

Roland as a hero: some (*Otinel*, *Renaut de Montauban*, *Aspremont* in particular) give him an entirely positive heroic role, while being obliged to allow the eponymous other new hero to take the limelight at his expense); one (the *Rhymed Roland*, to which one could of course add the *Pseudo-Turpin*) introduces the religious dimension evidently perceived to be lacking in the assonanced version; the majority have a Roland showing signs of overweening pride in various degrees and ways (*Gui de Bourgogne* and *Fierabras* are divided between the first and third categories),⁴¹ and some (*Aspremont* again, *Destruction de Rome*, *Saisnes*, *Covenant Vivien*) comment on him indirectly by having a hero who is *desmesuré* and at the same time clearly inspired by the epic *persona* of Roland. In other words, like modern critics, the poets composing within a century and a half, say, of Tuoldus show different appreciations of Charlemagne's nephew. Like most great literature, the *Chanson de Roland* inspired, and continues to inspire, controversy in its interpretation. How the pattern which emerges from this article changes, if at all, in later epics, as well as in the *Pseudo-Turpin*, is the subject of another paper.⁴²

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⁴¹ For the sake of brevity, I must leave for discussion elsewhere the case of *Jehan de Lanson*, though it fits chronologically into the present group; its portrait of Roland is a complex and somewhat ambiguous one.

⁴² See my communication 'La Réception du personnage de Roland dans quelques oeuvres plus ou moins épiques des 12^e, 13^e et 14^e siècles', forthcoming in the *Acta* of the Thirteenth International Congress of the Société Rencesvals, held at Groningen, August 1994.

THE GIFTS OF THE ROLAND: THE OLD FRENCH *GUI DE BOURGOGNE*

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In addition to its crucial role as a chronological point of reference for many *chansons de geste*, the legend of Roland offers a persuasive language of literary influence.¹ As we know from Harold Bloom, however, influence is not always cheerfully accepted, and its power can as often be gauged by manifestations of hostility as it can by dutiful tribute.² Thus, if the success of a particular tale can often be measured by the value placed on it by later works, a value associated with images of wealth and power, then stories of economic problems may signal a re-evaluation of the importance of an influential work, a refusal of crippling debt on the part of other poets.³ The text on which this discussion centres is *Gui de Bourgogne*, which sets out the events leading up to Roncevaux. According to this work, Charles' nephew Gui is elected king in Paris by the other young men to stand in for the long-absent

¹ For a discussion of the poems centring on the *Roland*, see Michael Heintze, *König, Held und Sippe: die Chanson de geste der 13ten und 14ten Jahrhunderten und ihre Zyklenbildung* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1991), pp. 580-624. For a survey of the manuscript corpus of the *chanson de geste* and the place of the Oxford *Roland* in it, see Joseph J. Duggan, 'The Manuscript Corpus of the Medieval Romance Epic', in *The Medieval Alexander Legend and Romance Epic: essays in honour of David J.A. Ross*, edited by Peter Noble, Lucie Polak and Claire Isoz (Millwood, N. Y.: Kraus International Publications, 1982), pp. 29-42, especially p. 33.

² Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: a theory of poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973).

³ *La Chanson de Roland*, edited and translated by Ian Short, *Lettres Gothiques* (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1990; 2nd edition 1994). For editions of the other versions, see *Les Textes de la 'Chanson de Roland'*, edited by Raoul Mortier, 10 vols (Paris: La Geste Francor, 1940-44).

Charlemagne.⁴ His first act is to order an expedition to Spain to relieve Charles, which he eventually does after capturing a number of strongholds that had proved impregnable to the emperor and his army. Although he initially forbids any of the sons to reveal their identity to their fathers, the two camps are eventually reunited, Charlemagne being especially eager to see his nephew. However, relations are not entirely unclouded: following Gui's capture of Luiserne, Roland claims the town as his booty to offer to Charles. Violent conflict is only averted by the emperor's prayer that the town be swallowed up by the sea. The army then heads back to France.

I will argue in this article that *Gui de Bourgogne's* re-evaluation of how debt and influence operate in the *cycle du roi* takes the form of an attempted dissociation of the model of Roland's sacrifice from the literary prestige of the *matière de France*. The poem attempts to say that, although Roland's sacrifice is a 'moment of truth', this should not overshadow the deeds of the other nephews of Charlemagne. It will be apparent that such a disentanglement would be tricky if not doomed from the very first, but I would like to suggest that *Gui de Bourgogne's* gallant failure can be seen as a version of the *Chanson de Roland's* pyrrhic victory, while also opening to question the motivation behind its attempt to add to the matter of Roland. The anxiety is that, given the clear-cut ethical framework that surrounds Roland's betrayal by his stepfather, to seek to outdo Roland is to be forced into some sort of misreading, which, if motivated by the need to innovate in order to secure an audience, can be assimilated to Ganelon's selling the rearguard to slaughter. It is therefore possible that poetic innovation in the *cycle du roi* became suspect, especially as verse in general and the *chanson de geste* in particular were often represented as examples of a 'medium of lies' incapable of transmitting historical truth.⁵ Such criticisms can be found in the prose translations of the *Pseudo-*

⁴ *Gui de Bourgogne*, edited by F. Guessard and H. Michelant, *Anciens Poètes de la France*, 1 (Paris: Vieweg, 1859). Charlemagne's nephews vary in name and number from poem to poem (Heintze, *König, Held und Sippe*, p. 356).

⁵ See Gabrielle M. Spiegel, *Romancing the Past: the rise of vernacular prose historiography in thirteenth-century France*, *The New Historicism*, 23 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 55-68.

Turpin (six versions produced between 1200 and 1230), texts exactly contemporary with *Gui de Bourgogne* (conventionally dated to about 1215).⁶ The translators claim to be motivated by a desire to present the 'truth' about Charlemagne, a truth that had been distorted by the constraints of verse and by the inventions of the *jongleurs*. Gabrielle Spiegel argues that this veracity accorded to prose is the formal reflex of a project to pander to and reassure specific aristocratic audiences (who were anti-Capetian in sympathy and whose political fortunes were in decline at this period). This formal break with the corpus of the *matière de France* constituted by the *chansons de geste* was combined with a revival of the 'core values' of chivalry that would have offered a highly satisfying aesthetic package. By comparison, *jongleurs* and poets dealing with the *cycle du roi* found themselves fenced in by their own material: for dynastic reasons, the *geste* generally avoids exogamy as a means of providing new names and scenarios, while its better and brighter heroes often exhibit a propensity for self-immolation (such as the suicidally brave Anseïs de Carthage).⁷ Eventually, Hugues Capet would have to act out his fabliau-like getting of a clan of bastards as the last possibility in a permanent crisis of continuation.⁸ That the *geste du roi* was forced explicitly to embrace exactly the sort of

⁶ For a discussion of the *Pseudo-Turpin* translations and their historical and literary significance, see Spiegel, *Romancing the Past*, pp. 55-98.

⁷ On the genealogical structure of the *cycle du roi*, see Heintze, *König, Held und Sippe*, pp. 324-84. For an example of Anseïs's excessive zeal in battle, see ll. 10753-66 (*Anseïs von Karthago*, edited by Johann Alton, *Bibliothek des Literarischen Vereins in Stuttgart*, 194 (Tübingen: Laupp, 1892)).

