocal service between Lancelot, Gauvain, and the Povre Chevalier. Lancelot and Gauvain manifest the chivalric virtue of *largesce* in return for hospitality, rather than physical action that is normally required. Sheltering a knight within a castle often results in an obligation on the part of the knight to perform some service and there are two types of service that are related to the convention of hospitality. Firstly, hospitality is a reward for services already performed, such as the rescue of a *pucele* who will then lead the knight to her father's castle and offer him hospitality in return for her rescue. The second type is where service on behalf of the community has not been performed and is usually requested of the knight following hospitality. There is the example of Yvain defending the nieces of Gauvain in *Yvain*, while in the *Perlesvaus*, Lancelot is surprised that the aged *vavasor* at the Chastiax

de la Pelote requests service from him the moment he arrives at the castle (159: 3447-8). In another episode, Gauvain concurs with the request of his host, a treacherous *vavasor*, and sets out to combat Perlesvaus:

> Li vavasors le herbergia molt volentiers, et fist molt bien sa porte fermer et Monsegnor Gavain desarmer. Il l'enora molt la nuit de canqu'il pot, et quant vint l'endemain que Monsegnor Gavains se cuida partir, li vavsor li dist: "Sire, vos ne vos em partiroiz mie issi, car la porte de cest chaste[l] ne fu mes ouverte, grant piece a, fors ier que je la fis ouvrir encontre vos, por ce que vos me soiez garant contre un chevalier qui me velt ocire por ce que li Rois del Chastel Mortel a receté ça dedenz, qui guerooit la Roïne des Puceles; si vos pri que vos m'aidiez a tenser envers le chevalier. (191: 4279-4287)

The combat is avoided through the intervention of a *pucele* who informs Gauvain that he is being manipulated and reveals that the ultimate aim of the *vavasor* is to take the armour and horse of the defeated knight. However, the type of friendship that is invoked through the convention of hospitality cannot be equated with true friendship as it is a ritual based upon return of services rendered.

In the section of Manessier's *Continuation* dealing with the adventures of Gauvain there arises a conflict between the obligation to fulfil a duty and allegiance to the fraternity of the Round Table. The section that concerns Gauvain relies on knowledge of the previous Grail continuations that recount Gauvain's visit to the Grail castle and the knight who was murdered by Keu.[44] Gauvain had failed to keep his promise to a dead knight, what is more, to a knight who was murdered while in his company. In addition, he had neglected to keep the promise he had made to finish the mission on which Silimac had been engaged (to avenge the knight on the bier seen at the Grail Castle). Gauvain is spurred to fulfil his duty concerning Silimac by the arrival of Silimac's sister (the Sore Pucele) who recalls him to his duty. Following her display of grief, Gauvain leaves to finish the mission (wearing Silimac's armour). The Sore Pucele is certain that Keu killed her brother but Gauvain is not convinced:

[44] G. D. West, 'Grail Problems I: Silimac the stranger', *Romance Philology*, 24 (1970-71), 599-611.

> "Douce amie, ce dist Gauvains,
> Onques ne poi estre certains
> Qui icelui fust qui l'ocist;
> Nou sost a dire cil ne cist." (35875-35878)

Gauvain cannot believe in the veracity of the accusation, even though it is levelled at Keu, just as later he cannot believe in the guilt of Dodinel; likewise Meliot cannot believe in the poor performance of Gauvain at the Three Days Tournament, corresponding with the urgings of Cicero that one should always believe the best of a friend (*De Amicitia*, xviii: 65). All knights are potentially united in a *compagnonnage* of caste but the bond is particularly strong between members of the Round Table, united against those who perpetrate anti-social acts that disturb the equilibrium of Arthurian society, either temporarily, when they can be returned to the fraternity following surrender, or permanently, in which case death is the only outcome. Those who are recognised members of this union should share the same ideals, and, by default, should uphold these ideals but Keu, however, frequently falls far short of the perfect example of the fraternity of Arthurian chivalry and becomes, in Manessier, the principal adversary with whom Gauvain contends.

The Sore Pucele demands that Gauvain avenge her brother's death by means of a duel with Keu. Gauvain does not want to kill Keu and he is faced with the problem of reconciling his obligations towards the Sore Pucele, having promised to aid her, and those towards Keu as a fellow knight and member of the Round Table. As imminent defeat faces Keu, Gauvain tells him he will be spared if he agrees to surrender to the damsel. This statement is not entirely true; the Sore Pucele is seeking the death of Keu as justice for the murder of her brother, but Keu refuses to consider surrender (36765-36770). In Manessier's romance, following the surrender of a defeated adversary, it is not the wronged female who dispenses justice to her aggressor but the victorious knight, an aspect that shall be more fully considered in chapter three.[45] Gauvain has already thwarted the desires of the Sore Pucele for vengeance in the episode concerning Margon who, following surrender, is dispatched to Arthur's court to the displeasure of the Sore Pucele. In this situation, however, Keu's refusal to engage in the ritual of surrender

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[45] See Chapter three, pp. 125-147.

should result in Gauvain being compelled to kill him, as Perceval is obliged to kill Partinal, who also refuses to surrender. Happily, the situation is reconciled through the intervention of Arthur, who offers himself and his knights in service in exchange for mercy and the Sore Pucele accepts, directing Gauvain to grant mercy to Keu; in this manner the narrator avoids the problem. A fundamental part of her quest for vengeance appeared to be staining the banner with Keu's blood, which Gauvain has achieved for her.

The duel of Gauvain and Keu provides an example of the clash between the duties of a knight-errant (giving aid to those in need) with his duty to the court and other members of his order. Gauvain fulfils his chivalric duty to serve the needy over his camaraderie, although his reluctance in the affair is evident, shown by his participation in the duel incognito. He is in an awkward position being required to uphold his role as a knight first and foremost, in other words, to fulfil his chivalric obligations to the deceased Silimac and the Sore Pucele. The conflict arises when the extreme requirements of the vengeance of the Sore Pucele are taken into consideration; Gauvain is reluctant, firstly to enter into a combat with Keu, and certainly to kill him. The reluctance to kill a defeated adversary is a trait of Manessier's *Continuation* as a whole, comprising part of the underlying theme of the romance: that of the importance of mercy in such situations, related to the assertion of the hermit of the Chapelle de la Main Noire that mercy is a necessary moral attribute of a Christian knight. There is also a strong similarity between the actions of Perceval in the *Conte du Graal* in the episode of Clamadoz, in which Perceval grants mercy to those he defeats (Clamadoz and his seneschal), dispatching them to Arthur's court, and the mechanism of mercy as it appears in Manessier's *Continuation*.[46]

[46] See Chapter three, pp. 141-147.

Gauvain and Meliot: *Compagnonnage or Amitié?*

The friendship between Meliot and Gauvain persists throughout the *Perlesvaus*, a relationship that is founded in feudal obligation but develops into something more than a bond based upon reciprocal service.

Meliot is a recurring figure throughout the *Perlesvaus*, a secondary character whose function it seems is both passive and active; he functions either as a static figure who initiates narrative action on the part of Gauvain, or he himself is active, usually operating on behalf of Gauvain with one exception, the encounter with Clamadoz.

Meliot first appears in the narrative as a boy riding on a lion at a hermitage. The hermit, who is also Meliot's uncle, informs Gauvain that Meliot "est filz au plus cruel chevalier e au plus felon qui soit" (87: 1581-2) but adds that the boy had disassociated himself from Marin, his father, who through his suspicion of Gauvain, killed his wife, revealing that Meliot "set bien qu'il l'ocist a tort" (87: 1584).

Gauvain is intrigued by the picture of the boy riding the lion and the hermit informs him that only Meliot looks after the lion since all others fear the beast. The hermit adds further that

> "il n'est chose o mont qu'il desire tant a veoir comme Monseigneur Gavain, car il doit estre ses hom après la mort son pere." (87: 1586-88)

Meliot is introduced to Gauvain and the hermit recalls Gauvain to his duty to Meliot, as he was inadvertently responsible for the death of his mother:

> "Sire, fet li hermites, cist doit estre vostre hom; cestui deveriez vos edier e conseillier, car sa mere reçut mort por vos. Cist avra molt grant mestier de vostre aide." (87: 1598-1600)

In a scene that inverts the conventional depiction of the culprit becoming the vassal of the wronged party, Meliot then kneels before Gauvain offering homage that Gauvain accepts with the words

> "Certes, fet Messire Gavains, e vostre amor e vostre homage aim ge molt, e m'aide avroiz vos totes les foiz que vos en avroiz mestier." (87: 1603-4)

Thus the relationship between Meliot and Gauvain is established with Gauvain initially taking a protective role of suzerain towards Meliot, a feudal relationship that persists throughout the romance. Their relationship is founded upon a series of reciprocal actions and it may appear as if Meliot exists purely to rescue Gauvain or be the cause of an episode that requires the help of Gauvain, prompting a new series of adventures.

The first time aid is requested of Gauvain by Meliot is at the hermitage of Joseus. Gauvain is searching for Perlesvaus but first a knight arrives with a message from Meliot:

> "Sire, fet li chevaliers, je ne vos finé de quere grant tens a. Melio de Logres, qui vostre hom est liges, li fiz a la dame qui fu ocise por vos, vos mande que Nabigan de la Roche a ocis Marin son pere, si chalonge la tere qui li est escheüe. Si vos prie que vos le secorez si com li sires doit fere ses hom lige." (208: 4713-4717).

Gauvain is in the midst of his quest to find Perlesvaus although immediately following this Perlesvaus also arrives at the hermitage thus ending Gauvain's quest. The *amitié* of Gauvain and Lancelot, an intellectual extension of the *compagnonnage* between knights of the Round Table, takes precedence over the feudal obligations Gauvain owes Meliot and the rescue of Lancelot from a siege is prioritised. Following the successful rescue of Lancelot, Gauvain returns to Arthur's court and does not manifest any intention of fulfilling the request of Meliot until much later in the romance when Meliot himself directly asks for assistance.

Lancelot encounters Meliot following the Three Days Tournament in which Gauvain, constrained by an earlier oath to comply with the wishes of the first woman who asks this of him, performed badly with the result that his reputation in combat is severely tarnished. Meliot "mout estoit esfreé des noveles de Monseignor Gavain" (297: 7028) and relates the disgrace of Gauvain at the tournament concluding with "je ne puis croire que il soit mauvais" (297: 7035-6), dismayed to believe ill of Gauvain. Lancelot declares his intention to locate Gauvain, and Meliot follows this initiative. Together they search for Gauvain whom they find with Arthur and under attack by seven knights. The

four of them are victorious and Meliot then asks for aid from Gauvain against Nabigan de la Roche in terms that make the feudal nature of the relationship clear:

> "Sire, fet il, je me sui venus a vos plaindre de Nabigan de la Roche, qui me calemge [*sic*] la terre de coi je sui vostre hom, e dit qu'il ne la desrainera envers nului s'envers vos non." (298: 7057-60)

Furthermore, Nabigan has called for Gauvain specifically as the only knight whom he will meet in combat to determine the outcome of this dispute, having witnessed the poor performance of Gauvain in the Three Days Tournament. Gauvain has his tarnished reputation to restore and it is this that results in the downfall of Nabigan. However, Nabigan's death is not to remain unavenged either; later Gauvain and Arthur are besieged in a castle by the brother of Nabigan, Anurez li Bastarz. It is Meliot who comes to the rescue, appearing with his men and enabling Gauvain and Arthur to meet the aggressors on a more even footing. In this manner Meliot repays Gauvain for his aid in defeating Nabigan (and avenging the death of his father) by saving the day and defeating Nabigan's brother. Gauvain is extremely grateful to Meliot and "mercie molt Meliot de Logres de la bonté q'il li a fete, car il lor a garanti les vies" (325: 7792-3). Both engage in an exchange that indicates the shift from a vertical (feudal) relationship to that of a horizontal (chivalric) relationship. Meliot

> proie a Monsaignor Gavain, se il ot dire q'il ait mestier d'aide, q'il viege secorre, autresi com il feroit lui partot; e Missire Gavains li dit que de ce ne li covient il mie faire proiere, car il est un des chevaliers del monde que il doit plus amer desormés. (325: 7795-7799)

The consequences of this episode reach into a series of adventures concerning Lancelot, who, by pulling a cross bow bolt from a wall at Arthur's court, is destined to be the one to undertake the quest to take the shroud of a knight lying in the Chapele Perilleuse in order to cure another knight at the Chastel Perilleus. This knight is Meliot, wounded in battle against Anurez and his men. Lancelot eventually completes his quest, rendered convoluted through the machinations of amorous women, and Meliot is cured. The main narrative drive of this section is Lancelot and his steadfastness in the face of

temptation to be unfaithful to the memory of Guenevere; the wounded knight and ultimate goal of this quest is of passing importance while the inclusion of Meliot must act as a narrative device serving to give to Lancelot's quest justification. The ultimate aim confers "respectability" and purpose to a quest that has been (excepting for the part of Meliot) arranged by a woman and principally serves to demonstrate further the loyalty of Lancelot to his dead lover.

Meliot can be cured only if he receives the sword with which he was wounded and the shroud in which Anurez lies. Lancelot duly completes his quest, obtaining these items from the Chapele Perilleuse and passing the loyalty test at the Chastel aux Gripes, finally arriving at the Chastel Perilleus to effect the cure of Meliot. Lancelot "est molt joiant en son cuer de ce que il voit q'il iert par tens gariz, e ce fust grant domage de sa mort, car il estoit bons chevaliers e sages e loiax" (349: 8481-8483). At the end of this episode, Gauvain, Arthur and now Lancelot, their affection for Meliot principally based upon his activities and the evidence of his prowess, view Meliot as a knight of merit.

The next occasion in which Meliot features in the narrative is as he is introduced by *li contes* at the start of an episode of which he is the central figure. This marks a departure from the usual role taken by Meliot; on previous occasions he functions as either the passive cause of fresh action on the part of a principal knight, usually Gauvain, or he arrives to relieve fellow knights from the threads of one adventure leaving them free to embark upon another (allowing Arthur and Gauvain to return home from the Grail Pilgrimage). This time Meliot is the subject of a new episode although his quest is familiar, the search for Gauvain reputedly held prisoner by knights related to the brothers of the Chastel Enragié in revenge for the victory of Perlesvaus over the castle. The text continues to express the relationship of Meliot and Gauvain in feudal terms:

> Or dit Meliot de Logres q'il n'iert jamés a aise si savra ou Missire Gavains est. Il chevauche parmi une forest, e prie Damledieu q'il li laist par tens oïr noveles de son saignor. (377: 9624-9626)

Meliot encounters a girl guarding the hanging bodies of two knights killed by the Chevalier de la Galie, a knight who persecutes those who believe in the New Law. She has been bidden to guard the dead knights for forty days or the Chevalier de la Galie will lose his castle and take his revenge upon her. Meliot, horrified at this shameful treatment of the bodies of Christians and of the girl, promptly takes down the bodies and buries them causing the girl to request protection from him. Meliot then proceeds with the girl to a hermitage (the hermit having been killed by the Chevalier de la Galie) where a second girl informs him Gauvain is to fight unarmed against a lion the following day. In addition the Lady of the Chastel Enragié, newly converted to the New Law by Perlesvaus, will also be thrown to the lion accompanied by both the girls if she does not abandon her faith. The second girl adds that Meliot must be praised for taking down the bodies of the knights as this will result in the Chevalier de la Galie losing his castle to the Chevalier de la Vermeille Tor. The girl then advises Meliot to leave before the Chevalier de la Galie arrives. But Meliot questions her fear of this knight, "n'est il home autresi com je sui?" (379: 9316) to which she responds that "il est plus fel e plus cruel que vos ne senblez estre" (379: 9317).

The judgement of the second girl on the character of the Chevalier de la Galie is proved to be accurate since he arrives, accompanied by a dwarf, beating the Lady of the Chastel Enragié. Meliot and the Chevalier de la Galie meet in combat and Meliot is the victor, killing both the knight and the dwarf. Now the first aggressor against the New Law has been removed, Meliot can continue his search for Gauvain since there is no longer a requirement to protect the two girls as the immediate danger is nullified.

Gauvain is the prisoner of the Chevalier de la Vermeille Tor, a knight with whom the Chevalier de la Galie had been in league. Meliot locates Gauvain tied unarmed to a stake guarded by only two knights whom Meliot dispatches. Thus, the personal quest of Meliot is achieved, and the rescue of Gauvain is successful. However, the actions of Meliot are seen as a direct consequence of the initial actions of Perlesvaus in the area. The narrator informs us that

> Les noveles estoient venues a la Tor Vermeille que la roïne Jandree estoit levee e batoie, e que li chevaliers venoit qui tant avoit force e poissance en soi que nus ne pooit durer encontre lui, por le Dieu en qui il creoit; e si sorent autresi les noveles que li Chevaliers de la Galie estoit morz e Monsaignor Gavain desliez e li chevalier qui le gardoient ocis. (381: 9379-9384)

The consequences of the separate actions of Perlesvaus and of Meliot become blurred in this section as they both work towards the same aim. Perlesvaus has established the New Law at the Chastel Enragié and surrounding lands, then departed leaving the denizens at the mercy of continued persecution from the likes of the Chevalier de la Galie. Meliot arrives and assumes the role of the defence of the New Law from persecution, removing the perpetrators and maintaining the New Law; evolving from a knight whose role is that of interaction with Gauvain, taking the form of reciprocal action and service to one who actively maintains the New Law. In this episode, Meliot completes the quest he has undertaken, the rescue of Gauvain, and in doing so fulfils a higher purpose in continuing and reinforcing the work of Perlesvaus.

The friendship between Meliot and Gauvain is initiated by a desire for duty[47] and service inspired, on the part of Meliot, by admiration of Gauvain. Gauvain, on the other hand, has an obligation to Meliot as he was held to be responsible for the murder of Meliot's mother. However, the friendship remains an unequal one, with more affection on the side of Meliot who, inspired by admiration of Gauvain, manifests a need to seek him later in the romance (377: 9624-9626), and troubled by the apparent lessening of Gauvain's qualities following the Three Days Tournament, arrives to save the day more frequently than Gauvain. Gauvain, it appears, bases the relationship upon feudal reciprocity, on Meliot's position as his vassal, since the language of their exchanges remains rooted in the feudal concepts of return for services rendered and the "love" of a vassal and his lord, rather than an intellectual consideration of the virtues of Meliot. Moreover when faced with a choice, Gauvain prefers to seek Lancelot rather than fulfil his feudal obligation to aid Meliot. In the case of Meliot and Gauvain, friendship

[47] Aelred acknowledges that duty can inspire friendship ("when through giving and receiving, some men are joined by special affection", *De Spirituali Amicitia*, 3: 2).

originating from duty is beginning to evolve into something more but cannot yet be equated with true friendship, either classical or spiritual, as it is not reciprocated, nor is it an equal friendship.

The moralisation of feudal obligations: reciprocal service and reward, creates solidarity between knights and preserves the fraternity against the potential for disruption, but the privileging of the vertical (feudal) axis over the horizontal (chivalric) axis prevents the relationship between Meliot and Gauvain developing into one of pure friendship, like that between Gauvain, Lancelot, and Perlesvaus.

Manifestations of *Amitié* in the Grail Romances

The friendships outlined above in the *Perlesvaus*, can be seen as typical friendships of the Arthurian world in any given romance which does not have an overlying spiritual motive (as *La Queste*) and are based upon social ideals that promote cohesion among men in order to maintain a stable society. They are predicated upon a system of service between those of the same rank, founded upon a recognition of attributes assumed to be inherent in an individual of that social rank, reflective of the individual's moral worth, summed up in the comment made by Perceval upon the attributes of Dodinel in Manessier's *Continuation*:

> Voirement est preuz et loiaux
> Et molt a de bontez an lui. (38594-5)

Likewise Lancelot is aware of the virtues of Meliot calling him *bons, sages, loiaux*, (349: 8483).

Perfect friendship, according to Aelred arises from reason and affection inspired by the virtue perceived in another (*De Spirituali Amicitia*, 3: 3). Virtue itself is the sum of desirable traits and these, necessarily, will fluctuate. While Galaad will embody qualities that render him the highest ideal in *La Queste*, an ideal to which all other knights aspire,

these qualities are not uniform across the whole genre of romance; virtue and desirability are particular to an individual text. There are, however, attributes that are common and requisite, those which make up the conception of *cortoisie*, those positive qualities that must be possessed by the hero(es), that constitute the behaviour necessary to the effective functioning of individuals within chivalric society and its success at large. Manifesting the traits perceived by society to be of value establishes the worth of an individual within that society:

> In essence the medieval ethos derived through Cicero and other authorities, from the classical (mostly Stoic) system of the cardinal virtues of prudence, fortitude, justice, and temperance as reinterpreted by the Christian fathers. This civic ethos would later be extended from the formation of the curial courtier to that of the knight. In the process, in both courtly and chivalric ethics, prudence was commonly defined as knowing what is fitting and acting accordingly; temperance as moderation from excess and pride; fortitude as valor and bravery; and justice as service to the weak and needy, especially if they were victims of injustice. Prudence came to include cunning in courtliness while fortitude became daring adventurousness in chivalry as a means to prove one's worth.[48]

In romance texts the most significant attribute a knight can demonstrate in order to prove worth is prowess, a value that constitutes success either in tournaments or in the Forest, where adventures serve a social purpose. Acclaim is increased by such ritual behaviour, as demonstrated by Perceval in Manessier's *Continuation* through the dispatch of prisoners to Arthur's court, serving to report the success of Perceval while he is separated from court. The ritual of mercy can benefit only those who uphold it: not only does a knight remain free from sin but also in utilising the defeated party as an instrument of communication, acclaim and social recognition, or worth, is increased.

Knights should embody values that are seen to be inherent in the concept of knighthood, such as the understanding of ritual and courtly behaviour and martial success (prowess); the knight who embodies all the established positive characteristics of society can be said to possess virtue and this will qualify him to form a true friendship. Donald Earl defined Roman virtue as consisting of "the winning of personal pre-eminence and

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[48] Aldo Scaglione, *Knights at Court: courtliness, chivalry, & courtesy from Ottonian Germany to the Italian Renaissance* (Berkeley; Oxford: University of California Press, 1991), p. 55.

glory by the commission of greater deeds in the service of the Roman state."[49] Thus, desirable qualities in *De Amicitia* that render an individual worthy of true friendship are not quite the same as those values attributed to a virtuous knight. However, as both are products of patriarchal society there will be certain similarities, while the concept of perfect friendship will remain the same.

Cicero and Aelred enumerate the virtues necessary for friendship to become *amicitia vera*. In romance, the virtues requisite for perfect friendship have developed to include those traits necessary to produce a perfect knight: arms, action, appearance, correct behaviour (dependent upon the mores of the text); the ideal attributes necessary for friendship become physical values rather than the intellectual virtues of classical and spiritual *amicitia*; the knight who possesses such virtues is exalted (by the narrator). Honour and physical achievement, perceived as characteristic of a virtuous man, are fundamental to the creation and maintenance of friendship: these virtues are masculine and friendship is confined to the realm of the masculine. Honour is derived (in Grail romance) from physical acts of prowess that also have some function (service to society) and conform to the requirements of the Church concerning violence and sin. The individual who undertakes this path is acclaimed the best in society, deemed worthy by God (in the Didot-*Perceval*) to achieve the Grail Quest/prize. Sherry B. Ortner and Harriet Whitehead, in the introduction to *Sexual Meanings: the cultural construction of gender and sexuality*, suggest "the structures of greatest import for the cultural construction of gender in any given society are the structures of prestige".[50] Defining prestige as social honour and value,[51] Ortner and Whitehead also state that

> prestige systems are always supported by, indeed they appear to be direct expressions of, definite beliefs and symbolic associations that make sensible and compelling the ordering of human relations into patterns of deference and condescension, respect and disregard, and...command and obedience.[52]

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[49] Donald Earl, *The Moral and Political Tradition of Rome* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1967), p. 21.
[50] Sherry B. Ortner and Harriet Whitehead, *Sexual Meanings: the cultural construction of gender and sexuality* (New York: University of Cambridge Press, 1981), introduction, pp. 1-27, (p. 12).
[51] Ortner & Whitehead, *Sexual Meanings*, p. 13.
[52] Ortner & Whitehead, *Sexual Meanings*, p. 14.

Within Grail romance lie ideologies that compete and coexist: religious directives sit side by side with a more secular set of cultural values that facilitate the mechanisms of society. Both secular and religious ideologies are legitimising ideologies that attribute merit to all behaviour that facilitates the organisation of society. Such ideologies find their expression in the values manifested by primary knights; values that cause other knights to wish to emulate the desired knight, leading to an honour/shame mechanism. The honour/shame system aims to motivate individuals to positive achievement in service of society by raising the spectre of failure, a system that motivates Perceval and the other knights in their constant striving for the greatest achievement, the acclaim and recognition of their prowess. The system does not always work, as we see with the Biau Mauvais in Manessier, who initially fails to respond to the demands of such a system.

Although the Biau Mauvais' appearance is strange, it is clear he is a knight and therefore a potential friend, being of that class which possesses the inherent qualities and capacity for an ideal friendship. Perceval is motivated by a desire to correct the Biau Mauvais, while there is nothing to indicate, at first, any desire on the part of the Biau Mauvais to be the companion of Perceval. It is not until the combat scene that the two knights enter into a relationship that manifests the traits of *compagnonnage* as they rescue the two *puceles* and arrive at the castle where Perceval recovers from his wounding by a poisoned arrow (39672-39969). A bond can exist between the two knights only when the Biau Mauvais has undergone his metamorphosis from coward to worthy knight, entering into a combat (albeit reluctantly at first) whereby together the two knights strive against a common enemy; the Biau Mauvais now manifesting the correct attributes as Perceval declares:

> "Car biaus, saiges et hardiz iestes,
> Et chevaliers pruz et honestes." (41279-80)

The difference of the Biau Mauvais is eradicated while the enumeration by Perceval of the attributes of the Biau Mauvais, once he is transformed into the Biau Hardi, are in fact an enumeration of the attributes of Perceval himself. In Manessier's romance the ideal model is consistently reinforced through the repetition of such values: Sagremor and

Perceval are identical in action, undertaking similar adventures. However, while Sagremor is said to be sorrowful at separation from Perceval, it is not indicated that Perceval experiences any similar emotion:

> Molt fu dolanz et d'ire plains
> De Perceval qu'il ot perdu. (34086-7)

Proximity to the Grail Knight is a key issue and the Biau Mauvais manifests the customary desire for contact with the hero, expressing regret at the parting from Perceval:

> Molt fu destroiz et angoisseus
> Et corrociez li Beau Hardi
> Quant ceste parole entendi,
> Quar tant amoit sa compaignie
> Que nus hons ne vos porroit mie
> Dire le corroz qu'il en a. (41296-41301)

Likewise, the locating of Perceval also elicits an emotional response. Sagremor reveals:

> "Molt an ai a mon cuer grant joie;
> Car tant por voir vos desirroie
> A veoir, je et tuit li autre," (33261-33263)

The desire for association with the hero is fundamental, enabling a new narrative direction, in that it inspires other knights to leave court and actively quest for the hero. However, affection is generally one sided: the emotions of Perceval concerning his separation from Sagremor are not recorded; similarly, although Perceval acknowledges the new found status of the Biau Mauvais as an ideal knight, unlike the latter, we are given no insight into Perceval's thoughts regarding the parting of these two knights. Equally, in the case of Meliot and Gauvain in the *Perlesvaus*, Meliot manifests a constant desire to seek Gauvain, who has no such desire to seek the company of Meliot. The attractiveness of the Grail Knight as a friend merely reinforces his status as the ideal knight, one in whom virtues are so evident that those around him cannot fail to respond.

Gauvain consistently manifests a desire for association with the hero but unlike the relationship of Perceval and the Biau Mauvais, Gauvain approaches Perlesvaus on an equal and reciprocal level, echoing the concept of Cicero regarding the great advantages of friendship and its ennobling effect on those who are attracted to an individual on account of his perceived perfection (*De Amicitia*, ix: 32).

Manifestations of *Amitié*: Lancelot and Galehaut

Friendship is inspired by the perception of worth and virtue in another that in romance takes the form of admiration of physical prowess of another and the ensuing success or acclaim of the admired individual within society. One of the great romance friendships that is founded upon this ideal is the friendship of Lancelot and Galehaut in the Prose-*Lancelot*.

The friendship originates from the admiration of Galehaut for the prowess of Lancelot in the battles between Galehaut and Arthur. Galehaut is initially a substantial threat to the security of the Arthurian realm, advancing upon Arthur's kingdom with the express purpose of seizing it by force but he is distracted from his original intentions by his interest in Lancelot. Hyatte observes that "Galehaut's friendly attitudes and actions invite a comparison with Cicero's *Laelius* and its Greek sources. Galehaut's benevolence, beneficence, disinterestedness, sacrifices, and affection for Lancelot are extreme and therefore they transgress the ethical limits of the classical code of *amicitia*".[53] Hyatte then describes the characteristics of male friendship of the Ciceronian-Aristotelian tradition as it appears in courtly romance as being mutual admiration, confidence, and affection and assesses how far the friendship of Lancelot and Galehaut can be said to be one of classical *amicitia*. While Galehaut's initial inspiration for friendship is based upon the requisite ideals of *amicitia*: *caritas* and mutual admiration, the reaction of Galehaut to Lancelot's worth and his subsequent symptoms and actions under the guise of *amitié* are

[53] Reginald Hyatte, 'Recoding Ideal Male Friendship as Fine Amor in the Prose-*Lancelot*', *Neophilogus*, 75 (1991), 505-518, (pp. 506-7).

symptomatic of *fin'amor*. The inception and development of *amitié* has strong resonances with the mechanism of *fin'amor* in which, again, the predominant factor is the ennobling force of desire; the object possessing all those attributes that are desirable and, through the state of love or friendship, the subject comes to manifest those positive attributes displayed by the object.[54] Jacques Roubaud observed that the author of the Prose-*Lancelot* follows the classic stages of love development in Galehaut's love for Lancelot and the "amour des héros"[55] is inspired by the demonstrations of the prowess of Lancelot and his reputation.

In addition, male friendship in this case causes isolation from the chivalric world and the true pursuit of a knight in maintaining standing and esteem. A knight cannot be worthy and therefore virtuous without the acknowledgement of his achievements by the world at large; the drive to seek acclaim constantly for actions also has the added social benefit of removing undesirable elements from society, maintaining social justice and equilibrium. The desire of Galehaut to keep Lancelot in Sorelois, like those fairy *amies* who manufacture environments by means of separating their *amis* from the chivalric world, isolates Lancelot from court and prevents him from fulfilling his true role. Isolation is doubly negative, firstly, for Lancelot himself, as his lack of action will lead to a loss of standing and secondly, for society itself, as it loses the knight who is its principal defender.

The Lancelot-Galehaut relationship is essentially that of classical *amicitia* in a text that has as its focus the love between Lancelot and Guenevere. This engenders a recoding of male friendship as *fin'amor*;[56] the friendship sharing the same rules as *fin'amor*, such as the requirement to avoid giving offence to the *amant* equates to the friend not doing or saying anything that might upset the other friend (*De Amicitia*, 27: 103), the same characteristics (love sickness, sleepless nights, grief at separation, and the willingness of Galehaut to suffer shame and to abase himself before Lancelot is

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[54] Peter Dronke: *Medieval Latin and the Rise of the European Love Lyric*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), I, pp. 4-5 in which he expands upon Bédier's concept of "le culte d'un objet excellent."
[55] Roubaud, *La Fleur inverse: essai sur l'art formel des troubadours* (Paris: Ramsay, 1986), p. 85.
[56] Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship,* p. 90.

antithetical to *amicitia* but representative of *fin'amor*), and the same consequences: the self-destruction of Galehaut resulting from his obsessive love for Lancelot and the self-destruction of the lovers in the *Mort Artu*. Hyatte concludes that "even though Galehaut's and Lancelot's *amistié/amor* is mutual, the two reciprocate in degrees and manners that conform to the unequal roles of the refined male-female lovers in romance".[57] Galehaut is actively seeking to please and to elicit a response from Lancelot who remains emotionally distant, and ultimately, the *amitié* of Lancelot and Galehaut loses to the *fin'amor* of Lancelot and Guenevere.

In the Prose-*Lancelot*, where male friendship is prioritised over societal duty and even heterosexual love, it is undesirable, ultimately negative, and self-destructive for both knights concerned.

Manifestations of *Amitié*: Perlesvaus, Lancelot, and Gauvain

There is a certain similarity between the motivation and inspiration of the friendship of Lancelot and Galehaut and that of the leading knights in the *Perlesvaus*: Lancelot, Gauvain, and Perlesvaus.

In the *Perlesvaus*, the virtues of the hero are clearly defined at the outset of the romance: only one knight is destined as the Grail Knight and accepted as such by other knights in the romance; all Arthurian knights defer to Perlesvaus, and willingly accept him as the superior knight. As Lancelot is the object of the desire of Galehaut, so the company of Perlesvaus is desired by the knights of Arthur's household. There is some correspondence of the desire for proximity to the hero with the definition given by Aelred in which love is an affection of the rational soul that strives after an object to possess it (*De Spirituali Amicitia*, 1: 19). The love of Galehaut for Lancelot is motivated by the virtues of Lancelot which is legitimate enough, although the excesses to which this love

[57] Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*, p. 109.

takes Galehaut are wholly undesirable. It is the extent to which love is developed and the loss of reason that ensues through excessive desire (also a common feature of *fin'amor*) that can be problematic, but *amitié* in the *Perlesvaus* remains within the limits of measured ideal friendship.

As Arthur dispatches his knights on the quest to locate Perlesvaus, Gauvain declares that he has "grant desirer de voer le" (186-187: 4167-8), while Lancelot adds "Et je, fet Lanceloz, ne le vi onques si volentiers conme je feroie ore" (187: 4168-9). Perlesvaus has a great attraction for these knights, his appellation "Li Buens Chevaliers" warrants their desire to be his companion.[58] Both Gauvain and Lancelot are aware of the qualities of Perlesvaus, consequently they seek his companionship in accord with Aelred's definition of the manifestation of spiritual friendship:

> ...he, whom reason urges should be loved because of the excellence of his virtue, steals into the soul of another by the mildness of his character and the charm of a praiseworthy life. (*De Spirituali Amicitia*, 3: 3)

The notion is also fundamental to the concept of ideal friendship in Cicero, that friends are sought because of their virtue, and that this virtue is reciprocal. Cicero describes ideal friendship as finding a person

> ...with whom we have an affinity in character and personality, and a similar feeling of love arises, because we seem to see in him as it were a gleam of virtue and good character. For excellence of character excites affection more than anything else, and attracts others to love its possessor. (*De Amicitia*, viii: 27-28)

The virtue of Perlesvaus is established beyond doubt at the beginning of the romance and the inclinations of Gauvain and Lancelot, their desire to accompany the Grail Knight, are principally founded upon his renowned virtue and ensuing achievements. However, the friendship is not one-sided: Perlesvaus expresses a desire to

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[58] Keith Busby, "'Uns Buens Chevaliers" ou "Li Buens Chevaliers"? Perlesvaus et Gauvain dans le "Perlesvaus,"' pp. 29-42.

accompany both Lancelot and Gauvain, once their chivalric qualifications (virtue) are established.

Gauvain encounters Perlesvaus three times and neither knight is aware of the other's identity. No combat arises on the first two occasions and Perlesvaus is not interested in revealing his identity to Gauvain (193: 4343-4345), paying him no more attention than he would any ordinary knight he meets in the Forest. The third encounter occurs at the Tornoi de la Vermelle Lande where Gauvain matches Perlesvaus in prowess, while Perlesvaus is acclaimed the winner of the tournament by default: he arrived there before Gauvain and fought for longer. However, while Gauvain (incognito) had held no interest for Perlesvaus before, his performance against the Grail Knight served to arouse Perlesvaus' attention. A knight arrives at Joseus' hermitage where Gauvain is staying following the tournament, and relates that he has encountered the knight in white who won the tournament and who is "molt dolanz qu'il ne s'estoit acointez de lui por la bone chevalerie qu'il i esprova" (207: 4701-2).

Perlesvaus later arrives at the hermitage himself and is overjoyed to meet Gauvain (208:4734-5) although he is unaware that it was Gauvain who matched him in the tournament. He asks for news of his opponent saying "...par .i. couvent c'onques .ii. ruistes chevaliers n'acointé conme celui et Lancelot" (209: 4739-4740). Perlesvaus has already met Lancelot in combat and is well aware of his worth and ability to match him. Gauvain then reveals his part in the tournament to the joy of Perlesvaus. Perlesvaus is elated to meet Gauvain, firstly because of his reputation, rendering him attractive as a knight; like Meliot and the Coart Chevalier, Perlesvaus recognises Gauvain's worth; secondly, because his performance in the tournament had so impressed Perlesvaus. While unaware of Gauvain's identity, Perlesvaus had shown no interest in making his acquaintance as evidenced in the aborted combat between the two outside the castle of a treacherous *vavasor* (191: 4298-193: 4347) in which Gauvain ascertains that Perlesvaus is not interested in a combat unless it is forced upon him and then points out that it is "vilain" of Perlesvaus not to ask his name as he takes his leave, to which Perlesvaus replies:

> "Bel sire, je vos pri que vos ne me demandez mon non jusc'a icele eure que je vos demanderai le vostre." (193: 4344-4345)

Unlike classical *amicitia*, romance friendship is founded not upon a consideration of the intellectual qualities that may render an individual attractive but upon the witnessing of the physical manifestation of virtue (or the report of one who has witnessed the success of an individual). Honour derived from physical achievements is integral to true friendship: honour is the "veritable currency of chivalric life"[59] being the expression of the "supreme temporal ideals of a society and their embodiment in the ideal type of men".[60] It is the evidence of the prowess of Gauvain, reinforced by his chivalric reputation that renders him attractive to Perlesvaus; the reunion of Perlesvaus and Gauvain at the hermitage exposes the mutual celebration of the other's virtues that founds their friendship, a friendship based upon the recognition and physical proof of worth in another.

Perlesvaus and Gauvain then embark on a quest to rescue Lancelot from robbers in the forest despite the fact that both knights at this point have other obligations to fulfil. Perlesvaus has been informed by Gauvain of the troubles facing Perlesvaus' mother and Gauvain has learnt of the request for his aid from Meliot, appealing to Gauvain as his liege lord. The rescue of Lancelot, however, is seen as a priority, demonstrating the principle of *amitié* above other duties. As soon as Perlesvaus has learnt of the potential peril facing Lancelot he says

> "...je ne partiré de ceste forest si savrai noveles de lui, se Misire Gavains le velt graer." (211: 4793-4794)

To which Gauvain replies

> ...qu'il ne li faut autre chose puis que il l'a trové, car il ne porroit estre a ese jusc'a icele eure que il seüst noveles de Lancelot qu'il en est en grant doutance puis qu'il [a] enemis en la forest. (211: 4795-4797)

[59] Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Society*, p. 129.
[60] *Honour and Shame: the values of Mediterranean society*, ed. by John George Peristiany (London: Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1965), introduction, pp. 9-18, (p. 10).

Perlesvaus, Gauvain, and Lancelot share a bond which unites them in a manner that is different to simple *compagnonnage*. They desire the company of each other and will give their friendship priority over other exigencies. It is one matter for Gauvain to consider rescuing Lancelot a more worthy cause than aiding another knight, Meliot, and delay fulfilling his duty as suzerain, but another matter altogether for Perlesvaus to prioritise the rescue of Lancelot over the defence of his mother The decision of Perlesvaus to rescue Lancelot rather than immediately fulfil his obligations to his family reveals that in the *Perlesvaus*, the claims of chivalric *amitié* outweigh both feudal and familial obligations, a situation that is rendered more complex in *La Queste* and Manessier's *Continuation*. In the latter romances, Bors is called upon to uphold chivalric duty to defend and protect the helpless non-combatant, a duty which conflicts with the equally valid chivalric requirement to aid a fellow knight. In this case precedence is given to the defence of the weak over familial duty. The rescue of Lancelot in the *Perlesvaus* illustrates the extent of the *amitié* between the three knights; the choice of whom to aid is a conventional situation useful to test knights in order to establish exactly where their priorities lie (or where their priorities should lie). In the Bors episodes of *La Queste* and Manessier, he deliberates and appeals to God to help him reach the correct decision when faced with this dilemma while it is significant that the priorities of Perlesvaus are first and foremost, the rescue of a friend. There is no indication of any condemnation of the choice made by Perlesvaus, it is viewed as the correct response in this instance; the rescue of Lancelot being a natural priority here. The choice made by Gauvain indicates the higher and more worthy place held by Lancelot in the male value system with *amitié* taking precedence over feudal duty while the decision of Perlesvaus to prioritise his *amitié* for Lancelot demonstrates a reversal of the traditional role of knights.

Perlesvaus and Lancelot first meet in the Forest, where Perlesvaus engages Lancelot in combat without issuing a challenge or justification. As in the later combat with Gauvain, Perlesvaus is impressed with the performance of Lancelot (and *vice versa*). During the combat Perlesvaus experiences "grant ire en son cuer de ce qu'il n'a le chevalier abatu" (140: 2974-2975). And it may be assumed from the impression that Perlesvaus forms of Lancelot following their joust in the forest, where Perlesvaus

expresses irritation that he cannot defeat Lancelot quickly enough, that he has some admiration for Lancelot serving as an inspiration for the relationship between the two knights. Lancelot, however, is more seriously wounded than Perlesvaus and recuperates at the hermitage for longer. While nothing is indicated by the narrator about the nature of the relationship of Lancelot and Perlesvaus at the time, beyond their kinship, in the episode of the combat between Clamadoz and Meliot, as Perlesvaus takes his leave of the Roïne des Tentes, who beseeches him to remain with her, he reveals that he has made a promise to return to the hermitage to see Lancelot:

> "J'oi en couvent Lancelot que je revenroie a lui au plus tost que je porroie, et l'en ne doit mie mentir a si bon chevalier." (158: 3415-3417)

The promise may come as some surprise as it has not been mentioned before, but the declaration of Perlesvaus regarding the fidelity a knight owes to another knight once a promise is made is significant. The fidelity is not established through notions of reciprocal service, nor through feudal obligations, it is an abstract loyalty between two knights who are equals. Perlesvaus does return to the hermitage only to find that Lancelot has gone and is "molt dolenz" when he realises he has missed Lancelot but also "molt joios" that Lancelot has recovered (158: 3427-3428). The promise is still in effect when Perlesvaus encounters Gauvain at the hermitage and they both decide to find Lancelot before fulfilling their obligations to others.

While the friendship between Lancelot and Perlesvaus is established early on in the romance, Gauvain is keen to form a bond with Perlesvaus himself and his disappointment at his near encounters with Perlesvaus recur frequently. He is envious that Lancelot has spent time with Perlesvaus at the hermitage saying "je vouldroie qu'il m'eüst navré sanz afoler par issi que je poïsse estre aveques lui autretant conme vos i fustes" (186: 4153-4155).

Finally, the three knights depart from Arthur's court together to combat the Chevalier au Dragon Ardent. Perlesvaus, by winning the Tornoi de la Vermelle Lande, has won the right to avenge the death of the knight on the litter, who, it turns out, is his

cousin, killed by the Chevalier au Dragon Ardent, assimilating the adventure to the motif of family vengeance. Perlesvaus is therefore the only knight qualified to undertake it.[61] He leaves court with Lancelot and Gauvain and "a molt chiere leur conpeignie" (247: 5705). Once they approach the Chastel de Grant Defois, the *pucele* who has also accompanied the three knights warns Gauvain and Lancelot to draw back while Perlesvaus can go forward, explaining that only the knight who is to conquer the Chevalier au Dragon Ardent, the Cercle d'Or, the Grail Castle and the "fause loi du chastel" (248: 5734) can approach the castle. Perlesvaus can pass into the castle only if he "fetes contenance tele com buens chevaliers doit fere" (248: 5730-5731). The news of the separation of the three knights is not received well by Perlesvaus:

> Perlesvaus est molt dolanz de ce q'il ot dire la damoisele, que Messire Gavains et Lanceloz ne passeront mie avec lui, et si sont li meilleur chevalier du monde. Il prent congié a ex molt dolenz, et il se departent molt a enviz. Mes il li prient molt docement, se Damedex le lest eschaper vif de la o il va, que il se mete encore en aucun tans en liu et en ese o il le puissent veoir sanz desconnoistre. (248: 5735-5740)

Perlesvaus later expresses to the Roi Hermite his sadness at the separation forced upon the trio by destiny ("j'amase mout lor compaignie" 260: 6045).