⁸ *Hugues Capet*, edited by M. le Marquis de la Grange, *Anciens Poètes de la France* (Paris: Franck, 1864). Hugh is abandoned by his parents, so in a sense the work can be seen as a drama of recognition, but also misunderstanding and difference of world-view. Hugh and his foster parents (his paternal uncle and aunt) have completely different views on marriage, chivalry and other subjects, while Hugh's early chivalric career, with its illicit liaisons and references to Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* (ll. 228-30), is only made more comical by the fact that he seems totally incapable of appreciating why the fathers of the young noblewomen whom he seduces should take such umbrage (e.g. ll. 250-97 for his adventures in Brabant). It can also be argued that the comedy of *Hugues Capet* comes from the historical break between the Carolingian and Capetian lines, a fact which is underscored by the strong presence of bourgeois characters, as well as by the poem's praise of bastardy as a force for political renewal (see especially ll. 2891-920). However, the fact that misunderstanding and recognition are so often accompanied by laughter in the work is a sign of the 'joie' that will be restored by its end.

sexual impropriety with which the composition of verse had already been associated was simply a matter of time. The desperation apparent in this relaunching of the *geste du roi* can be seen as a response to the recurring temptation to use extinction of the royal line as a source of drama, a temptation that begins with the model provided by Roland's self-sacrifice. *Gui de Bourgogne* can be read as an earlier attempt at another sort of solution.

Questions of value and negotiation, or at least their foreclosure, are central to a text like the Oxford version of the *Chanson de Roland*, whose hero is clearly no mercenary, and where only traitors like Ganelon are explicitly motivated by gain.⁹ Although the army is financed by booty and ransom, Ganelon is the only one seen to have financial dealings, accepting his thirty pieces of silver from the Saracens and, in the trial, accusing his stepson of financial impropriety: 'Rollant forfist en or et en aveir / Pur que jo quis sa mort e sun destreit' (ll. 3578-79). This allegation has been either dismissed as incomprehensible in the frame of the poem or explained by reference to some sort of prehistory.¹⁰ Ganelon's

⁹ Not that booty and honour were always incompatible in the *chanson de geste*, as Peter Haidu points out (Peter Haidu, *The Subject of Violence: the 'Song of Roland' and the birth of the state* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), p. 57).

¹⁰ There is no precedent for Ganelon's charge against Roland that he wronged him in a financial matter, and thus the accusation has proved something of an interpretative and editorial stumbling block. Bédier keeps an uncomfortable silence over the line in *Les Commentaires de la Chanson de Roland* (Paris: Piazza, 1968) pp. 317-19. Various emendations and translations have been suggested. One problem-solving interpretation is that proposed by Leslie Brook ('Le Forfait de Roland dans le procès de Ganelon: encore sur un vers obscur de la *Chanson de Roland*', in *Société Rencesvals: IV^e congrès international (Heidelberg, 28 août-2 septembre 1967): actes et mémoires*, Studia Romanica, XIV (Heidelberg: Winter, 1969), pp. 120-28), who suggests that Ganelon's words may be figurative, indicating that Roland had done damage to his reputation. For a summary of the arguments, see G.J. Brault, *The Song of Roland: an analytical edition*, 2 vols (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978), I, 320 and references. Brault's suggestion seems perhaps the most cogent explanation for the Oxford *Roland* itself: 'if one recognises that avarice and deceit are the key to Ganelon's psychology, it is evident that the traitor is simply lying here. Ganelon has repeatedly perverted the facts to serve his own ends and, notably, to discredit Roland' (Brault, *The Song of Roland*, I, 321). However, T.A. Jenkins's suggestion ('Why Did Ganelon Hate Roland?', *PMLA*, XXXVI (1921), 119-26) that the allusion could be to events during the Spanish campaign, thus pointing outside the immediate scope of the poem, is interesting. The accusation is not

characterisation here is, of course, entirely consistent with the depiction of the villain in the *Pseudo-Turpin* tradition, where his greed and lust for gain infects the Christian camp.¹¹ However, the embarrassment created by the remark in the context of close readings of the Oxford *Roland* reflects problems of cohesion and continuation that bedevil the poems of the *cycle du roi*: how does the story go further? Not only is the central character of the *Roland* dead, but also the poem sketches out a stark and rather rigid language about ethics and the impossibility of compromise that leaves the narrative with relatively few honourable avenues except self-immolation, as is illustrated by the *Chevalerie Vivien*.¹² Of course, Roland is without price: it is not wergild that will compensate for his death, but the spilling of blood. To accept financial compensation, to accept exchange is to be assimilated to Ganelon and his kin; to accept their logic is to betray Roland and to misunderstand or forget the sense of the sacrifice of Roncevaux. When Charlemagne offers his Louis as like coin to the grieving Aude, she refuses and dies (ll. 3705-22) in an echo of Roland's own intransigence.¹³ Situating Roland as the incarnation and representative of a 'transcendant ethical value', a function that he fulfils in both the Oxford *Roland* and in the *Pseudo-Turpin* translations, may offer a reassuring vision of a lost world of certainties to an aristocratic audience, as Gabrielle Spiegel points out, but it also leaves the humble *jongleur*, or indeed, any innovator working in verse, on a slippery slope.¹⁴ The pristine closure of the *Pseudo-Turpin* translations could always be justified by the nature of their subject matter, while the *jongleurs* laboured under a charge of

found in the other versions, where Ganelon's only stated motive, if any is given, is revenge for Roland's having named him as ambassador to Marsilie (e.g. Paris, l. 6727). In other texts, he simply denies the charges laid against him (e.g. Châteauroux, ll. 7473-76). In *V*⁴, Ganelon attempts no justification, names himself as traitor and obligingly suggests his own punishment (ll. 3956-71).

¹¹ See Spiegel, *Romancing the Past*, pp. 87-88.

¹² See Jean Frappier, *Les Chansons de geste du cycle de Guillaume d'Orange*, 2 vols (Paris: Société d'édition d'enseignement supérieur, 1955), I, 279-307 and also Lynette R. Muir, 'Est-ce qu'on peut considérer Vivien comme un "anti-Roland"?' in *Société Rencesvals: IV^e congrès international*, pp. 238-44 (see n. 10 above).

¹³ For a reading of this scene, see Haidu, *The Subject of Violence*, pp. 128-33.

¹⁴ Spiegel, *Romancing the Past*, p. 88.

mendacity implicitly bound up with the nature of verse and the work of innovation and reperformance: 'Many people have heard [the history of Charlemagne's Spanish expedition], but what these singers and jongleurs sing and tell is nothing but a lie. No rhymed tale is true [...] The good Baldwin, Count of Hainault, dearly loved Charlemagne, but he did not wish to believe anything that was sung about him'.¹⁵ Of course, Roland's language of refusal also means that any work referring to his model of behaviour has a range of intriguing transgressive possibilities to play with, potentially equally as 'refreshing' as the worthy message of the more moralistic *Pseudo-Turpin*, although perhaps in a different sense. The *Roland*'s poetic sequels and preludes not only present themselves as obsessed with preservation and conservation, but also thematicise the high risk that they are willing to run in providing expansions on the events of Roncevaux. In *Gaydon*, which follows as a sequel to the *Roland* in the Paris manuscript, a senile Charlemagne accepts money from the traitors.¹⁶

Mais convoitise l'emperéor sozprent
 Car par les dons que il donnent souvent
 Sont oublié, car trop volentiers prent
 La mort as pers et au conte Rollant
 Quant en sa cort les traïtors consent (5224-28)

'But cupidity overwhelms the emperor: by frequent gifts, which he is all too glad to receive, and by his tolerance of the presence of the traitors at court, the deaths of Roland and the peers are forgotten.'

Gaydon's reproach follows the logic of refusal dictated by the *Roland*: 'La mort Rollant vostre neveu vendez / Quant les avoires des traïtors prenez' (*Gaydon*, ll. 5394-95). Here cupidity goes hand in hand with images of blindness to the light of truth (ll. 3184-85) and loss of memory. Against this, Gaydon (a.k.a. Thierry) serves as a constant and unflinching reminder of the time when he was sent by

¹⁵ Nicolas of Senlis, *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle* (BNF fr. 124, fol. 1r), translation cited from Spiegel, *Romancing the Past*, p. 55.

¹⁶ *Gaydon*, edited by F. Guessard and S. Luce, *Anciens Poètes de la France* (Paris: Franck, 1862).

Roland to 'tell the truth' ('raconter le voir', l. 475) about Roncevaux, to bring (or indeed return) the 'bright gift' ('gai don') that will revive a memory dying in Charlemagne's increasingly clouded mind.¹⁷ After Gaydon's death at the end of the poem, the narrator leaves us with the nightmarish vision of the end of history: the traitors win over Charlemagne and nothing can stop their rise to power from then on (*Gaydon*, ll. 10864-87). Of course, one of the first victims of the new regime will be the 'truth' of the *Roland*, a tale to be turned on its head in a world where the villains claim that devils are angels (ll. 5289-94). Thus, although using Roland's name generates continuing interest in his legend, imperilling it offers the possibility of reaping even greater returns for the poet who follows after.

Questions of contract lend themselves fairly readily to study of the *chanson de geste*, since it is through the contracts that bind lords and vassals, friends, Man and God that these poems look outward to consider social relations, an emphasis reflected in recent studies.¹⁸ By extension, social ties can be seen as the reflection of literary influence, and I will aim to show that some of the tensions that the editors and critics of *Gui de Bourgogne* have seen in the work are a product of its place as a prelude to the story of Roncevaux.¹⁹ One of

¹⁷ 'Il m'envoia, bons rois, descî à toi / Por raconter le voir, com il estoit / De Ganelon, qui traïs noz avoit' (*Gaydon*, ll. 474-76). An explanation of the origin of Gaydon's name is given at ll. 424-26, according to which a jay sat on his helmet after he had killed Pinabel. While the connection between the name and gift-giving is not immediately made, part of Gaydon's account refers to how he was made rich after the duel by a gift from Charles ('vostre don', l. 431).

¹⁸ See, for example, Rebecca Edelman McKnight, *The God Who Never Lies: mendacity in French literature from the eleventh through the thirteenth centuries* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Emory University, 1994) and William T. Cotton, "'Par amur et par feid": keeping faith and the varieties of feudalism in *La Chanson de Roland*', in *The Rusted Hauberk: feudal ideals of order and their decline*, edited by Liam O. Purdon and Cindy L. Vitto (Gainesville: Florida University Press, 1994), pp. 163-99.

¹⁹ On tensions in the poem, see Jules Horrent, 'L'Histoire poétique de Charlemagne dans la littérature française du Moyen Âge', in *Charlemagne et l'épopée romane: actes du VII^e congrès international de la Société Rencesvals* (Liège 28 août-4 septembre 1976), Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Philosophie et des Lettres de l'Université de Liège, 225, 2 vols (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1978), I, 25-57, at p. 46; and Guessard and Michelant's introduction, p. xii (see n. 4 above). For a complementary reading, see Jean-Claude Vallecalle, 'Parenté et souveraineté dans *Gui de Bourgogne*', in *Les Relations de parenté dans le monde médiéval*,

the main means of creating bonds in *Gui de Bourgogne* is through gift-giving, something which tells us more about the exchange that takes place between this poem and the Roland material than it does about any society that the poem may reflect. Analysis of gift exchange has had a long history in cultural anthropology, starting with Marcel Mauss's *The Gift*.²⁰ In 'primitive' societies, gift exchange provides a means of non-violent (or at least not explicitly so) competition between significant social actors, regulating questions of status. This economy of tribute structures *Gui de Bourgogne*'s vision of a heroic society, where dealings between men are negotiated through spectacular acts of largesse. The questions of influence as credit and gift-giving and of the relations between economics and language are also considered in a poem '[dont] la donnée [...] doit paraître extravagante'.²¹ In this world, the young Gui accedes to a place in the symbolic order through a deception, a 'sting-operation' that cleverly manipulates a 'culture founded on sacrifice, crime [and] war', extorting the credit that will give his tale a place within the literary system even as it passes the hat around its

Senefiance, XXVI (Aix-en-Provence: Publications du CUERMA, 1989), pp. 83-97.

²⁰ Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: the form and reason for exchange in archaic societies*, translated by W.D. Halls, foreword by Mary Douglas (London: Routledge, 1990). See also Marilyn Strathern, *The Gender of the Gift: problems with women and problems with society in Melanesia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988). Both Strathern and Derrida have devoted space to the hints contained in Mauss's work that any study of other cultures must reflect on our own. In the case of Strathern, this reflection on what she saw as the 'failure' of her *Gender of the Gift* was to lead to her work on relations between nature and culture in contemporary Anglo-American society (*After Nature: English kinship in the late twentieth century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992)). See also Jacques Derrida, *Given Time 1) Counterfeit Money*, translated by Peggy Kamuf (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992).

²¹ The citation is from Guessard and Michelant's preface (p. xii). As R. Howard Bloch argues, medieval theories about economics were very much part of and subordinate to a more general theory of signs (R. Howard Bloch, *Etymologies and Genealogies: towards a literary anthropology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), pp. 164-75, at p. 165). Commentary on economic questions tended to fall into the field of Christian ethics; see J.W. Baldwin, *Masters, Princes and Merchants: the social views of Peter the Chanter and his circle*, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970) and his *Medieval Theories of Just Price*, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1959).

audience.²² Images of exchange, payment and credit dominate the poem as part of a tough and worldly reflection on the value of Roland's word. The risk inherent in any exchange relationship is presented as the only possibility of an afterlife. As yet unassured of a place in the Pantheon or a status as *patrimoine*, the place of the *Roland* at this time was not a given, it could not be won entirely by brute force, rather it had to be paid for. Of course, mention of that price is precluded by the particular nature of Roland's self-sacrifice. So it is that *Gui de Bourgogne* questions the *Roland*'s right to dictate its own market value. The poem's blackening of Roland provides an image for the dialectical relations of a literary tradition and the problem of repaying the gift of influence. It overturns the commemorative paradigm established by the *Roland*, where memory is presented as a matter of duty rather than debt. It shows that it is failure (or refusal) to guarantee any closing of the cycle of influence and commemoration that makes narrative possible.

One way of talking about exchange without appearing to mention money is the language of enfeoffment, whose suitability as an image for God's gift of life and the soul is clearly apparent in Roland's death (l. 2365). In *Gui de Bourgogne*, the fief operates as a model of the surplus that can be created by entering into contracts with others. Dealing with unenlightened pagans offers a chance to explain in detail this odd mixture of politics, finance and theology. The act of subjection of inferior to lord is conceived of as a passage from allodial possession to fief that entails no loss, as Escorfaut finds:

'Or sera li rois Guis de ma tere saisis,
Et si fera garder ma terre et mon pais.
—Par mon chief, ce dist Huidres, merveilles avés dit.
Vos n'i perdros de voir vaillant .i. angevin' (3373-76)

"Now will king Gui have the saisine of my land and so keep my land and my country." "By my head", said Huidelon, "You have said a fine thing. Truly, you will not lose an Angevin coin's worth of property through this."

²² Luce Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, translated by Gillian C. Gill (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 200.