These passages clearly illustrate the reciprocal and equal nature of the friendship between Perlesvaus, Lancelot, and Gauvain, rendering their relationship a higher form of friendship than any other friendship in the *Perlesvaus* or Manessier's *Continuation*. Unlike the *amitié* of Lancelot and Galehaut in the Prose-*Lancelot*, the prioritising of intellectual male friendship over social duty and obligations is not treated as negative, securing an important place in the narrative itself. Although *amitié* may temporarily interfere with chivalric obligations, these duties are ultimately fulfilled. The friendship of Gauvain, Lancelot, and Perlesvaus corresponds to the definition given by Aelred of

[61] Albeit by default, as I mentioned on p. 89: Gauvain matched the achievement of Perlesvaus in the tournament although Perlesvaus was granted the overall winner, having arrived at the tournament before Gauvain and fought for longer. This is a further example of the repeated motif of Gauvain undertaking and partially succeeding in the same adventures as Perlesvaus but denied true success through predestination and his lack of correct lineage.

spiritual friendship in that their friendship is "cemented by similarity of life, morals and pursuits among the just" (*De Spirituali Amicitia*, 1: 38).

The analysis of friendship, developed from the Ciceronian and Aelredian ideals of perfect, or true, friendship, which is adapted to form chivalric friendship (embodied in the relationship of Lancelot and Galehaut in the Prose-*Lancelot*, and also, Lancelot, Gauvain, and Perlesvaus), is founded upon a perception or evaluation of, and response to, virtues in another that render the individual attractive, and, as such, necessitates a consideration of the concept of objects of desire. There has been much work done on this subject particularly in relation to *fin'amor*, where it is accepted that the highly regarded lady is a silent object of desire, a situation also applicable to *amitié*, and a male object of desire. The similarities, already demonstrated by Reginald Hyatte and Jacques Roubaud in the examination of the friendship of Lancelot and Galehaut, between *amitié*, with its dependence upon a worthy object as the starting point of friendship and the ennobling force that desire of this object brings, and *fin'amor* cannot be ignored. Like *fin'amor*, *amitié* is the admiration of and attraction to a desirable object with the ultimate aim of becoming like that object, in other words, of possessing the qualities that the object is seen to possess. But it is essential that the desiring subject must first possess positive qualities before being able to embark upon this relationship. Unlike *fin'amor*, *amitié* is founded upon a reciprocal relationship but even then there is the inherent notion that there is some inequality (to start with at least) between subject and object (*De Amicitia*, ix: 32).

René Girard developed a theory of desire, termed mimetic desire, and observes that in the mechanism of desire there is not only a subject and an object but a third presence that Girard denotes as the rival[62] that can equally be termed the model. The subject desires the object because the rival desires it, but the rival himself only desires the object because his rival (or model) desires it, and so on. Girard further delineates two types of triangular desire: external mediation, in which the model/mediator is the

[62] René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. by Patrick Gregory (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1977), p. 146.

inspiration for desire but is not present; and internal mediation in which the model/mediator again inspires desire but is also a threat, a rival to the end goal.[63] In Grail romances in which it is the masculine prestige system that drives knights, the desired object is status and acclaim; consequently all knights are rivals in their desire to win the highest approbation, imitating each other in unending mimesis. Perceval features as the ideal figure through his virtues and unfaltering aim to complete his quest, in addition to the honour he already possesses before he embarks upon his quest; a figure that inspires imitation in other knights. As Girard says: " The impulse toward the object is ultimately an impulse toward the mediator".[64] The object, in this case, is the acclaim and virtue posessed by the model/mediator - Perceval - who thus becomes an object of desire himself, in the quest of other knights to achieve his status. One means by which this may be achieved is through friendship, particularly *amitié*, an ennobling mechanism by which the inferior partner comes to manifest the same virtuous traits as the one who inspired the friendship.

In the *Perlesvaus*, the rivalry between knights for the ultimate goal is diminished as Perlesvaus is already designated as the one who will succeed. Perlesvaus, as ideal figure thus becomes desired object (of Lancelot and Gauvain in particular), the goal being proximity and companionship, an element that is noticeable by its absence in the Didot-*Perceval* wherein all the knights are rivals on the quest for the Grail, although the momentum of rivalry does not hold the other knights to their course as it does Perceval himself. They give up and pass the time in tournaments, a public sphere designed to reaffirm prowess and honour diminished by lack of success and lack of tenacity on the Grail Quest. Only Perceval, by dint of fidelity to the vow sworn at the opening of the text, succeeds.

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[63] René Girard, *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel*, trans. by Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1965), p. 10.
[64] Girard, *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel*, p. 10.

Manifestations of *Amitié*: Arthur and Gauvain

The relationship of Arthur and Gauvain in the *Perlesvaus* is founded upon more than merely familial bonds or the bonds of duty between feudal lord and vassal. Arthur, with Gauvain and Lancelot, leaves court to journey to the Grail Castle, and in the course of this journey, Arthur, incognito, abandons his role as static king and takes on a new role, that of a questing knight. With Gauvain, he participates in the Three Days Tournament in which his friendship with Gauvain is tested. Both Arthur and Gauvain are fighting incognito at the behest of the two maidens of the tent, except that on the second day, at the bidding of the older maiden, Gauvain wears his own arms and behaves in a cowardly fashion. Gauvain complies with her request in order to fulfil a promise given earlier in the course of his quest for the sword of John the Baptist. He shames himself in the tournament, refusing to fight and riding to Arthur for protection. Arthur is also ashamed of Gauvain's behaviour:

> Li rois an a grant vergoigne de ce qu'il li voit faire. (292: 6899)

Moreover, he is himself unable to perform as well as he should that day since he spent his energies in protecting Gauvain (292: 6899-6900).

Gauvain's reputation is seriously damaged by his performance on the second day of the tournament:

> En itel vergoigne fu Misire Gavains tant com l'asemblee dura, e disoient li chevalier que il avoit asez graignor pris que il ne deservist, car onques mais ne virent si coart chevalier a asemblee com il estoit, ne jamais tant ne le doteront com il ont fait dusques a ore; desormais se porront bien li plusor vengier de lor parens e de lor amis que il a ocis a l'av(r)esprer." (292-293: 6902-6907)

From being perceived as a worthy, just knight and honourable companion, Gauvain is now seen as a liability, tainting his companion with his shame. As the dwarf says to Arthur:

> "Il n'afiert mie a bon chevalier qu'il tiegne compaignie de coart." (293: 6919-6920)

Arthur himself rebukes Gauvain:

> "Gavains, fait li rois, mout avez hui eü de blasme, e je meïsme ai esté toz vergoigniez, e je ne cuidoie que si bon chevalier com vos estes seüst contrefaire si le mauvais." (293: 6926-6928)

In addition, Gauvain's behaviour has detrimentally affected his companion's performance. It is fundamentally important that knights perform to their best abilities during tournaments, occasions where they principally win renown and demonstrate their prowess (virtue) to the world at large. However, Arthur remains incognito throughout the episode[65] preserving his own honour, corresponding someway towards the Ciceronian concept that one must not ask a friend to risk his honour and reputation (*De Amicitia*, xiii: 44; xxii: 82). Cicero asserts that in friendship "neither ask dishonourable things, nor do them if asked" (*De Amicitia*, xii: 40) but he accepts that during the friendship "if by some chance the wishes of a friend are not altogether honourable and require to be forwarded in matters which involve his life or reputation, we should turn aside from the straight path, provided, however, utter disgrace does not follow, for there are limits to the indulgence which can be allowed to friendship" (*De Amicitia*, xvii: 61). Certain transgressions can be accommodated in friendship although not when these lead to disgrace. If disgrace is involved in friendship that is confirmation that virtue did not exist; the friendship is not true friendship since in order to have become friends in the first place, the integrity and virtue of each friend is guaranteed; therefore, the occasion in which honour may be lost should not arise. Gauvain, in the tournament, fakes his

[65] There is a certain parallel between this tournament and the tournament of Noauz in the *Charrette*, in which Lancelot, abiding by a request from Guenevere, also performs his worst. However, the fundamental difference between the two tournaments is that in the *Perlesvaus*, Gauvain has to perform his worst as himself, whereas, in the *Charrette*, Lancelot is incognito and suffers no damage to his reputation as a result of the tournament. The damage to the reputation of Lancelot occurs from riding in the cart and results in the cool reception he receives from Guenevere (at first). In the *Perlesvaus*, the damage done to the reputation of Gauvain results in Nabigan requesting specifically that he fight against Gauvain as he mistakenly believes he will secure an easy victory.

cowardice; his disgrace is a sham, while the virtue that underlies the friendship with Arthur is real.

Aelred modifies Cicero's view that a friend should be willing to put his reputation at risk (although not risk of disgrace) for the sake of his friend, substituting sin for disgrace, declaring nothing should be denied to a friend except to place one's soul at risk (*De Spirituali Amicitia*, 2: 69):

> ...one ought to detest the opinion of those who think that one should act in behalf of a friend in a way detrimental to faith and uprightness. For it is not an excuse for sin, that you sin for the sake of a friend. (*De Spirituali Amicitia*, 2: 39-40)

Gauvain's failure on the second day has serious implications for his reputation, as knights lose all respect for him. In the later episode where Gauvain encounters Nabigan de la Roche, his adversary swiftly agrees to a single combat to decide the issue as he believes he will quickly dispatch Gauvain.

"Il proisa mout petit Monseignor Gavain por la coardise qu'il li vit faire." (299: 7068-7069)

On the third day of the tournament, Gauvain wears the gold arms worn by Arthur on the first day while Arthur wears the red arms previously worn by Gauvain. Gauvain is able to perform to his best abilities and both knights acquit themselves well, although Arthur holds himself back for he wants Gauvain to make up for the previous day and win the tournament (294-295: 6954-6957), placing the reputation and success of Gauvain before his own. Arthur's strategy succeeds for the other knights grant Gauvain the victory even though it was apparent that the Red Knight had deliberately held himself back (295: 6966).

The altruism of Arthur and Gauvain is demonstrated by the fact that both wish that the other be granted the prize (294-295: 6954-6957; 6969). In this way, their

friendship corresponds to a type of ideal friendship, rather than to the feudal bond formed by reciprocal obligations and service. As Cicero points out, goodwill towards each other is a fundamental component of friendship (*De Amicitia*, v: 19) demonstrated in Arthur's actions towards Gauvain. Although he reproaches Gauvain for his conduct on the second day of the tournament, he deliberately places the interests of Gauvain before his own. In this case feudal, family, and chivalric duties reinforce the bond of *amitié* between Arthur and Gauvain.

In the *Perlesvaus* and Manessier's *Continuation* are manifested forms of friendship that range from those bonds founded upon reciprocal services to *compagnonnage*, an "inferior" form of friendship based on the shared ideals of a particular class, to intellectual friendship, a reciprocal friendship between equals. In the Didot-*Perceval*, however, there appear no significant relationships between knights. Perceval travels alone; the other leading Arthurian knights are mentioned in passing and receive no great attention from the poet. The basic *compagnonnage* of the Arthurian knights is established at the opening scene at Arthur's court, and it is inherent in the text as all the knights depart upon the Grail Quest as companions in arms (but soon separate).

Conclusion

Friendship between knights in the Grail romances takes varying forms, corresponding, to a certain extent, to the notions of friendship described by Cicero and by Aelred. At the heart of the Ciceronian theory of true friendship is the fundamental concept that "friendship is nothing other than unanimity (*consensio*), joined with benevolence and love (*caritas*), on all divine and human matters" (*De Amicitia*, vi: 20). The foundation of true friendship in these romances remains, as in the philosophical treatises, the part played by reason.

Although friendship does not function to further the Grail Quest itself, which must be undertaken by a solitary knight, it does form an important part of the texts (with

the exception of the Didot-*Perceval*) in that companionship is desired by knights, especially Gauvain. True friendship is characterised as having no social purpose, unlike friendship based upon reciprocal service and even unlike *fin'amor*, but proceeds from a perception of virtue in another (or rumour of virtue). The virtues possessed by Lancelot, Gauvain, and Meliot in the *Perlesvaus* serve to give a representation of an ideal knight but the figure who, through lineage and predestination, represents the ideal is Perlesvaus, as evinced by the narrator at the opening of the romance:

> Buens chevaliers fu sanz faille, car il fu chastes e virges de son cors, e hardiz de cuer e poissanz, e si ot teches sanz vilenie. N'estoit pas bauz de parler, e ne sanbloit pas a sa chiere qu'il fust si corageus. (23: 15-17)

The statement of the narrator encourages the perception of Perlesvaus as the embodiment of virtue and one whose companionship is greatly desired.

Gauvain and Lancelot are specifically tainted by their *luxure* as the Roi Hermite explains, "car il sont li mellor chevalier dou monde, s'il ne fusent luxurios" (260: 6047-8). Both Lancelot and Gauvain, although figures of an ideal of knighthood, are defined within the *Perlesvaus* by their negativity, by their sin, highlighting the perfection of Perlesvaus himself. Not only is he predestined to be the Grail Knight but, through possession of the most important virtue, chastity, and the lack of this virtue in both Gauvain and Lancelot, even though they manifest a form of chastity throughout the romance themselves (Gauvain refutes his reputation as a philanderer, the love of Lancelot and Guenevere is presented as an abstract conception to which Lancelot is unswervingly faithful), Perlesvaus is configured as the ideal. It is the combination of prowess and chastity that renders Perlesvaus attractive and an inspiration of friendship, becoming, an object of desire for Lancelot and Gauvain, replacing the Grail itself.

The collective questing of the Grail romances, in which all the knights share the same goal, necessitates a bond of solidarity between them generated by their single aim. When the object of the quest is the location of a particular knight, due to the virtues he possesses as designated hero of the romance, this positions him as the object of desire.

The acclaim generated by the success of the Grail Quest, and the coming closer to God of one individual engenders like desires in the "rivals", other knights who then, through focusing on the same desired object or goal as the subject, form homosocial bonds designed to maintain the masculine order. Perceval becomes the model that is imitated, his virtues inspiring a desire for association in his companions. In Manessier's *Continuation*, in which all the knights depart from court to search for Perceval, there is no desire on the part of the hero to remain with his companions; in the *Perlesvaus*, we see the reciprocation of this desire, a desire that is manifested as *amitié* between the three principal knights, all of whom are qualified for a higher form of friendship through the chivalric virtues they possess. The mechanism of the desire for an object, recognised by Girard as mimetic, is compounded by classical and Christian notions of the desire for emulation: those who are worthy inspire worth in others, forming the inception and development of true friendship, while the generation of friendship itself renders masculine bonding an enclosed world, one that perpetuates the valued virtues through this concept of desire and imitation.

Friendship appears as the prerogative of the masculine, founded upon codes of behaviour designed to benefit society, in particular to propagate the superiority of particular members: knights, representing the nobility. Friendship presents the image of the union of men in the face of adversity, or threats to the stability of the social order that prioritises their needs. The solidarity that such bonds create can be seen to clearly function in the interactions of knights with women, and this forms the subject of the following chapter wherein it is apparent that women can be extraneous to the bonding of men. The Grail Quest, with the insistence on the rejection of heterosexual desire (and thereby the non-participation in an exchange mechanism), creates a homosocial world that does not utilise heterosexuality as a conduit. Women are not exchanged between men to further the bonds that structure society; the knights on the Grail Quest repudiate heterosexuality (this is particularly applicable to the *Perlesvaus*), and thereby certain forms of bonding with other men. However, bonding between men is instead predicated upon the male prestige system: it is the desire to achieve the highest acclaim (through a

display of prowess that is equated with virtue, engendering admiration and imitation) that forms the conduit of homosocial relationships.

The Actions of Gender and the Gender of Action

When examining the Grail romances in an effort to establish the nature of ideal masculinity, it is essential to devote a certain amount of attention not only to the interaction of the masculine characters but also to their interaction with female personages. As masculine-to-masculine relationships indicate ideal codes of behaviour, it is also an accepted fact that exchanges between genders reveal underlying social ideology. Gaunt states that "if in romance, male characters develop, evolve and assume new identities through love and their relationships with female characters, it follows that what the engagement with femininity really articulates is the construction within a male discourse of masculinity through its relationship with femininity construed as other".[1] This chapter aims to examine the nature of the encounter of the knight with the feminine sphere in order to establish the function of these encounters and the implications they have upon the masculine. The knight is defined not only by his relationship with other men but also through relationships with women that further his progression in the masculine sphere. I shall be looking at the implications of interactions between the genders for the creation of a masculine hegemony; the manner in which the feminine is sidelined, silenced, or, represented as negative: a hindrance to masculine bonding.

It is useful, at this point, to begin with a definition of gender itself. John W. Baldwin defines gender as "the cultural engagement between the two biological sexes".[2] It is common to assume that this cultural engagement will always conform to the perceived conventional pattern that designates women as passive objects while men are active subjects. Such rule-based actions is what Judith Butler refers to when she suggests that

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[1] Gaunt, 'From Epic to Romance: gender and sexuality in the *Roman d'Enéas*', p. 1.

[2] John W. Baldwin, 'Five Discourses on Desire: sexuality and gender in northern France around 1200', *Speculum*, 66 (1991), 797-819.

> Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeals over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being.[3]

Gender, being artificially created, therefore problematises the relationship of gender to sex since

> the presumption of a binary gender system implicitly retains the belief in a mimetic relation of gender to sex whereby gender mirrors sex or is otherwise restricted by it. When the constructed status of gender is theorized as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice, with the consequence that *man* and *masculine* might just as easily signify a female body as a male one, and *woman* and *feminine* a male body as easily as a female one.[4]

A convenient middle ground is the assumption that masculine and feminine are attributes of the biological state of male and female; a cultural interpretation of biological difference. Joan Wallach Scott defines gender as the "social organization of sexual difference"[5] adding that gender is the "knowledge that establishes meanings for bodily difference".[6] In expanding upon her initial definition she states that masculine and feminine opposition is a "set of symbolic references" while male and female refer to physical persons, a position summed up as

> Masculine/feminine serves to define abstract qualities and characteristics through opposition perceived as natural: strong/weak, public/private, rational/expressive, material/spiritual.[7]

Butler shares the view posited by Wallach Scott when she states that

> The heterosexualization of desire requires and institutes the production of discrete and asymmetrical oppositions between "feminine" and "masculine," where these are understood as expressive attributes of "male" and "female".[8]

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[3] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 33.
[4] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 6. This problem is further discussed on pp. 8-9.
[5] Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, p. 2.
[6] Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, p. 2.
[7] Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, p. 63.
[8] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 17

The male prestige system, predicated upon honour in romance, utilises women as a kind of mirror in which to reflect and increase the honour of men; a knight is loved on account of his reputation (often before being seen); the love of a woman inspires the knight to further acts of prowess that increase his worth and desirability. She is a reflection of his honour, an "idealized male self reflected in a mirror of female proportions".[9] However, the honour that women attain in society is only that which is granted by men; this governs their behaviour and maintains the masculine perception of women;[10] an aritificial perception that posits women as commodities. Luce Irigaray has stated that "a commodity - a woman - is divided into two irreconcilable "bodies": her "natural" body and her socially valued, exchangeable body, which is a particularly mimetic expression of masculine values".[11] We can equate this with the creation of the *dompna* in romance; she is the ideal woman, the opposite of man, but only insofar as she adheres to the expected conventions of behaviour, possessing values that make her worthy of man's interest; she is not a true expression of femininity. Sarah Kay discusses the "third gender"of troubadour lyric, proposing that the creation of the mixed gender was a solution to the problem of women not being worthy of men but also observes that "in projecting a semi-masculine identity onto the love object, the distinctions between self and other, subject and object, individual and social are all to some degree obscured, while the 'threat' of the 'feminine' is not always convincingly avoided".[12] Simone de Beauvoir argued that "only the feminine gender is marked, that the universal person and the masculine gender are conflated, thereby defining women in terms of their sex and extolling men as the bearers of a body-transcendent universal parenthood".[13] However, while the universal person is masculine, the marked feminine is also a masculine representation of femininity, not "real" femaleness, for that is unrepresentable and excluded from the binary opposition. Hence we have Dandrane posited as a heroine in the *Perlesvaus* but only insofar as she represents a version of femininity that conforms to the ideal propagated by the masculine hegemony of the Church.

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[9] E. Jane Burns, 'The Man Behind the Lady in Troubadour Lyric', p. 254.
[10] Siegfried Christoph, 'Honor, Shame & Gender', 26-33.
[11] Irigaray, *This Sex which is not One*, p. 180.
[12] Kay, *Subjectivity in Troubadour Poetry*, p. 91.
[13] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 9.

Courtly femininity was constructed as the natural counterpart of the new masculine courtly ideal with the fundamental role of women being to augment the status of knights. Through their role as protectors of women, knights consequently enhance their own status in society while furthering their relationships with other men, creating, according to Roberta Krueger, a "conservative gender ideology";[14] wherein the role of women is complementary, promoting the interests of men. Women are useful as a means by which the knight can prove his prowess and increase his standing, thereby improving his chances with his Lady, patiently waiting in her castle, who remains merely an object of his desire and a reflection of his honour. Women inspire action either when they are in danger, or because custom (including love) requires it; action serves to increase worth only in the male parties, while women perform a reductive role as functions within the male prestige system.

Cortoisie

Interactions with women are generally grouped under the convenient term of *cortoisie*, a term that incorporates codes of behaviour and systems of interactions including that termed "courtly love". As J.-Ch. Payen has commented, *cortoisie* is not only presented through particular words but also in motifs,[15] such as the rescue of a *pucele*, the love for a Lady, and the conventions of hospitality, but, essentially, *cortoisie* is a means through which the order of society is maintained, a code of correct behaviour in a given and recognisable set of social circumstances. Frappier defines *cortoisie* in the general sense of the term as "politesse des moeurs, distinction des manières, délicatesse du comportement".[16]

Courtliness is a necessary attribute of a knight and certainly one that the hero must be seen to possess, either through action (correct behaviour) or through affirmation

[14] Roberta L. Krueger: *Women Readers and the Ideology of Gender in Old French Verse Romance*, p. 70.
[15] Jean-Charles Payen, 'La destruction des mythes courtois dans le roman arthurien', *Revue des Langues Romanes*, 78 (1969), 213-228, (p. 216).
[16] Jean Frappier, *Amour courtois et table ronde* (Geneva: Droz, 1973), p. 40.

of his courtliness by the narrator through certain formulae that designate a character "qui molt estoit cortoise" (Roach: 35672). Adherence to the conventional codes of conduct that constitute the concept of *cortoisie* is one way in which the hero can be identified and defined while those who do not conform, such as adversaries, dissociate themselves from such interactions. *Cortoisie* covers all forms of fixed conduct within a given set of recognisable circumstances including the interactions of the masculine and feminine:

> *Courtoisie*, *hörensceit*, and *cortesia* are the vernacular code words for a type of conduct that the medieval cleric/courtier had fashioned for himself on the basis of the ancient ideals of the Greek *asteîos anér*...and the Roman *urbanus*, endowed with *urbanitas*, as opposed to the *rusticus* (Gr. *agrôncos*). The concept of urbanity as synonym for civilised behaviour extended with greater force of logic to the culture of the burgher towns, while its etymological counterpart of rusticity was reflected in that scorn for the peasant which pervades medieval lyrics and chivalric romances and which is implied in the frequent reference to the *rusticus* (Fr. *villain*, G. *dörperlich*).[17]

Cortoisie incorporates the ritual behaviour that bonds a class over other levels of society. Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner identifies three levels of meaning present in *cortois*:

1. Class meaning – the opposite of *vilain*
2. A reference to social graces
3. Something between the two, a person who acts in accord with the nobility.[18]

Ideal behaviour is demonstrated through the performance of the individual in a set situation in which set behaviour is expected. Variations from set behaviour are usually negative, therefore negativity of character can be demonstrated through the subversion of conventional conduct that is designed to facilitate interaction between members of a social rank; for the "interactions among characters of romance can be seen as a testing

[17] Aldo Scaglione, *Knights at Court*, p. 57.
[18] Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner, *Narrative Invention in Twelfth-Century French Romance: the convention of hospitality, 1160-1200* (Lexington, Ky: French Forum, 1980), p. 121.

ground for the quest of a proper norm that is not yet fixed or rigidly codified",[19] a feature that can be observed in the motif of hospitality and the motif of mercy/surrender:

> Dès lors, si le chevalier errant est un étranger, du moins appartient-il à la même classe que tous ces possesseurs de maisons fortes et de châteaux; à ce titre, il préexiste à toute rencontre une identité de nature, des valeurs et des usages communs, qui doivent aider à nouer des liens d'amitié ou à changer des rapports primitivement méfiants ou hostiles.[20]

In reality, it was unacceptable to lodge with peasants or at taverns but was acceptable to secure lodgings with the bourgeois by offering payment. Chênerie continues, noting that "en présentant à la noblesse l'hospitalié de ses membres comme une obligation de classe... le roman compensait la rareté et la précarité des institutions hôtelières et supprimait la fréquentation des mauvais lieux".[21] Payment is thus exchanged for reciprocal service, constructing an ideal of behaviour from the exigencies of real necessity. Hospitality in literature becomes a code of behaviour designed to demonstrate the nobility and worth of both parties:

> La réception idéale du chevalier errant est la plus souhaitable, car elle crée des relations gratuites et une communion dans la noblesse, alors que chevaliers et seigneurs de la réalité devaient payer l'hospitalité privée des bourgeois dans les villes quand ils ne se contentaient pas de piller et d'humilier un peu partout.[22]

It is necessary at this point to turn our attention to the concept of *fin'amor*. Jean Frappier discerns a distinction between northern *amour courtois* and the *fin'amor* of the south, in that the northern *amour courtois* was less lyrical and more psychological than southern *fin'amor*; it included analysis of sentiment, especially that pertaining to the birth of love. *Cortoisie*, in the general sense of the word, seemed to occur spontaneously in the north from the first half of the twelfth century without any influence from the south, while the northern concept of love tended to align itself with traditional morals,

[19] Bruckner, *Narrative Invention*, p. 125.
[20] Marie-Luce Chênerie, *Le Chevalier errant*, p. 507.
[21] Chênerie, *Le Chevalier errant*, p. 509.
[22] Chênerie, *Le Chevalier errant*, p. 589.

preserving the demands of social and religious law, and more importantly, the association of love and chivalry.[23] Yet, the concomitants of *fin'amor* vary from romance to romance and from knight to knight; Lancelot, for example, contains the self-abnegation of troubadour lyric in his excessive contemplation of the memory of his beloved from Chrétien to the Prose-*Lancelot* and the *Perlesvaus* in his vigil at her tomb, while Gauvain, another knight said to be "courtly", exhibits none of these traits yet embarks on many encounters with women, adheres to the rules of *cortoisie* in placing himself at the service of women and engaging in courtly rhetoric, but the nature of his amorous interludes differs considerably from that of Lancelot and Guenevere. Roberta Krueger observes that "he is not a 'courtly' lover, one sustained, like Lancelot, by a single inner desire or *panser*: his passions are multiple and ephemeral".[24] Krueger sees the excessive self-abnegation on the part of the lover before an objectified Lady as encapsulating courtly love. The term "courtly love" is problematic, its boundaries are vague; the love affair of Perceval and the Lady of the Castel del Eskekier in the Didot-*Perceval* also falls into the category of "courtly love" but it cannot be said to reach the same heights as the love of Lancelot and Guenevere, who are exceptions in romance rather than the rule. Neither Gauvain nor Perceval in Manessier are motivated by obsessive contemplation and desire of a beloved object akin to the troubadour concept of a "culte d'adoration"[25] but they still adhere to the rituals of *cortoisie*. Like Lancelot and Guenevere, Gauvain usually conforms to type, and this fixity can be a useful device against which to measure the hero. Keith Busby comments concerning this consistent portrayal of Gauvain:

> Because Gauvain is in many ways a pre-formed character, that is to say, one who has already a number of set features when he first appears in a given romance, authors are largely prevented from showing him undergoing any form of psychological evolution such as that of an Erec or an Yvain. Another consequence of the fixity of the figure is that the question of his reputation often occupies romancers a good deal; and they often set his reputation up and test it by means of events in their own poems. With the aid of this device, they are enabled to

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[23] Jean Frappier, 'Vues sur les conceptions courtoises dans les littératures d'Oc et d'Oïl au XIIe siècle', *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale*, 2,(1959), pp. 135-156.
[24] Krueger, *Women Readers*, p. 84.
[25] Frappier, 'Vues sur les conceptions courtoises', p. 140.

> question not just the figure of Gauvain, of course, but more particularly, the ideal of Arthurian knighthood that he embodies.[26]

There remains the question: how far is Perceval a courtly knight in the sense that "courtliness" or *cortoisie* (the terms are interchangeable) involves codified interaction with women? *Cortoisie* can extend to *fin'amor* or remain simply polite interaction between a knight and any woman; it is a ritual of correct behaviour while un-courtliness is an ignorance of, or a flouting of the conventions that serve to bond men including the correct treatment of women. Perlesvaus, for instance, demonstrates correct behaviour concerning women, a behaviour that often takes the form of the polite refusal of their advances throughout the romance, a form of behaviour that is reprised by Gauvain, Lancelot, and Arthur, the repetition reinforcing the desired attitude of knights towards women in that text.

Chrétien establishes the tradition of Perceval's love for Blanchefleur, assigning to Perceval the same manifestations of *fin'amor* as he does to Lancelot: Perceval, like Lancelot loses himself in the reverie of his beloved, oblivious to the world around him. The tradition of Perceval and Blanchefleur is continued and assumed in Manessier's *Continuation*, though the night visit there consists of dialogue alone unlike the ambivalent original. Manessier introduces Blanchefleur without explanation, assuming prior knowledge on the part of the audience, yet she appears in one episode only and no more importance is placed on her than on any of the other (mostly) nameless females in distress. It may be the case that Manessier, fully aware of the Blanchefleur tradition, includes it within his romance but ascribes no particular importance to it; certainly it has no significance to the evolution of Perceval as Grail knight beyond reinforcing his allegiances to the masculine value system over the demands of his *amie*. Furthermore, unlike the Perceval of the *Conte du Graal*, the Perceval of Manessier's *Continuation*, once separated from his *amie*, does not express any desire to seek her presence or

[26] Keith Busby, 'Diverging Traditions of Gauvain in some later Old French Verse Romances', in *The Legacy of Chrétien de Troyes*, ed. by Norris J. Lacy, Douglas Kelly, Keith Busby, 2 vols (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1988), I, pp. 93-110, (p. 96).

manifest any suffering caused by separation while Blanchefleur herself remains a static and passive figure.

The devil appears in the form of Blanchefleur (rather than an unknown woman as in *La Queste*) and Perceval does certainly appear to be enamoured of her once he believes her to be his *amie*, "Lors la prant, si l'acole et bese" (38058) but Manessier is no more specific than that. At the reunion of Perceval and Blanchlefleur at Biau Repere, the interiorisation described is of Blanchefleur while there is no mention of any particular emotions from Perceval; it is Blanchefleur who experiences *joie* (39041-39043) at the arrival of Perceval. Unusually, Blanchefleur is permitted some vocalisation of love while the narrator remains silent concerning the emotions of Perceval, a reversal of the lyric tradition wherein the emotions of the male lover are recorded while the female object is mute. Blanchefleur expresses desire, indicative of a subject role but her activity is shortlived and she soon resumes a passive role: the object of the aggression by Aridés. Perceval does term her "ma douce amie" (39076) but this is not necessarily conclusive as that turn of phrase is conventional rhetoric between knights and ladies. During the whole series of episodes devoted to Gauvain and the Sore Pucele, while it seems clear from the references that the Sore Pucele has become the *amie* of Gauvain (35746), no more attention is paid to the development. It appears that Manessier had no interest in expanding *cortoisie* beyond conventional encounters of knights and ladies in the Forest and it certainly has no place in the Grail Quest. Apart from the evident joy of Blanchefleur at the arrival of Perceval there is little to distinguish this episode from any other episode within the romance concerning the sojourn of a knight at the castle of a besieged Lady.[27] The victory of Perceval over Aridés d'Escavalon is less a bride-winning episode than an episode of the *pucele esforciee* motif recurrent in Manessier's *Continuation*. Blanchefleur is not a capricious *dompna* like the Lady of the Castel del Eskekier; her request to Perceval is not upheld for he prioritises his allegiance to the masculine world of the Arthurian court (39303-39314).

[27] Blanchefleur's *joie* could in part be attribuable to the arrival of a knight who will save her from an aggressor.

Manessier's inclusion of Blanchefleur in his work ties in neatly with the other episodes of this nature that are frequent in his *Continuation*; again, the love depicted in this work does not progress beyond superficiality: Perceval's loyalties to the court of King Arthur are stronger than any desire to remain with Blanchefleur. After the defeat of Aridés, Blanchefleur requests that Perceval remain at Biau Repere until Pentecost which Perceval refuses for he has declared, through the prisoners he has sent to Arthur's court, his intentions of returning there for Pentecost. Like the Fausse Blanchefleur episode, the "real" Blanchefleur herself also tests Perceval and his values, her demands that he remains with her, away from the masculine mileu of questing and court are in vain; there is no hesitation on the part of Perceval in declining her offer.

The episode serves to recall the Blanchefleur of Chrétien in which, through the scene of the blood drops on the snow, it is clear that the relationship between Perceval and Blanchefleur is one of *fin'amor*. The awareness of Manessier of the Perceval-Blanchefleur couple cannot be avoided but she is not an essential part in the career of Perceval. Perceval does not return to Biau Repere following his success at the Grail Castle, rendering the Blanchefleur episode a passing reference to the Chrétien tradition, utilised here at its face value: the demonstration of the prowess of a knight in the standard romance test – the defence of a helpless woman and her lands.

The Role of the *Pucele Esforciee*

However, as narrative devices women are active, inspiring male action and often the motivation that provokes the quest. The idolisation of a Lady results in the knight's desire for action, while the messenger *pucele* brings news which initiates a new course of action for the hero; women are rescued by knights in the forest and will then direct the hero to their castle; their rescue may lead to friendly contact with a grateful male relative and masculine associations can result from encounters with females. Repetition of these types of adventures serves an educative function for the knight within romance, an example of correct behaviour in a particular set of circumstances.

It was Saussure who first developed the theory that language is a "système de signes" in which the value of each term results from the simultaneous presence of the others,[28] a conception that has been applied to the components of form that make up a narrative, components termed by varying theorists as "motif" or "type". Paul Zumthor identifies types as "any element of writing that is both structured and polyvalent, having functional relationships between its parts and being infinitely reusable in a whole variety of contexts (clichés, topoi, formulae, key images, motifs)".[29] Furthermore, a type is a "microstructure constituted by a set of organised features comprising a fixed kernel (semantic or formal) and a small number of variables".[30] Meaning is derived from the appearance and organisation of types within a work:

> The text takes shape around its typical elements or develops out of them. When the particular erupts into a text, it functions as an amplification of the generalised type. In this way the text tends to become a closed system around its types, which determines its own form of truth.[31]

Vladimir Propp, in his analysis of the structure of folktale spoke of functions rather than motifs, delineated as "a minimal narrative unit; a familiar figure; a familiar object"[32] defining functions as "the actions of a character from the point of view of its significance for the progression of the narrative"[33] and argued for a grammar of narrative, a finite number of elements disposed in a finite number of ways that generate the structures recognised as stories. We see this in romance wherein the same motifs are utilised repeatedly throughout a work in a particular order; once the motif is set in place, it will be recognisable instantly on the part of the audience who then have a set of expectations to be fulfilled, the "horizon of expectation" of Jauss.[34] However, what is

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[28] Ferdinand de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale*, 4th edn (Paris: Payot, 1949), p. 33.
[29] Paul Zumthor, *Toward a Medieval Poetics*, trans. by Philip Bennett (Minneaoplis; Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), p. 56.
[30] Zumthor, *Toward a Medieval Poetics,* p. 57.
[31] Zumthor, *Toward a Medieval Poetics*, p. 65.
[32] Vladimir Propp, *Theory and History of Folklore*, trans. by Ariadna Y. Martin & Richard Martin with an introduction by Anatoly Liberman (Manchester: Mancehster University Press, 1984), p. xxvii.
[33] Propp, *Theory and History of Folklore*, p. xxvii.
[34] Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. by Timothy Bahtin (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982).

interesting in romance is the manner in which these motifs are used within the narrative as expectations are aroused but not necessarily fulfilled.

Kathryn Gravdal stated that "medieval romance structure depends on episodic units which recur systematically but are joined in ever changing ways, units such as the knight's dubbing, the battle, the journey through the forest, the crossing of water, the hospitality of an unknown châtelain, the feast day, and many other set pieces".[35] The motif that effectively demonstrates the subject and object roles in romance is the rescue of the *pucele esforciee*, an innocent and nameless[36] victim at the mercy of aggressor knights who must be dispatched by the hero. Following his victory the girl will often direct the hero to her nearby castle and offer hospitality. This particular type of motif is conventional and common; it is a useful episode as a set piece to demonstrate the ability of the knight. Dietmar Rieger sees the rescue of *puceles* alone in the Forest who become victims of male aggression as a test:

> L'acte d'empêcher la défloration constituant une épreuve, l'érotisme qui naît du jeu avec le danger de la défloration, la victoire sur celui qui veut l'obtenir de force et contrairement au droit, tout cela prend une dimension particulièrement récurrente dans la littérature courtoise qui traite, dans ses fictions, les obsessions patriarcales intensifiées par le christianisme.[37]

As Luce Irigaray has observed "once deflowered, woman is relegated to the status of use value, to her entrapment in private property, she is removed from exchanges among men".[38] The perpetrators of such an act are effectively undermining the mechanisms of masculine society by sabotaging the commodity that serves to further bonds between men given that the exchange of women is essential in the functioning of patriarchal society:

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[35] Kathryn Gravdal, *Ravishing Maidens: writing rape in medieval French literature and law* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1991), p. 43.
[36] Angelica Rieger, 'Balade des demoiselles du temps jadis: essai sur l'entrée en scène des personnages féminins dans les romans de Chrétien de Troyes', *in Arthurian Romance and Gender: selected proceedings of the XVIIth International Arthurian Congress*, pp. 79-103.
[37] Dietmar Rieger, 'Le motif du viol dans la littérature de la France Médiévale entre norme courtoise et réalité courtoise', *Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale*, 31 (1988), 241-267, (p. 247).
[38] Irigaray, *This Sex which is not One*, p. 186.

> Kinship systems do not merely exchange women. They exchange sexual access, genealogical statuses, lineage names and ancestry, rights and *people* – men, women, and children – in concrete systems of social relationships. These relationships always include certain rights for men, others for women. "Exchange of women" is a shorthand for expressing that the social relations of a kinship system specify that men have certain rights in their female kin, and that women do not have the same right either to themselves or to their male kin.[39]

Originally it was the Church that aimed to designate the social function of knights; principal among these social duties is the requirement to protect the weak and non-combatants. The type of person that best embodies such an exigency is a woman; the threat to her body becomes a threat to her male kin, her subsequent rescue and return home reinstates masculine bonds; the patriarchal system of exchange is preserved. The preservation and maintenance of the bonds that form patriarchal society becomes glossed by *cortoisie* in romance, creating the illusion of the knight's service to women while the frequency of these episodes gives the misapprehension that the knight is actively seeking such encounters especially to aid women, a phenomenon that occurs in Manessier's *Continuation* in which Perceval and Sagremor rescue a *pucele* from ill treatment (effectively rape) by a group of knights. The enemy knights are killed, removing any possibility of incorporating the theme of the female desire for vengeance in this episode. Perceval assures the girl she has nothing to fear from him adding:

> Damoiselle, fait Perceval,
> Desus lou col de ce cheval
> Vos porterai, *car ce est droiz*,
> Tot orandroit la o vodroiz. (33605-33608; my italics)

Perceval is himself aware of adhering to the required conventions in the situation, which is to put her on his horse and take her where she wants to go; an action he views as the correct response, indicated by the use of the word *droit*, a word that has a number of variant meanings associated either with secular legality or religious right, moral right or legal statute.[40] The narrator then comments:

[39] Rubin, 'The Traffic in Women', p. 177.
[40] George Jones, *The Ethos of the Song of Roland*, pp.9-13. Also, Nelly Andrieux-Reix, *Ancien Français: fiches de vocabulaire* (Paris: Presses Universitaire de France, 1987), p. 61.

Et cil qui de prouesse iert mestre
Li ostroie sa volonté. (33622-3)

The initial appearance that Perceval submits his will to hers and is subordinate to the girl, who, moments earlier was dependent upon him for safety, is false. The use of the verb "otroier" with its legal connotations means that the narrator gives control of the situation to Perceval, maintaining his superior masculine status through the use of legal, feudal vocabulary. The *pucele* has already recalled to Perceval the fact that aiding her derives not from a personal desire to be of service but from a duty imposed by God:

... molt doucement li prïa
Por Dieu qui lesus el ciel maint. (33600-33601)

JoAnn McNamara, in an article concerning the *Herrenfrage*,[41] raises the point that the absence of women from certain institutions, especially monasteries, creates a fundamental difficulty in the definition of masculinity. Women are the necessary "other" by which masculinity is defined, for the basal denotation of masculinity is its perceived superiority over women achieved by their subordination. Conversely, increasing the worth of men within this system necessitates the elevation of women. The typical rescue of the *pucele* of the forest appears to grant superiority to the woman while the knight seems to subordinate himself to her principal need: she has a right to call upon his assistance and he will give it whatever the odds; a role that embodies the nature of chivalry with its concomitant call for the protection of widows and orphans. However, aiding such a woman is merely a useful method by which the knight can prove his worth; the notion of service is simply an illusion, while the apparent direction by women in these cases is meaningless, merely a conventional motif of *cortoisie* which embellishes a more mundane social duty. The apparent subordination of Perceval to the request of the *pucele* is generated from the requirements of masculine duty (to God) to preserve the equilibrium of society by protecting its commodities and not from any desire to

[41] JoAnn McNamara, 'The *Herrenfrage*: the restructuring of the gender system 1050-1150', in *Medieval Masculinities: regarding men in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Clare A. Lees (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), pp. 3-29.

subordinate himself to a female individual in keeping with the fantasies of *cortoisie*, which situate the rescued female directing the male. Both parties involved are aware of the conventions and appearances of the situation; *cortoisie* appears as an artificial construction, creating an illusion of the superiority of the female.

The example of the "Bors' decision" episode in *La Queste* and Manessier's *Continuation* in which Bors elects to aid the female victim of aggression rather than his brother, demonstrates the awareness of Bors of his duty as a knight towards women and the protection of virginity, a duty to which the *pucele* herself recalls him:

> "Ha! chevalier, je te conjur sus la foi que tu doiz a Celui cui hom lige tu es et en qui servise tu t'es mis, que tu m'aides et ne me lesses honir…" (*La Queste*: 175: 22-24)

It appears as if this is the motivation he needs to make the choice between the unknown woman and Lionel. The episode is a culminating episode of the *pucele esforciee* type underscoring the fact that a primary role of knights is to protect the weak, rendering the rescue of women merely a duty, primarily a duty to protect virginity, the principal virtue in *La Queste*. The situation is accentuated by the dilemma with which Bors is presented, ensuring that he is tested in his allegiance to the ideology of knighthood.

Bors is faced with the shameful treatment of a knight, stripped of knightly vestments and debased, versus the persecution of a girl. There is pity stirred by the representation of Lionel but the helpless *pucele* invokes great compassion in Bors. Lionel is presented in a similar state to that of persecuted women in this text as "tot nu" (Roach: 40197) and the narrator adds that he is being dragged "honteusement" (40199). The author of *La Queste* states that Lionel does not utter a sound at the harsh treatment he is receiving "come cil qui estoit de grant cuer, ainz soffroit tout ce qu'il li fesoit si come s'il n'en sentist riens" (Q: 175. 12-13). When a knight is stripped of armour he is wholly

vulnerable, divested of the trappings that confer his masculine status,[42] thus Lionel appears as helpless as the *pucele*.