Such literal transactions then provide a model for the giving up of the soul to God, as Turpin argues, attempting to persuade Emaudras to convert: 'Tote rauras la terre, tu n'i perdras noiant' (ll. 3655-56). Of course, the connection between the soul and the fief was familiar from Roland's death scene. Emaudras's inability to understand the reciprocal relations between donor and recipient is then expressed through his inability to understand the crucifixion, referring to the cross as a 'planche vieille' (l. 3660). There is thus clearly a theological investment in the imagery of exchange, whose fluidity reflects contemporary anxieties about the ethics of economic transactions.²³ This notion of value is also carried over into the social realm. As Mauss points out, one of the main functions of the gift economy is the mediation of rivalry for status. Gui enhances his by the gifts he offers to Charles (e.g. ll. 3107-12) to placate him. Timing is all, however. Gui feels able to approach Charles only when he has enough territory to his own name: 'I will not go to Charles, the just and powerful king until I have two cities under my control. These I will give to Charles and he will love me all the more for it.'²⁴ This concern allows for the prolonged concealment of the identity of the sons. Appropriateness in giving is determined by degree of kinship, which protects Gui: Charlemagne comments that Gui would not dare offer him presents if he were not a close relative or nephew (ll. 3158-62).²⁵ Yet Gui is not the only one who has to be protected. Gift economies offer mechanisms by which status can be protected in the case of a recipient concerned not to lose face in the event of receiving a gift he cannot match, something that would be complicated if the recipient were the social superior. A key example of this in the text is when Gui warns the knights he sends to the starving and impoverished Charlemagne to be careful not to insult him: 'I beg you to speak fairly to him and not to treat him as base because he is poor, but rather honour him as much as you can' (ll. 660-62).²⁶ This figure of the impoverished king poses a

²³ On the economic thought of Peter the Chanter and his circle, see Baldwin, *Masters, Princes and Merchants*.

²⁴ 'Ja n'irai à Karlon, le fort roi droiturier, / S'aurai ces .ii. citez sos moi à josticier. / Et les rendrai Karlon, si m'en aura plus chier' (ll. 3102-05).

²⁵ Vallecalle, 'Parenté et souveraineté', p. 87.

²⁶ 'Et si vos pri, biaux sire, que bel à lui parlez. / Nel tenés pas por vil por ce s'a povretez, / Mais à vostre pooir le sien cors honorez'. The giving of gifts creates

considerable problem for the fictional universe of *Gui de Bourgogne* and describes the relations of the work with its earlier model.²⁷ What Charles and Gui have to negotiate, have to detour around, is their lack of resources. Charles is impoverished and Gui cannot approach him until he has cities of his own, but neither can afford to acknowledge the crisis that this implies. The idea central to the gift economy, and especially the form of ritual exchange known as the potlatch, is that there should be no admission that the materials exchanged are essential to survival. Indeed, the wealth is often destroyed, an act that confers even greater status on the participants.²⁸ To present a figure who patently needs to be resupplied as an equal in a gift exchange heightens the tension of the work, where a question of material necessity is yet further complicated by the fact that it must be thought and presented in another form in order to save face—as if a starving man continued to show a fastidious preoccupation with good manners.²⁹ The way in which the characters circle each other, supremely anxious to make the right move, is reminiscent of nothing so much as spiders or scorpions paying court to one another, where the wrong move usually results in death: when Charles abases himself before his inferior (ll. 3929-35 and l. 3942), Gui commands his followers to throw themselves on the ground and crawl to Charles (ll. 3939-46) in a frenzied attempt to avoid being wrong-footed by the emperor's hyperbole. Wisely, the young man realises that the problems of his

problems in other epics. In *Daurel et Beton*, for example, the rich gift made by Beuves to Guy, which Guy cannot reciprocate, both signals and causes the conflict between the two and the end of their companionship (see Sarah Kay, 'Compagnonnage, désordre social et hétérotexualité dans *Daurel et Beton*', in *Actes du XI^e congrès international de la Société Rencesvals (Barcelone, 22-27 août, 1988)*, 2 vols, *Memorias de la Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona*, XXI-XXII (1990), I, 353-67, at pp. 354-55).

²⁷ Compare again with *Daurel et Beton*, where Charles's poverty allows Guy to have influence over him through his gifts, causing the king to forget the death of Beuves (ll. 534-92).

²⁸ Mauss, *The Gift*, p. 37.

²⁹ Nine days before his death, Immanuel Kant, still driven by a 'sense of humanity', refused to sit down before his doctor, who had come to visit him, had himself taken a seat (an episode recounted by Panofsky at the opening of his introduction to *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1993), p.23). Charlemagne's gesture is potentially equally moving, but for the threat it clearly implies.

virtual claims over France mean that he is bound to Charles and must repay him for the status that he has vicariously acquired, a status that we could regard as the theft of symbolic interest, even though the capital remains untouched. This circling and delay, which is a cause of some puzzlement to the characters, is characteristic of the gift's perambulations in other texts, such as Baudelaire's *La Fausse Monnaie*, where such necessary delay, the acknowledgement of the value of social time, is symbolised by the meandering narrative style.³⁰

Emphasis on material exchange leads to a renegotiation of a variety of models, especially that of royal government and the notion of crusade as the ultimate end and supreme cultural capital at stake in the social unification of Christendom. The hesitation over motives may well point either to some sort of spiritual bankruptcy or to a shift in the relations between monarch and barons. Indeed, it is the accounting of the text that takes some precedence over the cultural capital of crusade, as can be seen from Charles's description of Cordes (ll. 17-23).³¹

The picture is then one of an economy exhausted by war and conflict, where Charles requires new victories to reenforce his status at court. Beyond that, the sacred duty of crusade is of rather less importance for the time being, although the tension between the economic and the sacred will have considerable importance. For the moment, Charles is in dire straits, to the point that he can no longer claim the credit for past victories, as Ogier points out:

³⁰ Derrida, *Given Time*; p. 114.

³¹ 'Or la tient l'aumacor, qui tant a de fierté,
Et a moult grant empire là dedens atiné;
Or et argent et pailles i a à grant planté,
Et maint destrier corant et maint faucon mué.
Barons, c'or i alons par sainte charité;
Que, se Diex nos avoit cel avoir destiné,
Riches en poroit estre no povre parenté' (17-23)

"Now the proud emir holds sway in the city, who has set up control in it. There is gold and silver and brocades in great plenty, and many a good swift horse and many a mature falcon. Barons! Let us now go there, in the name of holy charity, for if God has destined this wealth for us, then our poor families could be rich because of it."

'On dit que Karlemaines conquiert tous les reniez;
Non fait, par saint Denis! vaillant .iiii. deniers,
Ains les conquiert Rollans et li cuens Oliviers,
Et Naimes à la barbe, et je qui sui Ogiers' (37-40)

"It is said that Charlemagne conquers all kingdoms. This is not true! He does not do four pence worth, by Saint Denis! It's Roland, Oliver, bearded Naymon and myself, Ogier, who do it!"

Clearly the barons are in no mood to be short-changed by the pooling of resources that might lead to the sort of incipient state-formation that Haidu sees in the Oxford *Roland*, the coining of some collective reputation on which Charles might set his stamp and from which he might draw *seignorage*. Where Roland listed his achievements in the form of the names of places and people in the *Roland*, here the recurring theme is the assessment of how little is achieved in terms of monetary value.³² The barons are also not overly deferent: Roland teases Charles later on (l. 1043). In his defence, Charles then has to go on to detail the victories for which he is personally responsible (ll. 61-72). This gesture reveals that the French are no longer prepared to obey the king on the basis of a sacerdotal kingship, and that the total system is open to adjustment. As Michael Heintze points out, *Gui de Bourgogne* is no epic of revolt, despite the position of strength granted to the vassals and the power vacuum created by Charles's long absence from Paris.³³ Yet there are crucial renegotiations in the relations between the emperor and his vassals.