The *Queste* author does not offer any details of Bors' emotions at this point while Manessier reveals that:

> Si an fu dollanz et plains d'ire
> A soi meïsmes prist a dire
> Que trop li font de vilanie. (40205- 7)

Bors is poised to rescue Lionel when he hears the cries of a *pucele*, compared to *La Queste* in which he looks the other way and sees the girl, implying the left-right emphasis placed upon the choice of Bors, rendering the decision a clear cut choice between right and wrong. Like Bors, the audience does not yet know which is which, and has to follow the assessment of the situation through to its conclusion.

At this stage in the narrative, Manessier inserts a section describing the state of undress and helplessness of the *pucele* in the face of imminent rape. He utilises far more emotive language than *La Queste*, capitalising on the titillating voyeurism of this type of scene (the narrator does not dwell on the appearance of the *pucele* in *La Queste*), inciting empathy with Bors in this situation:

> Et elle crioit si formant
> Et si haut et si duremant
> Que nul home né ne l'oïst
> Qui toute pitié n'am preïst. (40233-40236)

Compared to other episodes of this type in Manessier, a larger section of the narrative is devoted to the description of the piteousness of the *pucele* and the wickedness of those perpetrating the crime. For example, in the first episode of this type in Manessier's *Continuation*, Perceval and Sagremor come across a group a knights holding

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[42] E. Jane Burns, 'Refashioning Courtly Love: Lancelot as ladies' man or Lady/man?', in *Constructing Medieval Sexuality*, ed. by Karma Lochrie, Peggy McCracken, and James A. Schultz (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 111-134, (p. 118).

a girl in exactly the same situation, yet it is not depicted in such detail nor does the narrator in his description, condemn the perpetrators by utilising negative adjectives. He simply describes the action to convey the negativity of these knights:

> Parmi la forest venir voient
> Dis chevaliers tuit abrivé,
> Tuit parant et voisin clamé.
> Li premiers qui devant venoit,
> Une demoiselle portoit
> Devant lui seur un destrier mor. (33334-33339)

Sagremor's first reaction is that these are the knights who have stolen his horse; it is this fact that ignites the desire to intervene in the situation before the *pucele* has uttered her piteous plea for assistance, recalling to the knights her threatened virginity:

> Et la pucele s'escrïa,
> Qui de duel ot lou vis nerci:
> "Ha! gentil chevalier, merci.
> Aïdiez moi a delivrer
> De ceus qui me volent livrer
> Mon cors a duel et a viltence." (33346-33351)

In Manessier's version of the Bors episode, description of the scene entails thirty two lines during which the narrator influences reception through his choice of vocabulary: one of the knights is described as:

> Un chevalier grant, merveilleux,
> Qui molt fu fiers et orgueilleux; (40221-2)

He repeatedly utilises "force/esforce" (40229, 40230, 40231) to emphasise the situation. In *La Queste* it is as Bors hears the *pucele* cry for mercy from God he is "si angoisseux qu'il ne set qu'il doit fere" (Q: 175. 27-8) while Manessier reveals Bors' anxiety in direct speech as the knight calls upon God to help him decide. Bors approaches his final decision through an assessment of the two situations: the knight who is maltreating Lionel is a knight of "mal afaire" who treats Lionel "a tel ledure" (Roach: 40244-5) whereas "vilmant" (40250) is employed to describe the activities of the knight brutalising

the *pucele* coupled with the fact that she has called for help "si piteusemant," (40251) all adding up to cause Bors "grant vergoigne" (40251).

The evaluation in *La Queste* takes the form of *discours indirect* and reveals none of the distress experienced by Bors with the exception of the one line relating that he is so upset at the situation that he does not know what to do (Q: 175. 27-8). The dilemma is presented concisely and clearly:

> ...car se il son frere en lesse mener a celz qui le tienent, il nel cuide ja mes veoir sain ne haitié; et s'il ne secort ceste pucele ele iert maintenant honie et despucelee, et einsi recevra honte par la defaute de lui. (Q: 175. 28-31)

Bors then appeals to God in direct speech

> "Biaz douz peres Jhesucriz, cui hons liege je sui, garde moi mon frere en tel maniere que cil chevalier ne l'ocient. Et je por pitié de vos et por misericorde secorrai ceste pucele d'estre honie: car il me semble que cil chevaliers la voille despuceler." (Q: 175. 32- 176. 3)

a speech that is imitated in Manessier's *Continuation*. At this point Manessier inserts a line concerned with the appearance of the *pucele* designed to underscore the decision of Bors.[43]

Unlike the *pucele* in *La Queste*, the *pucele* of the *Continuation* does not appeal directly to Bors in an attempt to recall him to his duty as a knight to protect women from exactly this type of violence. She is granted two lines of direct speech in which she calls on God and Mary to save her (40213-4); Manessier then describes her pitiful cries in an emotive four lines concluding with the statement that there was no man who would not be swayed with pity on hearing her pleas (40233-6).

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[43] See the *Continuation* lines 40254-40257: Manessier embellishes Bors' lament by substituting "felon de pute estrace" for "chevalier" rendering the speech more emotive.

Once Bors has decided to favour her cause over that of his brother, he again reiterates in direct speech the need and drive to save her that applies to every situation of this type and sums up a knight's motivation to save women:

> "Biaux sire Diex, or soiez garde
> De mon frere par vostre grace,
> Que cil felon de pute estrace
> Ne l'ocïent, qu'a la pucelle
> Qui tant est avenanz et belle,
> Que je voi si vilmant baillir,
> Ne vorroie por riens faillir.
> Ou orandroit la secorrai
> Sanz nule doute, ou je morrai." (40254-40262)

It is the appearance and treatment of the *pucele* that serves to inspire Bors to favour her cause over that of his brother while in *La Queste* Bors attributes his inspiration to "misericorde" and "pitié de vos" (= God). The motivation of Bors in *La Queste* is spiritual, finding its source in God rather than chivalric social duty as in Manessier wherein the dilemma between spiritual and earthly duties assumes a secular form: one between familial loyalty and chivalric duty.

Defence of women is an essential duty for a knight and in Manessier's *Continuation* an integral part of their activities. The motif of the *pucele esforciee* appears throughout Manessier functioning as an ideal test for his knights and one they all undertake: Perceval and Sagremor rescue a *pucele* from a group of knights in the Forest (33333-33352); Sagremor later saves another *pucele* in a similar situation (34737-34758); and Gauvain rescues the *pucele* accused of murder (35389-35581). It appears to be the helplessness of the women involved that renders the episodes attractive to the author who repeatedly dwells on their attire, stripped to their chemises, while in the Bors episode the narrator informs us that this particular girl has "cuisses descovertes" (40219). Other episodes of this type in Manessier may detail the state of undress of the girls; for example, in the episode where Sagremor rescues a *pucele*, the girl is described in her chemise, grabbed by a knight so that she becomes

Descoverte, que la poitrine
Blanche et nue li paroit toute. (34756-7)

Aside from the Bors episode, the narrator does not reveal much (if any) of the reactions of the knight. Piteous appearance and voluble cries for help are key factors which serve to cause knights to spring into action immediately unless they have something more to consider. Gauvain is distracted from an immediate attack on the aggressor-knight by the latter's explanation (35414-35449), and Bors delays in order to consider his dilemma. There is an element of choice in the appearance of the motif as it is allotted to each knight: the choice of whether to aid the *pucele* or not is diffused in the first episode by the fact that Perceval is accompanying Sagremor, freeing Sagremor to go after his stolen horse (his initial rection) while Perceval can rescue the girl. Again the tension posed by a choice of action is diffused in the Gauvain episode as the crux of the episode is not the choice between the rescue of Dodinel and the rescue of the *pucele*. There is, however, the delay of immediate action of the part of Gauvain as he decides whether or not to believe a fellow knight. The decision of Bors when faced with the dilemma is of narrative and traditional importance[44] and is related in full. It is incorporated into Manessier with embellishment, becoming the amplification of all earlier episodes of the *pucele esforciee* motif.

By repeatedly including the rescue of women in the Forest to the adventures allotted to each knight, the narrator emphasises the routineness of such an adventure but also places the rescue of women as an integral component of knighthood. When we reach the Bors section of the romance the problematic nature of automatic response is raised (there might be someone more needy round the corner) and also the question of who is more important to save: the knight or the girl; as virginity is of such importance in *La Queste* it takes precedence here.

The repetition of the motif of the *pucele esforciee* indicates it has a significant role within Manessier's *Continuation*. Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner states that "repetition

[44] Jean Marx, 'Étude sur les rapports de la 3e continuation du *Conte du Graal* de Chrétien de Troyes avec le cycle du *Lancelot en Prose* en général et la *Queste del Saint Graal* en particulier', *Romania,* 84 (1963), pp. 451-477.

signals which blocks of narrative are to be superimposed to determine the particular "sens" of the common "matière". The specific combination of repetition and change, whether from one part of the romance to another or from one romance to another produces meaning".[45] Norris J. Lacy, on the subject of motif transfer defines this feature as

> ...the borrowing of motifs that are then assigned to different characters either in the same work or across textual borders. The result may be more complex and subtle than that of figural borrowing because there is a double transformation: a motif borrowed either directly or in re-worked form necessarily has its effect and meaning transformed when it is fitted to the structure or ideological complexion of the new text or passage, but that difference is also magnified in complicated ways when it is associated with another character.[46]

The replication of the motif of the rescue of a *pucele* and its assignment to all the prominent knights in Manessier's *Continuation* indicates the prominent role it takes in the expression of the definition of knighthood, as opposed to the motif simply appearing due to an automatic inclusion of stock episodes in a romance comprised of borrowings and amalgamations of other sources and regurgitation of formulae. The recurrence of the conventional rescue of a distressed female indicates that perhaps Manessier is utilising this typical chivalric episode to establish the credentials of his principal knights.[47]

Kathryn Gravdal has demonstrated that the rape motif in Chrétien is utilised to highlight the moral motivation of the chivalric code and its frequent appearance in Manessier suggests that the motif functions as a paradigm of correct chivalric behaviour.[48] The seemingly trivial and clichéd episode of the knight rescuing a "damsel in distress" here assumes a relevance in the ideology of the romance in that the motif serves as a reinforcement of the requirements of chivalry designated by the Church; furthermore, the emphasis of the repeated motif is realised in the Bors episode, prepared

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[45] Bruckner, *Narrative Invention*, pp. 181-2.
[46] Norris J. Lacy, 'Motif Transfer in Arthurian Romance,' in *The Medieval Opus*, ed. by Douglas Kelly (Amsterdam: Rodopi 1996), pp. 157-168, (p. 158).
[47] In the *Perlesvaus*, Arthur gives the role of knights as "...por les dames e por les damoiseles se doivent pener li chevalier" (288: 6785-6).
[48] Gravdal, *Ravishing Maidens*.

by the earlier episodes. Women function as the ideal victims, wholly objectified and reduced to a threatened body that represents the potential vulnerability of the patriarchal order.

> Patriarchal heterosexuality can best be discussed in terms of one or another form of the traffic in women: it is the use of women as exchangeable, perhaps symbolic, property for the primary purpose of cementing the bonds of men with men.[49]

As commodities, and means of exchange that cement bonds between men, virginity is essential, thus when virginity is threatened, the exchange system is threatened. Furthermore, through their distress, women inspire pity in knights, moralising and ennobling an action that is fundamentally concerned with social exigence: the role of knights is to protect the order, preserving virginity and maintaining the circulation of one of the principle currencies of patriarchy, with its potential for creating homosocial bonds.

Manessier's *Continuation*: the triumph of homosocial bonding

In addition to the exchange of women, it is through the action of protecting women that homosocial bonds are formed, often at the expense of the wishes of women, a theme that recurs, like the motif of the *pucele esforciee*, throughout Manessier's *Continuation*. As Manessier moves from the adventures of Perceval to those of Sagremor, two out of the three adventures recounted involve Sagremor aiding women. In the work as a whole, out of thirty episodes, eleven can be termed "Grail" episodes in that they specifically deal with the quest of Perceval; ten involve encounters of some sort with women; and the remaining nine are concerned with various types of romance adventures, such as Perceval's relationship with the Biau Mauvais and Arthur's court at Pentecost.

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[49] Sedgwick, *Between Men: English literature and male homosocial desire*, pp. 25-26.

Unlike the episodes of Perceval and Sagremor, which are self-contained and principally serve as examples of the interaction of knights and women in the Forest, the adventures of Gauvain are instigated by and wholly concerned with women, who attempt to attain a degree of control over their affairs.

The Sore Pucele actively seeks Gauvain in order to recall him to his responsibilities and undertake vengeance for the death of the knight, Silimac. The demands of the Sore Pucele oblige Gauvain on a two-fold level to take action: firstly, his own consciousness of his fault regarding Silimac, evidently experiencing guilt concerning the death of the knight in his charge when he appears in the narrative:

> Molt fu iriez, molt fu pansis
> Dou chevalier qui fu ocis
> Au pavaillon an son conduit;
> N'ot ris ne joie ne deduit. (35055-35058)

Secondly, the Sore Pucele is another "damsel in distress": her castle is besieged by a knight who originally wished to force her into marriage but now wishes revenge for the death of his son at the hands of the Sore Pucele. By aiding the Sore Pucele, Gauvain is able to atone for the neglect of his duties regarding a fellow knight; in addition, undertaking such an adventure will maintain or increase his standing within society.

Like Sagremor and Perceval, Gauvain is assigned the conventional episode of the rescue of an unknown *pucele* in the Forest who is accused of killing her brother in order to gain possession of his land. It is a case of false accusation, for she maintains, along with the local populace, that Dodinel is responsible. Gauvain intervenes and as a reward asks for the release of Dodinel which is achieved after some reluctance on the part of the *pucele*.

The episode of the Rescue of Dodinel opens with the apparent stock scene of the unjustified maltreatment of the *pucele* by *garçons*, (35400) compounded by the overt grief of the populace; thus the scene is set for the arrival of Gauvain and the Sore Pucele. They are met with the sight of the beleaguered girl and the distraught locals, whom

Manessier allows to vocalise their distress in indirect speech, while the girl herself remains silent. The depiction of grief presents a picture that can only have one interpretation: that of the innocence of the girl in the face of unjustified aggression. Despite the explanation given to him by a fellow knight who evidently believes in the girl's guilt, Gauvain rejects out of hand the possibility of her culpability:

> "Ce ne porroit pas estre voir,
> Fait soi Gauvain, a mon avis." (35426- 7)

The crowd voices its protests at this point, laying the blame on Dodinel and it is their emotive words that convince Gauvain, in accord with all his chivalric instincts in this situation, that a crime is taking place which he quickly moves to prevent:

> "Por Dieu, or an aiez merci
> Et la delivrez de peril
> Que ne la livrent a essil
> Ceste mauvese gent felone."
> A ceste parolle esperone
> Son destrier monseignor Gauvain,
> Et dist: "Fuiez, garçon vilain!" (35442-35448)

The devaluation of the other knight through the words utilised by Gauvain indicates his stance on the matter. Yvonne Robreau comments regarding insults made pertaining to class:

> A un moment où la noblesse assiste non sans angoisse à la montée de la classe bourgeoise, qui menace de lui prendre ses prérogatives, à un moment où par réaction elle se raidit dans cette idée que l'honneur est subordonné à la pureté du sang, des insultes telles que vilain, ribaut, constituent un outrage particulièrement dégradant.[50]

The other knight is now depicted as the antithesis of courtliness, to all intents and purposes perpetrating a crime equated with the type of activity already seen in Manessier's *Continuation* in the episodes concerning Perceval and Sagremor, that of the

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[50] Robreau, *L'Honneur et la honte: leur expression dans les romans en prose du Lancelot - Graal (XIIe - XIIIe siècles)* (Geneva: Droz, 1981), p. 126.

unjustified and violent persecution of a *pucele* in the Forest that necessitates the immediate intervention on the part of the knight.

Gauvain overlooks the accusation against Dodinel at this point, uninterested in an investigation into why the knight believes the girl to be guilty of murder when the general consensus is that the perpetrator was Dodinel.

The *pucele* in the Rescue of Dodinel episode is not granted any direct speech: the crowd voices her situation, appealing to the mercy of God and to Gauvain (35434-35445). The narrator turns his attention to her after the accusing knight counters Gauvain's aggressive stance and she receives three lines of *discours indirect*:

> La pucelle, qui molt dotoit
> Lou feu ou amenee estoit,
> Crie merci a jointes mains. (35467-35469)

The short portrait of the frightened girl and her supplications, granted only indirect speech, serves to depict her as an exalted object. It is inserted immediately following the reasoned argument of the knight, evidently convinced of her guilt, as he points out to Gauvain that:

> "Onques a home n'ambeli,
> Qui proudom fust, murtre a soufrir." (35458-35459).

The plaintive insertion of the distress of the *pucele* mirrors the lament of the crowd following the initial statement by the knight and again serves to render reasoned argument futile in this situation. Gauvain is stirred by pity ("Molt an ot grant pitié Gauvains" (35470) and by preconception: *puceles* are always innocent victims in these circumstances (35426-7).

In the situation where all concerned believe they are right, the combat between the knight and Gauvain takes the form of a judicial battle and his success in the ensuing combat confirms her innocence. It is the piteousness of both the crowd and the girl that

motivates and justifies his actions; the crowd reinforces the fact that a crime is being committed in the persecution of the *pucele*, supplying the necessary background information. The narrator confirms that Gauvain was right to ignore the explanation of the knight by referring to his "fauseté" (35506). Gauvain already disbelieves the charge (35426); girls in this type of situation are to be rescued but the crowd serves to reinforce Gauvain's possibly unjustified belief in her innocence (he does not pay much attention to the knight's explanation, or seek to investigate the matter further). He is motivated by an automatic compulsion to react in a set way to certain circumstances, but also by pity, focusing upon one issue at a time: firstly the rescue of the *pucele* from wrongful burning (the fate of the knight is to receive her proposed punishment) and secondly to secure the release of Dodinel from her prison. Her position has now changed from that of victim to captor, and what is more, in Gauvain's eyes, the wrongful captor of Dodinel in the face of all the evidence.

The episode also serves to illuminate the fact that knights usurp any female attempt to gain control of the situation; the *pucele* cedes to the convention of granting a reward to her saviour; rescue necessitates the custom of gratitude and reward even at the expense of justice. It does appear that Dodinel is responsible for the death of the girl's brother but any judicial investigation into this matter is precluded on account of the higher, ritual obligation the *pucele* owes to Gauvain:

> "Sire, fait elle, or vos soufrez.
> Por droit neant vos i ofrez,
> Car je suis celle qui vos rant
> Tot a vostre conmandemant.
> Ja n'an iert autre consoil pris,
> Que tant vos ain et lo et pris
> Que je ne vorroie pas fere
> Chose qui vos deüst desplere." (35559-35566)

This confirms the situation present in the first episode of the *pucele esforicee* in which Perceval is left to rescue the *pucele* while Sagremor pursues his own stolen horse. It is the knight who is in control of the situation and the knight who can demand reward. Here

justice suffers to the benefit of custom since bonding between two knights is prioritised over the claims of non-combatants.

Keith Busby notes the possibility of Gauvain defending an unjust cause and raises the point that this occurred in the Noire Espine episode of *Yvain*, in which Gauvain chooses to take the part of the elder sister. Busby concludes that "in both cases, it might be argued, he is responding to social demands and not to the situation as such".[51] The episode in Manessier is certainly formulaic; Gauvain does respond to the tableau of what is apparently the wrongful burning of a *pucele* without much investigation, perceiving the situation to be the same as that in which a girl is in danger of imminent rape by a group of knights in the Forest. Women in such circumstances are depicted as innocent victims of aggression; the action taken by Gauvain is an automatic response to a conventional situation and the legal intricacies are overlooked. The truth is never revealed following the release of Dodinel from prison, and justice is subordinated to the fraternity of knighthood. Gauvain, however, does not believe in the guilt of Dodinel because the status of Dodinel as Arthurian knight should debar him from committing murder and it is this concept, of the rectitude of the Arthurian knight, that triumphs. We do not know whom to believe, although the attention paid by the narrator to the crowd and his own intervention indicate the truth of the matter.

In the episode of the Rescue of Dodinel, it is clear that the fraternity of Arthurian knights is prioritised above justice; the demands of the female victim are ignored. However, in Manessier's *Continuation*, the potential demands of the female victim are also feared: the female voice is depicted as excessive and vengeful in contrast to the reasonable and measured outcomes to combat pursued by the knights themselves. The motif of fear on the part of the defeated knight of the threat of female vengeance first appears in the episode of the Chastiaux au Pucelles [*sic*]. Sagremor arrives at the castle populated only by women, with the exceptions of a clerk and a chaplain who pass their time singing in church (34236-34240).

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[51] Busby, *Gauvain in Old French Literature*, p. 61 (footnote).

The episode begins with the complaint of the Lady of the Chastiaux au Pucelles against a knight, Tallidés, who is besieging the castle in order to obtain by force, as the lady of the castle will not give her consent, one of the girls resident within the castle whom he has loved since childhood. The Lady of the Chastiaux au Pucelles reports the situation:

> "Mais un chevalier que molt pris,
> Et qui molt est de grant puissance,
> An ama une des s'anfance.
> Por ce que doner ne li voil,
> Dit que trop suis de grant orgoil;
> Ceanz nos a fait asegier
> Et son ost fait laïs logier.
> Chascuns jor nos fait asaillir,
> Mais n'osons contre lui saillir." (34190-34198)

concluding:

> "N'il n'a si hardi chevalier
> De Galles jusqu'an Danemarche.
> Taillidés a non de la Marche,
> Vaillanz est et de grant vertu." (34202-34205)

The use of *vertu* and *pris* distinguishes this description of an adversary from others: adversaries are often said to be of *grant puissance, vaillanz* and *hardi*, serving to establish their physical credentials in battle rendering the victory by the hero more significant, but they are not said to possess courtly attributes since adversaries, by definition, are not courtly.[52] Tallidés falls into the category of adversary only through his actions, the besieging of a castle of young women.

Tallidés arrives at the castle the following morning and calls out in a "voiz belle":

> "Dame, randez moi la pucelle
> Que j'ai si longuemant ammee," (34354-5)

[52] See Chapter four for an examination of the representation of adversaries.

This is followed with a threat of violence (34356-61). A female messenger is dispatched from the castle to outline the terms of the single combat with Sagremor to which Tallidés responds "cortoisemant" (34420).

After his defeat Tallidés is alarmed to learn that Sagremor intends to hand him over to the Lady of the Chastiaux au Pucelles, for he does not expect any mercy from her, and that "...elle a de moi ocirre anvie" (34552), emphasising that "La teste me feroit tranchier" (34556). Sagremor responds to the fears of Tallidés, opening his reply by addressing Tallidés as "amis" (34563), a change from "vassaux" used before and during the combat:

> "Puis [que tu t'es en m]erci mis,
> Se tu via[us la merci avoir],
> Faire t'estu[et par estovoir],
> Mom [*sic*] plaisir et [ma volenté].
> Je ne suis pas antalenté
> Que je ailleurs aler te face.
> Si con tu iés, armee face,
> Va a la dame droite voie
> Et li di que je t'i anvoie.
> Sa pucelle quite li clainmes." (34564-34573)

Sagremor gives Tallidés his assurance of safety on his delivery to the Lady of the Chastiaux au Pucelles declaring that:

> "Je n'i voi nule mesprison.
> Des que de par moi i eras,
> Bone prison i troveras." (34578-80)

The act of surrender serves as a bond between the two knights with Sagremor as the ultimate guarantor of safety. Whatever the intentions of the Lady may be, Sagremor's promise has decided the outcome of the surrender, preventing the Lady of the Chastiaux au Pucelles from instigating any violent retribution of her own and her authority is subordinated to an obligation to Sagremor as a consequence of his victory over Tallidés.

The fears of Tallidés turn out to be unfounded. In the terms of the combat set out by the Lady of the Chastiaux au Pucelles and relayed to Tallidés by the messenger, there was no hint of any dire consequences should he be defeated by Sagremor, she merely requires that he returns to his lands peacefully (34401-34406), also statings that if he is victorious, he wins the *pucele* and the castle (34396-34400). Following his defeat, Tallidés introduces from nowhere the notion that he might meet an adverse fate at the hands of the lady of the castle but the actual meeting between the two does not conform to the scenario he had depicted. Tallidés humbles himself before the Lady and bemoans the fact that he will never have his love. The lament establishes Tallidés as a courtly lover as it contains elements typical of *fin'amor*: the complexion of the loved one; the fact that he will die through separation from this love; his grief is so great that he is unable to give voice to his pain:[53]

> "M'amie a la fresche color,
> Dont j'ai eü tant de dolor
> Que ne porroie dire, non!
> M'estuet quiter, ou voille ou non.
> Quiter? Certes, voire de boiche;
> Mais tel dolor au cuer m'en toiche
> Que je morrai, ce cuit, de duel.
> Et ce fust orandroit mon [v]uel." (34641-34648)

The lament sways the Lady of the Chastiaux au Pucelles "qui molt fu cortoise" (34649), therefore susceptible to such sensibilities, even though she is not the object of the lament. She responds favourably towards the expression of love uttered by Tallidés and like an *amie* herself grants him a reward for his efforts, releasing Tallidés from his prison once the nature of the love Tallidés holds for the *pucele*, his anguish at their imminent and permanent separation becomes evident (34655-34656). He begs her to give the *pucele* to him (34669) and she is moved to pity:

> La dame qui ces moz antent,
> Grant pitié an son cuer l'am prist;
> Car au paroles bien aprist

[53] This corresponds to the concept of *fin'amor* that to love is to suffer, see Paolo Cherchi, *The Ambiguity of Courtly Love in Andreas Capellanus' Model* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), p. 28; also Sandra Resnick Alfonsi, *Masculine Submission in Troubadour Lyric*, p. 236.

> Que il de bone amor l'amoit
> Et por ce que sa foi cremoit." (34676-80)

Finally, after reminding Tallidés of the damage he has inflicted on her lands, she agrees to hand over the *pucele* "por vostre amor" (34695) and love wins the day to the much referred to *joie* of all concerned except that of the *pucele* herself who remains silent, taking the role of an object in this exchange between Tallidés and the Lady. The Lady of the Chastiaux au Pucelles fulfils a masculine role in bestowing the *pucele* upon Tallidés, having the power to dispose of the girl as she sees fit, although it is the response of the Lady to the lamentings of *fin'amor* that prompts the happy resolution rather than the exchange of a woman to further an alliance between Tallidés and herself. Tallidés is already bound to the terms of the agreement made with Sagremor, raised before the combat, and the gift of the *pucele* benefits only Tallidés (and possibly the *pucele* herself, judging by the general consensus of delight that the wedding generates). The Lady of the Chastiaux au Pucelles may appear autonomous, but in fact her actions conform to the ideal outcome of the situation, the one desired by Tallidés, while the wishes of the *pucele* are not consulted. She also, unknowingly, colludes in the promise given to Tallidés by Sagremor, that of the former's safety, and, despite appearing to take charge in the situation, her actions serve principally the interests of the male parties in these circumstances.

It is the *fin'amor* element in the Tallidés episode that differentiates it from the other episodes of the same type in Manessier. Tallidés is redeemed because he exhibits the traits of *fin'amor*, a recognised form of ennobling behaviour; only those who have proved themselves of excellent character may be found worthy to love or be loved,[54] while Tallidés is depicted as negative only through action.

The outcome of the Tallidés episode is unusual in that it is resolved in favour of the defeated knight despite his aggressive actions. It initially appears that the episode is

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[54] Cherchi, *The Ambiguity of Courtly Love*, p. 26. See also D. W. Robertsons's analysis of Andreas Capellanus in *Preface to Chaucer* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), regarding the nobility of love and the automatic accruing of nobility for those who love.

the same as the one in which King Margon lays siege to the castle of the Sore Pucele: both are seeking marriage from a lady within. However, the marriage intended by Margon of his son and the Sore Pucele is not desired by the Sore Pucele herself; indeed she has an *ami* herself, who is killed, sparking her own revenge in dispatching Margon's son thus precipitating the siege by Margon. At first the conflict between knight and lady is caused by her reluctance to comply with his wishes concerning marriage and following drastic action on her part, the episode becomes a saga of revenge.

The actions of King Margon are condemned while Tallidés is rewarded. The fundamental difference between the two episodes of aggression is that in the Tallidés episode, the theme of the wrongfully besieged female is combined with a theme of thwarted love that naturally takes precedence: the *fin'amor* of Tallidés for the unnamed *pucele* ultimately deserves reward. A further difference between the two episodes is that the object of the knight's desire in this case is not the lady of the castle and therefore possession of the castle and lands through (enforced) marriage but a *pucele* within the castle itself, whom he then takes to his own lands (34724). It could even be said that Tallidés is, in fact, the hero of this episode (rather than Sagremor); he achieves his aim because he abides by the conventions of combat (especially that of surrender to the victorious Arthurian knight); furthermore, he is motivated by love and it is his ability to express his love for the girl that causes him to be successful.

It seems that the fears of Tallidés concerning the vengeful actions of the Lady of the Chastiaux au Pucelles were groundless and can be seen as an automatic response to a formulaic situation. This is the first episode in Manessier's *Continuation* that introduces the theme of masculine fear of a vengeful woman and in later episodes such fear is justified. Since the theme recurs throughout the work it possibly underscores some sort of masculine anxiety and mistrust of women in a position of authority over knights.

Corin Corley links episodes in Manessier to those in the Prose-*Lancelot*,[55] seeing similarities between the episode of the Rescue of Dodinel with the rescue of Meleagant's

[55] Corley, 'Manessier's Continuation of *Perceval* and the Prose-*Lancelot* Cycle', pp. 574-591.

sister by Lancelot in the Prose-*Lancelot*. Corley also draws attention to parallels between the episode of King Margon and the corresponding episode of Chastiaux au Pucelles in Manessier with a similar episode in the Prose-*Lancelot* involving the championing by Bors of two sisters under siege from an aggressor (who bears the name Gallidés).[56]

The episode of King Margon appears in variant form in the Prose-*Lancelot*. Bors defends two maidens from the aggressor Gallidés del Blanc Castel, who is also their uncle. Like the Margon episode, the Gallidés episode of the Prose-*Lancelot* is concerned with a *mariage forcé*, but unlike the Tallidés episode wherein the marriage is at first thwarted by an older, female authority. In the Prose-*Lancelot*, the typically "evil" seneschal is to be the husband, contrasting to Margon's son in Manessier. Bors defeats the seneschal who then pleads for mercy, adding that he will go anywhere except the maiden's castle.[57] Bors declares that he will hand the seneschal to the women of the castle to which the seneschal replies:

> "je vueil miels morir par vos que par els." (XLIV: 25)

Unlike the knights in Manessier, Bors pays no attention to the claim of the knight that he faces death at the hands of the lady of the castle. The author, in describing the fate of the seneschal at the castle comments that the Lady "respont molt iriement comme feme trop corocie" (XLIV: 31) and continues that "kar por le grant corroz qu'ele avoit vers lui en fist ele tel chose dont ele se repenti puis molt durement" indicating that her actions in killing the seneschal are unwarranted and excessive. The fate of the seneschal is revealed to Bors by another defeated adversary who again begs for mercy. Bors still cannot envisage sparing the defeated knight and sends him to the castle while the knight tells him:

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[56] Corley comments on the connection of Gallidés and Tallidés (p. 581), drawing attention to the similarity of g and t in manuscript versions. R. S. Loomis has pointed out the transmission of similar, distorted names as due to oral transmission of folk tales, *Celtic Myth and Arthurian Romance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1927).

[57] A. Micha, 9 vols (Geneva: Droz 1983), II: XLIV: 23.

"se je i muir la honte en sera vostre et la perte moie." (XLV. 13)

The death of the seneschal is a requirement of the episode corresponding to the death of Margon's son in Manessier, which results in the siege of the castle of the Sore Pucele, initially necessitating the return of Silimac. The death of Silimac precipitates the quest of the Sore Pucele for Gauvain. In Manessier, the Arthurian knight arrives at a later point in the episode, while in the Prose-*Lancelot* Bors appears earlier and is significant in contributing to the mechanism of the narrative. Granting him mercy, at that point, would have altered the progression of the episode as it provides the momentum for the second part of the episode concerning the revenge of Gallidés.

It is evident that the episode has been re-worked in two forms in Manessier's *Continuation*, as Corley has illustrated. The first time it appears the essence of the episode has been transformed from one concerning violent revenge taken by women when faced with male aggression to an episode where the aggressor is in fact motivated by *fin'amor*, while Manessier preserves the name used in the Prose-*Lancelot*. The motive of fear of female vengeance is still present (and is present in all the episodes concerning male aggression towards women) although the incentive for vengeance, the death of a lover, is not present in the Tallidés episode, as the lover here is the aggressor. The second time the episode appears, as the episode of King Margon, it follows the structure of the Prose-*Lancelot* episode although the initial events concerning the beginning of the siege following the refusal of the Sore Pucele to marry Margon's son and her violent revenge following the death of her *ami* are related to Gauvain by the Sore Pucele and do not unfold as part of the present narrative.

However, her revenge upon Margon's son is essential to the episode as it underlines the fact that Margon's fear of death at her hands following his surrender is real (36031-3604). But unlike Bors in the Prose-*Lancelot*, Gauvain adheres to the Arthurian custom of the rehabilitation of the enemy knight following his surrender; he and Margon form a bond ensuing from Margon's actions at his defeat, denying the Sore Pucele her vengeance as he does again on a later occasion. Unlike the Prose-*Lancelot* in which the

convention of complying with the demands of the lady is followed at the expense of the formation of bonds between adversaries once mercy has been pleaded, in Manessier's *Continuation*, the convention is superseded by the notion that the lady is in debt to her champion; the wishes of the hero concerning the defeated knight take precedence.

Chrétien utilises episodes of this type in most of his romances. The first occurs in *Yvain*[58] where the hero is called upon to defend the Lady of Noroison against the aggressive actions of Count Aliers. Aliers is defeated by Yvain and has to deliver himself to the Lady of Noroison and "se metroit an sa prison" (3288). However, the only obligation required of Aliers is that he

> ...ses pertes restoerra,
> Quanqu'ele an mosterra par prueves
> Et refera ses meisons nueves,
> Que il avoit par terre mises. (3310-14)

Aliers has not expressed any fear concerning his treatment at the hands of the Lady of Noroison and her demands are similar to those voiced by the Lady of the Chastiaux au Pucelles, that Tallidés must leave her lands (34401-34406).

The theme of the fear of death at the hands of the female victim is introduced in the *Conte du Graal* in the episode of Clamadoz. Both Clamadoz and his seneschal following their respective defeats by Perceval express their anxiety at the prospect of being delivered to Blanchefleur, which, according to them, would result in their death. Perceval instead sends them to Arthur's court.[59] Aguingueron the Seneschal fears the vengeance of Blanchefleur as, along with Clamadoz, he was responsible for the death of her father. Perceval has, of course, been advised to be merciful to defeated adversaries by Gornemont de Gohort (1597-1605); justice is seen to be carried out by Perceval while the act of taking vengeance for the death of her father and loss of her knights is denied

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[58] *Yvain, le chevalier au lion*, ed. by Wendelin Foerster with introduction, notes and glossary by T. B. W. Reid (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1942; repr. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984).

[59] *Le Conte du Graal,* ed.by Charles Méla (Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1990), vs 2216-2223; 2622-2639.

Blanchefleur. Clamadoz and the Seneschal are then employed to serve a function on behalf of Perceval, that of messengers who relay news of his success to Arthur's court and to Keu in particular.

A development of the theme also appears in the *Charrette*. The sister of Meleagant demands the head of the Orgueilleux[60] and Chrétien utilises the situation to present a discourse between Pity and Generosity ("Largesce et Pitiez" Méla: 2838). Lancelot cannot decide the matter himself, instead initiating another combat with the knight and leaving the outcome to God; ultimately, the maiden receives the head of the knight, a result that is viewed as the correct outcome. Leslie Topsfield sees the Orgueilleux as representing the powers of evil and epitomising the self-seeking nature of knighthood, a prefiguration of Meleagant,[61] and the *pucele* herself warns Lancelot that unless he kills the Orgueilleux, the knight will later seek to do him harm, again emphasising this figure as foreshadowing the *desleauté* of Meleagant.[62] However, on a narrative level, this is the necessary outcome in order for her to be able to return the favour to Lancelot and release him from the tower where Meleagant is holding him captive, one of the few occasions within the *Charrette* where the notion of the reciprocation of service is actually fulfilled.

Tallidés is not the only knight in Manessier who fears death at the hands of the woman he has wronged; the would-be abductor of Dodinel's *amie* is alarmed as Perceval initially wishes to hand him over to the *pucele*:

> "Ha! biaux doz sire, as tu desir,
> Fait cil, que je perde la vie?
> Elle n'a de riens nee anvie
> Fors que de moi a la mort metre.
> Ne te voilles pas antremetre,
> Frans homs, de moi a mort livrer." (38728-38733)

[60] *Le Chevalier de la Charrette,* ed. by Charles Méla (Paris: Librairie Générale Française, 1991), vs 2797-2815.
[61] Topsfield, *Chrétien de Troyes: a study of the Arthurian romances* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 141.
[62] Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner, 'Le Chevalier de la Charrette (Lancelot)', in *The Romances of Chrétien de Troyes: a symposium*, ed. by Douglas Kelly (Lexington, Ky.: French Forum, 1985), pp. 161-162.

Perceval concedes once he hears the objections of the defeated knight, dispatching him to Arthur's court. Like Tallidés and Margon in Manessier, and Clamadoz in the *Conte du Graal*, Aridés also appeals to Perceval not to send him to Biau Repere following his defeat:

C'Aridés ne pot plus sofrir,
S'espee li covint oufrir
Por merci querre et demander.
Et dist ne savra conmander
Chose qu'il ne li plese a fere
Fors que d'aler a Biau Repere,
Car illuec cuidoit il de voir
Que merci ne poïst avoir. (39215-32922).

This appears in indirect speech and is a contraction of the earlier appearances of the motif, in which knights explain their fear further.

Gauvain spares Margon from death contrary to the will of the Sore Pucele, who does not conceal her disappointment that Gauvain grants Margon mercy:

"Ha! fait elle, tant mar feïstes
Qant vos lou chief ne li tolistes.
Tant eüssiez bien esploitié!
Domaige est quant est respitié
De mort, se Damediex m'amant." (36109-36113)

Again, the defeated knight is sent to Arthur's court. However, Margon redeems himself in a later adventure, which is somewhat unusual, as defeated knights generally disappear from the text once bonds between themselves and the victorious Arthurian knight have established the defeated party as a member of the Arthurian fraternity; bonds that are solidified by returning to Arthur's court, and fulfilling their additional roles as relayers of news of the hero.

The Ritual of Mercy: tool of homosocial bonding

In Manessier's *Continuation* there are two types of antagonists in the Forest: firstly, there are knights who roam in gangs, usually attacking women, who are termed *pautonier* and *vilain*, a terminology that denigrates these knights by equating them to an inferior social station. The emphasis is placed on their wickedness, reinforced by the crime they are perpetrating and the fact that, significantly, there is no attempt at surrender following defeat. The second type is the solitary knight, who may also be undertaking some aggressive action towards women, but will engage in dialogue and comply with the conventions of surrender. There then emerges a pattern of defeat and surrender, followed by dispatch of the defeated aggressor to Arthur's court where rehabilitation can occur with the knight becoming a true Arthurian knight and a member of the Round Table. There are four exceptions to the pattern in Manessier: Keu and Partinal, who refuse to surrender; the groups of *chevaliers* perpetrating unjustifiable violence against women; Hector, who in combat with Perceval is mortally wounded but healed by the Grail (the combat ends with both knights too weak to fight on); and Tallidés, who does surrender but is not dispatched to Arthur's court.

The theme that materialises from the episodes of defeated aggressor knights sent to Arthur's court is that they are subsequently pardoned regardless of their crimes: defeat by an acclaimed Arthurian knight is an important step on the path to social integration, concluded by the knight's later incorporation into the Arthurian court. This is clearly seen in the arrival of Perceval's prisoners at Arthur's court where their crimes are overlooked, including those of Aridés d'Escavallon, the knight responsible for the besieging of Blanchefleur. Both Margon and Aridés are welcomed into the Round Table and their defeats by Gauvain and Perceval are viewed in a positive light.

At their arrival at court it is the defeat and surrender to the hero that becomes the focus of the interrogation by Arthur, who is overjoyed to learn any news of Perceval. The would-be abductor of Dodinel's *amie* relates his story to Arthur in full, describing how he had abducted the *pucele* while Perceval was unarmed. The knight then reveals that

> "Mon duel, mon annui et ma honte
> Vos cont, car vers moi la conquist
> Percevaux, et si me requist,
> Sus ma fience voiremant
> Et sus mon loial seremant,
> Que je ceanz prison tandroie
> De par lui, et me contandroie
> Vers vos con chevalier loiaux."   (39482-38489)

To which the king responds

> "Se de mes pechiez soie saux,
> Fait li rois, molt fait a amer.
> Et vos ne faites a blasmer
> De ce qu'iestes par si prodome
> Conquis; par Saint Pere de Rome,
> Ja mains ne vos an amerai."   (39490-39495)

The emphasis has shifted from a criticism of his aggressive actions that necessitated the intervention of Perceval to a pardon by King Arthur simply because of his defeat by such a knight as Perceval. The crime itself becomes irrelevant as the real focus of the incident is the interaction between the two knights in the form of engaging in single combat, the surrender that follows defeat, and the reporting of the incident to masculine society. Interest is centred upon the honour of both parties; honour on the part of the loser at least being derived in part from defeat by such a renowned knight, and the honour of the victor being increased by the report of the combat to the Arthurian court. The female victim is discarded: her role is simply to create a situation in which a combat between men can be instigated, the objective of which is the ensuing bonding following surrender. It is little wonder that enemy knights seek justice from the victorious Arthurian knights rather than the women they have wronged for this system of justice protects their own interests.

As Aridés arrives at Arthur's court he delivers the message from Perceval and of his own situation he reports:

"Honte m'est que jel reconnoisse,
Mais an ma fïence est l'angoisse
Ne je trespasser ne la voil.
Et de ce que je di me dueil,
Filz de roi suis et niés de roi;
A po que je ne me desroi
Dou grant corroz. Et nonporquant
Ne m'an doi pas corrocier tant,
Ne n'an doi pas estre blasmez,
Por ce qu'il est si renonmez
De prouesce et de hardemant." (39531-39541)

Aridés's crime, to force marriage (a parallel episode to that of the Margon episode and the Tallidés section), is effectively erased by his defeat. While he may feel some shame at being forced to surrender, this is also negated by the fact he has been defeated by such a fine knight. Arthur is overjoyed to receive Aridés at court, releasing him from his obligation immediately. Through surrender and dispatch to the court, in addition to delivery of greetings from Perceval, Aridés and the other prisoners are absorbed into Arthurian society.

Margon is treated slightly differently. He is condemned by his actions firstly in his attempt to force a marriage, and secondly in the relentless siege, at which point Margon is motivated by the desire to secure vengeance for the murder of his son at the hands of the Sore Pucele. The crimes of Margon are related by the Sore Pucele in direct speech, she reveals that Margon murdered her *ami*, an action that initiated the chain of events. Unlike Tallidés, Margon is not described as *cortois* but he does surrender. Furthermore once he learns he has been defeated by none other than Gauvain, he is overjoyed, responding to defeat in a courteous manner:

"Molt m'a hui Diex fait grant honor,
Que conquis suis par le meillor
Chevalier qui or soit an terre." (36077-36079)

The episode of Gauvain and King Margon serves to demonstrate the way in which masculine bonds are reinforced at the expense of the desires (real or imagined) of women. Margon is delighted when he learns the identity of his conqueror (36074-36079);

from that point the emphasis of the episode shifts towards the bonding between the two knights, despite the knowledge of Margon's previous crimes. Furthermore, following his defeat, Margon becomes a positive figure: it is while he is *en route* to Arthur's court that he becomes the hero of an episode detailing the rescue of his sister from a siege by Gorgari. Margon is thus reformed by his defeat and surrender to Gauvain, he then takes on the role of hero himself in an adventure similar to the one in which he took the role of aggressor. It is the mechanism of surrender to the hero, with the necessary engagement with courtly ritual (dialogue), rather than the actual dispatch to the Arthurian court that is the key moment in the reformation of a previously negative character.