Although it is ostensibly more unified, Gui's camp is dominated by a similar anxiety about the maintenance of just price and the exercise of violence that goes along with it. Exchange and contact is strictly controlled and scrupulously fair—or mostly so at any rate. Just prior to their departure for Spain, Gui has a number of

³² Formulae expressing how little damage Charles has done recur frequently (e.g. 'Ains n'i mesfist dedens vaillant .i. parisi', l. 458; 'Ains n'i mesfist dedens .i. denier monéé', l. 616; 'Mes dedens ne mesfurent vaillant .i. angevin', l. 901; see also l. 1490).

³³ Heintze, *König, Held und Sippe*, pp. 249-50, 375.

proclamations read through the French army. Among these proclamations, we read the following:

Encore a fait li enfes autre ban recrier
 Que il n'i ait en l'ost ne tolu ne amblé;
 Mès vitaille le suie assez et à planté,
 Et face la danrée .III. denier acheter.
 Et qui miels ne porra à fin argent peser,
 Li rois est riches hon qui lor donra assez,
 Tant com il ait denier, que il n'i ait lasté (296-302)

'And then the young man had another proclamation read out: "Let there be no theft of food within the army. Rather, plenty of food should follow, and the measure [or "pennyworth"?) should be valued at threepence. If anyone cannot manage for want of silver, the king is a rich man and, as long as he has the money, will give people enough so that there should be no want.'"

Localised inflation, effectively a tripling of prices in this case, keeps the merchants happy while the heavy subsidy should provide for order in the army. For the duration of the work, Gui—who receives no *rente* from France—is prepared to sustain at his own cost a literal and figurative economy that will allow for the most favourable outcome in a work that must nonetheless also prepare the ground for the disaster of Roncevaux. There will be no dishonest gain, protests the hero of the poem, masking the usury and still greater fraud that he plans to engage in. The *denier*, the 'ghost currency' of medieval France, which existed only for the purpose of accounting and evaluation, not as a money to be used in transaction, is devalued within the army, while, by a combination of threats and generosity, the soldiers themselves are dissuaded from engaging in the sort of looting that would compensate for the economic vacuum created.³⁴ The stakes are raised, but those closest to their leader are cushioned from the market forces. Gui's assurance is rather bold given that he is in a sense living off the credit that he hopes to gain from his future conquests, since for the moment, he is unable to

³⁴ On the *denier*, see Bloch, *Etymologies and Genealogies*, pp. 167-69. Such a devaluation mirrors the devaluation of the *denier* by the Capetians at the end of the twelfth century, which coincided with the resumption of large-scale gold minting.

draw any rents from the lands that he theoretically controls in his capacity as king. Obviously, the risk inherent in this venture is less than it appears, and may not inhere in the literal level of the text: it is not about the dangers of speculating on the outcome of an actual war.³⁵ Indeed, what is less apparent is that this statement also sets the exchange rate between narratives, becoming a figure for the deference that the earlier text is portrayed as exacting from the later one. In many respects then, Gui's money is the ghost coinage of the *denier*, a coinage which can only provide us with a speculative, abstract gauge of relative values.

The affirmation that the monetary economy will be maintained is repeated at various points, with Gui and other male characters offering to protect one another from loss and damage. A key example of this is the virtuous Turk, Huidelon, who protects and is protected by Gui (see ll. 2722-23 and ll. 2753-56). Another aspect of that protection is Gui's repeated injunctions against looting (ll. 638-42 and ll. 3414-20).³⁶ What seems to be an act of mercy actually

³⁵ Risk was one of the most important fields in financial speculation in the Middle Ages (see Baldwin, *Masters, Princes and Merchants*, I, 286-88). It was not thought of as a sin in the same fashion as usury, but rather was more akin to interest.

³⁶ Et l'enfes Guis fait panre et maisons et ostés,
 Puis a fait par la vile .i. riche ban crier,
 Qu'il facent la vitaille tot ensamble aporer
 Et gardent que n'en ostent .i. denier monéé
 Et qui la repondra s'aura le chief copé (638-42)

'And young Gui had them take houses and dwellings, and then had a great proclamation read through the city that they should bring all the food together out from the houses, and that they should be careful not to take a pennyworth of it, and anyone who contested this rule would have his head cut off.'

En la cité entrèrent li chevalier vaillant,
 Et ont prise la vile et ariere et avant.
 L'enfes Gui fait crier par la cité vaillant
 Qu'il n'ait chevalier, tant soit de haute gent,
 Qui toille à Sarrazin son or ne son arjant,
 Tyres, pailles, ne dras, ne riens sans son comment;
 Il en perdra la teste, ja n'i aura garant (3414-20)

'The valiant knights entered the city, and they took complete control of it. And Gui had it proclaimed through the entire town that there was no knight of such a high family that if he took anything from a Saracen, either gold or silver, Tyrian silk, cloth, clothes or anything else without his permission, he would not lose his head without any chance of protection.'

functions as a doctrine of economic apartheid, keeping the two generations and textual traditions separate. As part of this, the election of king is seen primarily as an economic question: the king is the chief signatory of the economic system, the head that is stamped on the coin to give it shape and value, almost in the same manner in which, according to Aristotelian theories of generation, the child is given form by the father's semen. Thus, the male child must be more on the side of form and less on that of matter than his sister. Yet what of the coin that has not seen the stamp that gave it its character? To preserve the values of the social hierarchy, the economy must be reinstated in the form of a copy, which, the young men speculate, must be guaranteed by a father. So, in Paris they may quite happily elect another king, since their order is not created in order to disinherit the emperor ('Car nos ne volons Carlon deseriter', l. 225), but rather to allow them some standards to operate by in his absence. Nonetheless, while they are also aware of the risks inherent in such a position, it is only Gui who sees the full implications of their act, and forces them to move their pseudo-realm outside France:

'... par cele corone dont m'avés queroné,
 Qu'en mon chief m'avez mis, trestot estre mon gré,
 Ne par la foi que doi au cors méisme Dé,
 Je ne tandrai en France ne chastel ne cité,
 Ne n'i n'aurai de rente .I. denier monée;
 Car, se revenoit Karles ariere en son rené,
 Et il me trovoit ci que fuisse queroné,
 Il me todroit la teste, jel sai de verité' (250-57)

"By that crown with which you have crowned me against my will and by my faith in God, I will hold no castle or town in France, nor will I received a minted denier of rent, for if Charles came back into his kingdom and found that I was crowned, then he would take my head, this I know for a fact."