The mechanism of surrender serves to perpetuate bonds between knights; it is effective in the recruitment and return of highborn knights to the Round Table thus consolidating the masculine order. Furthermore, on a personal level, the ritual of mercy is useful as a conformation to religious requirements, fulfilling the requirements of the Church, and frees knights from the sin of homicide; in addition, the ritual of mercy confers morality upon knight: he has moral worth as befits his status in life as a knight. Finally, but no less significantly, sparing the defeated is useful to increase honour and worth.

In Manessier's *Continuation* such episodes serve to increase the prowess of the victorious knight and the fraternity of the Round Table over the demands of women in the Forest, far removed from the masculine world. Norris J. Lacy refers to this practice as a confirmation of the centrality of the Arthurian court.[63] Women serve essentially as devices to further interaction between men, functioning as the motivation for combat between knights that results in the reinforcement of the bonds between men at the expense of the wishes of women and even of justice. The Custom of Logres, discussed by Sarah Kay in her article 'La représentation de la féminité dans les chansons de geste'[64] is itself a mechanism that serves this purpose. Alone, a woman should be safe from attack by knights, although this proves otherwise on many occasions, especially in Manessier.

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[63] Lacy, 'The Typology of Arthurian Romance,' in *The Legacy of Chrétien de Troyes*, ed. by Norris J. Lacy, Douglas Kelly & Keith Busby, 2 vols (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1987) I, pp. 33-57, (p. 39).
[64] Kay, 'La représentation de la féminité dans les chansons de geste', p. 231.

Once under attack the intervention of a knight is necessary to protect the woman through combat with the aggressive knight, raising the potential for bonds to form between the two knights following defeat. Furthermore, the Custom of Logres dictates that, when a woman is accompanied by a knight, it is acceptable for another knight to attempt to abduct her, her role being that of the reason for combat while the real focus of interest is the interaction between the two knights, their bonding after surrender and the honour that ensues from such an interaction. Irigaray stated that "in order for a product – a woman? – to have value, two men, at least, have to invest (in) her"[65] although, concerning the Custom of Logres, the woman has value only insofar as she is a motivation for interaction between men, rather than as a commodity to be exchanged.

What can be construed from these episodes is an infallible male hegemony, despite the trappings of *cortoisie* that these episodes present through traditional situation and formulaic dialogue. The frequency of episodes involving the rescue of a woman from a male aggressor, only for the aggressor to become, through defeat and the ritual of surrender, a valued member of the Arthurian court, exposes their function as a necessary form of masculine interaction, a productive way of increasing the brotherhood of Arthurian knights. Indeed it appears that it is through the ritual of defeat and surrender alone that Margon becomes aligned to the Arthurian world; immediately following Margon's surrender to Gauvain his status changes from villain to hero before he even arrives at Arthur's court for rehabilitation. Combat between equals, either in tournament, when the result is there for all to see, or in the Forest, when it is crucial that the defeated party returns to court to regale all of the stupendous ability of the victor, is essential to the continuation of the prestige system. Killing an opponent, for example, the killing of bands of knights in Manessier, may be worthy and socially beneficial, but more honour is won through the defeat of an equal in single combat and the despatch of the opponent to court. Therefore it is essential that women do not interfere in the mechanism that functions principally to increase the honour and fraternity of men; their demands to retain the defeated knight as prisoner, or secure his death cannot be granted. The ritual of *cortoisie*, in which the female victim is obliged to reward service rendered and is

[65] Irigaray, *This Sex which is not One*, p. 181.

therefore compelled to subordinate her demands to the wishes of her victorious protector, is instrumental in securing the desires of knights. What also becomes evident through the repetition of episodes involving mercy and the dispatch of the defeated to Arthur's court is that the hero views villainous knights as fellow knights, not as criminals, and is therefore not concerned with a feminine system of justice but rather with the system of honour, and the mechanisms by which honour is perpetuated.

However, the existence of such episodes indicates an awareness of the potential for women to take the subject role even if the demands of women are repressed by the masculine concern to maintain power and authority within its own realm. These episodes are utilised in the narrative principally as a method of establishing the credentials of the knight on a dual level: demonstrating the prowess of the knight and indicating the correct manner of interaction with women. Nevertheless, underlying such episodes is an element of female manipulation of the male-subject/female-object situation. The woman attempts to reverse the subject-object convention by seeking to control the fate of the defeated knight, an action that is thwarted by the presence of the Arthurian knight. The Arthurian knight himself may also seem to be an object in this scenario in that he initially appears amenable to the bidding of the Lady, undertaking to defend her, until her demands for vengeance are made. He will always align himself with the defeated knight creating a homosocial relationship from which the Lady is excluded. Her desire to retain control of the situation is perceived as alien: women have no place within the masculine codes of friendship and honour, rather they are regarded as a disruptive force and their desires are necessarily repressed.

The *Fées* of the Didot-*Perceval*: women in a subject role

In the Didot-*Perceval* amorous interactions are incorporated into the Quest, which appears to take the form of a social learning process. Perceval is already established as the finest knight in Arthurian society and it is outside society that the learning process must take place in order to furnish Perceval with the necessary attributes with which to

leave Arthurian society and take up his own inheritance. Outside society, however, Perceval is exposed to those women who control their own destinies and aim to achieve their own ends. The desires of the women who take a subject role in the Didot-*Perceval* do not correspond to the desires of men and masculine society.

The first representation of Perceval granted to the audience is that of the finest Arthurian knight attracting the welcome attention of one of the most worthy ladies at court. It would appear that, at the beginning of the text at least, this is seen as indicative of the quality of the knight. First of all Elainne is attracted to Perceval while the narrator expounds his attributes. The outcome of his participation in the tournament is that all acclaim him; in effect he has achieved all the aims of a knight within Arthurian society by the end of the opening episode. He has the love of a high born Lady, inspiring him to deeds of prowess which surpass his fellow and rival knights, to the acclaim of that society, traditionally the embodiment of chivalry. His quest must then take him further than the aims of society, necessitating his departure from the Arthurian world following his success, taking the form of a retreat into the Grail Castle leading to his death.[66]

The Didot-*Perceval* opens with a typical example of the mechanisms of courtly love. Elainne, the sister of Gauvain, after seeing Perceval sends a valet to deliver a message to him.

> Elainne li suer monsegnor Gavain le saluoit molt hautement et qu'ele desiroit molt que ele le veïst joster a la Table Reonde. Et li manda que par la foi que il li devoit que il jostast au matin devant li, et fust armés d'une armes vermelles qu'ele li envoieroit. (E: 145. 114-117)

She is introduced by the narrator in a conventional manner, termed "la plus bele demisele qui fust a son tans" (E: 145. 105). Her actions are prompted by her perception of Perceval which inspires her so that she "l'enama molt durement en son cuer" (E: 145. 106). The narrator also adds:

[66] As in the *Perlesvaus* to depart from the world on a boat, never to be seen again, much as Arthur himself.

Et qu'en pot ele? car il estoit li plus biaus cevaliers de toute la maisnie Artu le roi. (106-108)

When Perceval hears this he experiences *joie* in his heart that such a noble Lady has asked him to joust for love and he informs the messenger:

> il n'est riens que li demisele li mandast que il ne fesist por s'amor, "et jou i josterai molt volontiers." (E: 146. 121-123)

Perceval had not been participating in the tournament because of an injured hand but inspired by the love of Elainne, he is able to overcome physical hindrance. His excitement results in his inability to sleep through the night (E: 146. 127-128), a trait not uncommon to Perceval in his dealings with women; coupled with Perceval's *joie* they give two traditional symptoms of courtly love. It is Elainne who takes the initiative, as does Guenevere in the Prose-*Lancelot*. Yet Perceval himself is wholly enthusiastic, he enters the tournament wearing the armour Elainne has given him and his identity is only revealed to the court at the end. Arthur inquires the reason for his disguise and Perceval assigns his motives as "por amors" (E: 165). This amuses Arthur who comments:

> "çou que on faisoit por amor devoit on legierement pardouner." (E: 148. 168-9)

The episode depicts Perceval as worthy of the attention of women, as the author himself points out. Elainne's love for Perceval is not unsurprising to the author, a fact he communicates to the audience, rendering Perceval an attractive object. The attention of Elainne serves its purpose in that it elicits the required action necessary for the surpassing of other men, resulting in the initiation of the quest. Although Elainne may appear to be the subject here through her choice and active part in the relationship, in fact she is simply a catalyst, a mechanism through which Perceval increases his own honour and

worth in his society.[67] Acclaimed by all the other knights and the King, Perceval has effectively established himself within Arthurian society.

As an episode of *cortoisie* it is conventional. The inception of love (born of appearance and reputation on the part of the female, not an uncommon motif in romance) and Perceval's reactions to the overtures of Elainne, culminating in the traditional participation in a tournament in disguise are recurrent Arthurian themes. Perceval is depicted as something of a *naïf*, in keeping with the Perceval tradition, in that it is Elainne who initiates the relationship while Perceval willingly acquiesces.

In examining the three "amorous" episodes of the Didot-*Perceval*, it becomes clear that they form an evolutionary progress. Norris J. Lacy, referring to the requirements set out by the voice that rebukes Arthur for allowing Perceval to sit in the Perilous Seat, points out that "chivalric accomplishment is a prerequisite for success in the Grail Castle,"[68] therefore Perceval's relationships with the women he encounters form a fundamental part of his quest since chivalric accomplishment at its most basic necessitates protection of women. Furthermore, the prowess of Perceval renders him attractive to women and he is shown to respond to this in the correct manner. The fundamental nature of the quest in this romance is that Perceval must succeed within the bounds of traditional chivalry in order to surpass it.

Perceval's actions in the opening episode are merely the starting point: he proves himself capable of surpassing other Arthurian knights inspired by conventional courtly love, marking his worth as hero. The starting point of Perceval in the Didot-*Perceval* is often the finishing point of other Arthurian knights for the conventional romance ending of a hero is his establishment of himself in the eyes of fellow men and the acquisition of a wife. Perceval's involvement with Elainne forms the basis of his courtly education that is then developed in the episode of the Castel del Eskekier.

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[67] Siegfried Christoph, 'Honor, Shame, and Gender', pp. 26-33.
[68] Lacy, 'The Design of the Didot-*Perceval*', in *Continuations: essays on medieval French literature and language in honor of John L. Grigsby*, ed. by Norris J. Lacy and Gloria Torrini Roblin (Birmingham, Ala.: Summa, 1989), pp. 95-106.

At the Castel del Eskekier, Perceval is affected by the sight of the Lady when he finally manages to incite her to descend after threatening to throw the chessboard through the window in what she herself terms an uncourtly manner (E: 168. 494-5). He is smitten through vision, following the traditional medieval conception of the inception of love through the eyes, which then takes hold of the heart. The author also reveals that it is Perceval's intention to seek love from the Lady of the Castel del Eskekier and make the most of this situation:

> ...et bien saciés que ce estoit li plus bele demisele del monde. Et quant Percevaus le vit si l'enama molt durement, et dist en son cuer que molt sera fols se il ne li requiert s'amor puisque il est o li a si grant loisir. (E: 169. 511-514)

There is a certain similarity between Perceval's determined pursuit of the Lady of the Castel del Eskekier and that of Gauvain's flirtation at Escalot in *La Mort Artu*:

> Et la damoisele estoit si bele et si bien fete de totes choses que pucele ne pooit estre mieuz. Si la regarda messire Gauvains moult volontiers tant comme ele servi; si li fu avis que buer seroit nez li chevaliers qui de tel pucele porroit avoir le deduit et le soulaz a sa volonté. (23: 57-63)[69]

Both knights initiate the request for love immediately but possibly, due to there being no mention of *amor* in the episode of the *Mort Artu* merely *deduit,* the pursuit of the Lady of the Castel del Eskekier by Perceval is of more positive value than the pursuit of the Demoisele d'Escalot by Gauvain; *deduit* forming the motivation of other amorous encounters within the Gauvain tradition. Perceval and Gauvain are able to initiate love in contrast to Lancelot who needs not only the active pursuit of Guenevere, but also the assistance of Galehaut in the Prose-*Lancelot*. In the episode of the Castel del Eskekier Perceval assumes the role of the courtly lover while the Lady now takes the object role and Perceval's attitude in deciding to make the most of this opportunity is noteworthy (E: 169. 513-514).

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[69] *La Mort le Roi Artu,* ed. by Jean Frappier, 3rd edn (Paris: Minard, 1964).

He immediately propositions her "molt durement et essaia en maintes manieres" (E: 169. 515-516). It is not revealed what Perceval said to the Lady but evidently it was persuasive for she eventually replies:

> "Sire, si m'aït Dex, saciés que je molt volentiers vous oïsse de çou que vous me requerés, se je cuidasse que vous en fuissiés ausi engrant par fait com vous estes par parole. Et neporquant saciés que je pas ne vos mescroi de çou que vous m'avés dit, et se vous voliés faire çou que je vos requerroie, saciés que je vos ameroie et feroie segnor de cest castel." (E: 169. 516-522)

Her statement constitutes the amorous agreement: the Lady desires chivalrous action as proof of love, while Perceval states there is nothing he would not do for her. On this occasion it is Perceval who initiates proceedings but manages to persuade the Lady to instigate the mechanisms of *cortoisie* through his use of language. She then assumes control of the situation issuing her terms of contract: there is the requirement of chivalrous action before reward. The line "se vous voliés faire çou que je vos requerroie" (E: 169. 520-21) is particularly significant as an indicator of the exact nature of the courtly relationship incorporating the notion of *obediensa* into this relationship. *Obediensa* is a fundamental requisite of *fin'amor*, an indispensable principle according to Andreas Capellanus.[70] It appears that words alone are not sufficient for Perceval to win the love and land of the Lady of the Castel del Eskekier, physical action is requisite in order to secure reward.

As before, Perceval experiences difficulty sleeping "car il pensa molt a le damisele et a son afaire" (E: 170. 538-9), although there is no mention of any *joie* he may or may not experience at this situation, but another symptom of *fin'amor* manifests itself in the form of excessive meditation on the beloved. Following the visit to the hermit uncle during which Perceval received instruction essential to his development as the Grail Knight, that he must not kill other knights, he is challenged and attacked by another knight he fails to see since he "tant pensoit a sen afaire et a le demisele qui son braket li avoit baillié" (E: 184. 771-2), resulting in the death of the knight who had challenged him. This scene has obvious parallels with Perceval's love trance in Chrétien's *Conte du*

[70] Paolo Cherchi, *The Ambiguity of Courtly Love*, p. 9.

Graal from which neither Keu nor Sagremor can rouse him; their attempts to do so result in their being defeated by an oblivious Perceval; and to Lancelot's many reveries of Guenevere, who, in the Prose-*Lancelot*, also exhibits significant trances, into which he is completely absorbed to the exclusion of events around him. Elspeth Kennedy describes the love trances of Lancelot in the prose romance, stating that the observers in the romance perceive it to be a sign of weakness but concludes that the love trances always precede heroic activity[71] (which cannot be said of Perceval in the Didot-*Perceval*), while the love trances of Lancelot in the *Charrette* render Lancelot slightly ridiculous. The episode of the entranced lover automatically responding to an attack is an inherited literary device but does serve to illustrate that in the Didot-*Perceval* Perceval achieves a more refined form of love than that attained by Gauvain. Basic civility to and protection of women is the foundation of *cortoisie* – the majority of episodes involving a knight performing some service for a woman do not evolve much beyond this. In Manessier's *Continuation* encounters resulting in the rescue of a woman abound but while the knight may escort the Lady back to her home and she may offer him hospitality no more importance is placed upon the event. While Gauvain moves further on than such ritual behaviour in attempting to convince the Damoiselle d'Escalot through words for instance, he never falls victim to the excesses of *fin'amor* as Perceval evidently does in this episode, and an act that equates him with Lancelot, the embodiment of the *fin amant*. However, although being *cortois* is a necessary attribute of any knight and interaction with women an inescapable component of *cortoisie*, *fin'amor* is not desirable in the Grail Knight. While Lancelot becomes vulnerable as a result of his reveries, a consequence that also indicates the undesirability of this trait of *fin'amor* in a knight, Perceval is strengthened. In the *Conte du Graal* he defeats both the knights who ride against him, attempting to bring him to Arthur by force, until Gauvain intervenes and recalls him to the real world through dialogue. In the Didot-*Perceval* Perceval attacks and defeats a knight without even realising, but more significantly, kills the knight, failing to comply with the directive of the hermit to spare adversaries. Thus the symptoms of *fin'amor* are responsible for Perceval's failure in upholding this important requirement of Grail chivalry. The result of the reverie of Perceval is one of the indications that the

[71] Elspeth Kennedy, *Lancelot and the Grail*, pp. 54-57.

relationship of Perceval and the Lady of the Castel del Eskekier is a negative relationship, one that Perceval must overcome.

The episode of the Castel del Eskekier must be central to Perceval's development. But at first glance, taken in context of the overall Grail Quest, the quest at the bidding of the Lady of the Castel del Eskekier appears an idle distraction. She dispatches Perceval to hunt a white stag in the forest and bring her its head, lending him a hound to facilitate the hunt that she bids him to watch over. Perceval succeeds in catching the stag and taking its head but as he is about to return to the Castel del Eskekier, an old woman on a palfrey appears and takes the hound. After a discussion in which Perceval expresses reluctance to chase the old woman through the forest and seize the hound by force she bids him travel to a tomb upon which is painted a knight and issue a challenge by declaring "faus fu qui illeuc le painst" (E: 172. 575). Perceval complies, issues the challenge and the Cevalier del Tombel arrives in response. Although Perceval defeats the Cevalier del Tombel, the latter takes the head of the stag and the hound and disappears into the tomb. Perceval is thus compelled to roam the Forest in the hope of encountering the Cevalier del Tombel and regaining the head of the stag and the dog in order to enable him to return to the Castel del Eskekier in triumph and claim his reward. In the course of Perceval's adventures in the Forest, he encounters his sister and hermit uncle who instruct him on his lineage and the requirements of chivalry. Eventually, after many varied adventures, including the combat with Urbain at the ford, Perceval comes across a knight with the hound and the head of the stag who also happens to be the brother of the Cevalier del Tombel. After his defeat by Perceval the knight recounts the tale of the Cevalier del Tombel to Perceval, then directs him to the Castel del Eskekier. The brother of the Cevalier del Tombel is able to shed light upon the strange events that have puzzled Perceval, revealing that the old woman can change her shape and is the *amie* of the Cevalier del Tombel and also the sister of the Lady of the Castel del Eskekier. It transpires that the Lady of the Castel del Eskekier had sent Perceval into the Forest with the knowledge that he would encounter the Cevalier del Tombel, for whom she harbours a deep-seated hatred (although the reasons for her hatred are not explained in full);

Perceval has, in fact, been utilised by the Lady of the Castel del Eskekier in her continued vendetta aginst her sister and her sister's *amie*.

The episode takes the form of a quest within a quest in that while seemingly distracting Perceval from his Grail Quest, it forms an integral part of the Grail Quest itself, leading the hero to a reunion with his sister and uncle and a partial understanding of what the Grail Quest actually means. The value of the courtly quest lies in the establishment of Perceval as able to fulfil the role of *amant*, a role essential to the development of the hero within a secular romance and in the process of questing itself although the traditional resolution of such a quest can have no place within Grail literature. While Perceval completes the quest he undertook for the Lady of the Castel del Eskekier, he cannot accept her offer to make him lord of her castle because of his vow never to remain more than one night in the same place, yet he does not reject the possibility of returning:

> "Demisele, saciés que a çou ne couvient il mie proiere, que je ne desir tant rien, se Dex me laist esploitier me besogne, com a estre avuec vos a loisir." (E: 219. 1437-9)

At this point, Perceval is only partially aware of the true nature of his quest and not at all of the consequences of his success at the Grail Castle, that will entail his departure from society. Thus it is the Grail Quest which interferes with the courtly quest, interrupting the traditional outcome, as fidelity to his vow takes precedence over fidelity to his *amie*. Perceval himself makes no active decision in choosing the Grail Quest over the courtly quest; it is still his aim to return to the Castel del Eskekier. Evidently there is still a lesson to be learnt, and while it may have been conveyed to the audience, it was lost on Perceval.

It is useful at this point to pause to clarify the exact nature of the Forest as it is an entity to which I refer repeatedly throughout this chapter as the background against which events are played:

> The forest (in romance) figures as an already complex landscape which draws on several powerful traditions – historical, Biblical and philosophical, as well as literary. The meeting of the real and the symbolic in the conjunction of these traditions plays an essential role in the formulation of the forest as a romance landscape. The historical reality of the medieval forest was itself an intricate web of physical, economic and legal elements. Particularly important to the role of the forest in the romance was the legal concept of the forest as a specialised landscape set aside for hunting. In addition, the forest had to some extent assimilated the historical and symbolic associations of the Biblical desert or wilderness, the focus of various eremitic traditions. Perhaps, most strikingly, the forest brought with it a classical philosophical tradition in which the Greek and Latin terms for the forest, *hyle* and *silva*, were equated with disorder, chaos and primordial matter. The conjunction of historical, Biblical and classical traditions created the possibility of a romance motif which was to be further defined by the nature of romance itself.[72]

The Forest represents the wild, a "landscape of the unknown",[73] the realm populated by lone *puceles*,[74] *fées*, solitary knights or those in groups, mysterious castles etc. in which adventures occur, far from the civilisation represented by Arthur's court, instigating a binary opposition of order and chaos in which the role of the knight is to regulate the realm, seen in the classical tradition as an "allegorical world of untamed emotion and passion".[75] In reality, deforestation of Europe began in the twelfth century;[76] the forest was seen as the enemy of civilisation while in romance it is a "landscape of transformation, the distance of which is essential to the narrative".[77]

The Forest is also depicted as a feminine realm inhabited by women who are in some way threatening to the social order; opposed to the masculine world represented by Arthur's court, a conventional opposition equating the masculine with society and culture, while the feminine equals nature and disorder. Nature is associated with the female, in need of subordination by a culture that is invariably figured as male, active, and abstract,[78] but it can be difficult to draw a distinction between the two as Lévi-Strauss

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[72] Corinne J. Saunders, *The Forest of Medieval Romance: Avernus, Broceliande, Arden* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1993), p. 1.
[73] Saunders, *The Forest of Medieval Romance*, p. 3.
[74] Rieger, 'Balade des demoiselles du temps jadis', p. 79.
[75] Saunders, *The Forest of Medieval Romance*, p. 19.
[76] Saunders, *The Forest of Medieval Romance*, p. 2.
[77] Saunders, *The Forest of Medieval Romance*, p. 104.
[78] Butler, *Gender Trouble,* p. 37.

wonders, "où finit la nature? Où commence la culture?"[79] Michelle Rosaldo, on the nature/culture opposition states:

> Insofar as men are defined in terms of their achievement in socially elaborated institutions, they are participants, *par excellence*, in the man made systems of human experience. On a moral level, theirs is the world of "culture." Women, on the other hand, lead lives that appear to be irrelevant to the formal articulation of the social order. Their status is derived from their stage in a life cycle, from their biological functions, and, in particular, from their sexual ties or biological ties to men...Accordingly, in cultural systems we find a recurrent opposition: between man, who in the last analysis stands for "culture," and woman, who (defined through symbols that stress her biological and sexual functions) stands for "nature" and often for disorder.[80]

The female world of the Forest and its threat to masculine codes is unrelentingly portrayed as negative throughout the Didot-*Perceval* and the traditional conclusion of the "bride-winning" episode is undesirable. Negativity is created by the emphasis placed on the isolation and unconstructive role performed by the knight in his new situation: namely that of attacking any knight who passes, including his former brothers of the Round Table. In acquiescing to this artificial situation that necessitates the maintenance of chivalry in such a predatory fashion, the knight is effectively disrupting the order that he, as an Arthurian knight, should be maintaining.

Although it is essential for his development as a "perfect" knight that Perceval demonstrate his adeptness as a *fin'amant*, displaying the symptoms and desires of a courtly knight in the episode of the Castel del Eskekier, the author illustrates the negative outcome of such an episode during the courtly quest, in which Perceval encounters two knights whose situations may be considered parallel to that into which he himself is entering.

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[79] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Les Structures élémentaires de la parenté* (Paris: Mouton, 1967), 2nd edition, p. 4.
[80] Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo, 'Women, Culture, and Society: a theoretical overview', in *Women, Culture, and Society*, pp. 17-42 (pp. 30-31).

The Cevalier del Tombel and Urbain are both former successful Arthurian knights now isolated from Arthurian society following their association with their fairy *amies* but are permitted to maintain their prowess in artificial situations created by these women; the tests of prowess requested of these knights by their ladies take the form of meaningless and gratuitous attacks on passing knights. The original function of knights questing from court is to maintain order in the Forest and to further the order, be it the order of the court or the order of religion. Instead, Urbain finds a fairy *amie* who can keep him from the masculine order by creating a situation in which Urbain becomes the guardian of a ford. In order to maintain his physical skills as a knight he must attack all passing knights, a situation that necessitates aggression against fellow knights from court. Consequently, Urbain has become divorced from his own society, transformed into an adversary of his former fellow knights. Likewise, the Cevalier del Tombel issues from the invisible castle of his *amie* in response to a challenge declared at a tomb, attacking all passing knights. However, Urbain could have been freed from this undesirable situation, if he had so chosen, after his combat with and surrender to Perceval and the bonding between knights that the ritual of mercy encompasses. Unusually and in contrast to the attitude of Mabonagrain in *Erec*, who is relieved to be rejoining society, Urbain refuses to complete the ritual of surrender and the fairy *amie* prevails. The heterosexual desire of Urbain is stronger than the urge to complete the bonds he is in the process of forming with Perceval through the dialogue following the combat; a situation that reverses the expected outcome of such a dialogue: the return of Urbain to Arthur's court where he can renew his relationships with other men. However, his desire to remain with his *amie* is too strong, as evidenced in the fainting fits he exhibits when she threatens to withdraw her love (E: 200. 1068), symptomatic of *fin' amor* but that can also be viewed as *fol amor*. Once Perceval is apprised of the situation, recognising the extent of Urbain's love for his *amie*, he grants Urbain leave to depart. As in in the Tallidés episode of Manessier's *Continuation*, those involved recognise the validity of love, prioritisng it over other exigencies. It appears those who act out of love are to be pardoned and indulged despite any undesirable situation that may result: Urbain remains at the ford and continues to attack passing knights, a situation that originally Perceval had been keen to

resolve (E: 198. 1039-1042). Unlike Urbain, the Cevalier del Tombel remains silent and following his defeat by Perceval flees into the tomb, his relationship with his *amie* intact.

Urbain relates his own story, and that of the Cevalier del Tombel is told to Perceval by the knight's brother. Both accounts are identical to the meeting of Perceval and the Lady of the Castel del Eskekier; both knights having been renowned for their prowess; the Cevalier del Tombel being acclaimed "uns des mellors cevaliers que on pooit trover" (E: 214. 1355-1356); and, like Perceval, on entering a mysterious castle Urbain becomes enamoured of the Lady therein (E: 197. 1016-1020). Perceval's destiny (if there were any possibility at all of his remaining at the Castel del Eskekier) would then be to become, as is the case with Urbain and the Cevalier del Tombel, merely another one of the Arthurian adventures that the Grail Quest will bring to an end. Perceval himself appears oblivious to the warnings. He is merely amused at the exhibition of excssive love by Urbain (E: 202. 1105-6) while his reaction to the story of the Cevalier del Tombel is simply disbelief, exclaiming "par Diu, tu m'as contee la forçor mervelle que onques mais oïsse" (E: 216. 1378-1379); he does not recognise the fact that the tale the knight has recounted is identical to his own, failing to realise that he is associated to this world through his relationship with the Lady of the Castel del Eskekier. Like Perceval, the Cevalier del Tombel also appears to have been the object of the desires of his *amie*, for in the tale related by the knight's brother to Perceval, it is the prowess of the Cevalier del Tombel that attracts the attention of the *fée*; she "qui molt estoit bele l'enama por le pröece qu'ele vit en lui" (E: 214. 1356-7), while the knight in his turn is attracted to her by her physical appearance:

> Et si tost comme mes frere l'ot veüe si fu sospris de s'amor que a poi que il n'issi del sens toutes les fois que il estoit avuec li." (E: 214-215. 1356-1359)

The episode provides a warning example of excessive love that can be seen as *fol'amor*: the *fée* does not want her knight to lose his prowess through inaction so she devises an artificial adventure in which he can fight against Arthurian knights and maintain his worth. Unlike other cases where the prowess of the knight attracts the

attention of a Lady (notably Guenevere's interest in the Black Knight in the Prose-*Lancelot*[81]) the knight is extracted from society, entrapped in the feminine domain of the Forest. Like those women who attempt to assert their own justice and control over masculine aggressors, the Lady of the Castel del Eskekier and her counterparts within the Didot-*Perceval* and other romances are isolated in the Forest, beyond society. These particular types of women, commonly fairies, appear to demonstrate a certain amount of control in their dealings with the masculine and can be identified by their possessiveness. Frappier analyses the "amour de la Fée" seeing it as of Celtic origin amalgamated into the courtly tradition, the *fée* becoming the double of the *dompna*.[82] Frappier then defines the characteristics of the "l'amour de la Fée" which

> comme celui de la dame, a le plus souvent un caractère impérieux; toutes deux sont des *dominae*, des *domnas* (la fée est, elle aussi, appelée *dame* dans les parlers populaires). Comme la dame de la *fine amour*, la fée exige de son amant le secret absolu sur leur amour (ainsi l'amie de Lanval) ou lui impose des conditions qu'il ne saurait violer impunément…Enfin, des deux côtés, *fine amor* et amour de la fée, l'amant accède par l'amour à un monde supérieur, hors de l'ordre commun où *joi* des troubadours et euphorie de celui qu'a choisi la fée ne sont pas sans beaucoup d'analogie.[83]

The *fées* of the Didot-*Perceval* are not victims but directors of action, manipulating situations involving their knights to suit themselves, evidenced in the rescue of Urbain from Perceval by his *amie* thus successfully preventing the relationship between the two knights from proceeding any further, the consequences of which could result in the rehabilitation of Urbain and his reintegration into society.[84]

The negative situation in which Urbain and the Cevalier del Tombel find themselves indicates that the traditional "happy ending" of bride-winning episodes is perceived as problematic, an issue also treated in Chrétien's *Yvain* and *Erec*. In *Yvain*, the hero undertakes a series of redemptive adventures, culminating in his combat with

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[81] *Lancelot do Lac*, ed. by Elspeth Kennedy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 334, vs 35 – p. 337.
[82] Jean Frappier, *Amour courtois et table ronde*, p. 45.
[83] Frappier, *Amour courtois et table ronde*, p. 47.
[84] This is, of course, exactly what happens in *Erec et Enide* in the episode of the Joie de la Cort, and, as I have demonstrated, it also occurs throughout Manessier's *Continuation*.

Gauvain which in itself signals his highest social achievement, permitting his final departure from Arthurian society and his return to his wife and land. Marriage in *Yvain* is presented as positive and the romance itself is concerned with the problems associated with the reconciliation of marriage and chivalry, whereas in the Didot-*Perceval* the situations of Urbain and the Cevalier del Tombel represent a negative picture of love. Again, in *Erec*, this negative situation is depicted in the episode of the Joie de la Cort wherein the parallel between the couple Mabonagrain and his *amie* and Erec and Enide is evident.[85] Perceval's victory over Urbain does not release the latter from his situation in the same way as Erec's victory over Mabonagrain returns the knight to his rightful place in society.[86] In fact, Urbain offers Perceval the guardianship of the ford, revealing that if he remained for a year then he would gain "le pris del siecle" (E: 1037). Perceval refuses to contemplate this offer (E: 1039-1042), demanding that Urbain refrains from attacking knights who pass by the ford. Urbain agrees to the demand as the price of Perceval's victory and it is at this point that Urbain's fairy *amie* intervenes in the proceedings. It may be presumed that she is aware of the interaction between the two knights, as women of the Forest are consistently well-informed on events that are a mystery to the hero, the obvious example being Guenevere's inexplicable knowledge of Lancelot's hesitation before the cart in the *Charrette*. Perceval's victory appears to have ended the custom of the ford to her dissatisfaction, so that unlike Erec, Perceval's victory brings no positive resolution to the situation, the *amie* retains Urbain in "prison" and there is no social reintegration for the pair. Jean-Charles Payen raises the point that Chrétien, in *Erec*, "condamne ce couple qui se coupe du monde et qui s'enferme dans un narcissisme à deux"[87] while E. Jane Burns observes that the "garden of Maboagrain's *amie* stands...beyond the state of proper Arthurian speech and conduct" adding that an important consequence of Mabonagrain's captivity is that tales of his prowess have been

[85] See A. R. Press, 'Le comportement d'Erec envers Enide dans le roman de Chrétien de Troyes', *Romania*, 90 (1969) pp. 529-538. It is pointed out that in *Erec* "l'amour secret, caché, vécu dans une solitude à deux, dans un apparent paradis terrestre qui pourtant baigne dans une atmosphère de mort et de violence, cet amour-là, n'est qu'une source constante de méfiance et d'angoisse, et n'aboutit qu'à l'échec". (p. 534). This is also the case in the Didot-*Perceval*.
[86] Gerard Chandès in *Le Serpent, la femme, et l'épée: recherches sur l'imagination symbolique d'un romancier médiéval, Chrétien de Troyes* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1986) states that Mabonagrain employs vocabulary suggesting that he views his situation as captivity, p. 150.
[87] Payen, 'La destruction des mythes courtois dans le roman arthurien', *Revue des Langues Romanes*, 78 (1969), 213-228, (p. 213).

suppressed (referring to vs. 6082-88).[88] This must be true of Urbain, revealed to be one of the finest knights of Arthur's court, yet Perceval does not know of him, or of the Cevalier del Tombel, again spoken of as a fine Arthurian knight. It appears that salvation is not possible for the male-female couple isolated from society in the Didot-*Perceval* in which the ideal masculine-feminine relationship is not the desired end of the hero. In separating knights from society women deprive them of the acclaim of their fellows, an integral component of homosocial bonding, and deny the knight standing within masculine society.

Women have a definite role in romance: to function as facilitators (often silent) to bonding between men. There is no exchange between men of the Lady of the Castel del Eskekier, likewise, her sister (the *amie* of the Cevalier del Tombel), and Urbain's *amie*. Therefore there are no homosocial bonds formed, no advantage to masculine society from these relationships, the women themselves prevent the bonding process following the surrender of their defeated knights: the *amie* of Urbain interrupts the bonding between Urbain and Perceval, firstly by warning the latter:

> "Percevaus li Galois, maleois soies tu de quanque nos poons faire entre nous dames, car tu nous fais hui la forçor dolor avoir que onques mais eüssiemes, et bien saces que il t'en venra molt grant painne." (E: 199. 1049-1052)

She then proceeds to threaten Urbain with the withdrawal of her love twice (E: 199. 1054-5; 200. 1067-8), urging him to flee and finally, she initiates Urbain's defiance of Perceval as she and her ladies, in the form of birds, seek to rescue Urbain, breaking the bonding ritual by attacking Perceval (E: 200. 1067- 201. 1089). Unlike Urbain, the Cevalier del Tombel does not enter into a bonding ritual following defeat, so removed is he from the masculine sphere following his absorption into the female world that, like women, he is unable to speak, therefore unable to enter into a dialogue initiating surrender. Gayle Rubin, in focusing upon women as objects of exchange within a kinship system, states that "the preferred female sexuality would be one which responded to the

[88] Burns, *Bodytalk*, p. 86.

desire of others, rather than one which actively desired and sought a response".[89] The desire of the haughty *pucele* in the *Perlesvaus* is depicted as excessive in addition to the condemnation of the *fée* of the Castel del Eskekier, through comparison with the other *fées* in the Didot-*Perceval*. The *amie* of Urbain is portrayed as wholly supernatural, incomprehensible to Perceval; she is able to project herself as a dark shadow and speak as a disembodied voice. Furthermore, she first appears to Urbain in the midst of a fierce storm and Urbain himself comments that the storm was so wild it "sambloit que li diable m'enportassent" (E: 197. 1006-7). The implied association of Urbain's *amie* with the diabolical is significant – she is a temptress, removing the knight from his true role and function within society; an association that is made clear in the narrator's comment regarding Perceval's indirect rejection of the Lady of the Castel del Eskekier, that Perceval wished to avoid sin:

> Mais Percevaus n'avoit cure de faire pecié, et nostre Sire ne li voloit soufrir a faire. (E: 219. 1446-7)

It is only his adherence to his vow that saves Perceval from the same fate as Urbain and the Cevalier del Tombel rather than a conscious rejection brought about by realisation of the wholly negative aspects of this type of relationship.

Within such a situation and relationship, the knight has lost all control of his actions, reduced to a static existence waiting for innocent knights to pass by. The appropriation of the subject role by women is depicted as overwhelmingly detrimental and harmful in the Didot-*Perceval*;[90] the desire of women is portrayed as negative, viewed as a disruptive force threatening society as a whole, a desire that is also incomprehensible to the masculine world. Judith Butler defines the Subject (the masculine subject) as "constituted through force of exclusion and abjection, one which

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[89] Rubin, 'The Traffic in Women', p. 182.

[90] It is interesting to note the similarities of the situation in *Yvain,* of Laudine and her knight guarding the fountain and that of Urbain guarding the ford, perceived as desirable in Chrétien once Yvain has proceeded through the chivalric evolution necessary to render him the ideal knight; while the situation is seen to be wholly negative in the Didot-*Perceval*. Evidently the two authors take opposing stances on what is effectively the same situation. In Chrétien, Yvain abandons the fountain and finally returns to it on his own terms, thereby reversing the initial situation of female subjectivity and male objectivity.

produces a constitutive outside to the subject, an abjected outside, which is, after all, "inside" the subject as its own founding repudiation",[91] a statement she expands:

> We might understand the feminine figured within the binary as the *specular* feminine and the feminine which is erased and excluded from that binary as the *excessive* feminine.[92]

The situation arises from the masculine occupying both terms of the binary opposition while the feminine is not an intelligible term, creating an opposition founded upon men defined in relation to a masculine view of women while real women are excluded; an opposition that can be equated to the knight/ troubadour defined in relation to the *dompna* that excludes the *fée*. The version of femininity that the *fée* presents is unintelligible to the binary system created by man to define himself; those that utter a language incomprehensible to the system cannot find a place within it, and are excluded:

> Women's social inferiority is reinforced and complicated by the fact that woman does not have access to language, except through recourse to "masculine" systems of representation which disappropriate her from her relation to herself and to other women. The "feminine" is never to be identified except by and for the masculine, the reciprocal proposition not being "true".[93]

Irigaray repeatedly emphasises that femininity is a masculine creation designed to reflect itself; real femininity is unknown and unknowable.[94]

In Grail romances, where the true female becomes temptation she is presented as an alien, unknowable being that must be avoided. The women who are what can be termed the excessive female appear as mad, dangerous to the male order, unpredictable and haughty, like the *dompna*. However, unlike the *dompna*, the *fée* is not constrained by a masculine feudal discourse. The *dompna* represents the Other against which the masculine is defined and as such, is a mainstay of a closed phallogocentric signifying

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[91] Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: on the discursive limits of "sex"* (New York; London: Routledge, 1993), p. 3.
[92] Butler, *Bodies that Matter*, p. 39.
[93] Irigaray, *This Sex which is not One*, p. 84.
[94] Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. by Gillian C. Gill (New York; Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 133-141.

economy that achieves its totalizing goal through the exclusion of the feminine, (the *fée*) altogether.[95] Judith Butler concludes:

> The relation between masculine and feminine cannot be represented in a signifying economy in which the masculine constitutes the closed circle of signifier and signified.[96]

She continues to elaborate upon Irigaray's stance on the Other and the Same, identifiying it as a false binary opposition, and that "the Other as well as the Same are marked as masculine; the Other is but the negative elaboration of the masculine subject with the result that the female sex is unrepresentable".[97]

The women depicted as excessive are so far removed from the "real world" that their rehabilitation in society is not possible, they cannot be reintegrated by contact with knights representing the masculine order, appearing dangerous and threatening, frequently seeking the death of men, hence they are perceived to be more alien than the pagans of the *Perlesvaus*: pagan women at least have the potential to be converted and subsumed into conventional society. Queen Jandree, who appears as an external, negative force, demanding Arthur in marriage and his conversion, is perceived as a threat to Arthurian society, an active threat to individual Arthurian knights. However, following her conversion she is absorbed into masculine Christian society. The "otherness" of Jandree finds its expression in her religion rather than her gender for although the demands for Arthur originate from the queen, it is from her brother Madaglan that the real aggression is implemented. She, herself, remains static while her brother directs the war against Arthur's kingdom, remaining rooted in a masculine society that, although it is a pagan society, adheres to the conventions of patriarchy. In contrast, the women of the Forest are alien because of their gender alone and there is no redemptive course of action for them.

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[95] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 9.
[96] Butler, *Gender Trouble,* p. 11.
[97] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p. 103.

From the repetition of such episodes can be seen the undesirability of relationships in which the Lady plays a subject role, in contrast to the behaviour of Elainne, who serves to further the honour of Perceval, and the *pucele* at the Blanc Castel; the ideal relationship between the genders is one in which the masculine takes the subject role in opposition to the role of women as object.

The episode of the Castel del Eskekier and the ensuing quest demonstrate the evolution of Perceval as a courtly knight, a necessary evolution for the refinement of chivalry, but the author also indicates the direction which the work will take concerning the relationship between the hero and the female characters. By utilising negative examples of the situation the narrator indicates that women, especially those who take on a subject role, can have no place in the Grail Quest, which automatically assumes precedence. In the episode of the Castel del Eskekier Perceval shows no indication of having assimilated this concept and it is left to circumstances to intervene. In the three situations concerning fairy *amies* in the Didot-*Perceval*, the *fée* has appeared in response to the attractiveness of the knight; the unchecked and dominant female desire is negative, controlling, and threatening. Unlike the *dompna* who remains static and passive, "une idole peut-être inaccessible, mais apparemment fixée dans sa perfection, à peu de chose près",[98] and "a mirror of value of and for man",[99] the desire of the three *fées* of the Forest threatens the masculine order and the outcome can only be negative.

The Tornoi del Blanc Castel

The third significant episode that charts the evolution of Perceval in his relationships with women is that of The Tornoi del Blanc Castel, showing the development of Perceval's ability to reject relationships with women, an episode in

[98] Frappier, *Amour courtois et table ronde*, p .47.
[99] Irigaray, *This Sex which is not One*, p. 177.

which the mechanism of the exchange of women, that furthers society as a whole, is sacrificed to the male prestige system and Girardian desire.

Feminist theory takes as its fundamental point the fact that all hierarchies are predicated on gender since the prestige and the position of men is determined by their appropriation of women.[100] The episode of the Tornoi del Blanc Castel can be regarded as a typical bride-winning episode that persistently recurs throughout Arthurian literature[101] in which the knight enters a tournament in order to win the hand or admiration of the lady of the castle. Erich Köhler identified the fundamental aim of the knights as the desire to gain land and secure a financial position, to be independent, no longer reliant on a feudal lord for livelihood but such an outcome is not the desired aim of the Grail Knight.

The episode of the Tornoi del Blanc Castel differs from the episode of the Castel del Eskekier in that it centres on a tournament and the masculine social world. Perceval's quest for the Lady of the Castel del Eskekier was a solitary journey, enabling him to encounter his sister and uncle and to learn the nature of the Grail Quest but a quest that did not involve any interaction with rival knights of Arthur's court.