Gui's oath on his crown is simply a variation on the many oaths

sworn by heads: 'par mon chief'.³⁷ That the investment implied by such oaths is considerable is clear from their frequency: their occurrence four times in sixty lines is not exceptional, and represents a symbolic importance entirely absent from the different versions of the *Roland*.³⁸ By swearing by the head, the characters offer an all-or-nothing version of the truth, an absolute affirmation that what they say is thought to be true and that nothing is being withheld.³⁹ Even though the violence that follows never actually takes the form of beheading, threats and warnings involving decapitation are repeated often (the head on which this accumulated doom may be intended to fall is, of course, Roland's.⁴⁰ The value is therefore primarily symbolic, a vision of a radical split that cancels

³⁷ R.B. Onians (*The Origins of European Thought: about the body, the mind, the soul, the world, time and fate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981)) adduces many examples that show that the head was conceived of both in Hellenic and Semitic cultures as a sacred object, the seat of the sense and home of the psyche. It is thus a seat of presence, although it was also connected with futurity, linked to the organs of reproduction via the spinal cord, and both the brain and the marrow of the spine were thought to be constituted of the same life-giving spirit as semen. Oaths in Greek and Roman cultures were made on both the head and the testicles, an equivalence reflected in the terminology that linked testimony with both the head and the male sexual organs. Bowing and nodding were thought to be highly significant gestures (Onians, *The Origins of European Thought*, pp. 94, 138-39, 195-97), both of which figure in *Gui de Bourgogne*: e.g. ll. 688, 1042, 1079. Charlemagne also hunches his shoulders and neck as part of his disguise when entering to spy in Luïserne (l. 1325). On the various gestures indicative of grief or displeasure in the Old French epic, see P. Ménard, 'Tenir le chief embronc, crosler le chief, tenir la main a la maissele: trois attitudes de l'ennui dans les chansons de geste du XII^e siècle', in *Société Rencesvals: IV^e congrès international*, pp. 145-55 (see n. 10 above).

³⁸ Examples: 'Par mon chief, ce dist Guis, bon conseil me donez' (l. 1655)

'Par mon chief, dist Bertrans, se g'i sai assener' (l. 1659)

'Par mon chief, ce dist Guis, ci a bon ordené' (l. 1671)

'Par mon chief, dist li Turs, teus noveles portés' (ll. 1712 and 1721)

Another variant is that by which the head is sworn to a particular saint or god: 'Par Mahomet mon Dieu, que j'ai mon chief doné' (l. 467); 'Par Saint Denis, dist Karles, qui mes chiés est donés' (l. 1000). The formula does admit of some variation. Note that Boïdains swears successively by his beard (l. 461), his head and then his entire body (l. 478). They also fear for their heads (e.g. ll. 1306-08, ll. 1382-83).

³⁹ Onians, *The Origins of European Thought*, p. 96.

⁴⁰ For threats, see ll. 866, 907, 672-74, 1556-88, 2850-53, 2874-78, 2933-35, 3076-78. One notable blow to the head is dealt by Turpin, who opens hostilities at Maudrane by splitting Emaudras's head vertically from crown to chin (ll. 3664-65).

identity and status, although it is carried over into the description of the massacre of the pagans at Maudrane: 'n'en remest .i. *antier*' (l. 3709, my emphasis). This possibility of annihilation operates at a variety of levels, from that of individual transactions to more abstract notions of the state and the body politic: threat of a single, cancellatory act of violence is a key part of the control Gui exercises over members both of his party and of the emperor's camp, a founding violence that he takes over from his election:

'Seignor, ce dist Bertrant, il nos convient jurer
Celui que nouz voldrons faire roi coroné
Que se il le desdit, le chief aura copé' (206-08)

"Lords", said Bertrand, "We must swear: if the one whom we want to crown refuses, then we will cut off his head."

Of course, Gui uses his head to make the *coup de force* rebound onto his electors:

'Ançois voil estre rois que la teste couper, [...]
Or voil que refaciés la moie volaté,
Et qui le desdira s'aura le chief coupé' (233-38)

"I'd rather be a king than have my head cut off [...] Now I want you to do my will, and anyone who disagrees will have his head cut off."

Gui is also afraid that Charles will cut off his head for taking any revenue from his lands (ll. 251-55), which is why he is quite happy to accede to Huidelon's wish to hold his lands from Charles rather than from him (ll. 3063-70). Gui realises that too many heads can be bad for the body politic, a thought that also underlies the Saracen Boïdans's use of the form *mauchief* (literally: 'bad-head', cognate with Eng. 'mischief'), meaning an evil fate:

'Maléoitte soit France de Mahon qui me fist,
Quant ele puet .ii. rois tanser et garantir!
Mauchief puist ele panre et à mauchief venir!' (446-48)

"May Mahommed, who made me, curse France if she can protect and guarantee two kings! Let mischief take her and let her come to mischief!"

Here, the two heads of the two kings are answered by the repetition of 'mauchief'. There should clearly only be one of them, a fact that presents the basis for the exchanges in the work: the head is an irreplaceable unit, guaranteeing the total loyalty or truthfulness of the interlocutor. This emphasis on totality, on the integrity of the socially significant agent that can be cancelled at a stroke, is gendered: for agents, read men. Threats to women promise dismemberment rather than decapitation, fragmenting the body into a plurality and reducing it from mobility (where limbs allow for movement and agency) to an immobile passivity associated with the consumptive production of other bodies.⁴¹

In addition, women are reduced to silence, their utterances thereafter consisting entirely of weeping and wailing and of prayers—repetitive, babbling utterances addressed to the only male that will listen: God. The place of the women in their closed carriages enacts and offers a token of the reduction of talk and body spoken of in Gui's threats, relegating them to insignificance in the narrative.⁴² Any speech on their part is deferred, and will even then

⁴¹ As part of the measures taken by Gui to avoid any sort of violent encounter with his fathers, he first seeks to control speech, and quite specifically the speech of the mothers and sisters who could denounce him:

Il an jure la crois, par ire, où Diex fu mis,
Qu'il n'i a une seule qui tant soit de haut pris,
'Si [elle] estoit sereur Karlon de Saint Denis,
Ou se c'estoit bele Aude, qui tant a cler le vis,
Ou ele estoit ma mere, que je dout mout et pris,
Se g[e] en oi huimés la parole tantir,
Que je ne li féisse touz les membres tolir' (273-79)

'He swore by the cross to which God was nailed, that there was "No one there of such high worth, be she the sister of Charles of Saint Denis, or Aude of the radiant face, or my mother, whom I fear and esteem so greatly, that if I ever hear a word out of them again that I would not cut off all her limbs."'

⁴² See E. Jane Burns, *Bodytalk: when women speak in Old French literature* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press, 1993). Burns's readings investigate

only take the form of the *geste* of the unborn children they carry back to France. A less obviously violent reduction in status applies to the fathers, on the other hand. Gui denies the latter the chance to recognise their sons, and, by employing a castrating gesture closely related to decapitation, denies them the use of the gaze that affirms their status as male subjects.

Of course, some do not have to swear by their heads in order to affirm and underscore the truth of what they say. While they lack both head and body on which the violence of the oath might be inscribed, angels are thought of as the messengers par excellence and are highly active in *Gui de Bourgogne*, mirroring their interventions in the *Roland*. Yet, while they ought to be at the pinnacle of this pyramid, angels seem to offer less certain revelations. Charlemagne can call on divine help almost at will and future events are readily divulged to him (ll. 150-64) and he is hidden from his enemies by them (ll. 1349-64). The relations between Charles and the angels are secret, and they speak to him quietly ('Il [Gabriel] li dit en l'oreille coïement, a celé' ('Gabriel whispers in his ear, discreetly'), l. 1360). There are two notable exceptions. The first comes when he prays to God to find the identity of this mystery king, a prayer which goes unanswered. The second is the angel that arrives to tell him to return to France:

'Karles, ce dist li angres, dirai toi verité:
 Ne sui pas hons terrestre, ains sui esperités;
 Ce te mande li Sires qui en crois fu penés
 Que ailles en Galisce por Saint Jake aorer.
 Aincois que tu reviegnes, je te di par verté,
 Orrois vos teus noveles dont vos joiant serés.
 Après ceste joïe autre joie raurés;
 Mais ne t'esmaier mie, drois empereres ber,
 Qu'icil te conduira qui tout a à garder.
 Je ne te puis plus dire que ne m'est commandé;
 Mais cil qui nos servons et iver et esté
 Gart ton cors et ta vie et ton riche barné!' (4096-107)

how the 'rhetorical female body' finds a voice in a number of texts. *Gui de Bourgogne* provides an example of how it is carefully and savagely silenced.