On this occasion, the tournament is instigated by the Lady of the Blanc Castel in order to find her daughter a husband. A knight whom Perceval encounters informs him that:

> "ele a grant biauté si a ele grant riquoise, et si l'ont plusor cevalier demandee, et conte et duc et autre segnor; mais ele n'en volt onques a nul entendre." (E: 223. 1521-1523)

The statement instantly emphasises the significance of female choice in this type of episode. It appears that the tournament is called to determine a worthy husband for the

[100] Gaunt, 'From Epic to Romance: gender and sexuality in the *Roman d'Enéas*', p. 3.
[101] Anita Guerreau-Jalabert, *Index des motifs narratifs dans les romans arthuriens français en vers (XIIe-XIIIe siècles)* (Geneva: Droz, 1992).

girl, social standing alone not being sufficient. We also learn that Meliant has loved her for some time, a factor that presumably accounts for his worthy performance in the ensuing tournament, as he appears to rival the prowess of Gauvain, the traditional embodiment of Arthurian chivalry.

Perceval inquires into the number of knights present at the tournament and the knight replies that it was heralded at Arthur's court, and all the Round Table knights will be present now they have returned from the Grail Quest in failure (E: 223-224. 1536-1539), a piece of information that presents two differing motives for attending the tournament: the overt motive of the daughter of the castle as prize, and the underlying and more important motive of masculine competition. The Tornoi del Blanc Castel serves to soothe the damaged egos of the Arthurian knights following their failure on the Grail Quest, which they have now abandoned, forming a controlled environment, a simulated adventure. The tournament reinforces the bonds between the knights dispersed by the Grail Quest, and it is the contact with the masculine world that causes Perceval to break his vow never to remain in one place more than one night.

When Perceval enters the Blanc Castel his arrival elicits a great response. The Lord of the Blanc Castel seems just as appreciative of the appearance of Perceval (E: 225. 1572-1575) as do the Lady and her daughter (E: 227. 1594-5), aware that an admirable form is equated with prowess, the most desirable virtue of masculinity, one that immediately evokes approbation and imitation since physical appearance and nobility of character coincide.[102] However, the Lord of the Blanc Castel, like Yvain li Avoltre who comments upon Arthur as he is armed and ready to depart on the quest to the hermitage in the *Perlesvaus*, (31: 197-201), is also cognisant of the potential discrepancy between outward semblance and actuality. The Lord of the Blanc Castel ponders upon the arrival of Perceval and decides it would be a great pity if he did not live up to the promise of prowess that is suggested by his appearance:

[102] Sarah Kay and Miri Rubin, in *Framing Medieval Bodies*, ed. by Sarah Kay and Miri Rubin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), introduction, (p. 5).

"Molt est grans damages se si biaus cevaliers n'a proëce en lui." (E: 225. 1574-5)

The women of the castle receive Perceval with excitement, holding him in high esteem based upon his appearance before he has proven himself in the tournament.

Initially, Perceval agrees to participate in the tournament (E: 231. 1675-1679) before declaring to the daughter that evening that:

"por amor de li volra faire plus d'armes que il onques fesist a nul jor." (E: 232. 1689-90)

It is the father who experiences *joie* at Perceval's declaration. Perceval's agreement to participate in the tournament serves to unite the two men as Perceval is evidently regarded as ideal husband material and a suitable successor.

It appears that Perceval is merely adhering to a ritual of *cortoisie*. He wears the girl's sleeve but his motives for undertaking the tournament, unlike the tournament at Arthur's court, are not due to any love on his part, for, following a discussion on the most successful knights of the tournament, Perceval asserts to the father:

> "Saciés que por autretant d'or comme cis castiaus est grans ne lairoie jou que je n'i soie demain armés, et josterai a mon pooir et si volroie, si m'aït Dex, que Gavains et Melian de Lis se tornassent d'une part, et si josteroie contre aus." (E: 231. 1675-1679)

It is also significant that he experiences no trouble in sleeping that night and exhibits none of the other symptoms of *fin'amor* further indicating that this is merely a ritual courtly interlude.

While the women and the Lord of the Blanc Castel believe that Perceval is participating in the tournament because of love for the girl, it seems that he is motivated by a wish to compete and surpass his fellow knights. The Lady of the Blanc Castel attempts to utilise the masculine medium of the tournament for her own ends in order to

secure the best husband for her daughter, evidently regarding Perceval as an object in this situation. A perfect knight is required and he appears to fit the bill initially by appearance alone. The daughter even pre-empts the tournament; by asking Perceval to wear her sleeve she is effectively (and swiftly) making her choice (despite the earlier comments made by Meliant's vassal encountered upon the road as to her refusal to entertain any suitors) and the tournament is simply a means of confirmation.

It is specifically stated that the tournament is called at the instigation of the Lady of the Blanc Castel, yet it is the Lord who interacts most with Perceval during his stay. They hear mass together, arm together and discuss the tournament at dinner. From the first comments made by the lord of the castle at his first sight of Perceval, it appears as though Perceval is again viewed as a commodity. But what is more likely is that the father, prompted by his desire to align himself with Perceval by utilising his daughter as a means of exchange, aims to incite Perceval to compete. She becomes the object in an interaction between the two men, a mechanism observed by Nancy Armstrong:

> The exchange of such women not only determines kinship relations among families or tribes but also determines the economic and political organisation characterising the group within which such an interaction of women takes place.[103]

However, the mechanism of the exchange of women that should serve to unite the father with Perceval is upheld by Perceval only superficially, keen as he is to enter a combat against Gauvain and Meliant, both of whom are acclaimed by the spectators. Participation in the tournament will increase his chivalric worth, while adherence to the ritual of *cortoisie* is devoid of further meaning, seemingly recognised as such by Perceval: he is inspired by the prospect of masculine competition not by an *amie*. The Lord of the Blanc Castel is surprised when Perceval does not ask for his daughter as reward while Perceval explains:

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[103] *The Ideology of Conduct: essays on literature and the history of sexuality*, ed. by Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse (New York; London: Methuen, 1987), pp. 1-2.

"Je non; car je n'ai [cure] de fame prandre, ne faire ne le dei." (D: 236. 1468-9)

Perceval's desire to further his acclaim within society supplants the traditional motivation for entering such a tournament, that of the establishment of bonds between the father and the victor. Out of those participating in the tournamemt only Meliant is said to love the girl and therefore be interested in fulfilling the implied contract. Likewise, if the tournament had been won by Gauvain, a similar predicament of non-fulfilment would have arisen, thwarting both the desires of the girl and the homosocial desires of her father on this occasion, revealing the patriarchal system, founded upon the exchange of women, to be empty of meaning. Furthermore, Perceval's enthusiasm to participate in the tournament results in the breaking of his vow not to remain more than one night in the same place, and although on the surface his decision appears to stem from his desire to be the champion of the daughter, as the Lord of the Blanc Castel believes, in fact, Perceval is concerned with succeeding within a purely masculine realm, and receiving acclaim of those who represent the essence of Arthurian chivalry, such as Gauvain. The difference between Perceval's attitude in the two episodes of the Castel del Eskekier and the Tornoi del Blanc Castel is that Perceval comes to value the masculine medium and the masculine world more than isolation within the supernatural female world. He rejects the isolation at the ford offered by Urbain even though there is the opportunity to earn the "pris del siecle", favouring instead the Grail Quest and the acclaim it will bring. However, at the Blanc Castel, it appears he forgets the Grail Quest itself, so preoccupied is he with competing against Gauvain, apparently placing more value on securing status within Arthurian society than on succeeding in his quest.

The episode of The Tornoi del Blanc Castel demonstrates the conflict of ideals within Arthurian romance. At first glance, tournaments like that at the Blanc Castel and the tournament of Noauz in Chrétien's *Lancelot*, appear to be directed by women, utilising the traditional mechanism of *cortoisie*: the masculine desire to triumph in feats of arms in order to gain love. Perceval conforms to this ideal firstly in the tournament at the opening of the romance, and then in the episode of the Castel del Eskekier until he

realises his prior commitment to the Grail Quest. As Lancelot subverts the desired outcome, desired by the female public in Chrétien, so Perceval subverts the desired conclusion of The Tornoi del Blanc Castel.[104] He has no intention of conforming to the conventional narrative outcome of this episode, marrying the girl, and instead displaces her original suitor, Meliant. If it had not been for the intervention of Perceval in the episode, then the aim of the women of the Blanc Castel would have been realised; with Meliant as victor of the tournament, the daughter would have received her ideal, worthy husband but conversely, if the episode had centred on Gauvain, again the desired female outcome would have been subverted. Jean-Charles Payen observes concerning the Gauvain romances, that although love does still constitute the crux of the intrigue, these adventures do not wholly correspond to the ideal of the nuptial quest and he cites Gauvain's "galanterie" that leads to a "démythification relative de l'*amour courtois*".[105]

The Bride-Winning Episode allows a successful outcome only if there is an available male protagonist, a role Perceval partially fulfils at the Castel del Eskekier although it is the Grail Quest itself that causes him to be unavailable to remain at the castle. At the Blanc Castel he is doubly unavailable, again due to his pledge but also because it is his intention to return to the Castel del Eskekier. In a manner similar to that in which Yvain subverts the traditional ending of the Bride-Winning motif in the Pesme Avanture in *Yvain*, and the whole motif is subverted at the Tournament of Noauz in the *Charrette*, (in which all the ladies aim to secure husbands, preferring the best knights when, in fact, there can be only one "best knight" at a tournament, all others lose and should, therefore, be undesirable), so Perceval subverts the desired outcome of the Tornoi del Blanc Castel by his unavailability and lack of interest in the motivation of the organisers of the tournament. Instead he is concerned solely with his own aggrandisement in the masculine sphere, achieving the accolade of successful masculinity that is signified

[104] The participation of Lancelot at the tournament of Noauz results in none of the female organisers achieving their aim, which was to find husbands from the best performers. Lancelot performs so well that they focus their desire upon him to the detriment of the other participants but of course he has no intention of marrying any of them. See Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner, 'A Case for Mise en Abyme: Chrétien's *Chevalier de la Charette*,' in *Shaping Romance*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), pp. 60-108.
[105] Payen, 'La destruction des mythes courtois dans le roman arthurien', p. 215.

by his victory over Gauvain. Competition between knights for honour and status, the recognition of their worth by other men serves to drive Arthurian society rather than the conventional bonds formed through marriage; the masculine prestige system is a more effective mechanism of homosocial bonding than is the exchange of women.

Women in the *Perlesvaus*: chastity, love, and unregulated desire

The role of women fluctuates between positive representations of female characters as we see in the personage of Dandrane and the figure of Guenevere, who serve to further the interests of men, a role that is contrasted with depictions of women who express their own desire, a desire, like that already evidenced in the Didot-*Perceval*, represented as negative. Both types of women are utilised to demonstrate the devotion of the knight to his ideals: Perlesvaus to his quest and all that embodies; Gauvain also adheres to the requirement of chastity; and Lancelot to Guenevere.

Guenevere is a figure of duality in the *Perlesvaus*: as a wife and queen she speaks, advises, and directs action; but as an *amie* she is reduced to an object, silenced by death, in other words, the perfect female: her desire, with its potential to be troublesome and at odds with the aims of men, is removed from the field of action; she serves only as the inspiration and motivation through which Lancelot sustains his own honour and demonstrates his *courtoisie*.

The Grail Quest, his desire to be with Perceval and his love for Guenevere all conspire to spur on the actions of Lancelot, creating a knight who, while not perfect in terms of the religious ideology of this work, is perfect in the example of *fin'amant* that he sets, remaining true to his ideal of love. At the Chastel des Gripes Lancelot is obliged to ask for the hand of the Lord's daughter through his duty "por sauver la costume" (312: 7435), a situation which is evidently not ideal:

> Lanceloz disoit autre chose que il ne pemsoit [*sic*], mais il vooit bien qu'il ne s'en pooit par el partir, e la dolor de la roïne li gisoit encor si el cuer qu'il n'ert nule amor el monde de dame ne de da[amoisele] a qui il se peüst apuier. (312: 7430-7433)

Again, it is the girl who initiates proceedings having become enamoured of Lancelot first by his appearance (311: 7415-6) and then by his successful completion of the custom (312: 7443). Lancelot then explains to the maiden of the Chastel des Gripes that he is unable to return her love:

> "Da[moisele], fait Lanceloz, grans merchiz; vostre amor aim je mout, e vostre bienvoilance; mais vos ne les autres damoiseles ne devriez jamais avoir fiance en moi, se je metoie si tost en noncaloir l'amor a qui mis cuers estoit obeïsanz, por la valor e por la cortoisie qui herbegie estoit en soi; ne jamais jor que je vive n'en amerai nule en itel maniere." (315: 7534-7539)

For Lancelot, the desired object that motivates and inspires his prowess is traditionally Guenevere, illustrated in Lancelot's failure at the Grail Castle and his refusal to repent. The Roi Hermite points out the necessity of desire as a motivation for action as he informs Lancelot that:

> "Se vos fussiez en si grant desierier longuement de voer le Graal conme vos estes de la roïne, vos l'eüssiez veü." (175: 3863-4)

Desire must be singular and cannot be diminished by multiple objects; a knight has only one destination. Lancelot, in putting his case to the Roi Hermite declares that:

> "...la roïne desir je molt a voer, por apenre sens et cortoisie et valor. Ausi doivent fere tuit li chevalier, car ele a totes les enors en soi que dame puist avoir." (175: 3865-7)

He specifically states that it is his love for the queen that evokes his appropriation of *sens, cortoisie*, and *valor*. But what is more, the desire to attain a revered object other than that desired by the hero of the text achieves the same ends: Lancelot is successful in all his adventures (except at the Grail Castle where he must fail for he is not predestined to succeed) and illustrates an acceptable alternative pathway. Condemnation of Lancelot is muted in the romance, appearing only in his encounters with the Roi Hermite and

another hermit in the Forest. Furthermore, Lancelot does not lose status within the text; in spite of his sin the narrator places him as one of the three finest knights (171: 3750-3).

Despite all Lancelot's words concerning Guenevere, no encounter between the two is related, nor does the narrator give any indication of Guenevere's own emotions concerning her *ami*: Lancelot constantly recalls his love for Guenevere both before and following her death; but the silence of Guenevere is deafening. The love is presented wholly through the emotions and statements of Lancelot, who focuses upon the effect his love for Guenevere has had upon his prowess, which justifies the sinful nature of their love as far as he is concerned. Love is a mechanism that furthers Lancelot's career but does nothing for Guenevere. When Guenevere dies in the *Perlesvaus* it is her memory that serves to fuel the chivalry of Lancelot; thus he is always constructed against the constant presence of Guenevere even if the love does not form part of the narrative: Lancelot will always be only half of the Lancelot-Guenevere couple. Frappier says "l'amour courtois représente le raffinement extrême de la "courtoisie"[106] and the notion of the excessive contemplation of an unattainable love object is particularly clear in Lancelot's absolute devotion and fidelity to the dead queen who remains an image of idolised love for Lancelot, the inaccessible embodiment of perfection.[107] The physical departure of Guenevere from the narrative makes no difference to the motivation of Lancelot who declares:

> "Je aim bien ma dame, qui roïne est, plus que nulle rien qui vive, et si l'a .i. des meillors rois del mont a feme. La volonté me senble si bone et si haute que je ne la puis lessier, et si m'est enracinee el cuer qu'ele ne s'em puet partir. La gregnor valor qui est en moi si me vient par la volenté." (167: 3657-61)

The image of love remains constant for Lancelot throughout the romance, but it is an image as intangible as the Grail, which cannot be physically possessed. Love appears an ennobling force as Lancelot attributes his worthiness to Guenevere while, despite the

[106] Frappier, 'Vues sur les conceptions courtoises', p. 136.
[107] The inspiration generated by a mistress rendered absent by death, with the implication of purity and spirituality (and unlike *La Queste*, the love of Lancelot and Guenevere is not detrimental to Lancelot's career and actions and he holds a valid place in the romance due to his chivalry, inspired by the Queen), predates Dante's exploitation of Beatrice and Petrarch's Laura by a century or more.

intercessions of hermits and their mild condemnations of Lancelot, the narrator maintains the worthiness of this knight. The idealisation of an unattainable woman perceived as an objective is presented in the same manner as the desire to see the Grail; indeed the two are equated in the words of the Roi Hermite (175: 3863-4). The death of Guenevere enforces the concept of *fin'amor* as she becomes purely a mental image resolving any potential problems in the romance where, although not castigated as in *La Queste*, the sinful aspect of this love is present. It is abstract love that causes Lancelot to realise his potential and take the third place in the chivalric hierarchy.[108]

The depiction of Lancelot and his prowess resulting from a secular love demonstrates an alternative to the type of chivalric perfection that occurs in the Grail romances represented by Perceval. While shown to be incompatible with the exigencies of the Grail Quest, it can exist side by side with the chivalric perfection of Perlesvaus. Both types of chivalry have as their ultimate aim *joie* for which absolute sacrifice is required. Women are necessary components in the quest, either offering *joie* as a goal, or representing temptation, a means of reinforcing the moral worth of the hero: they must be rejected in order to obtain *joie*, as a symbol of chastity, the highest virtue requisite for success in the Grail Quest. Jean-Charles Huchet states that

> le chemin que le chevalier reconnaît comme le sien est aussi un itinéraire amoureux qui voit le manque réapparaître sous la forme d'une place d'amour dont l'exigence s'avère incompatible avec le succès d'armes. Qui s'abandonne au plaisir goûté au corps de la Dame, en qui la Fée a pris forme humaine, connaît la honte des armes (Erec). Qui se laisse séduire par les armes et captiver par le renom qu'elles procurent doit faire le deuil de la Joie amoureuse (Yvain), ou renoncer à connaître le secret du Graal (Perceval).[109]

[108] This demonstrates *fin'amor* as an abstraction – the fundamental requisite is the act of desiring not the attainment of the desired object itself – Guenevere is the symbol of Lancelot's desire to desire, symptomatic of what Frappier terms the culture of desire ("culte d'adoration") of the troubadours ('Vues sur les conceptions courtoises dans les littératures d'Oc et d'Oïl au XIIe siècle', p. 140): she is the inaccessible desired object.

[109] Huchet, 'Psychanalyse et littérature mediévale', *Cahiers de Civilisation Mediévale*, 28 (1985), 223-233, (p. 225).

T. E. Kelly further emphasises the *Perlesvaus* as being a text concerned with redemption and views Lancelot as the epitome of this ideology of redemption; through deeds he can atone for his sinful love of Guenevere.[110]

The absence of Guenevere also has a strong influence upon the actions of Arthur in the *Perlesvaus* and it appears that he, in addition to Lancelot, takes inspiration for his actions from the stylised concept of Guenevere. Guenevere is a powerful symbol in the minds of Arthur and Lancelot: as there is the constant presence of Perceval's mother, there is also the presence of the absent Guenevere.

It is following his success at the tournament of the Pré des Pailles that Arthur learns of the death of Guenevere. Arthur is accorded the victory at the tournament, having impressed the other knights with his performance:

> li plusor des chevaliers regardent lo roi a merveiles, que il tient autresi estal com fait li lions que li veautre n'osent aprochier..." (301: 7136-8)

At the conclusion of the tournament "li chevalier distrent e jugierent que li chevalier au vermeil escu l'avoit miels fait" (301: 7139-40). In this way Arthur has ironically won Guenevere's crown and the right to defend his own (neglected) kingdom reinforcing his position as king but also his never realised potential as the defender of his own lands.[111] He has taken on the persona of "best knight" (the defender of the realm, usually a role taken by Lancelot or Perlesvaus) becoming the champion of the queen, the role normally assigned to the *fin amant* but how can Arthur be reconciled to this unusual position? The problems associated with such a situation are detailed in *Yvain* and *Erec* in which Chrétien achieves a reconciliation between love and marriage. In the *Perlesvaus*, however, marriage receives scant attention and love does not feature within the institution. When marriage does appear it is depicted in a negative manner: Marin is a typical *gelus*, his violent actions are reminiscent of the cruel husbands in the *Lais* of

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[110] Kelly, 'Love in the *Perlesvaus*: sinful passion or redemptive force?', *Romanic Review*, 66 (1975), 1-12.
[111] Once returned to his country, he reverts to inactive type and leaves its defence to Lancelot allowing for dissent to appear in his relationship with Lancelot and the commencement of a "Mort Artu" section orchestrated by Brien des Illes.

Marie de France;[112] while the other example of marriage, the *Mariage Forcé* which surfaces on several occasions throughout the romance, is concerned with the evocation of the misery of both spouses until Perlesvaus remedies the situation. The marriage is enforced by Lancelot who compels the Knight of the *Mariage Forcé* to uphold an earlier promise to marry the discarded girl despite his protestations that he loves another more, while Lancelot is keen to save the honour of the discarded girl's family, shamed as a result of her elopement. Love then, is not the prime motivation in this case; rather it is the preservation of the dignity of her masculine relatives, purely a matter of maintaning honour and bonds between men that prompts Lancelot to force the marriage. The *Mariage Forcé* later appears as Arthur, Lancelot, and Gauvain are *en route* to the Grail Castle and the treatment meted to the Lady by the knight causes some consternation. Love might not necessarily be expected in this situation but certainly the knight is acting dishonourably and it is the shameful treatment of his wife to which Lancelot objects. But bound by the conventions of hospitality, Lancelot cannot seek to resolve the situation through a combat with his host, and has to leave the following morning. The next time the *Mariage Forcé* appears is as Perlesvaus lodges at the castle following his victory over Gohart and his visit to the tombs of his father and uncles. This time the knight now has leprosy, but his behaviour towards his wife remains unchanged. However, he has pledged to forgive the Lady for the marriage if he receives a golden cup which is to be the prize in the tournament of the Blanche Tor and Perlesvaus aims to send him the cup following his victory. Perlesvaus is victorious at the tournament and dispatches the cup to the Knight of the *Mariage Forcé*. This is the last time that the *Mariage Forcé* appears and it is to be assumed that the action of Perlesvaus results in the knight's forgiveness of his wife for enlisting Lancelot to enforce the marriage.

The *Perlesvaus* is not a romance in which love within marriage is reconciled and the problems raised by Arthur's success in the tournament of the Pré des Pailes are sidestepped, as it is Lancelot who returns to the defence of the kingdom while Arthur

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[112] *Yonec* and *Guigemar*, in particular demonstrate the extremes to which the jealous husband will go and illuminate the plight of the *mal mariée*. See: Philippe Ménard, *Les Lais de Marie de France: contes d'amour et d'aventure du Moyen Age* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1979), pp. 104-106 where he outlines the nature and function of the *gelus*.

continues his journey to the Grail Castle. Arthur cannot be a *fin amant* to his wife although he could play the part at the Three Days Tournament[113] and the role returns to its rightful player at the resolution of the episode. While travelling to the Grail Castle Arthur hears the news of the death of the queen but the narrator prefers to recount the grief of Lancelot, sparingly saying of Arthur: "il fu mout dolent" (302: 7157) adding "Dou duel que li rois demaine ne covient il mie parler." (302: 7162-3) The theme of Arthur's grief over the death of Guenevere is continued as Arthur arrives back at court stopping at Avalon on the way where he "ne fu mie joianz" (325: 7806) at the sight of the tombs of Guenevere and Loholt.

In winning the tournament of the Pré de Pailles, Arthur (briefly) supersedes Lancelot as champion of Guenevere, the winning of her crown signifying the right to defend Arthur's kingdom while Guenevere herself becomes a symbol of the floundering kingdom.[114] However, once Arthur returns to court he reverts to the role of inactive and indecisive king, a role that continues for the remainder of the romance.

Once back at court, the familiar motif of Arthur at table lost in thought when a strange knight bursts in is repeated while the reason for the pensiveness of the king is revealed in a moment of interiorisation:

> Li rois esgarda environ la table, si li sovint de la roïne. Il conmença a pensser e petit a mengier, e vit que sa cort estoit molt enpiriee e agastie por sa mort. (326: 7837-9)

The reflection of Arthur is prophetic; the court does indeed become worse as a result of Arthur's behaviour and his bad decision in sparing Brien des Illes, taking him back to court and making him his seneschal. In Manessier's *Continuation* such a course of action is the correct and frequent response concerning a defeated enemy but this case is a warning against the naïve optimism behind such a philosophy. However, Arthur's words

[113] The ideology behind the service of women is stated by Arthur to the younger sister - "por les dames e por les damoiseles se doivent pener li chevalier" (288. 6785-6) - and highlights the superficial nature of the ritual of *cortoisie* within the *Perlesvaus*. The exception to the superficial adherence to courtly love is Lancelot but in this work he never directly acts in the service of Guenevere.

[114] Dominique Boutet, *Arthur et Charlemagne, ou le roi imaginaire* (Paris: Champion, 1992), pp. 264-5.

reveal something of the role of Guenevere for there is the implication that Guenevere is influential at court, a fact that is borne out at the opening of the romance where the narrator utilises the grief of Guenevere at the predicament of the court now that Arthur has revoked his customs to underscore the dwindling glory of the Arthurian kingdom:

> "Ore en i a si poi chascun jor que ge en é grant vergoigne, ne nule avanture n'i avient mes; si é grant poor que Dex ne vos ait mis en obli." (26: 86-88)

It is she who advises Arthur to go to the chapel of St Augustine in order to restore his motivation for great deeds. The pilgrimage to the chapel is successful, the kingdom saved from decline; a decline brought about by the failure of Perlesvaus at the Grail Castle. Arthur's successful pilgrimage to the chapel of St Augustine constitutes a type of mini Grail Quest in that it resolves one of the consequences of the un-asked question and prevents the wasting of Arthur's kingdom.

In the *Perlesvaus*, the death of Guenevere brings about a weakness in Arthur who laments the loss of the queen who had been a worthy advisor. In the section dealing with the war against Claudas, a fundamental problem for Arthur is the lack of Guenevere as advisor, one consequence of which is the depletion of knights at court. Arthur is too ready to listen to advice from all sides, especially from Brien, resulting in wasteful debate with no firm resolution and ultimately, the departure of many knights, including Gauvain, from court. While Arthur's land may be a waste land at the beginning of the romance due to his neglect of duties (the lack of prosperity is signified by his failure to perform the function of *largesce*) and the failure of Perlesvaus at the Grail Castle, at the end of the romance it is again a wasteland following the absence of Guenevere from court since the kingdom is weakened without her.

Dominique Boutet states that in Irish literature the queen represented the sovereignty of Ireland and conveys power on the king through marriage[115] while Jean Markale also notes that Guenevere is aligned to those women in Irish literature who represented the land stating that the marriage of Arthur and Guenevere "représente le

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[115] Boutet, *Arthur et Charlemagne, ou le roi imaginaire*, pp. 264-5.

mariage symbolique entre lui et la Bretagne",[116] an issue intimated in some texts (particularly *La Queste* in which the origins of the Round Table are detailed), and in the *Perlesvaus*, in the tradition that the Round Table, the symbol of sovereignty and prosperity, has come to Arthur through his marriage to Guenevere. In this case, Madaglan of Oriande, the closest male relative of Guenevere, wants it back unless Arthur takes Jandree, the sister of Madaglan, as his wife, thereby restoring his own sovereignty through marriage to another female member of the family of Oriande. The proposition is now unacceptable, firstly, as Jandree is an enemy of the New Law, and secondly, because of Arthur's continued loyalty to Guenevere. The underlying theme of the female conferring sovereignty on the male goes only as far as Guenevere and does not extend to her female relative.

Boutet places importance on Guenevere as an advisor of Arthur at the opening of the romance,[117] a role she continues when Clamadoz appears at court and Gauvain objects to his request to be knighted. Boutet sees Arthur as "un simple exécutant des volontés de la reine" while the wishes of the queen correspond to the principles of the Arthurian kingdom where the upholding of customs takes precedence. The active role of Guenevere as advisor and maintainer of correct custom, customs that are developed to benefit men,[118] originates, as Boutet points out, from the Celtic and Indo-European tradition of the female principle representing the realm and the right to sovereignty over it, while Guenevere appears as a diminished courtly version of such a tradition.[119] However, her activity continues only insofar as she furthers the masculine society within which she is firmly ensconced: she functions as a figure that engenders moral worth in Lancelot, and, in her more active role as advisor to Arthur, serves to uphold the honour of

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[116] Jean Markale, *Le Roi Arthur et la société celtique* (Paris: Payot, 1976), p. 248.

[117] "Le *Perlesvaus* est sans doute le texte qui combine les éléments les plus divers. On sait que ce roman, après s'être placé sous le patronage du Saint Esprit, montre le royaume d'Arthur frappé de déréliction, le roi ayant perdu par un effet surnaturel son goût pour les largesses. C'est alors la reine qui fait à son époux la suggestion adéquate, en le conseillant d'aller en pèlerinage à la Chapelle Saint Augustine: ainsi retrouvera-t-il sa souveraineté perdue." Boutet, *Arthur et Charlemagne, ou le roi imaginaire*, p. 269.

[118] She upholds the principle that a knight cannot have an enemy who is merely a valet, the enmity of a valet is demeaning to a knight, whereas the enmity of a knight is ennobling, a clear example of the workings of the prestige system. See Chapter four, pp. 216-217.

[119] Boutet, *Arthur et Charlemagne, ou le roi imaginaire*, p. 269.

the Arthurian court, particularly the customs that generate the honour of the male individuals of the court.

Like the Didot-*Perceval*, the *Perlesvaus* also contains episodes that concern the problem of excessive and negative female desire. Gauvain arrives at a castle, is granted hospitality in the traditional manner by the lady of the castle who does not ask his name nor does he reveal that information. She then shows him a chapel containing four tombs that the lady explains are for himself, Lancelot and Perlesvaus, the last being for herself. Her plan is to entice the knights to worship at relics placed in recesses in the wall at which point a guillotine contraption will decapitate them. She is motivated by an obsessive love for all three knights that is unable to find expression in life, death being the ultimate prison in which she can retain the objects of her love. The episode shows an extension of the motive of the possessive *amie* who creates a prison in which to retain her *ami* in order to separate him from society, as we see in the Mabonagrain episode of *Erec*, and the episodes of Urbain and the Cevalier del Tombel in the Didot-*Perceval*. If the actions of the *pucele* in the *Perlesvaus* were to succeed, then Arthurian society would be placed in jeopardy through the loss of its principal knights. The codes of *cortoisie* are constructed to benefit society in addition to the individual and, in making these knights the objects of her obsessive desire, she does not conform to typical behavioural codes – she requires death from her knights rather than proof of prowess rendering her a threat to courtly chivalry.

This episode finds a parallel in Raoul de Houdenc's *Vengeance Raguidel* in which Gauvain visits the castle of the Pucele de Gautdestroit who, believing Gauvain to have spurned her love, has engineered tombs for him and for herself and has created the same guillotine mechanism.[120] The *pucele* in the *Vengeance Raguidel* does not recognise Gauvain, nor does he reciprocate her love but she reveals how she suffers, equating the masculine role to herself (2043-2051). However, her love manifests itself predominantly

[120] Raoul de Hodenc, *Messire Gauvain; ou La Vengeance de Raguidel: poème de la Table Ronde*, ed. by C. Hippeau (Geneva: Slatkine, 1969), vss. 2120-2302. See also W. Baird, 'The Three Women of the *Vengeance Raguidel*', *Modern Language Review*, 75, (1980), 269-280 and Jessie L. Weston, 'The *Perlesvaus* and the *Vengeance Raguidel*', *Romania* 47, (1921), 349-359.

in possessiveness and excessiveness; she herself admits that she "...l'amai trop outréement" (2225). Possessiveness is, to a certain extent, a concomitant of *fin'amor* but usually that of the masculine desire to possess the loved object. In the examples cited, however, possessiveness becomes an obsessive trait of the lady highlighting the negativity of this component of *fin'amor*. In addition, the dangers of women taking the subject role are delineated: being in an object role in a relationship with an excessive woman is adverse to the knight; the consequences range from isolation from masculine society with the result of becoming antagonistic towards it (as in the case of Urbain and Mabonagrain) to death in the *Perlesvaus* and the *Vengeance Raguidel*, the extreme outcome of such a danger.

Female desire occurs again in the episode of Perlesvaus, Clamadoz, and Meliot, exhibited on the part of the Roïne des Tentes, whose desire is not represented as negative or excessive. The potential confrontation between Perlesvaus and Clamadoz is displaced in favour of the combat between Clamadoz and Meliot at the instigation of the Roïne de Tentes who plays a pivotal role in the narrative momentum of this episode, receiving considerable attention from the narrator, in contrast to other female figures in the romance.

Initially there is conflict in the heart of the Roïne des Tentes as she learns of the outcome of the defeat of Cahot at the hands of Perlesvaus: she experiences grief at the death of a male protector and hatred against the one who caused her predicament. However, grief rapidly turns to joy at the coming of *Li Buens Chevaliers* who can replace Cahot as protector and also in whom she can hope to find love. The narrator goes some way in revealing the thoughts of the Roïne des Tentes through interiorisation, the use of indirect speech that also serves to reiterate the standing of Perlesvaus as celibate:

> La roïne volsist que Perlesvax se fiast plus en li qu'il ne fesoit, et que plus esgardoit le chevalier plus li plesoit et plus estoit esprise et desiranz de s'amor. Mes Perlesvax ne pensoit a li a amer ne a autrui en tel maniere. (153: 3293-6)

Her love follows the conventions of *fin'amor* in that she has heard of Perlesvaus and hoped for his arrival, corresponding to the concept of *amor de lonh*. Once he is present, she responds to his appearance, which, combined with his reputation, inspires love. Likewise Perlesvaus inspires love in other women he encounters, as at the Chastel Enragié, wherein the lady of the castle, in a manner traditional to courtly love, has become impressed by Perceval's appearance:

> Ele le voit bel chevalier e grant e bien forni e de bone contenance, si li plaist molt. Ele le comence tantost a enamer... (372: 9125-6)

This is all in vain however, for Perlesvaus remains oblivious, dedicated to his higher ideals of chastity.

Attractiveness to women becomes a requisite attribute of the knight in romance in general, as the acclaim of women, particularly an *amie,* is necessary to a secular knight as a reflection and measure of his achievements. Social rank engenders an inherent desirability; once a man is a knight it is assumed he possesses the formulaic gamut of attributes that makes a knight: *cortoisie*, *honor*, *prouesce*, that render a knight worthy, an object of desire, desired by both women and fellow knights. Furthermore, inherent attractiveness is compounded by the standing of a knight within chivalric society, a concept based upon the formula that prowess generates honour and acclaim: the higher the acclaim a knight receives the more desirable he becomes. Prowess engenders honour while honour inspires love in women (and in men, as we have seen in the examples of Lancelot and Galehaut in the Prose *Lancelot*, and Perlesvaus, Lancelot, and Gauvain in the *Perlesvaus*), love that emphasises and confirms the reputation of a knight as hero. Although Perlesvaus may refute love as an integral part of his success as the Grail Knight, he inspires love in others, reaffirming his own worth, since the inception of love, like friendship, comes from the perceived worth of the loved object that consequently generates desire.

According to René Girard, "desire is essentially mimetic, directed towards an object desired by the model".[121] Sarah Kay elucidates the Girardian concept of mimetic desire as:

> The desire to imitate other human beings is, for Girard, a universal human characteristic. We desire not the object of another's desire but to be *like* that other, because the desire for the object makes him appear to be more truly a person than we are (although in fact, for the model too it is not the object, but some other model, which is desirable and so on, down an unending chain of imitation).[122]

Success in the quest confers a high status upon the questor with the Grail Knight becoming the embodiment of worth within Arthurian society. Other knights also desire to emulate the Grail Knight, to participate in the quest in which he is engaged; through association with the hero and the values he represents, *prouesce, honor, cortoisie*, they gain something of the status of the Grail Knight. It is the evident posession of attributes valued within Arthurian society by the Grail Knight, compounded by his status and prestige, that is attractive to other knights; their desired object becomes the worth (honour) that is conferred on the hero through his success in the quest, creating a system of imitation in others, who are presented as similar, such as Gauvain and Lancelot in the *Perlesvaus*, Sagremor, and ultimately the Biau Mauvais in Manessier.[123] It is the desire to attain the same goal, the drive to achieve within the prestige system and gain the most honour that reinforces bonds of companionship between fellow knights, bonds that do not require women to function as conduits in their formation.

There is the implication in the reaction of characters to the behaviour of the Roïne des Tentes that her actions are untoward in this situation: she recovers from her grief in minutes as she is gripped by an intense love for Perlesvaus. Perlesvaus, on the other hand, is careful not to do anything to provoke this reaction but it is his presence that has inspired her love:

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[121] René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, p. 146.
[122] Kay, *The Chansons de geste in the Age of Romance*, p. 54.
[123] See Chapter two, pp. 95-96.

> Il l'esgardoit molt volontiers, qu'ele estoit de grant beauté, n'il ne li disoit nule rien por quoi ele se poïst percevoir que il l'amast d'amor enterine. Tote voies ne pooit ele refraindre son cuer ne oster ses euz ne perdre son talent. (153: 3296-99)

Implicit condemnation in the form of the surprise of her ladies at this sudden change of heart follows:

> Les damoiselles l'esgardent a mervelles de ce qu'ele avoit si tost oblié son duel. (153: 3299-3300)

Like Laudine, the Roïne des Tentes has focused her love on the killer of her protector (Cahot), the offer of service by Perlesvaus is instantly accepted (partly as the lands now need another protector – a situation similar to that in *Yvain*, as Laudine's barons urge her to take Yvain as a husband, specifically to defend the land, since they themselves cannot fulfil that undertaking). Yet, Perlesvaus will not stay and defend the Roïne des Tentes, his offer of love and service proving to be formulaic and superficial, subordinated to his promise to Lancelot.

The Damoisele del Char offers to remain as hostage for Perlesvaus while the Roïne des Tentes appeals to her to intervene on her behalf:

> "Sire, fet la Damoisele del Char, je demorera[i] por vos en ostages. – Mes vos li proiez, fet la roïne, qu'il demeure avec vos. – Dame, fet Perlesvax, je ne porroie, car je lessé Lancelot molt navré en l'ermitage mon oncle. –
> Sire, fet la roïne, je voldroie que li demorer vos pleüst autretant conme a moi. – Dame, fet il, ne devroit mie desplere d'estre avec vos, mes chascun doit sa parole sauver au meulz qu'il puet. J'oi en couvent Lancelot que je revenroie a lui au plus tost que je porroie, et l'en ne doit mie mentir a si bon chevalier." (157-158: 3409-3417)

The importance placed on bonds and promises made to fellow knights is a recurring feature of the *Perlesvaus* and serves to demonstrate the priority Perlesvaus places on his friendship to Lancelot over societal duty to protect a woman.

While the characters cannot understand the behaviour of the Roïne des Tentes, there is no narratorial condemnation throughout her appearance in the romance. As the episode progresses, the narrator condones her actions and the love that motivates them.

The combat between Perlesvaus and Clamadoz is delayed by the Roïne des Tentes who declares they wait in order to consider the matter calmly in the morning. The narrator does not criticise her for delaying the course of justice but instead condemns Clamadoz for his tirade against her:

> Clamadoz est conmeüz de molt grant ire, et la Roïne des Tentes eneure Perlesvax de canqu'ele puet. De ce est Clamadoz molt dolenz, et dit que nus ne doit avoir fiance en feme; *mes il l'en blasme a tort*, que ce li fet fere la grant amor qu'el a a lui, qu'ele set bien que c'est li meudres chevalier del monde et li plus beaux, tant est ele plus essaucie. (154: 3321-6, my italics).

As Perlesvaus is depicted as perfect, it is a natural and required consequence that he will inspire love in women and the Roïne des Tentes is a perfect candidate for courtly love, possessing the correct qualities and being of the right social rank; hence the love that motivates her is justification for the delaying of the judicial duel and is viewed favourably by the narrator.

In condemning Clamadoz, the narrator guides the audience towards the correct response concerning the Roïne des Tentes even though she is possibly wrong to prevent the judicial duel. The direct narratorial intervention continues with an insight into the emotions of the Roïne des Tentes. It appears she is right to put her own interest in Perlesvaus before the judicial requirements of Clamadoz (and, by extension, herself, as she is a member of the Red Knight clan). She knows, as the audience already knows, that Perlesvaus is "li meudres chevalier del monde et li plus beaux" (154: 3225-6). The sympathetic interiorisation of a female character is not a frequent occurrence in romance, although on this occasion, the interiorisation serves to reinforce the standing of the hero, demonstrating his desirability, and therefore his moral worth.

Like Guenevere, who figures as a constant presence that, on the one hand, continues to inspire and increase the honour of Lancelot, while on the other, affirms the weakness of Arthur without his principle advisor, there is also the constant presence of Perceval's mother, sister or other female relations; female figures that tend to play a passive role in the romances, their actions limited to imparting information or, as is the

case of Perceval's mother, acting as an incentive for atonement. Danielle Régnier Bohler draws attention to the prominence of females in the narrative, commenting that these women serve to reinforce the memory of family and maintain its position in society as "la culture médiévale, dans le champ arthurien, est la culture du Nom perdu, du Nom retenu, du Nom recouvré".[124] Perceval's female relatives are vehicles of information regarding his lineage and offer explanations of events otherwise not understood: the principal event being Perceval's failure at the Grail Castle. She also draws attention to the fact that female relatives hold the key to the true identity of the hero: women are responsible for the destiny of the hero, are essential for his education (such as the Dame du Lac in the Prose *Lancelot*) and finally as educators themselves. However, while the use of the female figures as a means to impart essential knowledge reccurs in romance texts, in the Grail romances women can be supplanted from their role; it is hermits who replace the feminine as "those in the know".

In the Didot-*Perceval*, the sister performs the same role as the hermit in imparting information regarding his family to Perceval, while in the *Perlesvaus*, hermits have replaced women as a means of the communication of information, women are simply educative through their role as the objects of adventures, becoming learning experiences for the hero and no longer party to wisdom themselves. In the Didot-*Perceval*, Perceval's sister has an important revelation for Perceval, informing Perceval of the nature of his lineage revealed to her by their hermit uncle and concluding:

> "Et m'a aconté que cil Bron qui est li vostre taions a le vaissel u li sans nostre Segnor fu recuellois, et est cil vaissiaus només Graaus; et m'a dit que nostre Sire dist que a vos doit revenir et vos le covenra tant querre que vous l'arés trové." (E: 180. 704-707).

The role of Dandrane is expanded further in *La Queste* where conversely, she is party to divine knowledge and guides Galahad to the Ship of Solomon. She also instructs the trio of questors upon the nature of the ship and its purpose:

[124] Danielle Régnier-Bohler, 'La fonction symbolique du féminin: le savoir des mères, le secret des soeurs et le devenir des héros,' *Arthurian Romance and Gender*, 4-25, (p. 6).

> "en cele nef la est l'aventure por coi Nostre Sires vos a mis ensemble: si vos covient issir de ceste nef et aler i." (Pauphilet: 200: 31-33)

The narrator presents her as a mouthpiece of divine wisdom: she is aware of the direction of the adventure as a whole and takes her place as one of the questors.

Dandrane, however, has no revelations for Perlesvaus, except to relate the troubles facing Yglais, information that Perlesvaus has already received. Nonetheless, despite a lack of inside information, Dandrane performs a more active role in the *Perlesvaus*, as she continuously searches for her brother. While her counterparts in the Didot-*Perceval* and the *Conte du Graal* relay important information (or give the impression that they could reveal something of importance), when Dandrane encounters Perlesvaus she does not recognise him and merely reveals the news of his besieged mother. However, she is granted an active part in the narrative of the text, contributing to the chain of events and undertaking adventures herself, completing the preliminary adventure necessary for Perlesvaus' defeat of the Roi del Chastel Mortel. Furthermore, she is aware of the responsibilities of this particular quest, relating to Perlesvaus the reasons for such a perilous undertaking:

> "...si me dist uns sainz ermites que cil qui nous guerroie ne porra estre comquis par nul chevalier se je n'aport del drap de quoi li autex es[t] couverz en la chapele de l'Aitre Perilleus." (220: 5032-5034)

Like Perlesvaus she is informed of the meaning of her actions by a hermit, which equates her to the masculine subject role: in romance women or hermits impart information while knights act and receive explanations for their actions. In the episode of the Aitre Perilleux, she demonstrates the qualities of a perfect knight in her religious devotion, her virginity, and the accomplishment of actions, which facilitate the restoration of Christian order. She is directed by a higher authority, as is Perlesvaus, and to a certain extent, Gauvain and Lancelot; she achieves what is required of her but she does not maintain this level of activity throughout the romance and resumes an object role in the section concerning her abduction by Aristor. She is, however, a positive

female model through her embodiment of Christian virtues, motivated by the Grail Quest and its ideology, her nobility of soul is further confirmed by her Grail lineage. T. E. Kelly observes that the elements of the sister motif, incorporating the notion of the obligation of Perlesvaus to his family, crystalise around her virginity, it is upon this in addition to her lineage that she focuses in her lament at the Aitre Perilleux (223: 5100-5106), leading to an interpretation of her as a figure of Christian faith and the emphasis on her suffering leads to her being viewed as a figure of Ecclesia.[125] Her virginity is of ultimate importance, firstly as an attribute that is valued as an intellectual, individual, and moral value, but later, in the Aristor episode, the value of virginity diminishes from the spiritual value possessed by an individual to the conventional signification of virginity as a commodity, useful to men, that is threatened and must be preserved.