"Charles", said the angel, "I will tell you the truth: I am not a man of this earth, but rather I am spiritual. This news sends you the Lord who was tortured on the cross, that you should go to Galicia to give offerings to Saint James. Before you return, I tell you truthfully, you will hear such news as will make you glad. After this joy, you will experience another, but do not be afraid, rightful lord and emperor, for He will guide you who watches over all things. I can tell you no more than I am commanded to, but may the one whom we serve both summer and winter protect you and your noble retinue."

'I can tell you no more than I am commanded to do'—this guarded guarantee providing only the darkest of hints at a dark future by the cunningly-dislocated economy of 'après ceste joïe autre joie raurés', a promise that does not speak of the loss that will intervene.⁴³ The creature guarantees its prediction on the basis that it is 'spiritual' rather than 'carnal' in nature—there is no need to swear by the head, since there is apparently no need to offer the same sort of guarantee. The angel cannot swear by its body, but rather belongs to a different sort of truth, announcing the plenitude of God's presence or design in the form of a narrative with some notable silences, a calculated revelation of a hidden future. The hierarchy of angel – man: head – body suggests an equivalence of 'angel is to man as head is to body' which the angel appears to endorse but which the text reveals as problematic. Having less knowledge than God and more knowledge than man, it opens out a space in which mental reservation may not be the mark of weakness or treachery. It cannot offer the absolute reassurance of divine omniscience and it cannot swear that it is not withholding anything, as might the human characters; it belongs to a different order of knowledge and language—the intelligent.⁴⁴ Its body is merely a channel for information rather than a node, which provides for a different relation to language, temporality and truth. By saying that this is all that can be said now, the angel reminds Charlemagne that he is only partly privy to the divine purpose, underscoring the

⁴³ See also the first angel that appears to Charles, who also qualifies its message with 'je ne te sai plus dire' (l. 162).

⁴⁴ On the language and episteme of the angels, see, for example, Augustine, *City of God*, book XVI, chapter 6.

secrecy inherent in the design of the sacred text.⁴⁵ The fact that the young men are at one point mistaken for angels (l. 475) suddenly starts to take on rather sinister implications: they might not be as transparent as they look. Although candour and truthfulness are virtues prized in the work, with characters constantly affirming that they are hiding nothing (e.g. 'à celer nel vos quier', l. 3338),⁴⁶ *Gui de Bourgogne* is as much about not divulging, a text about disguise and deception, riddles and parables as it is about transparency; the swiftness (*celeritas*), which Jean-Claude Vallecalle sees as characteristic of the young men, is tempered by a narrative of delay and diversion in which Gui does not go directly to Charlemagne.⁴⁷ In the same way, for all that the characters maintain that nothing will be hidden ('Nel vos celerai mie', l. 3085), much goes unsaid. Disguise is a prominent motif: at one point, Charlemagne pretends to be a Muslim pilgrim returning from Mecca (ll. 1324-454); Gui and his followers pretend not to be their fathers' sons. Gui and his men set Charles and his followers riddles about their identity.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Not that this is an especially unusual situation: Heintze argues that Charles's role as elect of God and self-sufficient conduit for the divine purpose had been in question since the 1180s, with Bertrand de Bar-sur-Aube's *Girart de Vienne* already offering an image of his failure to read a warning dream. However, it might also be argued by comparison with other texts, such as the *Paris Roland*, that what we have here is less a decline in Charles's powers than a change in the presentation of the miraculous in the *chanson de geste*. The key passage is Aude's prayer over the dead Oliver and his temporary resuscitation (ll. 5875-6024). Where Vivien might have revived briefly to receive the last communion from his uncle William in the *Chanson de Guillaume*, the *Paris Roland* presents us with the problem of any return to the earthly life: it is the angel that speaks through the body, not Oliver's soul returning (ll. 5986-99). Yet, clearly, Aude's affirmations of the truthfulness of the contract of understanding expressly precludes any understanding of the miraculous as trickery, even as it affirms the divide that would make of the contract a link that might be exploited and misread from the human side. In that respect, the 'trick' that God plays on Aude can be read as the close kin and counter-weight of Gottfried's false oath scene: 'Thus it is made manifest and confirmed to all the world that Christ in His great virtue is as pliant as a windblown sleeve [...] He is at the beck of every heart for honest deeds or fraud' (Gottfried von Strassburg, *Tristan*, translated by A.C. Hatto (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), p. 248).

⁴⁶ In the same section, see also ll. 3328, 3331.

⁴⁷ Vallecalle, 'Parenté et souveraineté', pp. 89-90.

⁴⁸ See Charles's questioning of Bertrams: '—Por Dieu, dist l'emperere, de quel terre est il nez? / —Sire, dist Bertrams, de France le regné. / —Amis, dist l'emperere, et de quel conté?' (ll. 995-97).

Indeed, this emphasis on secrecy and reservation also reflects Charlemagne's position apart from the rest of the community, being the sole character to engage in some 'wholly private verbal utterance [...] an inner monologue, which violates the premises of the universe of which he seems—alone at the end—to be the sole survivor'.⁴⁹ The introduction of the notion of a contract of understanding that is necessarily one-sided and often murderous in its small print paves the way for the rather shaky guarantee of reciprocity that underlies *Gui de Bourgogne*'s relation with the *Roland*.

The questioning of the solidity of a variety of unities becomes a key feature of the text's vision of psychological organisation. The uneasy unity and the dividing violence of the *cycle du roi* leave their traces in the tiniest details of the text. Speech and economic transactions are both shadowed by the figures of violent splitting and division, by an emphasis on that transition from one state to another presented as a sort of interest (*inter-est* from *intersum*: 'to lie between', 'to elapse' (of time), 'to differ', and yet also 'to be present'). Moreover, the text deals with the question of how one can hide things from oneself: it is also about divided intentions, about breaks, silences and ruptures of all kinds. The fact that Gui imposes silence on his army is reflected in their anguished encounters with their families at various points: when Bertrand first meets his father, he can barely keep his feet, but is so torn by Gui's injunction not to reveal his identity that he is driven to berate and curse his parent (ll. 850-58); Tierrri d'Ardane's encounter with his father runs along similar lines (ll. 894-912).⁵⁰ The bonds and instinctive

⁴⁹ Quotation from Bloch, *Etymologies and Genealogies*, p. 107.