Conclusion

What can be construed from the Grail romances is that there is a toleration of female activity as far as it serves the Arthurian knights themselves and furthers the Grail Quest. The Sore Pucele recalls Gauvain to his duty to avenge Silimac; the *pucele* of the Chastel des Gripes enables Lancelot to escape from his prison, and the actions of Dandrane further Perlesvaus' task to defeat the Roi del Chastel Mortel and facilitate his Grail Quest. Women can find a place within the Grail Quest but their role is limited to that of helper-facilitator, at best companion to the Grail Knight or other Arthurian knight undertaking the Grail Quest.

In Manessier's *Continuation*, women principally function as cursors to effect action on the part of men, the end result being the reinforcement of bonds between men, epitomised by the dispatch to Arthur's court of the repentant (through surrender) *malfaiteur*. While the nature of these episodes may appear repetitive and formulaic, they serve to express the ideology of the text in three ways.

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[125] Kelly, *Le Haut Livre du Graal: Perlesvaus*, p. 147.

Firstly, the rescue of the solitary female under attack serves as a continuous lesson of the correct behaviour of a courtly knight, the chivalric role being the policing of the Forest in order to prevent such attacks, maintaining the order of society through the preservation of a valued commodity, virginity, that is essential in furthering bonds between men, for "the exchanges upon which patriarchal societies are based take place exclusively among men. Women, signs, commodities, and currency always pass from one man to another".[126]

Secondly, the rescue of women generates the convention of reciprocal action on their part, either hospitality, or, more significantly, reward, a convention that leads to the denial of female desire for vengeance upon the aggressors for crimes committed, even to the extent of perverting the course of justice (as in the rescue of Dodinel) in order to preserve the fraternity of knighthood.

Lastly, the fraternity of chivalry is reinforced through the ritual of combat and surrender; furthermore, honour is perpetuated and increased. The masculine role is one of action, deeds of arms, and violence for the good of the community, resulting in the augmentation of honour, the bonding between men and the exchange of women. David Gilmore views masculinity as something that is different from anatomical maleness,[127] something that has to constantly be reinforced,[128] impossible to prove in isolation, and therefore susceptible to diminishment and loss. The fragility of masculinity is best embodied in romance in the abhorrent situation of a knight separated from society by a woman, a society that no longer knows his name, as we see with Mabonagrain in *Erec*, Urbain and the Cevalier del Tombel in the Didot-*Perceval*. The relationships of knights with the feminine sphere in the Didot-*Perceval* are utilised to depict a negative image of women, shown to be ultimately extraneous to the masculine world and its quest; the episode of courtly love, that of the Castel del Eskekier is demonstrated to be undesirable

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[126] Irigaray, *This Sex which is not One*, p. 192.
[127] Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making*, p. 11.
[128] Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making*, p. 24.

for the hero, while the later courtly encounter at the Blanc Castel is simply superficial and contains similarities to the behaviour of Gauvain in this type of situation.[129]

Men have to be active and prove their subject role, hence women in subject roles like the Lady of the Castel del Eskekier are threats to the masculine state. The manner in which the threat is overcome is an issue particularly well illustrated in Manessier, in which the wishes of the victorious knight take precedence over the demands of women. The subject role of a knight cannot be compromised by women attempting to gain control, to destabilise the order of society, especially when such an attempt compromises the carefully preserved but evidently tenuous male fraternity, interrupting homosocial bonds created by the activities of men, such as the bonding that results from combat, and the despatch of the defeated knight to court; thus the desire of the Lady either to imprison the defeated knight, or to have him killed, cannot be sustained within such a system.

Female desire is seen as dangerous and represented as exterior to society, a society that is maintained through masculine bonds. The negativity of female desire manifests itself in the appearance of the *fées* of the Forest and their unreasonable demands that serve no social function, represented as being far outside society. They correspond to the type of woman identified by Marie Louise Von Franz who states that "les femmes ont tendance à ne pas attacher beaucoup d'importance aux principes de la justice et de la loi, mais à réagir instinctivement contre ce qui leur déplaît par de la méchanceté, réaction qui ressemble à celle de la nature (ce qui ne signifie pas qu'on doive justifier toute réaction de l'animus)."[130] The female world, one in which the female can, or attempts to, manipulate the masculine is either subordinated to the masculine value system, as in Manessier's *Continuation*, or is depicted as wholly negative as in the Didot-*Perceval* and the *Perlesvaus*.

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[129] Rupert T. Pickens comments that the episode of The Tornoi del Blanc Castel is an "inventive translation" of the first independent Gauvain adventure of the *Conte du Graal* which reinforces the notion that Perceval behaves in a Gauvain-type fashion at the White Castle – being more concerned with masculine competition than *cortoisie*. See: 'Mais de çou ne parole pas Crestiens de Troies: a re-examination of the Didot-*Perceval*', *Romania*, 104 (1985), 492-510.

[130] Marie Louise Von Franz, *La Femme dans les contes des fées*, trans. by Francine Saint & René Taillandier (Paris: La Fontaine de Pierre, 1979), p. 77.

Women within society generally remain silent, their actions and interactions with men only serve to further the progress of men. The most positive representations of women are of those who conform to the masculine ideal: Guenevere, Dandrane, Blanchefleur, Yglais, Elainne. When they do speak or act it is only to further the interests of men: Guenevere advises Arthur to act for his best, to restore his standing; the virginity of Dandrane is essential in Perlesvaus' task to defeat the Roi del Chastle Mortel, and Elainne's insistence that Perceval fight in the tournament at the opening of the Didot-*Perceval* serves to increase Perceval's worth and his standing in male society. Femininity in the Grail romances serves to reinforce masculinity while the dissenting voice is suppressed. Masculinity must then finds its opposition in other models of masculinity that also serve, through the embodiment of undesirable charactersitics, or lack of positive characteristics, to illuminate the positivity of the hero.

Models of Opposition

We have seen that masculinity is constructed through means of similarity, through the reinforcement and propagation of ideals of the dominant masculinity: chivalric masculinity, as discussed in chapter two, and through means of opposition to femininity, leading again to the reinforcement and consolidation of the dominant masculinity. This chapter is concerned with the creation of a masculine ideal not through similarity, but through difference: through the contrasting of the model to a figure that possesses either differing attributes, or none of the valued attributes; in particular the adversaries of the hero who lack positive characteristics but may also exhibit negative behaviour traits.

If the ideal model, the male hero, is established through a reflection of himself in other knights, their imitation of his attributes reinforcing the ideal while their lack of some requisite virtues emphasises his perfection, the ideal model is also defined through difference - the contrast between himself and an Other who possesses none (or few) positive characteristics, while manifesting negative, undesirable or opposing traits. Use is made in Arthurian literature of certain key or stock figures with whom it is useful to contrast with the hero. Gauvain is one such figure, as studied in detail by Keith Busby,[1] a like model against whom the hero is measured, frequently found to suffer from comparison with the hero; while Keu is another figure with whom the hero is "compared and contrasted". The opposite of the hero is manifested in varying forms ranging from supernatural adversaries, to enemies who are knights like the hero, in addition to other figures who are not adversaries, such as the figure of Keu, or a character type such as the Biau Mauvais. The representation of the opposite to the hero shifts from one who is completely Other and supernatural, to one who is like him; an opposite who, as belonging to the class of knights, should ascribe to the ideals of that class, but, instead, embodies the opposite, negative, and undesirable traits that disrupt the cohesion of chivalric society.[2] Those whom the hero combats in the Forest

[1] Busby, *Gauvain in Old French Literature*.

[2] See Susan Crane, 'Brotherhood and the Construction of Courtship in Arthurian Romance', in *Arthurian Yearbook* III, ed. by K. Busby, (New York; London: Garland Publishing, 1993), pp. 193-

prove, for the most part, to be knights like the hero himself. However, within the romances are found adversaries who, through the manifestation of negative behaviour and the absence of positive values, represent opposing figures to the hero.

Partinal and Keu: principal adversaries in Manessier's *Continuation*

In Manessier's *Continuation*, Perceval embarks upon his quest, principally to take vengeance upon Partinal, who figures as the ultimate enemy, supposedly the embodiment of evil, in comparison to Perceval. Partinal is viewed as evil principally because of his crimes against the Grail Family, and the fundamental motivation of the *Continuation* is one of vengeance. Perceval's battle with Partinal is the culminating episode: defeat of the principal adversary results in success for Perceval and the completion of the quest. Partinal therefore must be a worthy opponent, worthy, in the sense that he must be equal to Perceval in combat, in order for the final conflict to have meaning, in addition to corresponding to his depiction as an evil murderer by the Roi Pescheor at the beginning of the romance.

The Roi Pescheor recounts the death of his brother, Goondesert, to Perceval and mentions Partinal as "molt hardi" (32841), establishing the credentials of this adversary as a worthy opponent. Goondesert had defeated Espinogrés, Partinal's uncle and Partinal had vowed to avenge the defeat by killing Goondesert before the end of the day. He completes his vow by taking the arms of a dead knight of the company of Goondesert, joining the company of the king in disguise. He then approaches Goondesert whom he kills with a sword. The sword later breaks, wounding the Roi Pescheor, and it is this sword that Perceval joins in the Grail Castle at the end of the Second *Continuation*. Partinal has therefore killed Goondesert "an traïsons" (32918) and through this action is denoted as evil.

201, in which she comments, regarding the work of Frederick Jameson, that he "raised the notion that the emerging sense of class identity among knights in the twelfth century made the older notion of an evil and supernatural adversary less expressive of chivalric consciousness than the romance version of an adversary who proves to be akin to the hero" (p. 197).

As Perceval finally approaches Partinal's castle at the end of his quest, the narrator offers his own report of the lord of the Tor Roige emphasising his negativity:

> Car li sires est si crüex
> Et si fel et si engrïex
> Que il n'a, tant est plains d'envie,
> Un ausi crüel home en vie. (41633-6)

The narrator's statement leaves the audience in no doubt as to what to expect and establishes the evil nature of Partinal beyond doubt. Perceval recognises the castle from the description given by the Roi Pescheor and from the shield that is hanging outside. At this point in the narrative, there is convergence of the narratorial opinion with the opinion of character in the encounter of Perceval with Partinal. Here both the narrator and Perceval are of the same view regarding the evil nature of Partinal, whereas the *vaslez* who inhabits the castle regards Partinal in a different light, creating a discrepancy between the perception of Partinal by the denizens of his castle, who do not view their lord as evil, with that of the narrator and Perceval.

The *vaslez* at the door informs Perceval that the lord of the castle "Preuz est en bataille" (41686). What is more, it appears that Partinal has defeated "cent et quatre" valiant knights in combat. As Perceval is to be defined by his arch opponent, it is imperative that Partinal is a worthy adversary, "preuz" in combat and able to defeat "vaillanz" knights, and the description given by the *vaslez* establishes Partinal's credentials as a difficult opponent, one who will cause the hero to strive in his definitive combat, while not evincing any empathy or admiration from the audience. Partinal does not possess any attributes relating to *cortoisie* indicating that, despite his valour in combat, he lacks the characteristics necessary to engage in interaction on any level except that of violence.

The narrator then offers a report of Perceval's opinion of Partinal in combat:

> Qu'il n'est nus hom, s'il le veïst,
> Qui certenement ne deïst
> Que onques nul meillor vassal
> Ne fu. Tant refait Perceval. (41777-41780)

Vassal is a positive term used to describe Partinal by the narrator but positive in the respect that the opposite values, those possessed by the Biau Mauvais, to be analysed

later in this chapter, are wholeheartedly condemned by all narrators and characters within the texts. The term completes the set of vocabulary used; it is traditionally employed with *preu*, and *hardi*,[3] *preux* having been utilised to describe Partinal by the *vaslez* of the castle.

Following the description of Partinal, the narrator presents the opinion of spectators as they watch Perceval:

> Que tuit dïent sanz contredit
> Cil dou chastel, grant et petit,
> Que son paroil veü n'avoient
> Ne en la terre nel savoient;
> Chevaliers si bien esprové
> N'i poïst pas estre trové. (41781-6)

Both knights are presented in conventional rhetoric, through opinion of character, although the opinion of Partinal of his opponent is not given.

Partinal believes it is *recreant* to surrender once defeated, a view he shares with Keu, the only other knight in the romance who, when faced with defeat and surrender into the prison of a woman, refuses to surrender not because he is frightened of the fatal vengeance of the woman in question but because he sees it as dishonourable "Que l'an me teigne a recreant" (36770). The position of Keu within the Gauvain section of Manessier's *Continuation* is that of "opposite," in that Keu is the adversary against whom Gauvain is defined, a role that is conventional in romance tradition, and one analysed by Linda Gowans in *Cei and the Arthurian Legend*. The Welsh tradition of Keu as a principal warrior of the Arthurian court was adapted by Chrétien with the motif of the sharp-tongued Keu, whose propensity for violence towards inferiors becomes apparent in the *Conte du Graal* in his treatment of the fool and the girl at Arthur's court, taking precedence. The motif is further developed in the later romances, creating the treacherous and despicable figure that Keu becomes in the Second *Continuation*, Manessier's *Continuation*, and especially the *Perlesvaus*.[4] Gowans further suggests a tradition of the pairing of Gauvain and Keu as principal knights of Arthur's court, against whom the hero is pitted in order to demonstrate his

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[3] Nelly Andrieux-Reix, *Ancien Français*, p. 136.
[4] Linda Gowans, *Cei and the Arthurian Legend* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1988).

worth, pointing to their roles in Chrétien. It is the fear of competition from Gauvain and Keu that inspires Yvain to search for the fountain; Lancelot takes over the role originally claimed by Keu in the *Charrette*, notably in his combat with Meleagant to defend the honour of Guenevere and the reputation of Keu, compromised by his own actions. However, there is also a parallel tradition of Gauvain versus Keu that appears in the *Roman d'Yder* in which the actions of Keu are indubitably treacherous. "The author of *Le Roman d'Yder* appears to have superimposed an exaggeration of Chrétien's contrast between Kay and Gauvain".[5] In Manessier's romance there is a continuation of the Keu-Gauvain opposition, Keu taking the role of unrepentant treacherous adversary against whom Gauvain is the Hero. Furthermore, as the Adversary will not conform to the ritual courtly conventions of society because of his status as enemy and the concomitant attributes assigned to him (he will be treacherous, he will commit crimes that cannot be pardoned) that effectively place him outside society and beyond rehabilitation, he must be wholly defeated by the Hero.

However, the role of Keu as Adversary and the necessary denouement this implies is problematic because of the status of Keu in Arthurian tradition. Keu's refusal to surrender defines him as an individual who cannot and will not conform to the ritual patterns of behaviour required by Arthurian society in Manessier's romance, a stance that is difficult to reconcile with his traditionally high position at Arthur's court. The problem is resolved thanks to the ambiguous terms of vengeance outlined by the Sore Pucele allowing the outcome to be altered: the spilling of Keu's blood onto the standard is sufficient recompense, rather than his death, originally desired by the Sore Pucele.

The stance of Partinal regarding surrender is first revealed by the narrator:

> Respont que ja tel mesprison
> Ne fera que il en prison
> De par nule chevalier se mete,
> Ne ja de ce ne s'entremete
> Que il cuit qu'il li crit merci. (41813-7)

[5] Gowans, *Cei and the Arthurian Legend*, p. 106.

In this episode Perceval reiterates the principal lesson of the quest, the directive of the old hermit to refrain from killing other knights (in addition to hearing mass and confessing sins — the basic tenets of Christian knighthood); he is prepared to offer mercy to his enemy and it appears defeat is enough to effect vengeance in this case. Perceval observes the rituals of combat while Partinal refuses to comply saying:

> "...Je vos creant
> Que ja ne serai recreant
> A nul jor que je soie en vie." (41823-5)

Partinal is in opposition to cultural exigencies in his refusal to surrender; his refusal to engage in convention signifies his inability to be reformed, in that he will not conform to the requirements of society. As I have discussed in the previous chapter regarding surrender,[6] the ritual of surrender consists of correct engagement in dialogue between two knights and often results in a bond between the two knights. Surrender is the fundamental stage towards rehabilitation taken by an enemy knight and the ritual dispatch of the defeated adversary by the hero to Arthur's court is an active manifestation of this bonding. Furthermore, through clemency, the victorious knight himself demonstrates nobility of character, an expression of *pitié,* that, due to its link to *miséricorde*, aligns the mercy given by the victorious knight to the generosity of the devout Christian.[7]

The code that Partinal and Keu subscribe to, that it is shameful to surrender, is not in itself something to be condemned. However, it is incompatible with the norm for enemy knights in Manessier's romance and as such must be subordinated to the overriding ideology of the romance, an ideology that directs against the killing of a fellow knight. The refusal to surrender in combat implies that the combat will endure until the death of one of the combatants with the possibility of the resultant stain of sin upon the soul of the victor.[8] Marie-Luce Chênerie points out that "à quelques antagonistes seulement on reconnaît le courage de préférer la mort à la honte d'une

[6] Chapter three, pp. 141-147.
[7] Marie-Luce Chênerie, *Le Chevalier errant*, p. 319. Mathew Strickland also points out that "the sparing of a vanquished foe displayed maganamity or *franchise*." *War and Chivalry*, p. 103.
[8] Bernard of Clairvaux, 'Eloge de la nouvelle milice', I, p. 201.

vie de vaincu, mais ce courage est condamné comme celui d'êtres pleins d'orgueil et sans repentir".[9]

Meleagant in the *Charrette* is another adversary who is unable to surrender although he does not cite any reason for this refusal and the narrator attributes this to Meleagant's "ire" (7081):

> Et Meliaganz a tele ire
> Qu'il ne puet parler ne mot dire,
> Ne merci demander ne daingne,
> Car ses fos cuers li desansaingne,
> Qui trop l'enprisone et anlace. (7081-7085)

Here the narrator reaffirms the ritual of surrender as essential to the courtly comportment of knights. It is the *fos cuers* of Meleagant that prevents him from being able to surrender and, unlike Partinal and Keu, there is no good reason offered for his refusal. In the *Charrette*, Meleagant is constructed as the opposite of Lancelot and in the final combat, displays characteristics that reflect the opposite values held by Lancelot; his refusal to surrender is necessary as the narrator draws attention to the flaw in his character that causes this refusal, ennobling Lancelot by comparison. Manessier allows Partinal the grace of an explanation for his motives, one that is not wholly unreasonable but opposition is made between Perceval, complying with courtly convention and offering mercy, and Partinal, refusing. However, unlike the *Charrette*, the narrator here does not interpret the actions of Partinal to make the opposition of *fos* and *fins* clear.

The custom of the shield is a typical Arthurian adventure of the type of combat in response to a challenge that we have seen in the Didot-*Perceval*, in the episode of the Cevalier del Tombel, and in *Yvain*, in which a knight appears to defend the fountain once water has been poured upon it. In Manessier, a horn must be sounded to summon the knight to combat. In the episode of the Tor Roige, custom takes on evil connotations as Perceval himself exclaims on hearing that Partinal kills those he defeats:

> Molt est crüex et desloiax,
> Foi que doi Saint Pere de Rome,

[9] Chênerie, *Le Chevalier errant*, p. 322.

Quant por si pou ocit un ome,
Et de ce envers Dieu mesprent. (41708-41711)

Partinal is reported as "esjoï" (41720) as he hears the horn which summons him to combat and the narrator again emphasises the fate that befalls those who engage in combat with Partinal, referring to his "espee/ Dont ot mainte teste coupee" (41725-6). Partinal's custom of killing adversaries places him in conflict with the ideological stance of the romance: the philosophy of mercy in combat and the perception that the killing of other knights is a sin, rendering him, like Mabonagrain in *Erec*, outside society. In Manessier's romance mercy is of prime importance, a directive of the Church, one that Perceval himself has to learn the value of, and a trait that the other knights seem to demonstrate as well. As Marie-Luce Chênerie has noted, mercy is both a courtly and religious attribute, employed by knights in order to demonstrate their noble and moral worth and to avoid the problem of homicide.[10] However, it is also evident that mercy is employed by knights principally to increase fraternity and solidarity, moreover to increase the rumour of their own prowess and standing, a usage that corresponds with the view of Jean Frappier:[11] that the inclusion of mercy as a directive of the Church in romance is a result of the desire of the nobility to reinforce their own standing and to justify their way of life by moralising customs that serve their own interests. The refusal of Partinal to capitulate and to engage in the furthering of the fraternity of Round Table is the egocentric action of an individual who prioritises his own desires (acclaim) over the maintenance of society. Perceval is therefore compelled to kill him, an outcome that does not please him (si m'est grief" (41831). However, the crimes of Partinal, particularly the murder of Goondesert[12] and the languishing of the Roi Pescheor, justify his death at the hands of Perceval, in accordance with the view of Bernard that those who will not repent must be killed:

> Mais dans notre condition présente, mieux vaut les combattre par les armes que de les laisser dominer sur les justes de peur que ceux-ci, à leur tour, ne se livrent à l'iniquité.[13]

[10] Chênerie, *Le Chevalier errant*, pp. 318-319.
[11] Frappier, *Autour du Graal*, p. 93; also Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence*, p. 47.
[12] The actions of Partinal conform to the definition of murder given by R. Howard Bloch in *Medieval French Literature and Law*, p. 37.
[13] 'Eloge de la nouvelle milice', III, p. 202.

In this way Partinal is depicted as opposite to Perceval, defined as negative through action, through the opinion of the narrator, and through his espousing of values that oppose the ideology of the text.

Adversaries in the *Perlesvaus*: gradations in the representation of negativity

In the *Perlesvaus* the principal adversaries are denoted, often as a result of forming part of allegorical lessons, as wholly negative, clearly seen in the depiction of the Noir Hermite. He is designated evil by name and by signification: the castle, as a hermit explains to Gauvain, represents hell while the Noir Hermite himself is Lucifer (Nitze 109: 2180-2182).[14] Other significant adversaries: the Roi del Chastel Mortel, Aristor, and the Rous Chevaliers are also presented as absolutely negative.

The Roi del Chastel Mortel is the principal enemy against whom Perlesvaus combats; it is by vanquishing this enemy that Perlesvaus finally succeeds in the Grail Quest. Unlike the Noir Hermite, a purely allegorical figure representing evil, the Roi del Chastel Mortel is a human adversary. Firstly he is Perlesvaus' uncle, brother of the Roi Pescheor and the Roi Hermite. Yglais describes him as having "autretant de felonie en lui com cist dui ont de bien en eus, qi assez en ont" (67: 1081-1082) while the Roi Hermite opines that "li Rois dou Chastel Mortel est li plus cruelx et li plus fel qui vive, si ne le doit nus amer por la felonie qui en li est"(177: 3928-9). The consensus of the Grail Family is reinforced by the actions of the Roi del Chastel Mortel himself, killing the Roi Pescheor in order to win the Grail.

Perceval first encounters his enemy at the Chasteau des Jalies where he defends the Roïne des Puceles from his uncle. In combat, the Roi del Chastel Mortel is typically described as "granz chevaliers et hardiz." (178: 3952-3), therefore his credentials as a significant enemy are established and both he and Perlesvaus inflict mighty blows upon each other. The king then realises that Perlesvaus is his nephew to which Perlesvaus replies:

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[14] Like the Biau Mauvais, the Noir Hermite embodies an irreconcileable opposition: an evil hermit

> "...Ce poise moi, fet Perceval. Ja n'i ai je preu ne heneur, car vos estes li plus deslloiaux de tot mon lignage, et je savoie bien quant je ving ci que c'estiez vos; et por la grant deslloiauté qui en vos est, guerroiez vos le mellor roi qui vive et le plus prodome, et la dame de cest chastel por ce qu'el li aide a son pooir. Mes se Dex plest ele n'avra garde de si mal home conme vos estes, ne li chastiaux n'iert ja obeïssanz a vos ne les [s]aintes reliques que li bons rois a en garde; car Dex ne vos ainme tant q'il fet lui, et je vos desfi tant com vos le guerroierez, et vos tieg je a enemi." (179: 3974-3982)

The king further compounds his low standing by fleeing as he is defeated, adding cowardice and incorrect action in combat to his list of vices and foreshadowing his suicide following his defeat at the Grail Castle.

The Roi del Chastel Mortel becomes the ultimate enemy in the *Perlesvaus* through his aggressive actions against the sacred Grail Family, actions that are also perpetrated by various enemies throughout the *Perlesvaus*. In turning against his own family, the Roi del Chastel Mortel commits an act of betrayal that is equated with Cain's murder of Abel (267: 6217-6224), as he is responsible for the death of the Roi Pescheor. Significantly, the Roi del Chastel Mortel advocates the *Viez Loi* although this in itself is not an irredeemable trait of adversaries in the romance; repentance and conversion are one option following defeat by the Grail Knight. However, the Roi del Chastel Mortel, in his aggression against the Grail Family has overstepped the mark: aggression against the Grail Family comprises the worst of crimes which, compounded with the other activities of the king, creates an adversary who manifests all negative attributes possible.

Not all adversaries in the *Perlesvaus* conform to the model of ultimate negativity represented by the Roi del Chastel Mortel: there are gradations within the representation of negativity. For example, the Sire des Mares falls into the category of such an adversary but does not fulfil all the criteria needed to render him evil on a level with the Roi del Chastel Mortel.

The Sire des Mares is motivated in his actions by the death of the Red Knight, killed by Perceval with a lance and is aligned to Cahot li Roux and his family, all of whom seek the death of Perlesvaus as just retribution for the crime they believe has occurred. Like other odious adversaries, the Sire des Mares pursues vengeance against the Grail Family, the members of which are incapable of defending themselves: the

Roi Pescheor was debilitated and unable to stand against the Roi del Chastel Mortel; the Roi Hermite, alone in the Forest, was also incapable of prevailing against Aristor, while the Sire des Mares persecutes Yglais and the siege of Kamaalot endures into the romance.

However, the Sire des Mares is not a wholly negative figure despite his aggression against the mother of Perlesvaus. At the beginning of the romance it is Gauvain who defends the women of Kamaalot and secures the safety of the castle for a year by defeating the Sire des Mares and Cahot li Roux in a tournament. There is an absence of depiction of the Sire des Mares either by narrator or characters as *fel* or *cruelx*, a contrast to the presentation of the Roi del Chastel Mortel and Aristor. Gauvain defeats the Sire des Mares in combat and the knight surrenders to Gauvain, agreeing to abide by the conditions of the tournament. He is civil in defeat and faithful to conventions of surrender in contrast to Cahot, who refuses to observe courtly conventions in his later encounter with Perlesvaus. Again, following his later, final defeat by Perlesvaus, the Sire des Mares is courteous, offering the conventional conditions of surrender:

> "Dame, fet li Sire des Mores, vostre fil m'a afolé et mes chevaliers pris et moi autresi. Je vos rendré vos chasteaus quanque je en tieng, si me clamez quite." (234: 5380-82)

Perlesvaus, however, does not accept this surrender, remarking that "l'en doit fere guerre encountre guereeor, et pes encontre pesible" (232: 5333-4). In seeking retribution for the merciless aggression against his family (234: 5382-5387) there ensues the drowning of the Sire des Mares in the blood of his knights. Aggression against the Grail Family cannot be tolerated, it is perceived as aggression against the Church (the equation of the Grail Family with the Church itself is reinforced by the name of Perlesvaus' mother[15]). The vengeance taken by Perlesvaus on this knight indicates the heinous nature of an otherwise commonplace crime as, essentially, the Sire des Mares is an ordinary adversary who, if acting against any other castle, would be defeated and sent on his way (as in the episode concerning the encounter of Lancelot with Marin li Jalox). Unlike the other main adversaries, the Sire des Mares is

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[15] Norris J. Lacy, 'Perlesvaus and the Perceval Palimpsest', *Philological Quarterly*, 69 (1990), 263-271, (p. 264).

not reported as evil, is denoted as such through action only, while he demonstrates that he is capable of adhering to ritual behaviour, in contrast to other principal adversaries, such as Partinal, Keu, Meleagant, and Cahot li Roux.

Cahot li Roux is the brother of Clamadoz' father and also the sworn enemy of Perlesvaus. He first appears at the siege of Kamaalot led by the Sire des Mares and is defeated by Gauvain in the tournament. Perlesvaus later arrives at Cahot's castle, a castle the latter has taken from Yglais, with the intention of finding lodging for the night. The first detailed representation of Cahot as an aggressor is reinforced by the narrator's depiction of the knight that immediately denotes him as negative before his lineage is revealed:

> Li sires li vient encontre, qui granz chevaliers estoit et rox, et avoit le regart felon et le vis plaié en molt de leus... (149: 3200-3202).

He has seized the castle that he occupies from the mother of Perlesvaus, instantly aligning him to the tradition of negative aggressive knights preying on the defenceless. In addition, Cahot will not follow the rules of hospitality, contrary to the expectations of Perlesvaus who demands that Cahot grant him hospitality for the night (150.3211-3) to which Cahot replies:

> "...mon enemi mortel ne hebergerai je ja se mort non." (3213-3214)

These expectations are based on the conventions of hospitality that always conform to a set pattern and take precedence over other forms of behaviour. As observed by Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner, "the giving and receiving of hospitality becomes a rite which validates or invalidates the social identity of all those involved, especially the guest or knight. As such it confers or confirms status, sorts out the deserving from the undeserving, opens or closes the door to adventure".[16] The refusal to conform to a recognised form of behaviour confirms the negative presentation of Cahot, his actions are contrary to the behaviour of others perceived as courtly, and therefore positive, in similar situations, such as the Roi d'Escavalon in the *Conte du Graal,* and Lancelot in the *Perlesvaus*, who cannot take action against his host, the

[16] Bruckner, *Narrative Invention in Twelfth-Century French Romance*, p. 117.

Knight of the *Mariage Forcé*, because he is a guest under his roof. In the *Conte du Graal*, Gauvain takes lodging within the castle of the Roi d'Escavalon at the invitation of the king whose father he is accused of murdering. Gauvain and the sister of the king are besieged by the townspeople on the discovery of Gauvain's identity. The king returns and despite the urgings of Guigambresil, the steward, who had brought the accusation to Arthur's court, refuses to prosecute Gauvain, even going as far as to offer him protection from the attack because he has given him hospitality, the conventions of hospitality prevailing over family vengeance on this occasion. While the Roi d'Escavalon adheres to the conventions, therefore perceived as a positive personage in Chrétien's romance, Cahot is a negative character, adhering to this negativity by his refusal to initiate rules of *cortoisie*. Hospitality as a narrative motif is useful to demonstrate whether a character is positive or negative through his behaviour once in the ritual mode. If an individual will not engage in the ritual in the first place, aware of the constraint that is inherent within the code of behaviour, then his refusal to comply with the rules of courtly society is very significant for his depiction as positive or negative, as noted by Marie-Luce Chênerie:

> dans la réalité et la fiction, celui qui offre et celui qui demande l'hospitalité choisissent donc le mode de leurs relations; ils décident de se traiter en amis plutôt qu'en ennemis; en tout cas, refuser l'hospitalité reviendrait à manifester des intentions hostiles, ou une imprudente avarice.[17]

Unlike the Sire des Mares, Cahot is portrayed as universally negative through his actions and the description that denote him as *felon*. In accordance with convention, he is also granted positive attributes that relate to his ferocity as an enemy: following the combat with Perlesvaus, members of Cahot's retinue declare that "vos avez ocis li plus hardiz chevalier del roiaume de Logres, et celui qui plus estoit doutez de ses enemis"(151: 3236-7), a typical declaration serving to reinforce the victory of Perlesvaus.

Like Cahot, a further adversary, Aristor, the abductor of Dandrane and murderer of the Roi Hermite, is also introduced into the narrative as wholly negative. Perlesvaus encounters the *pucele* bearing the sealed head who informs him of the

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[17] Chênerie, *Le Chevalier errant*, p. 506.

abduction of Dandrane and the death of the Roi Hermite at the hands of Aristor. In addition, the *pucele* also introduces another enemy to Perlesvaus, the Rous Chevalier de la Parfonde Forest, a knight responsible for the death of one of Perlesvaus' uncles Brun Brandalis. These two enemies are introduced into the romance at a late stage, reviving the motif of clan vengeance.

The actions of Aristor, in killing the Roi Hermite, situate him high in the hierarchy of adversaries. There is no doubt as to his malevolent nature, reported by two *vallets* who confirm that "ceste cruautez est graindre que nus chevaliers puist avoir" (358: 8730-3731), further expanding their statement concerning the negativity of Aristor by adding "e Aristor est de si cruel maniere que chevaliers ne puet passer parmi ceste forest, se il l'encontre, que il nel voelle ocirre" (359: 8742-8744). Not only has Aristor committed the ultimate crime of aggression against the Grail Family but he is also performing illegal aggressive acts of violence in the Forest and disrupting the peace.

Perlesvaus succeeds in defeating Aristor who surrenders saying:

"...laissiez me vivre, e je vos pardonrai ma haïne." (360: 8769-8770).

Surrender is not sufficient recompense for the actions perpetrated by Aristor and death is the only possible outcome. The ritual of surrender does not serve to bond the enemies of the Grail Family with Perlesvaus: crimes committed against members of the Grail Family (unlike the crime of advocating the *Viez Loi*) are punished only with death. Even in Manessier's *Continuation*, where the bonding and pardoning of knights is achieved through the ritual of surrender, the ultimate adversary, who cannot be pardoned (although Perceval is prepared to do just that following his victory over Partinal), is the one who has committed a crime against the Grail Family.[18]

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[18] There is a similarity between the unforgivable nature of crimes committed against the Grail Family and the notion of the unforgivable sin against the Holy Spirit. The symbolic equation of the guardians of the New Law with the Holy Spirit is illuminated in the appearance of Galaad at Arthur's court at Pentecost in *La Queste* (See: Matarasso, *The Redemption of Chivalry*) and in keeping with the mysticism of Joachim of Fiore who prophetised the coming of the age of the Holy Spirit. See: Marjorie Reeves, *Joachim of Fiore and the Prophetic Future* (London: S.P.C.K., 1976).

The dispensing of mercy is dependent on the nature of the crime committed and the murder of an individual aligned to the Grail Family or to one of the principal knights is punished by death. Lancelot fights against the Sire de la Roche who is responsible for the death of the brother of the Chevalier au Vert Escu and who has seized his castle. This knight is described as "cruex chevaliers estoit et molt hardiz" (129: 2687-8). Lancelot defeats him and although he asks for mercy, Lancelot beheads him and gives the head to the Chevalier au Vert Escu. As the knight is responsible for the death of a knight allied with Lancelot, pardon cannot be given, a position that contrasts with the Gauvain's actions as he is attacked by the Partiz Chevalier. The Partiz Chevalier is not described by the narrator and following his defeat he is granted mercy by Gauvain. Unlike, the Sires de la Roche, the Partiz Chevalier challenges Gauvain first and, in addition, is not responsible himself for the death of anyone, his crime is of a less serious nature. Mercy is again given to the defeated in the episode where Lancelot fights Marin li Jalox who is laying siege to the castle of an elderly *vavasor* and his two daughters.

At first Lancelot is taken aback when he is asked to perform a service in return for hospitality:

> "Comment! fet Lanceloz, je ne sui ça dedenz venu se por herbergier non, et vos me volez si tost enbatre en mesllee?" (159: 3447-8).

But since he is swayed by the pitiful sight of the two girls crying and beseeching mercy from God (160: 3452-4), he agrees to defend the castle. Following the victory of Lancelot, Marin pleads for mercy (160: 3483-4) which Lancelot grants once Marin has vowed to cease his aggression against the castle.

Marin li Jalox is a negative figure that receives ambiguous treatment throughout the romance: the father of Meliot, he is continuously represented as negative, a factor that renders the granting of mercy to Marin by Lancelot unusual.

Gauvain is the first character to encounter Marin le Jalox, an episode that occurs early on in the narrative. Gauvain arrives at a castle, is warmly welcomed by a dwarf, which comes as something of a surprise to Gauvain who "se merveille molt de la joie que li nains li fet, car il a mainte vilenie trovee en pluseurs nains" (73: 1236-7).

However, the dwarf is true to type and as soon as Gauvain is asleep, seeks Marin to inform him that Gauvain is lodged in his castle despite his strict instructions to his wife that Gauvain was never to be given shelter. Marin, like others in the text, is convinced of the reputation of Gauvain as a philanderer, a reputation Gauvain carries from romance to romance and one that he constantly disproves in the *Perlesvaus*.

Once the lady of the castle has discovered the treachery of the dwarf, she requests that Gauvain aid her against the wrath of her husband. Gauvain agrees and hides a short distance from the castle and observes the return of Marin, who is furious and declares that Gauvain is the knight "que ge plus resoignoie" (76: 1299). He drags the lady through the forest to a pool where he whips her. Gauvain appears but the knight will not believe his assertions of innocence and insists on a combat between them, which the narrator sees as an act of "folie e de grant felonnie" (77: 1324). The combat is merely a ruse and as the two knights ride towards each other, Marin swerves away from Gauvain in order to run his wife through with his lance, such is the extent of his jealousy. Having done this, Marin then flees back to the castle, vowing from the ramparts that Gauvain will suffer for what he has done.

> "Messire Gavains, ceste honte e ceste mesaventure m'est avenue par vos, mes vos le conperrez encore se ge vif." (77: 1340-1)

The declaration of Marin marks the beginning of prolonged animosity between allies of Marin le Jalox and Gauvain. As Gauvain leaves the lands of Gomorret, he immediately encounters the Partiz Chevalier, who attacks him on behalf of Marin le Jalox, however, following his defeat, the Partiz Chevalier places himself in the service of Gauvain.

Later, Gauvain encounters a hermit who offers the knight interpretations of the events that have befallen him including the murder of the lady by Marin le Jalox. The hermit explains to Gauvain that the lady signifies the Old Law, overthrown by the thrust of a lance – as through the stabbing of Jesus by a spear and the crucifixion, the Old Law was overturned and the New Law established:

> "Sire, foit soi li prestres, ce fu molt grant joie de la senefiance de sa mort, car Josephes nos tesmoige que la Viez Loi fu abatue par un coup de glaive sanz resociter, et por la Viez Loi [abatre] se sofri Diex a ferir en coste du glaive, et

> par ce coup fu la [Viez] Loi abatue et par son crucefiement. La dame senefie la Viez Loi." (110-111: 2207-2211).

However, the repercussions of this symbolic event are very real and more significant for the progress of Gauvain in the romance than his understanding of it as an allegory. The allegorical level seems arbitrary, appearing as a garbled interpretation of events that function more successfully on a narrative level. The symbolism of such an event is brief in passing whereas the consequences of the episode have resonance throughout the text. That Marin has struck down his wife, the Old Law, is seen by the characters of the romance as a crime (87: 1584), a view with which the narrator concurs, presenting Marin in a negative manner. At the hermitage where Gauvain first sees Meliot, the hermit explains that Meliot is "de molt haut lingnage, mes il est filz *au plus cruel chevalier e au plus felon qui soit*" (87: 1581-2, my italics), a statement that contrasts with the interpretation by the hermit of Marin as striking down the Viez Loi, symbolised by his wife. However, the interpretation given by the hermit contradicts the events as they appear on a secular and narrative level with the actions of Marin being condoned by the hermit. By striking down the Old Law, Marin is essentially furthering the New Law rendering the involvement of Gauvain in the punishment of Marin and his victory over the supporters of Marin problematic. Gauvain's role as the defender of Marin's wife therefore positions him as defender of the Old Law; especially true when the implications of the interpretation of Meliot are considered. T. E. Kelly asserts, regarding the allegorical character of the *Perlesvaus*, that "it would be a mistake to assume that all signposting automatically implies the allegory is all pervasive".[19] The difficulty of the interpretation of events on an allegorical level also arises in the Clamadoz episode.[20]

Marin appears later on in the romance as an aggressor of a castle containing two girls and their infirm father. Lancelot is the defender of the castle and is swiftly victorious over Marin who yields to Lancelot and retreats after swearing oaths never to attack that castle again. The episode is brief with Marin assuming the role of traditional aggressor of defenceless women in a castle. Marin, however, is unaware of the identity of his opponent until he is defeated and appears to bear no such animosity towards Lancelot as he does towards Gauvain. In addition, he cites Meliot in his plea

[19] Kelly, *Le Haut Livre du Graal: Perlesvaus*, p. 98.
[20] See: pages 211-221.

for mercy, adding weight to his attempt to convince Lancelot to spare him. Following this episode, Marin makes no further appearances in the text until the news of his death at the hands of Nabigan de la Roche is related to Gauvain by Meliot.

Marin is not punished as are the other knights who are also said to be *cruel* and *felon* (Aristor, the Roi del Chastel Mortel, the Chevalier de la Tor Roige) despite the fact that he is persecuting the weak in the same manner as the Sire des Mares and is said to be as odious as Aristor. However, while being defined by their actions, the negativity of adversaries is also generated by the identity and significance of their victims; only crimes against the Grail Family are seen to be ultimately reprehensible, only those who are truly evil can undertake such actions, therefore Marin is pardoned.

The opinion of character and narrator is also significant in establishing the nature of adversaries, designating the adversary as either "evil" (*fel*, or *cruex*), or simply as lacking positive attributes pertaining to *cortoisie*. When Clamadoz kills Meliot's lion as it prevents his progress and hangs its head upon the gate of the castle at the Champ del Lion, a *valet* issues from the castle and reproaches the actions of Clamadoz, saying "vos avez fait grant vilonie qui avés ochis le lion al *plus cortois* chevalier que l'on sache et au plus bel et al mielz vaillant de cest roiaume" (146-147: 3127-3129, my italics). At this point in the narrative we are not aware that the owner of the lion is Meliot, it could be any typical adversary but from the language utilised it is clear that this knight is not negative. While the most evil of knights may receive the positive attributes of *hardiz* or *proz*, this simply denotes their physical abilities in combat rather than referring to any moral quality and these positive physical attributes are frequently coupled with *fel* and *cruex*. The inhabitants of the Tor Roige may term Partinal as *preuz* (this is qualified by stating that he is *preuz en bataille*), while the Roïne des Tentes laments the death of the *meilleur* knight of her line, but none of these enemies is ever termed *cortois,* an attribute consistently utilised in association with Meliot. It seems that *cortoisie*, representing moral worth, is applied only to those knights perceived as "good:" the Grail knight and those like him.

However, there can be discrepancy between the actions of an adversary (that denote him as negative) and the description of, and reaction to the adversary by the

narrator and characters, seen to a certain extent in the figure of the Sire des Mares, but a discrepancy that is more evident in the depiction of Clamadoz, enemy of Perlesvaus.

Clamadoz: adversary or hero?

The duplications of enemies of the Grail Family serve to maintain the focus of the narrative upon Perlesvaus, following his success at the Grail Castle, effectively the completion of his quest. As they are pursuing vengeance against the Grail Family, they are consistently depicted as wholly negative (with the exception of the Sire des Mares). However, there is one member of the Red Knight family who is represented in an entirely different manner.

The narrative focuses upon Clamadoz, relating his journey to Arthur's court, and his adventures following his departure as he searches for Perlesvaus, his motivation not, like the other Arthurian knights who seek Perlesvaus, a desire for association and emulation, but rather vengeance. The name comes from the *Conte du Graal* in which Clamadoz is the aggressor besieging Blanchefleur, a role that is taken by Clamadoz' *alter ego* in the *Perlesvaus,* Cahot, who fulfils the role attributed to Clamadoz in the *Conte du Graal* through his aggression towards the mother of Perlesvaus, here a substitute for Blanchefleur as an object of aggression. Clamadoz in the *Conte du Graal* corresponds more to the knights who besiege castles held by women in Manessier than those irredeemably evil knights who perform the same role in the *Perlesvaus*. In the *Conte du Graal*, Clamadoz' motives for the siege are forced marriage; following his defeat by Perceval he surrenders and is dispatched to Arthur's court there to be subsumed into society once his initial role as imparter of news of Perceval is completed. In the *Perlesvaus*, despite his status as an enemy of Perlesvaus, Clamadoz is depicted as a positive character, one who has right on his side while the traditional evil nature of the Red Knights, as mortal enemies of the Grail Knight is suppressed. The narrator resolves the problem by the introduction of another Red Knight, one who embodies the negative qualities that should be embodied by Clamadoz, depicting the two as opposite poles of the same adversary. Like Clamadoz, Cahot is also problematic in that the representation of him as negative is complicated

by the fact that he is also the protector of his family and regarded highly by the Roïne des Tentes, who is depicted favourably by the narrator. On learning of the death of her brother she laments that "il a ocis le mellor chevalier de mon lignage, et celui qui me tensoit vers mes enemis" (152: 3277-8).

The early presentations of Clamadoz depict him in a positive light despite his lineage and motivation. He first appears in the narrative in an encounter with Gauvain who is in the midst of his quest to win the sword of John the Baptist. They engage in dialogue and Clamadoz refers to Perlesvaus as the "meilleur chevalier du monde" (64: 983) but then qualifies this:

> "Je di qu'il est buens chevaliers; si no deüsse pas loer, car il ocist mon pere en ceste forest d'un javelot. Li Buens Chevaliers estoit vallez qant il l'ocist, e ge vengeroie mon pere vallez, se ge le trovoie, car il me toli le meilleur chevalier qui fust o roiaume de Logres qant il ocist mon pere. Il le me toli bien, puis qu'il le tua sanz deffiance de son javelot, ne ge n'iere jamés a ese ne a repos si l'avré vengié." (64: 985-990)

Gauvain, in his response, refers to Clamadoz as "Biax doz amis" (64: 990-1) while warning him to beware in case Perlesvaus does him harm. Clamadoz is heedless of Gauvain's advice, referring to Perlesvaus as "ennemi mortel" (64: 995). However, he is presented as courteous as he outlines his grievance against Perlesvaus, the murder of his father "sanz deffiance de son javelot". His complaint, apparently justified by the facts (64: 985-990), and his desire for a judicial combat with the perpetrator of the crime raises him above the level of an aggressor such as Cahot, Aristor, or the Sire des Mares, who seek vengeance upon the defenceless members of Perlesvaus' family.

Clamadoz then travels, like Perceval in the *Conte du Graal*, to Arthur's court in order to be knighted where initially Gauvain is staunchly against the knighting of Clamadoz because of the problems this would create for Perlesvaus:

> "Je ne le di mie por le valet desavancier, mes por ce que je [ne] voldroie que vos feïssiez chose de coi li Bons Chevaliers se plainsist de vos." (144: 3057-3059)

The objections of Gauvain refer to the tradition of the Red Knight as an adversary of the Grail Knight. Cahot li Rous and the Sire des Mares have already appeared as aggressors of the mother of Perlesvaus, both encountering Gauvain in combat:

Gauvain is therefore aware of the feud between the family of Perlesvaus and the clan of the Red Knights viewing the knighting of a further member of the clan as creating yet another adversary to hamper the progression of Perlesvaus, and endanger the Grail Family, if the actions of the Sire des Mares and Cahot li Roux are indicative of the comportment of the clan.

However, Guenevere argues for the knighting of Clamadoz:

> "et gregnor vergoigne devroit il avoir de la haïne d'un valet que d'un chevalier, car il ne fu onques nul bon chevalier qui ne fust sages et temprés." (144: 3062-3064)

Guenevere subscribes to the notion that it would be demeaning for Perlesvaus to incur the enmity of a *valet* since it is necessary for an adversary to be the equal of the hero in order for renown to be won, an attitude that illuminates the true function of combat as a matter of increasing one's place within the prestige system. In addition, once Clamadoz belongs to the *compagnonnage* of knights he should share their ideals (be *sages* and *temprés)* and conform to the codes of behaviour ritualised by the fraternity of chivalry. Guenevere's words suggest that to be a knight is to enter into a particular mode of behaviour; the actions and ideals of a knight will be (or should be) dependent on his belonging to this caste. Guenevere qualifies her statement, implying the existence of knights who are neither *bon* nor *sages et temprés*, a fact born out by the many examples of negative knights throughout the *Perlesvaus*. The numerous enemy knights who manifest negative traits and behaviour prove that the ideal is not universal, but Clamadoz fulfils the concept expressed by Guenevere in that, although an enemy of Perlesvaus, he also exhibits the positive values of knighthood.

In response to Guenevere's words, Arthur knights Clamadoz creating an enemy to equal Perlesvaus while the court concurs

> qu'il n'avoient veü, grant tens avoit, en la cort chevalier de gregnor beauté. (144: 3068-3069)

The opinion of the court corresponds to the recurring idea that fine appearance is indicative of moral worth for the narrator adds that Clamadoz "fu molt enorez del roi et de toz ses barons" (144: 3070-3071). To those at court, Clamadoz appears a good candidate for knighthood, of fine appearance that indicates his virtue. Arthur is

following custom in knighting Clamadoz in response to his request, to which Guenevere adds her remarks upon knighthood. Gauvain is the only voice of dissent, offering opposing advice to Arthur founded upon his concern for the progress for Perlesvaus in his quest as the saviour of the world, favouring the higher ideal over that of the worldly prestige system. Guenevere's argument, on the other hand, rests upon custom and subscribes to the value system in which the honour of a knight is derived from those he defeats in combat; his status and worth arise from his actions; in this way she articulates the ideology of the Arthurian court, an ideology that is not without its problems – the equation beauty equals virtue is not infallible, as evinced at the opening of the romance in Yvain li Avoltre's remarks upon the fine appearance of Arthur as a knight (31: 197-201).

Clamadoz leaves court, now a knight and therefore an equal and worthy adversary to combat Perlesvaus. The first adventure to befall Clamadoz is the championing of three women prevented from continuing on their chosen course by a lion described as "si felon et si cruel" (145: 3089-3090). The description contrasts to the original presentation of this particular lion as it first appears in the romance when Gauvain encounters Meliot and his lion. Meliot is still a child, riding on the back of the lion watched over by his hermit uncle. The significance of the event is later explained by a hermit who informs the knight that the boy riding on the lion

> "senefie li Sauveres du monde qui nasqui en la Viez Loi, et fu circoncis et s'umilia vers tot le monde et le pople qui dedenz ert, et bestes et oisiaus, que nus ne porroit governer ne jostisier se sa vertu non." (111: 2230-2233)

T. E. Kelly points out, regarding the first depiction of Meliot in the romance, that "the reference point is more specifically to an idea: the humble Savior's dominion over the world and all its creatures".[21] However, in the later episode, while the knight who owns the lion is said by the women to be good ("a en lui molt [de] cortoisie et valor", 145: 3094), the lion is not.

Clamadoz recognises the women as the Damoisele du Char and her companions and agrees to guide them on their journey (as they are all seeking Perlesvaus); a move that reinforces the positive portrayal of Clamadoz. Through his

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[21] Kelly, *Le Haut Livre du Graal: Perlesvaus*, p. 97.

actions in accompanying the Damoisele du Char he is seen to be fulfilling the requirements of chivalry: the defence of women from harm, in this case from the lion. Furthermore, the Damoisele du Char is a figure of right and the position of Clamadoz as her protector confirms his alignment to the side of good (which contrasts with his function in the romance as the enemy of Perlesvaus).

It is the killing of Meliot's lion by Clamadoz that later becomes a problem for him as the wrangling over the right of the matter takes precedence over the attempt by Clamadoz to secure justice for the murder of his father; the question arises as to whether Clamadoz was right to have killed the lion. Firstly, the lion was impeding the progress of the Damoisele du Char on her quest and she has divine blessing. In addition the lion was behaving in an aggressive manner typical of the other lions that appear in the romance. Meliot, on the other hand, accuses Clamadoz of treacherously killing his lion. Clamadoz also hangs the head of the lion on Meliot's gate which is not condoned; he is later rebuked for that action by the Roïne des Tentes:

> "Par mon chief, fet ele, ce fu vilenie de la teste pendre pui[s] que vos ne li avez rien mesfet avant." (155: 3357-8)

There is the suggestion implicit in the reaction of the Roïne des Tentes on learning of Clamadoz' actions that there is no justification for his actions as Clamadoz had done no wrong to the lion beforehand. Her rebuke of Clamadoz presents an inversion of the conventional situation in which one would expect the lion to have wronged Clamadoz to warrant the display of its head. But by such an action, Clamadoz is more reminiscent of Cahot li Roux than a chivalrous Arthurian knight, although the Roïne des Tentes does concede that it was not surprising that Clamadoz killed the lion (155: 3358-9).

Unlike Meliot, Clamadoz appears to have no spiritual significance within the text; he belongs simply to a line of adversaries of Perlesvaus, linked by lineage in their animosity, while the interpretation given by the hermit of Meliot and his lion cannot function within the level of narration. Clamadoz kills the lion not unreasonably as it impeded the progress of himself and the Damoisele du Char. However, Clamadoz' behaviour can be questioned when his actions following the death of the lion are considered. There are, however, some other points to take into account:

Firstly, while the lion is deemed by the hermit to have a religious significance, the initial presentation introduces a point of ambiguity in its reception in that only Meliot could ride the lion (concurring with the interpretation given by the hermit) but that it instilled fear in others. This is developed as the lion becomes perceived as aggressive and dangerous in the Clamadoz episode: on the one hand protecting the lands of Meliot and to some extent those of the Roïne des Tentes; while on the other hand it blocks the way forward for Clamadoz but more importantly, for the Damoisele du Char, a person of significance in the romance. The lion is both a guardian and an adversary.

Lions are not unfamiliar in romance and the point of departure is Chrétien's *Yvain*, a text that has instigated a prolific work upon the significance and purpose of lions within romance texts, particularly knights accompanied by seemingly pet lions. Jean Frappier observed that the lion in *Yvain* is the "signe de la perfection chevaleresque"[22] recalling the reader to the "climat de la symbolique et de la moralisation médiévales" where the lion "était devenu, dans l'ordre mythique, une figure allégorique du Christ sauveur [true here to a certain extent and then only momentarily] et, dans l'ordre profane, une figure allégorique du parfait chevalier".[23] In the instance at the hermitage, it is not the lion that symbolises Christ but Meliot while the lion is a tangible embodiment of the expansion of the reign of Christ. Peter Haidu covers the traits of lions evinced as symbols of divinity[24] and recounts the Christian tradition coupled with that of Androcles and the grateful lion. He also raises the point that, as the lion is seen as a symbol of strength and power, it can also be seen as a symbol of violence.

> Dans le domaine de la littérature profane, le lion reste encore plus proche de ce sens primaire. Dans les chansons de geste et les romans, il est le plus souvent l'emblème de la fierté: "fier comme un lion", avec ses variantes stylistiques, est un cliché que reconnaît tout lecteur de la littérature médiévale.[25]

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[22] Jean Frappier, *Étude sur Yvain ou le Chevalier au Lion de Chrétien de Troyes* (Paris: Société d'Edition d'Enseignement Supérieur, 1969), p. 212.
[23] Frappier, *Etude sur Yvain*, pp. 213-214.
[24] Peter Haidu, *Lion-Queue-Coupée, l'art symbolique chez Chrétien de Troyes* (Geneva: Droz, 1972), p. 58.
[25] Haidu, *Lion-Queue-Coupée*, p. 60.

The lion in *Yvain* can be seen as a chivalric extension of Yvain during his healing process but once he has evolved into a more perfect knight there is no longer any need for the lion. If the lion in the *Perlesvaus* is to be seen as an extension of Meliot, perceived throughout as a positive character, then it plays no part in any evolutionary process. Firstly it appears as a symbol, clearly explained by a hermit, later it appears as an aggressive guardian[26] in line with the other appearances of lions in the romance and in romance in general.[27] In the *Perlesvaus* lions continuously appear as ferocious guardians: there is a chained lion guarding the entrance to the lands of the Roi Pescheor that instils fear in Gauvain as he approaches the gate; likewise there is a lion guarding the Grail Castle; lions and bears in chains guard the Chastel de Grant Defois. Meliot's lion is not chained and it is this factor that causes Clamadoz to reproach Meliot (147: 3132-3).

Meliot's lion appears to be following this vein rather than conforming to the interpretation given by the hermit, or to the function and symbolism of the lion in *Yvain* as a chivalric extension of the knight. The interpretation given by the hermit must apply purely to that given moment and does not continue to have any bearing in the rest of the romance. It is simply another in a series of significant visual events that Gauvain experiences on his approach to the Grail Castle.

The pattern of divorce between the allegorical and narrative level is becoming significant as noted by T. E. Kelly who states that

> although the *Perlesvaus* itself proclaims its allegorical character, it would be a mistake to assume that signposting automatically implies the allegory is all pervasive. We find instead that the romance, far from being consistently interpretable on two levels, does not allow us to read the story as if that were completely shaped and controlled by allegory.[28]

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[26] In *Yvain* the lion is assumed to be ferocious. As Yvain arrives at the castle of Gauvain's family the lion provokes a fearful reaction.
"Mes del lion, que venir voient
Avuec lui, duremant s'esfroient,
Si li dïent, que, se lui plest,
Son lion a la porte lest,
Qu'il ne les afot ou ocie."   (3789-3793)
[27] The lions guarding the sword bridge in the *Charrette*.
[28] Kelly, *Le Haut Livre du Graal: Perlesvaus*, p. 98.

The issue of the killing of Meliot's lion is not resolved, although the only person who regrets the death of the lion is Meliot himself. The matter of the killing of the lion, treacherous or not, reflects the accusation of Clamadoz against Perlesvaus, as the truth of neither matter is revealed.

The judicial duel of Perlesvaus and Clamadoz is avoided due to the intervention of the Roïne des Tentes, who delays the combat until the following day, motivated by love for Perlesvaus. The delay is convenient in that in the meantime Meliot arrives and accuses Clamadoz of treacherously killing his lion. Clamadoz has already justified the killing:

> "...il poet bien estre que li sires est cortois, mais li lion estoit vilains, qui voloit ochire moi et les trespassans. Vostre sire lui deüst avoir enchaené puis qu'il l'amoit tant. Mielz aim jo que jo l'aie mort que il moi." (147: 3131-4)

Meliot's hurry to be elsewhere precipitates the decision that there shall be combat between Meliot and Clamadoz first, despite the appeals of Clamadoz for his combat against Perlesvaus to take precedence, but the Roïne des Tentes does concede that after the combat with Meliot, Clamadoz may continue with the proceedings against Perlesvaus.

The narrator then gives the impression formed by Perlesvaus of Clamadoz:

> "Il le voit grant et de bone taille et de grant beauté." (154: 3315-6)

The description of Clamadoz' appearance, like that given by the members of Arthur's court, further reinforces Clamadoz as a positive character, contrasting with the description given of Cahot who has a *regart felon* and whose character fulfils the negativity of the description.

The narrator then describes the two knights as they arm themselves for combat. Clamadoz "sanbloit a estre hardiz chevalier et corageus" (156: 3366), a description that allows for a note of doubt in the use of *sanbloit*, while Meliot "molt estoit bons chevaliers et adroiz" (156: 3368), formulaic attributes of a *bon chevalier*. Neither is a victor over the other; both are severely wounded as a result of the duel but

Meliot less so than Clamadoz. Perlesvaus is directed to intervene in the combat by the Roïne des Tentes stirred by pity at the stricken state of the combatants, who are too grievously wounded to continue despite themselves (156: 3379-80), provoking some moralising on the wastefulness of such combats by the narrator through the opinion of the Roïne des Tentes (157: 3390-2). In addition, Clamadoz later dies as a result of his wounds, a development necessary for the narrator to avoid the potential problems of Clamadoz' complaint, and the implication of the possible guilt of Perlesvaus.

The problem faced by the narrator is the fact that Clamadoz and Cahot are right: Perlesvaus did murder the Red Knight treasonably. The complaint of Clamadoz makes the case quite clearly:

> "...il ocist mon pe[re] en la Forest Soutaine, sanz defiance, et lança .i. javelot parmi le cors conme traïtre, ne je n'iere jamés a ese si l'avra vengié; si l'apel en vostre cort de murtre et de traïson." (153: 3309-3312)

There was no challenge given and the use of the javelin further condemns the actions of Perlesvaus. R. Howard Bloch, on the medieval definition of murder, states:

> The notion of murder comprehends...the idea not only of treachery, but of surprise. A murdered man has been taken unawares, either in his sleep or in a contest without formal challenge or equality in means of confrontation.[29]

The case against Perlesvaus is furthered by the fact that the audience has already been given an account of events as the *pucele* in the Forest relates the crime to Gauvain revealing that Perlesvaus, coming across a combat between two knights, one white and one red, on perceiving the Red Knight to be gaining the upper hand in the combat, hurled his javelin at the knight and killed him to the "grant joie" of the White Knight (43: 490-501).

Clamadoz in fact, seeks justice in the correct way, through judicial procedure rather than the seizure of lands that is the course of action taken by the rest of his family. In doing so, this distances Clamadoz from the recurrent motif of the aggressive Red Knight clan. The question becomes whether Perlesvaus, in the tale of Clamadoz, is a worthy adversary and this is never answered for the narrator avoids the

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[29] Bloch, *Medieval French Literature and Law*, p. 37.

issue and the concomitant problems about the guilt of Perlesvaus. The favourable presentation of Clamadoz indicates that he is in the right, the narrator has already shown Perlesvaus to be capable of attacking a knight without challenge (as he attacks Lancelot), while Clamadoz presents the father as free from wrong-doing, unlike the Red Knight in the *Conte du Graal* who had arrived at court and insulted Arthur and Guenevere. Clamadoz' report of the incident presents the attack on the Red Knight by Perlesvaus with a javelin in a dubious light.

There is something of a dichotomy in the presentation of the figure of Clamadoz in the romance, by lineage, an enemy of Perlesvaus, a threat to the Grail Quest, but he does not appear the usual type of adversary. He is depicted in a positive manner by the narrator and obviously falls into the category of a "good" knight, honoured at court, presented as worthy, through description and his alignment with the Damoisele du Char. He is granted rather more than the usual peremptory information regarding his stance good or bad, and his actions do not mark him out as an adversary. He is not the opposite of Perlesvaus: he is not, like Cahot, who typifies an adversary, uncourtly; he is not an aggressive upholder of the Old Law; he does not maltreat women, rather he is the champion of women, accompanying the Damoisele du Char and (temporarily) inherits the position of defender of the Roïne des Tentes. Significantly, unlike, the other members of his family, who in pursuit of vengeance choose to attack the weak members of the Grail Family, Clamadoz seeks vengeance on Perlesvaus himself for which he cannot be condemned. Hence he is not subject to either a gruesome death to underscore the seriousness of his crimes as is the case with the Sire des Mares, nor is he evil by action or evil by report, as are both the Roi del Chastel Mortel and Aristor. He is, in fact, an ideal knight despite his lineage, presented in combat as worthy, with little to distinguish him from Meliot. Clamadoz having inherited the name of an aggressive knight from Chrétien but none of the attributes, nor those of the other members of his clan: Cahot, the Sire des Mares, Aristor, and the Rous Chevaliers de la Parfonde Forest, becomes a hero in his own tale, the tale of a coming of age and a quest for vengeance for the murder of his father.

Adversaries in the Didot-*Perceval*: similarity and difference

The fraternity of the Arthurian chivalric community is muted in the Didot-*Perceval* in comparison to Manessier and the *Perlesvaus*. Here, attention is solely devoted to Perceval, who quests alone in the Forest, and in contrast to Manessier's *Continuation,* is very much distinguishable from other knights he encounters. Unlike Manessier's *Continuation* in which the narrator makes no distinction between his treatment of Perceval, Gauvain, Sagremor, and Bors with the same values being placed on each, there is no way to evaluate Perceval as a character in the Didot-*Perceval* by utilising comparable episodes involving a similar Arthurian knight as there is in Manessier. However, there is an abundance of adversaries with whom Perceval can be contrasted.

Firstly, there is the appearance of the Orguelleus, already known to be an enemy from the *Conte du Graal* and his negative depiction is reinforced by the presence of a dwarf in his company, possessed of a traditionally evil nature. The custom of the truculent dwarf who strikes the damsel or knight, or is devious and treacherous like Frocin in Beroul's *Tristan* is long established.[30] Gauvain in the *Perlesvaus* gives expression to the general concept of the treacherous nature of dwarfs (73: 1236-1237). In the *Conte du Graal*, the Orguelleus appears after Perceval has kissed the *pucele* in the tent (by force), drunk the wine and taken her ring. As she relates the story to the Orguelleus, he reacts only when she reveals that Perceval kissed her; the narrator refers to the Orguelleus as "cil cui jalosie angoisse" (815). Jealousy and outrage motivate his intention of vengeance and the maltreating of the *pucele*. When Perceval later encounters the pair, the Orguelleus launches into a lengthy speech on the worthless nature of women before Perceval reveals that he was the culprit, a statement that precipitates the combat and victory of Perceval. The Orguelleus is then sent to Arthur's court and fulfills the role of relaying news of Perceval. In the Didot-*Perceval*, the Orguelleus takes a different form; no longer a *gelus*, he is now regaled as a fearsome enemy.

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[30] See: Roger Sherman Loomis, *Arthurian Tradition and Chrétien de Troyes* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1949), pp. 79-85 and Vernon J. Harward, *The Dwarfs of Arthurian Romance and Celtic Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 1958).

The first appearance of the Orguelleus occurs in an inserted narrative in which a *pucele* recounts the combat of her lover with the Orguelleus. Perceval comes across the girl weeping over the body of her lover and asks her what has happened. Firstly she relates the story of her abduction from her father's house by a giant and subsequent rescue by her *ami* thus establishing his credentials when faced with supernatural enemies. Her tale moves on to detail their arrival at a tent and the reaction of the women present therein as her lover proclaims his bravado when faced with the imminent arrival of the supposedly terrifying knight who owns the tent ("Et quant eles l'oïrent si commencierent a plorer" (E: 157. 321), warning him that the Orguelleus will kill him. The *pucele* and her *ami* leave the tent after an encounter with a dwarf, "qui molt estoit fel et crüels," (E: 157. 323) and almost immediately come across the Orguelleus. The *pucele* describes the Orguelleus as "molt fors" (E: 158. 339), which is not in itself a signifier of the supernatural nature of an opponent, being applied to adversaries in general, and describes how he kills her *ami*.

Perceval is moved by sympathy for the girl and her plight, the narrator revealing his emotions through indirect speech: "et Percevaus qui molt fu dolans de la dolor que il li vit avoir" (E: 158-159. 346-7). He is then motivated by the sight of her grief rather than the pursuit of an adventure, offering her advice: "Demisele, en cest duel ne poés vous rien recovrer" (E: 159. 347-8) adding that he will avenge her. She protests that the knight is "trop fors et trop grans" (E: 159. 351), evidently unimpressed by Perceval's appearance which seems to inspire so much confidence and expectation later on in the romance, particularly at the Tornoi del Blanc Castel.

A certain apprehension is generated by the account of the fictional female narrator through her depiction of an adversary who possesses certain supernatural characteristics, able to defeat knights of established prowess, and who incites mass lamentations of fear in the women present in the tent, reinforcing the notion of the evil inherent in the Orguelleus. The narrator concurs to a certain extent, at least with the physical abilities of this knight described by the girl (E: 161. 381-2; E: 162. 394). But the use of superlatives is essential during a combat scene and in actuality the Orguelleus does not differ from other adversaries in the romance medium. What does set him apart from merely another ordinary knight-opponent is the build up he is given, through the medium of the girl's narration of events, his negative intertextual

reputation derived from the *Conte du Graal*, coupled with the presence of the dwarf. In fact, once defeated he behaves in meticulously courteous manner in pleading for mercy from Perceval and accepting the conditions of the victor (E: 163. 409-416), but what is more he offers hospitality to Perceval:

> "Sire, je ferai del tout a vostre volenté, mais je vos requier que ançois que vous vos en alés ne jou autresi, que vous mangiés avuec moi, et puis si m'en irai plue liement la u vous m'avés commandé." (E: 164. 423-426)

The actions of the Orguelleus in offering hospitality to Perceval goes one step further than those knights defeated in Manessier's *Continuation* who plead mercy and comply with the directive of the victor. The Orguelleus extends the courtly ritual beyond mere compliance, he then takes on the role of Hospitable Host. Although this does appear to be something of a role reversal, normally it is the rescued girl who offers hospitality to the victorious knight, the role reversal is not unheard of: in the *Conte du Graal*, the Orguelleus offers Perceval hospitality following his defeat, although Perceval does not accept. In the Didot-*Perceval*, he accepts "molt volentiers" (E: 164. 427-8). Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner, in her study of the formation of the motif of hospitality observes that in *Erec*[31], following the combat between Erec and Guivret, and Guivret's defeat, hospitality is offered to Erec, although Erec refuses the offer (3869-3899).[32]

At first the Orguelleus is (mis)represented as an evil, supernatural opposite, presented as such by the girl, reinforced by the presence of the dwarf and the reactions of the women in the tent, and he responds automatically to a challenge (as does Partinal, Esclados, and Yvain). During the combat, he is granted the usual positive values of an adversary, described as being of great "force et hardement" (E: 161. 381), in addition to the earlier description given by the *pucele* as "molt fors" (E: 158. 339). However, once defeated the Orguelleus behaves in a courteous manner. While initially defined by motif as Other, through the ritual of surrender and the ensuing courteous dialogue, he becomes aligned to the normal masculine chivalric world. The process of normalisation culminates with his arrival at Arthur's court where he "fu puis molt amés a le cort des barons" (E: 165. 456).

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[31] *Erec et Enide*, ed. by Mario Roques (Paris: Champion, 1990).
[32] Bruckner, *Narrative Invention*, p. 106.

The episode of the Orguelleus, a combat between the hero and a seemingly supernatural adversary finds a parallel in the episode of the Cevalier del Tombel. This later episode essentially follows the same structure as that of the Orguelleus in that the enemy knight arrives in response to a challenge (in the earlier episode the challenge was merely being present in a particular location). At the painted tomb, Perceval is obliged to declare that "faus fu qui illuec le painst" (E: 172. 575) and the Cevalier del Tombel arrives: black on a black horse. The precision taken over the appearance of this knight is significant compared with the more general description of the Orguelleus reported by a female character (E: 158. 339). The presentation of the black knight of huge size is related by the narrator; a description that immediately sets this knight apart from Perceval and denotes him as supernatural:

> si oï une si grant noise arriere soi que il s'en regarda et vit venir un cevalier de molt grande aleüre par deseur un si grant ceval tot noir que ce sambloit une grant mervelle, et estoit armés de toutes armes et toutes ses armes estoient plus noires que onques fust aremens. (E: 173. 579-583)

The reaction of Perceval further compounds this presentation:

> Quant Percevaus vit le cevalier si s'en esfrea et se segna si tost com il le vit, car il estoit si grans que molt faisoit a redouter. (E: 173. 584-5)

The knight evidently appears such a fearsome sight that it provokes fear even in Perceval and is further removed from the normal world as Perceval conquers his fear by making the sign of the cross, an action he has not performed before any other adversary in the romance, an action that further reinforces the representation of the Cevalier del Tombel as a diabolic manifestation although, unlike other instances when Perceval makes the sign of the cross (in Manessier's *Continuaton* at the Chapelle de la Main Noire, and in *La Queste* when Perceval is tempted by the devil), the action does not immediately dispatch the adversary. While the Cevalier del Tombel may appear diabolical, he is simply another knight and his normal origins are revealed later in the romance.

What is also significant is the fact that this knight is never named. The Orguelleus had been named by the textual female narrator and in the parallel episode to that of the Cevalier del Tombel, Perceval's combat with Urbain at the ford, Urbain names himself. The Cevalier del Tombel, however, does not utter a word serving to

remove him further from the courtly sphere, nor is he granted any of the traditional masculine attributes consistently given to adversaries, such as *hardi*; instead the narrator concentrates solely on his fearsome aspect. Furthermore, the Cevalier del Tombel behaves in an un-courteous manner as his defeat becomes evident, he flees:

> et li cevaliers ne le pot plus soufrir et le redouta molt et s'en torna vers son tombel grant aleüre. (E: 175. 613-4)

He does not engage in the ritual of mercy and there is no dialogue between the two. The flight of the Cevalier del Tombel pre-empts his defeat, the verbal interaction this necessitates and the potential for re-absorption into society. As a knight, the Cevalier del Tombel must be aware of the conventions of his class, particularly regarding honour and the correct behaviour in defeat as the Orguelleus has already demonstrated in adhering to the ritual of surrender despite his supernatural origins. But through his refusal to engage in these rituals, the Cevalier del Tombel confirms that he is beyond rehabilitation and has excluded himself from the normal world. Contact with the hero cannot resolve the situation of the Cevalier del Tombel.

The later episode involving the encounter of Perceval with Urbain is essentially the same type of episode as that of the Cevalier del Tombel. Urbain, however, is initially presented as "normal", although the surroundings and his position as guardian of the ford denote the supernatural leanings of this episode. Unlike the Cevalier del Tombel, who arrives in response to the challenge by Perceval and reacts without speech, here, Urbain issues a challenge to Perceval:

> "par Diu, dans cevaliers, saciés que vous mar i estes entrés, et le gué vos covenra il comperer." (E: 195. 975-977)

In addition, as Urbain realises that Perceval does not possess a lance himself, he bids a female on-looker arm Perceval with a shield and lance for it "sambleroit hontes se il jostoit a lui sans escu" (E: 195. 982-3).

Through his words and actions, Urbain is represented by the narrator as a conventionally chivalrous and courteous knight, depicted positively, through action that is reinforced through dialogue. Urbain is able to relate his own story and is granted thirty lines of direct speech to narrate his tale to Perceval, contrasting with the

representation of the Cevalier del Tombel, designated supernatural by the narrator and barred from speaking. When the story of the Cevalier del Tombel is later related to Perceval by the brother of the knight, it is revealed that the Cevalier del Tombel was an acclaimed Arthurian knight (E: 214-215. 1354-1377), a situation that contrasts with the narrator's depiction of the Cevalier del Tombel as supernatural which emphasises the significance of Perceval's victory over his enemy. The fact that the apparently diabolical enemy does not flinch when Perceval makes the sign of the cross, a motif that appears in other Grail romances (especially in Manessier's *Continuation* in the episode of the Main Noire, and those episodes borrowed from *La Queste*), indicates that he is not diabolical or supernatural at all, a fact born out by the later account of his normal, Arthurian origins.

It is only at the intervention of his fairy *amie* that Urbain removes himself from the chivalric world: he flees after he has observed the courtly conventions of surrender. He has offered the guardianship of the ford (and the fairy by implication) to Perceval who refuses the offer. Through his vocal engagement with Perceval there is at first the potential for the rehabilitation of Urbain, but the possibility is denied by the interference of the supernatural *amie,* who threatens Urbain with the withdrawal of her love (E: 199. 1054-5; 200. 1067). As Urbain has been depicted as a courteous and therefore positive character by the narrator, his desperation to please his *amie* can be viewed sympathetically in this instance. While he may appear as an adversary, Urbain's position as a *fin amant* aligns him to Perceval, who is, at this time in the romance, undertaking a quest at the instigation of his fairy *amie.* But Perceval is ignorant of Urbain's motivation and cannot understand why the knight is so desperate to go:

> Et quant Percevaus le vit ensi merci crïer, si s'en esmervella molt, et li demanda por quoi il li crioit merci | si durement. (E: 199. 1057-8)

The reason is not revealed until the final skirmish between the two knights and the intervention of the birds. Urbain explains the full situation, revealing that the birds who attacked Perceval were Urbain's *amie* and her ladies, desperate to rescue Urbain from Perceval. Urbain begs Perceval to allow him to return to his *amie* whom it appears he loves excessively, evidenced by the fact that he faints on hearing her threat to withdraw her love (E: 200. 1068) and his desperate attempts to return to her.

Perceval's reaction is somewhat similar to the reaction of Arthur at the participation of Perceval in the opening tournament incognito in that Perceval is amused and dismisses the matter lightly:

> Et quant Perceval | l'a oï si en commença a rire, et l'en a doné buenement le congié. (E: 202. 1105-6)

Perceval does not seek to dispatch Urbain to Arthur's court, perceiving that Urbain is wholly driven by his love for his fairy *amie*, and those who act under the influence of love can be pardoned. Both Urbain and the Cevalier del Tombel are beyond rehabilitation due to their involvement with the sphere of the feminine, a world rendered all the more divorced from ideal society by its depiction as supernatural and uncontrollable.

The episode of the Cevalier del Tombel, with its emphasis on the negativity of the situation foreshadows the encounter of Perceval with Urbain. Like Urbain, the Cevalier del Tombel has withdrawn from society to remain in the company of his *amie*, who, in order to maintain his chivalry has engineered a situation in which he attacks all passing knights. The amplification of the earlier episode in the Urbain episode allows the narrator to humanise the enemy knight and underscore the basic parallels between Urbain's actual and Perceval's potential situation by depicting Urbain as similar to Perceval as possible. At the ford, Perceval turns down the chance of solitary acts of chivalry under the guardianship of a fairy mistress but on his return to the Castel del Eskekier, it is the vow never to stay more than one night in the same place that "saves" him. Thus the repetition and amplification of this motif allows the narrator to emphasise the point of the undesirability of involvement with the feminine and the similarity of Perceval and Urbain. Furthermore, the fact that Perceval, although victorious, has not necessarily broken the custom of the ford, draws attention to the overall negativity of this type of situation. The intervention of the hero is not sufficient to break the undesirable association with the feminine, a fact that has significant implications for the ideology of the Didot-*Perceval* as a whole and the attitude of the narrator towards women.

Unlike other encounters with adversaries, where the conclusion of the episode is to demonstrate the desirability of the behaviour of the hero and an opportunity for

the adversary to become like the hero through surrender, these two episodes serve to illustrate the undesirability of the hero becoming like the adversary.

The Biau Mauvais and the Couart Chevalier

So far in the romances, the adversarial Other, the opposite by which the hero is defined, has appeared in direct physical conflict with the hero. However, there is a further type of negative opposite, one who is associated with the hero through friendship.

According to the male prestige system illuminated by Ortner & Whitehead,[33] within all societies the most important structures for the cultural construction of gender are the structures of prestige. Moreover, because some form of male dominance operates in every society, the cultural construction of sex and gender tends everywhere to be influenced by the prestige considerations of socially dominant male actors. Such a factor is relevant to the honour system of romance, a system which focuses upon physical action as the generator of honour/worth, whether it be spiritual worth (as in the *Perlesvaus* and *La Queste*), or individual honour and standing within society. The hero and those who imitate him best embody the exigencies and attributes of a type of masculinity portrayed as ideal in a particular prestige system. However, there are also figures within romance who do not conform to the dominant system presenting different, possibly even subversive alternatives, and it is a figure such as this that we find in Manessier's *Continuation* (also in the *Perlesvaus* but in a more limited sense) in the Biau Mauvais.

In Manessier's *Continuation* the Biau Mauvais is condemned at his first appearance since the narrator, in an aside, introduces the notion of the madness of this knight. Madness may excuse his attitude but also negates any reasoned argument the Biau Mauvais may have to justify himself:

> Desconseillié et sanz confort
> Ou fox, ne sai lou quel estoit. (39582-3)

[33] Ortner &Whitehead, *Sexual Meanings: the cultural construction of gender and sexuality*, introduction, pp. 1-27.

Even the narrator is unable to ascertain the true nature of this knight. He may be mad or not but it is through his appearance that he is identified, through the depiction of an odd knight riding in disarray upon a fine horse ("un destrier isnel et fort" (39581). The portrait of the appearance of a knight is one utilised by the narrator as a point of reference, the conventional representation of a good knight on a good horse, being the ideal situation. However, the narrator often approaches the portrait from the opposite angle: that of a fine knight on a decrepit horse. In Manessier, Sagremor first appears "sus un roncin et megre et las" (33188) while Hector later appears in such a pitiful state, both knight and horse, that Perceval is unable to recognise him:

> Ses chevax si maigres estoit
> Que a grant paine le portoit (41375-6)

Hector himself appears "Pales fu et descouloré" (41381). Gauvain, in the *Perlesvaus* also initially appears to be the worse for wear:

> Li chevaliers seoit seur un megre cheval grant e descharné, e ses hauberz estoit enrooilliez, e ses escuz troez en plus de .vii. lex, e la coleurs si esfacie que on n'en pooit la coleur connostre. (52: 697-699)

However, the dilapidated appearance of Sagremor, Hector, and Gauvain is due to their activities in the Forest, their numerous off-stage combats and adventures while the Biau Mauvais, on his fine horse, has evidently suffered no hardship and avoided combat; in addition, the cause of his disordered appearance is his own doing and instantly conveys his Otherness to Perceval. The appearance belittles him, rendering him comic and consequentially Perceval "molt se merveilla" (39591).

The narrator provides a short description detailing the handsomeness of the Biau Mauvais, which could be an attempt to feminise the knight, rendering him Other.

> Et celui li randi aprés
> Son salu molt cortoisemant,
> Car cortois estoit duremant.
> Et fu li plus biaux chevaliers
> Qu' an trovast an trente milliers;
> Onques si bel, a son avis,
> Ne vit ne de cors ne de vis.
> La face avoit clere et vermoille
> Et lou cors gent a grant mervoille. (39594-39602)

The representation of the Biau Mauvais through the description is far more detailed than any conventional portrayal of the appearance of knights in Manessier's romance (the description of Sagremor (33193-33208) concentrates on the discrepancy between his fine arms and decrepit horse; likewise Hestor and his dishevelled appearance, of the other knights no description is given), which aligns him with the feminine, more commonly the subjects of descriptions of appearance that progress beyond "beau" (or "bel").[34] The implied association with the feminine renders the Biau Mauvais negative, adhering to a long tradition of the derogatory depiction of women as vain.[35] However, although he is said to be handsome and is given a description that bears this out, this is not necessarily a feminisation of the figure. For one, Perceval in the Didot-*Perceval* is also said to appear *beau* (E: 1572-1575; E: 1594-5). James A. Schultz says that "when bodies are described as desirable, sex-specific features are not mentioned, and when men or women are described as beautiful, they are said to be beautiful in the same terms".[36] Moreover, as E. Jane Burns has noted, armour genders knights as masculine.[37]

The appearance of the Biau Mauvais as a handsome knight (like Perceval's appearance at the Blanc Castel in the Didot-*Perceval*) generates expectations; expectations that should be upheld and that Perceval compels him to uphold. For it is the concept of fine appearance equalling prowess and nobility of character that renders the Biau Mauvais so odious to those he encounters; while outwardly manifesting the values of knighthood, he subverts the ideal, exhibiting opposing, negative qualities of masculinity (such as cowardice) that, in effect, render the notion void that appearance is indicative of virtue.

Philippe Ménard comments that the main problem posed by the figure of the Biau Mauvais is one of appearance and reality:

> Mais le Beau Couard n'est pas seulement risible par sa frayeur et sa lâcheté. Pour les gens du Moyen Âge il est comique également dans la mesure où il

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[34] Alice Colby in *The Portrait in Twelfth-Century Literature; an example of the stylistic originality of Chrétien de Troyes* (Geneva: Droz, 1965), observes that in the romances she studies there are more than twice as many descriptions of women as of men (p. 17).

[35] Bloch, *Medieval Misogyny*, p. 41.

[36] James A. Schultz, 'Bodies that Don't Matter: heterosexuality before heterosexuality in Gottfried's *Tristan*', in *Constructing Medieval Sexuality*, ed. by Karma Lochrie, Peggy McCracken, and James A. Schultz (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 91-110, (p. 91).

[37] E. Jane Burns, 'Refashioning Courtly Love', p. 119.

> représente un singulier paradoxe. Puisque ce personnage aspire à une vie quiète et tranquille, pourquoi chevauche-t-il à travers les forêts aventureuses à la façon des chevaliers errants?
> En un temps où l'on croyait que l'apparence extérieure était le reflet du caractère profond d'un être, que le physique était la "senefiance" du moral, comment admettre qu'un homme beau puisse manquer du courage?[38]

Characters within the romances are aware of the potential discrepancy between impressive physical appearance that denotes worth, and reality, conscious that there may be a shortfall between the two. As I have discussed in Chapter three,[39] the lord of the Blanc Castel is impressed by the appearance of Perceval but also hopes that Perceval can live up to the worth suggested by his semblance. Equally, at the opening of the *Perlesvaus*, as Arthur is armed and prepares to depart on the quest to the chapel of St Augustine, Yvain li Avoltres and Guenevere comment upon the imposing figure Arthur cuts as a knight:

> "Seigneur, fet la roïne, que vos sanble du roi? ne sanble il bien preudom? – Certes, dame, oïl; ce est granz doleurs au siecle qant il ne porsiut son buen commencement, car on ne set ne roi ne prince si bien enseignié de totes cortoisies ne de totes largesces, s'il les voloit fere autressi com il soloit." (31: 197-201)

while the narrator observes that:

> bien sanbla ester, au corssage de lui, chevaliers de grant pooir et noble hardement. (31: 192-3)

Likewise, when Arthur encounters a *pucele* in the forest, his appearance provokes comment:

> "E Dex soit garde de vos, car ge n'en vi mes pieça nul qui mielz sanblast buens chevaliers; ce seroit granz damages se vos ne l'estiez, ne ge ne partiré de ci s'avré veüe vostre fin." (35: 277-8)

The narrator then emphasises the courteousness of the Biau Mauvais (39595-6), referring at first to his ability to use the correct words in greeting Perceval. Like Tallidés, the Biau Mauvais is able to express himself effectively, although, unlike Tallidés, the Biau Mauvais does not convince his audience. The first utterance of the

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[38] Ménard, *Le Rire et le sourire dans le roman courtois en France au Moyen Âge (1150-1250)* (Geneva: Droz, 1969), p. 388.
[39] See Chapter three, pp. 167-168.

Biau Mauvais comes in response to the request by Perceval, that the strange knight explain his appearance to which the Biau Mauvais replies in reported speech:

> Li dist por ce que de mellee
> Se viaut garder, car il n'a cure
> Que nus hon li face laidure;
> N'a que faire de soi combatre
> Ne que l'an dou cheval l'abate. (39610-39614)

which is expanded in direct speech:

> "Miauz voil am pes aval la terre
> Aler por mes afaires querre
> Que moi faire batre et ferir,
> Que bien ne m'am porroit venir.
> Qu'i avroie je gaaignié
> Se l'an m'avoit a mort plaié
> Ou navré a gesir au lit?
> N'i avroie point de delit." (39615-39622)

The first revelation of the motivation of the Biau Mauvais is designed to provoke a strong reaction, as he expresses a philosophy that is the antithesis of knighthood, a philosophy that horrifies Perceval. The appearance of the Biau Mauvais concerns him greatly:

> "Je meïsmes qui le vos conte
> An a [i] duel et vergoigne et honte,
> Que n'afiert pas a chevalier
> Q'ainsins se doie aparaillier." (39635-8)

A knight's appearance implies worth, or the potential for worth; worth that is fundamentally derived from his position as a member of the dominant, ruling, masculine class with a particular function and role: positive acts of chivalry that serve a social purpose; and it to this ideal that Perceval subscribes when he reacts to the speech of the Biau Mauvais.

Perceval is not alone in condemning the actions and motivation of the Biau Mauvais. *Couardie* is used by the narrator to describe the emotions of the Biau Mauvais during the encounter with a band of knights. That the Biau Mauvais "ot poor et se couarda" (39760) does not correspond wholly with the Biau Mauvais' own justification of his reluctance to engage in combat. The crux of the matter is revealed

in the response of the Biau Mauvais to Perceval's monologue: an expansion of his initial, abrupt explanation of his appearance:

> "Je n'ai de mellee mestier,
> A nului combatre ne quier,
> Am pais voil ma vie ordoner
> Et tote *folie* eschiver.
> Cil de *folie* s'antremet
> Qui an avanture se met
> Por chose que riens ne li monte." (39663-39669, my italics)

The Biau Mauvais views engagement in combat, the mainstay of chivalry, as *folie*, a criticism that is not unreasonable but undoubtedly an unusual stance for a knight. Certainly unnecessary combat for gain, be it personal or material, is difficult to justify in terms of the ideology of the Grail texts, wherein knights are ultimately in the service of God. However, Perceval's combats, including the one in which the Biau Mauvais is forced to participate, do provide a service for the community. The Biau Mauvais discards the entire ethos of chivalry, rejecting the prestige system he decries as *folie*, evidently indifferent to the constant pursuit of honour and renown that drives other knights; a view that in fact corresponds, at least partly, to the condemnations of secular chivalry expressed by Bernard of Clairvaux and John of Salisbury.

However, the narrator disregards the criticism of chivalry he placed in the mouth of his character, favouring an emphasis which allows no ambiguity in the interpretation of the behaviour of this fundamentally cowardly knight:

> Einsint li Biaux Chevalier conte
> A Perceval sa coardie. (39670-1)

The initial explanation given by the knight is designed to provoke the reaction it receives: firstly by the abrupt explanation presented in *style indirect*, in which the Biau Mauvais states he simply does not wish to fight; and secondly in the lines of direct speech that follow as the Biau Mauvais declares he would rather be going about his business than involving himself in violence with its negative and potentially fatal consequences. Of course, that is exactly what constitutes the business of a knight and the fact that the Biau Mauvais is undertaking some unspecified and certainly un-knightly activity can only incense Perceval. The agenda and the value system of the

Biau Mauvais are incomprehensible to and incompatible with knighthood, as such they are resoundingly denounced by the narrator in his conclusion to the dialogue between the two knights.

Perceval perceives the comportment of the Biau Mauvais as shameful; as action/combat engenders honour and worth on knights, so lack of action produces the opposite: shame. Perceval attempts to strike a chord in the Biau Mauvais by emphasisng the shamefulness of his situation, corresponding to the view noted by Mathew Strickland:

> Although in medieval society concepts of morality and behavioural restraint were heavily influenced by the dynamics of guilt, enforced through the Church's teaching on sin, penance and atonement, the warrior aristocracy was equally if not more constrained in its conduct by considerations of honour and shame.[40]

Perceval reacts volubly to the Biau Mauvais, unable to comprehend the motivation of the knight, a reaction that is detailed in direct speech (39626-39652), in which the extent of his emotion concerning the Biau Mauvais is revealed. Firstly he is horrified, replying that it is "grant vilenie" to comport oneself in such a fashion. (39628). In his vilification of the strange knight, he employs "recreant, failli, honte, duel, vergoigne", running the gamut of negative vocabulary attributable to a knight, the opposing values to the ones he himself exhibits, and the narrator adds "coardie" to complete the list. However, despite the speech in which he throws the whole spectrum of undesirable and shameful attributes at the Biau Mauvais, he fails to strike a chord in the knight, immune to shame and unresponsive to being labelled *recreant*. The Biau Mauvais does not share the binary view of chivalry that opposes honour to shame, evidently perceiving himself outside such a value system.

At the heart of Perceval's ire is the fact that the Biau Mauvais poses the problem of chivalry without action. Courteous words, seen as an integral part of knighthood, especially in the Tallidés episode, are not enough to secure him tolerance in this world of violence, while his philosophy of pacifism, his desire to "am pais ordoner ma vie" (39664) is without religious justification and cannot be equated with

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[40] Strickland, *War and Chivalry*, p. 98.

the alternative form of masculinity represented by clerics and hermits, hence the narrator ascribes it to vanity and cowardice. Furthermore, while the Biau Mauvais may appear indifferent to the prestige system he is still judged by and included within it by others. Although appearing identifiably masculine, in armour, the refusal of the Biau Mauvais to engage in action renders his gender questionable, a concept observed by R.W. Connell:

> The constitution of masculinity through bodily performance means that gender is vulnerable when the performance cannot be sustained.[41]

In romance, there is a division of masculinity into two well-defined and acceptable types: *chevalerie* and *clergie* both being valid (although, as romance is concerned with the promotion of knighthood it is that type of masculinity which receives more validation). The Biau Mauvais, on the other hand is an ambiguous figure who appears to belong to one type (knighthood) but eschews the values and role of this type while failing to uphold the spiritual values of the other.

He chooses to use words rather than to act and, no matter how courteous these words may be, they do not lead to his acceptance by other knights. It is one thing to employ words and to reply "cortoisemant" (34420) as Tallidés does while outlining the conditions of combat, or to enter into the dialogue of surrender correctly, but it is futile to vocalise a credo that has no place in a particular value system.

As Perceval's speech has no effect upon the Biau Mauvais he is compelled to alter this knight not through argument but through action. Perceval then forces the Biau Mauvais to arm himself properly "a grant peine" (39674) and almost immediately they hear the cries of a *pucele*. Following the sound they come across two *meschines* manhandled by two *pautoniers* while ten knights order the proceedings. Naturally the girls "molt crioient/ A haute voiz, et reclamoient/ Molt doucemant Sainte Marie" (39703-39705). On observing the approach of the two knights, the girls then beg for assistance. Perceval then asks the Biau Mauvais if he has heard their pleading but unlike Perceval, Sagremor, and Gauvain, the piteousness

[41] Connell, *Masculinities*, p. 54.

of the women fails to stir the Biau Mauvais into action as his concern remains with the adverse odds of the situation:

> "Jes oi, fait li chevaliers, bien;
> Mais de ce ne doutez de rien,
> Je ne m'an mellerai por eus.
> Ils sont dis et vos estes seus,
> Ja comparroiz, se Dieu m'amant,
> Molt chier vostre fol hardemant." (39719-39724)

Again, the Biau Mauvais levels a criticism at the activities of knighthood, pointing out the apparent foolhardiness of entering into a combat with ten knights, something that may be viewed as a reasonable statement, given the odds. Such criticism of chivalry is also found in other texts, notably the Prose-*Tristan* where the personage of Dinadan, representing an "explicit articulation of this view",[42] repeatedly offers criticisms of the excesses of Arthurian chivalry;[43] the manner in which knights react in a predetermined way to certain circumstances when combat may not be the response that necessarily achieves the desired resolution of the situation. This type of automatic response to a set situation has already been seen in Manessier in Gauvain's rescue of Dodinel and the manner in which justice was subordinated to the formulaic response to the circumstances. Philippe Ménard views the Biau Mauvais as an implement by which chivalry may be criticised:

> Ce personnage original, qui se distingue si vivement de tous les chevaliers arthuriens, aurait pu servir de porte-parole à un conteur malicieux pour faire la satire de l'existence chevaleresque.[44]

The narrator, however, ascribes the motivation of the Biau Mauvais, who remains an observer to the ensuing combat, to the fact that he "ot poor et se couarda" (39760) rather than to his reluctance to become involved in a combat in which, on first appearances, it would be foolish to engage. In doing so, the narrator negates and overrules the reasonable justification given by the Biau Mauvais for abstaining from combat, condemning his questioning of chivalry. Perceval, however, is merely amused by the objection of the Biau Mauvais for he "conmance a sorrire/ Quant ce li ot conter et dire" (39725-6), then launches into an attack on the knights.

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[42] Keith Busby 'The Likes of Dinadan: the role of the misfit in Arthurian Literature', *Neophilologus*, 67 (1983), 161- 174, (p. 167).
[43] Busby, 'The Likes of Dinadan, p. 161.
[44] Ménard, *Le Rire et le sourire*, p. 387.

One knight issues a challenge to the Biau Mauvais who remains motionless and responds:

> "Vasaux, ne ferez mie bien,
> Se me ferez, ne vos voil rien.
> Se mes compainz vers vos mesprant,
> A moi mie consoil ne prant;
> Si m'aïst Diex, s'il me creüt,
> Ja guerre vers vos ne meüt." (39775-39780)

The attempt by the Biau Mauvais to dissuade the attack fails, but still he persists in reasoning with the aggressor:

> "...Sire,
> Por quoi me vandez vos vostre ire?
> Ja ne vos ai ge riens mesfait." (39797-39799)

These knights have done no wrong to the Biau Mauvais directly but they were engaged in the typical antisocial activity of Manessier's romance — the persecution of helpless girls in minimal clothing with the ultimate aim of burning them. Moreover, through his refusal to participate in aiding the weak, the Biau Mauvais neglects what is the mainstay of knighthood in the text: the majority of episodes in Manessier are concerned with the protection of women. Therefore, the line of pacifism taken by the Biau Mauvais (why should he concern himself in matters that have nothing to do with him), his apathy regarding situations it is his duty as a knight to rectify, must be condemned trebly, both by character, narrator and ultimately audience. The Biau Mauvais determines the activities of knighthood as "folie" (39666) but the narrator terms his opinion as "coardie" (39671).

The Biau Mauvais finally realises that words will not alter the situation and he ultimately reacts with violence to his aggressors as the persistent attack renders him "plains de corroz et d'ire" (39817). Firstly, he complies with the verbal exchanges of the combat situation, and his response to the knight who has injured him is one that corresponds with the conventional dialogue utilised in these circumstances in that he declares that the aggressor will rue the day he acted thus (39819-39825).

However, while the Biau Mauvais may have proved himself in combat and fulfilled his duty to aid the weak, he has not wholly redeemed himself. He has not

proved his prowess before society and it is not until he takes part in a tournament that the Biau Mauvais receives the approval of Perceval and the narrator.

Perceval and the Biau Mauvais approach a castle where it appears a tournament is taking place. Perceval is enthusiastic about taking part in the tournament and the Biau Mauvais, having overcome his desire for pacifism, is a willing accomplice. All the notables of Arthurian society are present at the tournament. Having performed remarkably in the tournament, the Biau Mauvais reveals his name to Perceval who immediately renames him the Biau Hardi and enumerates the positive, masculine values the Biau Mauvais now possesses following his participation in ritual violence:

> "Car biaus, saiges et hardiz iestes,
> Et chevaliers pruz et honestes.
> Je l'ai molt bien aperceü
> A ceste asamblee et veü;
> Bon chevalier vos ai trové.
> Bien l'ont cil dedanz esprové,
> Que par vos et par vostre escu
> Sont il desconfit et vaincu." (41279-41286)

His new name signals his entrance into the chivalric world and the fact that he is now identical to Perceval, having rejected his former ideals of pacifism. The Biau Mauvais passes from a form of negative masculinity, through an episode of socially beneficial violence, to a correct version of knighthood, only truly achieved through his participation in ritual violence: the tournament, in which he is now publicly acclaimed to be a real man and accepted by the masculine world at large (personified by Perceval), a notion illuminated by Michelle Rosaldo:

> If "becoming a man" is, developmentally an "achievement," social groups elaborate the criteria for that achievement and create the hierarchies and institutions we associate with an articulated social order. Insofar as achievement in this sense is a prerequisite of manhood, then men create and control a social order in which they compete as individuals.[45]

[45] Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo, 'Women, Culture, and Society: a theoretical overview', in *Women Culture and Society*, ed. by Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo & Louise Lamphere (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), pp. 17-42, (p. 28).

The transformation of the Biau Mauvais into a true knight is signified by the ritual of naming in which the narrator also participates, now persisting in referring to the Biau Mauvais as the Biau Hardi. The ultimate transformation cannot take place in the obscurity of the Forest, in performing chivalric acts (commonly protection of women), but on the tournament field, in full view of the Arthurian court; value being placed more on a successful display of prowess in the ritualistic medium of the tournament than useful acts of chivalry in the Forest. The conversion of the Biau Mauvais into the Biau Hardi confirms the prioritising of the masculine prestige system (the individual honour and worth of knights) over their value derived from their social function, a view that contradicts the condemnation of honour-seeking chivalry uttered by the hermit at the Chapelle de la Main Noire. The conflict between the ideal chivalry as expressed by the hermit, and embodied by Perceval in his later adventures, with the transformation of the Biau Mauvais at a tournament, renders the religiously oriented chivalry of Manessier's *Continuation* problematic, illuminating the difficulty of extricating chivalry in the service of God from the traditional, secular concept of chivalry as a means to increase the honour of individual men in society.

A figure similar to the Biau Mauvais also appears in the *Perlesvaus*, named the Couart Chevalier in the text. It is Gauvain who first encounters the strange knight who rides towards him "en molt sauvage maniere" (78: 1353). Gauvain concurs with the representation given by the narrator (above): "qui molt se merveille de lui qant il le voit." (78:1357), before the actual appearance of the knight is revealed to the audience. Unlike, Manessier, in which eight lines are given over to a portrait of the knight, emphasising his handsomeness, there is no such portrait in the *Perlesvaus*. The Couart Chevalier gives his name to Gauvain serving to further reinforce the negativity of the character, if appearance alone were not enough. But the knight does not expound upon his philosophy of pacifism, summarising his views in one line: "Car il ne vient de guerre se max non" (80: 1401) and there is no detailed reaction from Gauvain to the knight beyond unsustained curiosity.

Compared to Perceval's response in Manessier, the reaction of Gauvain when confronted with a pretender to knighthood is muted. This first encounter in the *Perlesvaus* serves to introduce the Couart Chevalier (the name being more to the point

than that utilised by Manessier), employed in this episode principally as an imparter of information, furnishing Gauvain with the reason behind the injury of the Damoiselle du Char. Once Gauvain learns of the connection of the knight with the Damoiselle du Char he even warms towards the Couart Chevalier:

> "Par mon chief, tant vos aim ge mielz." (78: 1366-7)

In this episode, the Couart Chevalier has taken on a passive role usually performed by women or hermits who appear to impart essential information to the knight or to explain the theological meaning behind certain adventures or phenomena. Being equated with women compromises the masculinity of the Couart Chevalier, unlike the Biau Mauvais, to whom at least is attributed masculine values, albeit negative values as listed by Perceval. Women cannot be said even to be *recreant* or *failli*, thus the Biau Mauvais cannot be categorised as a feminised representation of masculinity even if the narrator does give a portrait of the knight, usually reserved only for women. The Biau Mauvais is still defined by the masculine value system and therefore remains within the masculine field, an embodiment of an alternative model of masculinity but one that is not tolerated. The Couart Chevalier, on the other hand, through his mysterious appearance and pacifism, his role of informer/messenger is placed outside the masculine chivalric world. Furthermore, the Couart Chevalier is in the service of the Damoisele du Char, a position that contributes to his disrupted masculininty. Vassals of women can become feminine themselves, unable to fulfil martial duties for example, as in *Yvain* where the barons of Laudine are not capable of defending the fountain themselves. Service of women inspired by love will increase the prowess of a knight but service as a vassal, without any secular love as inspiration can only a hinder a knight. Despite the fact that the Damoisele du Char has significant religious meaning herself, she is unable to inspire chivalric action on the part of the knight who serves her, contrasting to the positive inspiration of *fin'amor* epitomised in the relationship of Lancelot and Guenevere. Therefore it falls to the masculine to provide an effective cure for this situation.

Like Manessier's Biau Mauvais, the pacifism of the Couart Chevalier is not religiously inspired and he cannot be equated with hermits; hermits in the *Perlesvaus*

are not necessarily passive as demonstrated by Joseus, who possesses the highly rated quality of prowess (and aggression) and who is admired by all. Significantly, it is the revelation that he is in the presence of Gauvain that inspires the Couart Chevalier to right his appearance. Gauvain achieves an initial "curing" of the Couart Chevalier through contact, although this is a passive feat on the part of Gauvain. However, it is indicative of the effectiveness of Gauvain in the romance as a whole, partially achieving what only Perlesvaus can complete.

In the second encounter of Gauvain with the Couart Chevalier there is familiarity between the two but no motivation on the part of Gauvain to effect a further cure than the initial correcting of appearance. Perlesvaus, on the other hand, cannot help but seek to resolve the problem once he encounters the Couart Chevalier. There is a brief description of the knight as Perlesvaus sees him:

> "grant et bel et adroit et bien formé, et tot armé sur sun cheval." (241: 5546)

Perlesvaus also draws attention to the discrepancy between appearance and reality:

> "c'est granz domages que couardie est herbergiee en si bel cors de chevalier." (241: 5552- 3)

The cowardice of the knight is presented simply in few lines of direct speech.

> "Porquoi estes vos armez, fet Perlesvaus, puisque vos estes si couarz? – Sire, fet il, por la vilanie d'aucun chevalier que je dot; car tex me porroit encontrer desarmé qui molt tost m'ocirroit." (241: 5546-9).

Physically, the Couart Chevalier has the appearance of a normal knight; it is the inaction of the knight that presents such a problem for Perlesvaus who comments that the name *Coarz Chevaliers* is "trop vilains a chevalier" (241: 5554).

The Couart Chevalier reveals that he is armed for fear that if he were unarmed he would be attacked and killed: only the trappings of knighthood protect him from attack, a notion that appears incongruous in the *Perlesvaus*, in which knights repeatedly attack other knights principally because they are identifiable as such and are, therefore, legitimate enemies. The Couart Chevalier evidently believes being

vested as a knight will protect him from attack in accordance with the rituals of chivalry as he interprets them, a view that severely contradicts the ethos of the *Pax Dei*, in which the unarmed civilian is protected while knights are legitimate targets, a role of knighthood that is upheld consistently in Manessier. Not only does the Couart Chevalier wear his arms upside down but his perception of the rituals of knighthood also appear to be reversed.

While he may be able to convince fellow knights not to attack him (as Gauvain reassures the knight there is nothing to fear from him), he cannot convince them that his way of life is acceptable. The exchanges between the knight and Perlesvaus are short, simple sentences summarising the situation and there is no presentation of the case of the Couart Chevalier beyond the fact that he is terrified of being harmed. The name used by the narrator is enough to colour reception of the knight, coupled with the references by Perlesvaus, to *couardie* ("couarz" 5547; "couardie" 5552) underscore the negativity and undesirability of such a knight.

Again, Perlesvaus does not choose to educate the Couart Chevalier through words but through action, thrusting him into combat rather than making any attempt to reason. He merely points out the shame of the Couart Chevalier and utters one sentence which sums up his philosophy:

> "il est bien resons qu'e[n] enort les preudomes plus que les mauvés." (243: 5609-10)

After he has killed, the Couart Chevalier realises the error of his ways, revealing that he would have become brave long ago "si i eüsse et prou et enor; car maint chevalier m' en ont tenu en vilté et ledoié, qui m'eüssent enoré et chier tenu" (243: 5607-8), a statement that discloses his awareness of the prestige system and his discomfort in failing to fulfil the requirements of the value system. The fact that previously he had been held in contempt by other knights has not been lost on the Couart Chevalier, aware that through his prioritising of self preservation he had placed himself outside the masculine realm that rests upon action resulting in honour. His attitude contrasts to the attitude of the Biau Mauvais who is unaffected by the insults and derision of other knights (39611-12). The remark of the Couart Chevalier also underscores the

fact that honour is a prime motivator of knights for action (rather than service of society), an attitude that is presented as acceptable in the text as the Couart Chevalier now becomes a positive character, renamed as Hardi Chevalier, who loses his life in combat against Perlesvaus' enemy, Aristor.

In the *Perlesvaus*, emphasis is placed on the utility of knights rather than the ritual and extraneous, and the Couart Chevalier is fully absorbed into the masculine sphere following his participation in combat in the defence of the weak, unlike in Manessier's *Continuation* in which adherence to the ideal model of masculinity is confirmed through the medium of the tournament. Both knights, the Biau Mauvais and the Couart Chevalier are rendered, through acts of arms, the same as other knights. The alternative to the model of masculinity represented by the hero is not permitted to endure but made to conform to the ideal, and the transformation is only achieved through contact with the hero who serves as the model/mediator, an inspiration to other knights, who follow his example. The desire of the model/hero towards his goal figures as the ideal desire, a desire moulded to fit in with the ideology of the text itself. As the Biau Mauvais expresses an ideology that conflicts with, and is possibly even critical of that held Perceval and the other knights of the Round Table, the representative of that ideology, the motivations and purpose of the Biau Mauvais are unintelligible to Perceval. The episode of the Biau Mauvais clarifies the persistent theme of the desire of other knights to be with the Grail Knight underscoring the concept that *compagnonnage*[46] results in betterment of self and increase of worth while the transformation of the Biau Mauvais via contact and proximity with the Grail Knights into a knight possessing virtues identical to those of Perceval, shows the Biau Mauvais appropriates goals and ideals that previously he had termed *folie*. Perceval becomes the model for the Biau Mauvais, his desires imitate those of Perceval, and other knights of the Round Table.

[46] When *compagnonnage* is understood to be derived from a unity of class and shared ideals that finds its realisation in the fraternity of the Round Table, compounded by the mimetic desire of other knights to the goal of the hero and the accompanying status that results from success.

Conclusion

David Gilmore sees masculinity as the "culturally imposed ideal to which men must conform".[47] In the three Grail romances, it is clear that the ideal type of masculinity is knighthood, despite an alternative positive ideal represented by Joseus the Hermit. It is principally through appearance and acts of arms that the ideal model is defined; constructed through the inclusion of those who are lacking or different in some way. Appearance suggests prowess, perceived as the necessary attribute to ensure success and virtue, while action can either confirm or refute worth implied by impressive appearance, negative actions denoting adversaries. Correct action, the type of acts said to be chivalrous, such as acts of service, reinforce the potential of worth. When those who are different are introduced into the text, the difference draws attention to the attributes of the hero, and through contact with the hero, the Other is transformed into a model of the ideal, manifesting the same traits as the hero (unless they represent a figure that is wholly undesirable and is beyond redemption). In the *Perlesvaus*, when Arthur arms himself and acts as a knight he becomes identical to Gauvain and Lancelot, being acclaimed the victor at the tournaments he enters, although, at the Three Day Tournament, he ensures that the prize is ultimately given to Gauvain.

Knights in the Grail romances are compared and contrasted with one another according to the concerns of the text, presenting a hierarchy of models of chivalry, ranging from the ideal, who may exhibit most or all of the characteristics valued by the text to the model that exhibits the least, most frequently the adversary. There is, significantly, no "negative" male model who exhibits none of the ideals of masculinity: adversaries are always physically worthy and brave; the coward knight is recognisable as a knight and is courtly, he simply needs a combat to rectify his reluctance to fight and is easily cured. However, it is not the adversary who truly represents the opposite to the ideal of chivalric masculinity but the Biau Mauvais, a figure that represents a criticism of knighthood. Criticism, however, has no place in the construction of the ideal in the Grail texts, it simply makes for an underlying

[47] David Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making*, p. 4.

tension in the representation of the ideal of knighthood; the alternative figure is brought to conform to the ideal expressed in the text, embodied in Perceval.

Conclusion

The prominent question with which this study is concerned is the creation and propagation of the ideal man and the construction of masculinity within the Grail romances. Is masculinity constructed solely against femininity or are there other mechanisms that contribute to the creation of the ideal model of masculinity? Does adherence to a code of conduct (including codified interaction with women) and a manifestation of admirable traits render the hero an object to be imitated? Is the positive model of masculinity created through contrast with the masculine opposite, reinforced by the imitation of others?

The starting point of this investigation was the cultural conditions that arose to produce the literary conception of the perfect knight, a movement away from the origins of "organised pillage"[1] to an idealised literary figure. This literary figure is constructed from a cultural ideal and will therefore embody some (or all) of the traits most desirable for the perfect functioning of an individual within chivalric society. Jean Flori has shown that the developing ideology of knighthood which evolved in the course of the 11th and 12th centuries,[2] particularly in the writings of theologians that formed the thrust of the attempt by the Church to control and produce an "armed hand",[3] was principally concerned with service of the Church and therefore to producing men who possessed the requisite virtues. From John of Salisbury comes the concept that it is the duty of a lord to protect and uphold the Church, enforce its justice, and protect the populace. The *milites*, in the service of the lord undertake these responsibilities themselves, as part of their service, a function seen very clearly in Manessier's *Continuation* wherein all the knights strive to maintain peace in the Forest, thwarting the activities of lawless groups of knights engaged in criminal activity who can be seen as exemplars of the detested *milices profanes*.[4] However, the definition of chivalry given by Perceval in Manessier indicates that he is primarily interested in undertaking adventures and increasing his renown, a definition that is

[1] Haidu, *The Subject of Violence*, p. 51.
[2] Flori, *L'Essor de la chevalerie*.
[3] John of Salisbury, *Polictraticus*, VI: I.
[4] *Eloge de la nouvelle milice II*, p. 198.

condemned by the hermit at the Chapelle de la Main Noire. Perceval later redeems himself by confirming the strength of his faith in the temptation episodes.

A fundamental factor in the ideology of knighthood that issues from Bernard of Clairvaux is the notion that homicide is a mortal sin and the concomitant view of the importance of mercy. The directive of the Church to show mercy to defeated knights is a crucial point in both the Didot-*Perceval* and Manessier, in which the danger to the soul is considered. However, from the examples of Manessier and the *Perlesvaus*, it is apparent that mercy cannot be given to those who have committed certain crimes in which case the only just outcome is the death of unrepentant *malfaiteurs*.

In the writings of Alain de Lille the importance of lineage is stressed and the concept of the "perfect man" against whom all others will be found wanting is developed. Perlesvaus and Gauvain are similar in action in the *Perlesvaus* but are differentiated by lineage and the tarnished reputation of Gauvain. In Manessier's *Continuation*, Perceval is indistinguishable from Sagremor, both have identical adventures but it is Perceval's lineage that denotes him as hero. Sagremor and Gauvain are not shown to be flawed in order to measure and highlight the perfection of the hero in this romance as Lancelot and Gauvain are measured against Perlesvaus, who is elevated through comparison.

Lineage is an essential qualification of the hero, one that causes him to rise immediately above those who are seemingly his equals. The idea of lineage as the fundamental requisite of the hero corresponds to the modern day recognition of ascribed traits as being essential to denote the individual who will perform at a superior level to those of his peers, "for prestige (negative or positive) may also be granted for qualities with which the individual is endowed by birth, such as nobility, membership in an ethnic group".[5]

In summing up the various theories propagated concerning knighthood, the role of the knight in society takes the form of the defence of the Church, maintenance

[5] William J. Goode, *The Celebration of Heroes: prestige as a social control system* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), p. 12.

and expansion of the faith, and the enforcement of justice, in addition to those identified by R. Howard Bloch as being "the necessity of generosity, piety, service of worthy causes such as the protection of widows, orphans, the helpless and the poor; injunctions against slaying a helpless adversary or taking advantage of one's enemy; exhortations to pursue glory and praise rather than profit, to avoid perjury and false counsel".[6] This is the role to which the ideal knight must conform, defined firstly by cultural requirements that manifest themselves as positive characteristics, such as the hearing of mass every day and the protection of the weak that then takes the form of a system of masculine and feminine interaction.

Nancy Chodorow has stated that the relationships of men "tend to be based not on particular connection or affective ties, but rather on abstract universalistic role expectations".[7] Knights become companions due to their status (as knights) and ability to perform a social role (prowess). In the second chapter investigating the imitation of the ideal model, the concept of *compagnonnage* – unity between members of the same class who, because they are exactly that, should desire the same goals and value the same codes of behaviour – leads to the function of knighthood as a positive force in society. The bonding between individuals is reinforced by the presentation of those perceived as threats to this social order, antagonists who will necessarily embody the opposite characteristics of those figures perceived as positive. *Compagnonnage* can extend into *amitié*, which, rather than the automatic assumption of friendship of the former, involves an intellectual choice founded upon the manifestation of admirable qualities in the recipient of the friendship in addition to an assumption of these qualities in the desiring subjects themselves. The aim of friendship is focused upon the requirement of virtue and a progression towards the ultimate ideal, expressing the view that true friendship brings perfection, an outlook that reflects the influence of the treatises of Cicero and of Aelred of Rievaulx. Knights should manifest the virtues ideal to the class (and the function of that class), rather than intellectual virtues of classical and spiritual friendship, prowess being one of the virtues that is the most highly valued. The basic values necessary for the development of friendship between knights are enumerated by the description given by Perceval of Dodinel in Manessier. These values are the positive traits it is assumed that knights, as

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[6] Bloch, *Medieval French Literature and Law*, p. 197.
[7] Nancy Chodorow, 'Family Structure and Feminine Personality', p. 53.

belonging to the same class, and sharing the same ideology, will possess; values that are necessary, firstly for *compagnonnage* and secondly as the basis for the development of *amitié*. Reason and reciprocity characterise intellectual friendship, found in the friendship of Perlesvaus, Lancelot, and Gauvain where there is mutual admiration expressed by all three and sorrow at separation. Prowess is established as the significant attractive virtue which, when combined with the other positive attributes manifested by a knight, renders the knight ultimately attractive. The attractiveness of an individual knight to others manifests itself in *amor de lonh*, a feature of *fin'amor* that is equally applicable to the inception of friendship and one that finds its culminative example in the parallel of Galehaut and Guenevere, both of whom desire the company of Lancelot after watching his performance in battle.[8] This is echoed in the *Perlesvaus* as the unknown knight who equals Perlesvaus in the Tornoi de la Vermelle Lande rouses some considerable interest on the part of Perlesvaus, whereas Gauvain, as himself does not, until Perlesvaus discovers they are one and the same.

"Expressions of desire in fact constitute ideology in its most basic and powerful form, namely one that culture designates as nature itself".[9] Desire is fundamental in the motivation of action: one knight inspires others and provides the model emulated and desired by others, while the one knight himself focuses solely upon his object of desire (the Grail). If the Grail is the objective of the model (Perceval), signifying success and acclaim within society, this promotes a desire for acclaim in other knights and an imitation of Perceval, signalling a chain of behaviour and desire that follows that of the model, the hero. In discussing the theory of desiring subjects, Sarah Kay states:

> René Girard developed the concept of mimetic desire, the impulse to pattern the self on the model of the other and thus generalise "sameness" at the expense of "difference." The subject, desiring not the ostensible object of desire, but rather to imitate the model whose desire constitutes it as an "object" in the first place, is drawn into an indefinite chain of mirroring...[10]

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[8] Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*.
[9] Nancy Armstrong, *The Ideology of Conduct*, p. 2.
[10] Kay, *Chansons de Geste in the Age of Romance*, pp. 145-6.

Perceval is not only the model that engenders imitation in his quest for the Grail but is also an object of desire both to other knights, who will then desire friendship, or to women. The embodiment of perfection causes imitation in other knights from their urge for association with the hero (as demonstrated by the Biau Mauvais, Gauvain, and Lancelot), while the ritual of mutual admiration at the tournament and reputation that ensues from feats of arms engenders the admiration of women as well as men, reinforcing the attractiveness of the qualities manifested by the knight. Men primarily seek the acclaim of other men before valuing the acclaim of women, and the single combat, or tournament is an ideal medium which gives expression to this desire. The tournament in the *Perlesvaus* is elemental in the bonding between Perlesvaus and Gauvain; likewise, it is through combat that Lancelot and Perlesvaus become friends.

The duplication of heroes causes, necessarily, a model of masculinity to be constructed by comparison and imitation, emphasising the ideal through repetition. In the *Perlesvaus*, a romance in which the ideal (Perlesvaus) is clearly defined from the outset, this ideal is reinforced by imitation on the part of other knights, who also conform (albeit not completely) to the notion of the ideal model. Gauvain and Lancelot manifest the same virtues as Perlesvaus: even Lancelot, faithful to the abstraction that is his love for Guenevere in this romance, remains chaste and shuns the advances of others, proving his fidelity to his ideal. They conduct themselves in the same manner in the same set of circumstances, presenting a slightly imperfect imitation of the ideal model. Perlesvaus and Gauvain are constructed against each other, Gauvain's preconceived flaw highlighting the perfection of Perlesvaus, his partial success paving the way for the complete success of Perlesvaus. Like is imitated by like while difference is eradicated, a concept clearly seen in Manessier's *Continuation*, where each knight is assigned identical adventures, that find culmination in the transformation of the Biau Mauvais from undesirable figure to an imitation of the hero following his success at the tournament organised by Bademagu.

Interactions of men and women are necessarily coloured by the exigencies of society that requires set behaviour from both sexes. Claude Lévi-Strauss developed a theory in which he states that masculine society functions harmoniously only if relations between men are the first priority and the circulation of women is made to

serve their interests, necessarily entailing the suppression of the interests of women.[11] Foucault also has stated definitively that "relations of sex gave rise in every society to a *deployment of alliance*: a system of marriage, of fixation and development of kinship ties, of transmission of names and possessions".[12] And it is upon the mechanisms of the transmission of women that forms the foundations of patriarchal society:

> Patriarchal heterosexuality can best be discussed in terms of one or another form of the traffic in women: it is the use of women as exchangeable, perhaps symbolic, property for the primary purpose of cementing the bonds of men with men.[13]

Codes of behaviour that make up what is termed *cortoisie* are designed to further bonds between men while those who cannot engage in these codes (other men) are seen as negative and the antithesis of courtliness, embodied in the ultimate adversary. Women, as a currency of exchange, are excluded from an active role in such codes of behaviour; instead they become part of the code themselves. Permitted only an object role, they serve to define masculinity in that they represent something other to masculinity; masculinity being

> structured not only by immediate social relationships but also by the pattern of the gender order as a whole. Masculinity is shaped in relation to an overall structure of power (the subordination of women to men), and in relation to a general symbolism of difference (the opposition of femininity to masculinity).[14]

Simon Gaunt states that "romance portrays and problematizes constantly the exchange of women between men which... imposes different models of subjectivity on men and women".[15] Interactions with women in the three romances studied do illustrate the problem of women taking the subject role (and the ensuing possibility of men in an object role, epitomised by temptation scenarios in Manessier and the isolation of knights through their love for *fées* in the Didot-*Perceval*) and how this may, or may not, be overcome. When women do attempt to take a subject role (to

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[11] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Les Structures élémentaires de la parenté*. See also Gaunt, 'From Epic to Romance: gender and sexuality in the *Roman d'Enéas*', p. 3.

[12] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, trans. by Robert Hurley, 3 vols (London: Penguin, 1990), I, p. 106.

[13] Sedgwick, *Between Men*, pp. 25-26.

[14] Connell, *Masculinities*, p. 223.

[15] Gaunt, *Gender and Genre in Medieval French Literature*, p. 92.

control the situation themselves and to serve their own interests) they are then excluded from the social sphere and depicted as dangerous. Those who are presented as negative models of femininity are often outwith the margins of society in some way: *fées,* pagans, solitary women of the Forest, and their desire is represented as excessive. While, in some cases, there is the possibility of reintegration into society (through conversion, through marriage), those who cannot be reintegrated remain as warnings; the knight learns to avoid them, as in the Didot-*Perceval*. Successful interaction can occur only with those figures of women who function within the code as an object — female figures who are simply a motivation for action but not the ultimate goal, as demonstrated by the personage of Blanchefleur. Gaunt further states that the hero of romance is a "divided self, split between an impulse towards social integration and a counter impulse towards socially alienating, but privately fulfilling desires",[16] a notion clearly confirmed in the Didot-*Perceval* in which Perceval has to overcome his inclination to return to the Castel del Eskekier and remain with the lady therein. While women may serve to bond and reinforce relationships between men within an ordered society, once they take a subject role, and in this case, the Lady of the Castel del Eskekier can be seen to be taking on the role of temptress, they can alienate the hero from society, or from performing actions that benefit society as is seen in the example of Urbain. In the Didot-*Perceval* and the *Perlesvaus*, women who take the subject role in *fin'amor* are depicted as threatening and undesirable, reinforced by the inclusion of the perfect masculine-feminine relationship, that of Lancelot and Guenevere, in which the female is silent, an acceptable form of inspiration and can make no claim upon her lover. In Manessier, the attempts to direct circumstances on the part of the women in the Forest are not related to control of a love situation, rather women attempt to control the process of justice itself but are consistently repressed: justice remains within the domain of the masculine. It becomes clear that the interests of women do not necessarily further the interests of men and the hegemonic masculinity that social interactions between the genders is designed to promote. Thus it is necessary to suppress female desire, depicted as erratic and usually negative and threatening,[17] by employing the ritual of masculine bonding. Masculinity is constructed in opposition to a masculine ideal of femininity that is created to best serve the interests of men. Yet, within romance there exist female

[16] Gaunt, *Gender and Genre in Medieval French Literature*, p. 109.
[17] Krueger, *Women Readers*, pp. 33-67.

figures who do not conform to such a role and function, indicating an awareness of the artificial masculine-feminine opposition itself and an awareness of another type of femininity, a real femininity that is suppressed and depicted as dangerous.

Adherence to conventional codes of behaviour is one way in which the hero is defined. The hero, in the course of the romance, if he does not from the start, will learn to exhibit the forms of behaviour necessary to successful society. He will know how to be courteous to women (this may extend to *fin'amor*, if *fin'amor* is a desirable trait that furthers the career of the hero); be able to engage in dialogue (demonstrated in the encounter of Sagremor with Tallidés in the Manessier's *Continuation*); show mercy once an adversary has surrendered (or not, depending upon the nature of the crime) in keeping with the directive of the Church (thus avoiding the sin of homicide) and also adhering to the requirements of courtly society (through surrender is established a bond between hero and adversary); honour vows over other distractions; assume the best of fellow knights; and of course, hear mass and confess sins. Codes of behaviour are developed into noble and courtly comportment, desirable to increase and maintain virtue of character in a society that serves to bond and unite the members of the same class. Those who are enemies dissociate themselves from the rituals that bind society, refusing to enter into such rituals that signify reciprocal action and bonding between men. The adversary is one figure who departs in some way from the ideal, distinguished by his lack of positive attributes, with the exception of valour and worth in combat, attributes that it is essential for the adversary to manifest in order to be a worthy opponent to the hero and to valorise the combat.

The adversary is identifiable firstly by action, perpetrating some form of anti-social behaviour, and secondly by description, narratorial and by other characters. However, negativity is depicted to greater and lesser extents. Aside from Partinal and the gangs of knights who roam the Forest, the other adversaries in Manessier, the solitary knights, are not depicted with absolute negativity but are instead denoted as adversaries by their actions, that do not take the form of irredeemable crime. In both the Didot-*Perceval* and Manessier, through combat with the hero and by engaging in the ritual of surrender and mercy, the adversary can become like the hero and even, take on the role of hero as the episode of Margon illustrates.

The ultimate adversary appears differently in the romances from those noted above, usually labelled as *fel* and *cruex* by character and/or narrator, recognisable as such through reprehensible actions. Furthermore, he will not conform to the codes of behaviour of courtly society, in particular, refusing to comply with the ritual of surrender and ensuing assimilation and from this negative representation of knighthood there is, in absolute contrast, the positive figure of the hero.

In addition to the negative version of the hero, the adversary, there is, also, the opposite of the hero who is not altered through conflict with the hero but through association, a figure such as the Biau Mauvais, who exhibits opposite values to the hero: he is cowardly not *hardi*; he will not fight, preferring to go about his affairs and die in bed; he has no interest in upholding traditional ideology, in that he will not protect the weak. The type of masculinity represented by the Biau Mauvais, a critic of the chivalric life, is utterly condemned, while the "curing" of this knight is a significant occasion, rendering him identical to the hero.

However, since the adversary is a negative mirror image of the hero and is either, reintegrated into society and correct behaviour through defeat, or killed by the hero and since opposing models of masculinity are reviled within the text, then cured of their otherness and rendered identical to the model it would seem that there are no alternative masculinities that can function alongside the hero. However, in the *Perlesvaus*, there are alternative models to the ideal that find a place within the narrative and are favourably treated by the narrator. The first alternative model to the ideal is offered in Lancelot. Gaunt has observed that in some texts "the "opposite" of the ideal man is not a woman but another type of man."[18] This is clearly illustrated by adversaries, who are, by definition, the opposite of the hero and draw attention to the positive characteristics of the hero by their negativity. However, alternative models may be presented in romance that are akin to the hero and present some sort of ideal and this is the case with Lancelot in the *Perlesvaus*. Lancelot, through his desire for the abstract and objectified Guenevere, reaches the heights of prowess, acclaim and standing within society, rendering him attractive to other knights; thus Perlesvaus and Gauvain both desire his company. It is the act of desiring not the object of desire itself

[18] Gaunt, *Gender and Genre in Medieval French Literature*, p. 12.

that creates an ideal model: to be seen to desire is to evoke imitation from others, creating an "indefinite chain of mirroring".[19] Gauvain mimics Perlesvaus, so Meliot mimics Gauvain, but the object of desire itself is interchangeable as the end result is always the same: increased acclaim and social standing. Lancelot offers an alternative and successful model of masculinity to Perlesvaus, while Gauvain shows a reflection of the ideal Perlesvaus represents, a version of the ideal knight that is slightly diminished from the original.

A further alternative model to the ideal is also offered in the form of the hermit, Joseus, in the *Perlesvaus*. However, although a hermit, the traits that Joseus exhibits that make him an ideal man are those traits that render him like a knight, in other words, his ability to perform acts of violence and defeat adversaries; it is this trait that provokes admiration in others rather than his worthiness as a hermit (as expressed by Lancelot, who regrets that Joseus is not a knight). Joseus, of course, has the lineage to make him a worthy knight, being one of the Grail Family himself yet the principal characteristics that mark Joseus as an ideal model are those that make him similar to knights (the definitive model of the militant Church in this romance).

Lancelot offers an alternative choice of inspiration, one that still engenders success as a knight while Joseus offers an alternative lifestyle, one that is seen to be the ideal ending for a knight: an eremitic life is the ending for the hero in both Manessier's *Continuation* and the Didot-*Perceval*, for although Perlesvaus departs overseas in a boat, never to be seen again, he had prior to his departure, retired to the Grail Castle to live a secluded contemplative life. Hermits, however, are seen as a valid alternative to knighthood and are not so far removed from knights, often being former knights themselves. Micheline de Combarieu du Grès has observed that hermits were always perceived as worthy in epic,[20] a treatment that continues in the Grail romances.

The construction of the ideal model of masculinity is therefore complex, dependent on several means of generation, from the imitation of like with like, to the

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[19] Kay, *Chansons de geste in the age of Romance*, p. 146.

[20] Micheline de Combarieu du Grès, "Ermitages" épiques de Guillaume et de quelques autres', in *Les Chansons de Geste du Cycle de Guillaume d'Orange*, ed. by Philippe Ménard and Jean-Charles Payen, 3 vols (Paris: Société d'Edition d'Enseignement Supérieur, 1983), III, p. 145.

comparison of the hero and the enemy, the depiction of alternative models of masculinity, those that are acceptable and those that are reviled, while a text may support one or more models of ideal that differ in motivation but are still successful. Essentially, however, the ideal model of masculinity, even if there are alternatives, belongs to one particular genus only, defined by prowess. Perceval, Lancelot, and Joseus are characterised principally by their ability in combat that ensures their success. Arthur, too, when acting in the same milieu as the other knights, manifests the same features as Gauvain and Lancelot, proving his physical worth in tournaments and winning acclaim of masculine society at large. Although the authors are aware of other types of masculinity, the one with which they are principally concerned, naturally is the type that succeeds over the other models. The other knights represent the grading of an ideal, ideal simply because they are all the same, with similar aims and aspirations and identical behaviour in a recognised set of circumstances.

The basic motivation of the narrative of romance, focused upon one (or more) primary masculine figures, is the rivalry between knights for an ideal (prowess) focused upon the personage of a female as reward. In Grail romances, the female as reward is disposed of, and the ideal becomes a means to a further, higher, ideal: coming closer to God. What we see in the Grail romances is a world in which the focus is on relationships between men, while women, displaced from the only role in which they, themselves, gain some honour (albeit, on men's terms), fulfil a reductive role of catalysts for homosocial bonding; their admiration of the hero confirms his worth while their object role furthers his progress in society, and that of the masculine relationships that form the fabric of society itself.

The ideal model of masculinity is reinforced by imitation and a suppression of difference with interactions between knights, be it amity or enmity, being constructed to further society itself (even if the Grail Quest has the potential to be socially divisive). It is safe to assume that the dominant presentation of masculinity is one that corresponds to an idealised version of knighthood, one that is predominantly exclusive. This is not to say that all romance presents a unified front in the depiction of chivalric masculinity. The Grail Knights increasingly become a dominant type of masculinity themselves, successful in problematic encounters in which other knights,

representative of *chevalerie terrestre*, may fail. The knight cannot simply set forth and expect to get everything his own way.

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