⁵⁰ Quant Bertrams vit son pere, s'a le cuer si serré
Que d'une grant loée ne pot sor piés ester,
Por ce qu'il ne l'osa baisier ne acoler,
Que li enfes Guion li ot bien devéé;
A poi qu'il ne chaï de son destrier armé.
Après a respondu, si a haut escrié:
'Dahais ait qui en chaut', ce dist Bertrams li ber.
'Poi vos doit vostre fame et vostre fils amer
Que onques ne véistes an trestot vostre aé!' (850-58)

'When Bertrand saw his father, his heart was so heavy, that for a full league he could not keep his feet, for he did not dare to kiss or embrace him, since young Gui had forbidden him this, indeed he nearly fell from his horse. Afterwards he

recognitions that are a source of joy in other poems such as *Raoul de Cambrai* and *Jourdain de Blaye* are here subject to a violently imposed deferral.⁵¹ The divided heart of the many characters is seen as a normal mode of expression for men in extreme situations. Boïdains is the first example of this, cursing France and then stopping himself ('Et dist à l'autre mot: "Je n'ai mie bien dit [...]'", l. 449). Contradictory outbursts become a sign of the conflict between oath and affection, one strand of the work's endemic schizophrenia. The moment when the two camps finally embrace is depicted as a sharp and sudden transition, unsurprising given that one of the attributes of the gift is its suddenness, its nature as surprise.⁵²

Au departir qu'il firent plorerent de pitié.
 'Si m'aït Diex, dist Sanses, or poons enragier
 Quant nos véons ici les fils de nos molliers,
 Si ne nos deignent acoler et baisier.'
 Il a dit à Guion: 'Retornez ent arier.
 Certes nos en partons dolent et coreciés.'
 Quant Guion l'entendi, si plore de pitié;
 Des lermes qu'il ploroient sont durement moillié
 Qui là véist la joie que font li chevalier!
 Chascuns baise le sien trestot sans atargier (3119-28)

'When they took their leave they all wept for pity. "God help me," said Samson, "We have cause to be angry when we see the sons of our wives who do not deign to embrace and kiss us." He said to Gui "Go back. Certainly we take our leave both pained and angered because of this." When Gui heard him, he wept for pity. They are all wet with tears that they weep. Any then might have beheld the joyful celebration of the knights! Each one kisses his kin without further ado.'

replied, calling out loud "A curse on who might be offended by this, said Bertrand the nobleman. Your wife and son, whom you have never seen in your life, must love you little indeed." See also ll. 894-912 (Tierri d'Ardane meets his son, Berart de Mondisdier).

⁵¹ On bonding and recognition in other texts, see Heintze, *König, Held und Sippe*, pp. 466-67.

⁵² Derrida, *Given Time*, p. 126.

Gui's actual change of heart is represented as a jump, as something that is not formulated in words. His tears are interpreted as a sign that the segregation of the two armies is at an end. Between the violences and hidden plans, the feelings of some characters are offered positive avenues of escape even though the emphasis often seems to be on silencing and interdiction. In *Gui de Bourgogne*, even though such conflicts may pull at identity and threaten to disrupt it, they are nonetheless a permanent feature of mental life for the characters and invert the history of the psyche that the Oxford *Roland* appears to describe. The fact that Roland is the only character who never appears torn, the only subject 'before the Law' (as Haidu would have it) in a tale that precedes the historical watershed that marks his uniqueness, becomes a source of considerable suspense.⁵³ Subjects were subject to splitting before Roncevaux, says the text, so what is Roland hiding?

Such a carefully-elaborated and multi-faceted literary economy is developed with one goal in mind: to pave the way for Roland's destruction. Roland's role in *Gui de Bourgogne* goes from that of a bystander to one of active hostility towards the claim put forward by Gui's alternative new order. His place in *Gui de Bourgogne* raises questions about the nature and the value of friendship relations within the evolving networks of a gift culture. Gui may well negotiate the tricky question of the fathers quite successfully, but when it comes to the older 'sons', Roland and Oliver, then we see that things are not so simple. A wedge is driven between them and the court even in the smallest mentions:

Au departir qu'il firent plorerent de pitié,
 Et si plorerent andui Rollant et Olivier (1242-43)

'On taking their leave they all wept with pity, and Roland and Oliver wept, too.'

Lors s'armèrent par l'ost à force et à baudor.
 L'enfes Guis fu armés el destrier misodor;

⁵³ See Vallecalle, 'Parenté et souveraineté', pp. 90-91. '[Roland] pourra ici incarner la continuité, tandis que Gui manifeste une rupture' (p. 91).

Les enfans fait venir qui erent li meillor.
 Rollans et Olivier se sont mis au recor;
 Les viellars font armer de la terre maior (4138-42)

'Then the army armed itself with great joy and vigour. Young Gui sat armed on his war-horse and had the best of the young men come to him, Roland and Oliver come charging up and the French elders are also armed.'

This is developed further to the point where they can be presented as hanging around court in a rather lackadaisical manner:

Atant es .i. garçon qui es loges antra.
 Rollant et Olivier en sa voie encontra;
 Il venoit des montagnes qu'il gardoit, tiers jor a.
 Quant Rollant l'a véu, en haut li escria,
 Si li a demandé où vient et où va;
 Mais li garçons respont que moult bien lor dira,
 Mais qu'à Karlon le mainent et à lui parlera.
 Et Rollans li respont: einsi com il lui plaira.
 Devant le roi mainent et il le salua (3757-65)

'There came a boy into the camp, down from the mountains where he kept watch, after three days travel. He bumped into Roland and Oliver. When Roland saw him, he called to him and asked him where he came from and where he was going, but the boy replied that he would tell them if they took him first to Charles, and he would tell him. And Roland replied that it would be as he wished, and so they led him before the king and the boy greeted him.'

The contrast between the control shown by Gui over speech and Roland's own lack of control could not be more apparent and tends to marginalise the latter. Where Gui as king is the recipient and generator of messages, Roland does not have the status to hear them. This is reinforced by the insignificance of his own words: here they are reported in the form of indirect speech. Roland's independence from the court is a feature of other poems, such as the *Entrée d'Espagne*, *Roland à Saragosse* and *Renaut de Montauban*.⁵⁴ What is

⁵⁴ Heintze, *König, Held und Sippe*, pp. 335-38.

remarkable in *Gui de Bourgogne* is the untrustworthiness implied by his brooding, Achilles-like isolation and taciturnity, a silence that also envelops Oliver. Where the *Roland* tradition presents the two as an occasionally fractious but inseparable—and increasingly interchangeable—pair, *Gui de Bourgogne* takes the process of homogenisation to an even greater extreme.⁵⁵ Reduction is the key to *Gui de Bourgogne's* portrayal of the Roland-Oliver couple: they are almost always mentioned together in the first three-quarters of the epic, and are generally used to evoke with pathos the breaking of the noble company that will take place at Roncevaux. In that regard, Roland's potential value as message, as a bearer of the stamp of *le voir*, has not been authenticated through death, and so his credit remains open to doubt. The first angle of attack is that the relation between the two goes un glossed, largely because it probably required little elucidation, but also there is a suspicion that the separateness of the two friends from the processes of social interaction in the wider context of Charlemagne's retinue may point to something more ominous. Another issue is the silence of the wise Oliver: even though he does speak in the council scenes, in general he is simply the silent adjunct of Charlemagne's better-known nephew.⁵⁶ That the place of the Roland-Oliver couple should be so fenced about is clearly significant. Interactions *between* the two are not mentioned either. Roland enters into competitive relations only with figures such as Gui. In the context of a more widely-operating gift culture depending on shifting networks of reciprocal relations, strongly-bonded dyadic relations between males can be regarded as a departure from the prevailing forms of sociability, which is how *Gui de Bourgogne* frames (in a number of senses) the epic couple par excellence, placing them in a cruel world that is probably more cunningly-designed literary construct than *fait sociologique*—its reflection on social networks cannot be abstracted from its literary

⁵⁵ See Simon Gaunt, *Gender and Genre in Medieval French Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 44-52.

⁵⁶ Echoing to some extent the silence of history about his origins: 'Le poème parle des hauts faits de Roland et des guerres menées par lui en d'autres temps, mais, pour Olivier, c'est un mutisme complet sur ce qu'il aurait pu faire autrefois' (Ramón Menéndez Pidal, *La 'Chanson de Roland' et la tradition épique des Francs*, 2nd edition revised by the author and René Louis, translated by I.-M. Cluzel (Paris: Picard, 1960), p. 344).

context. However, the text's anthropological fiction chimes with observations that 'friendship' is not seen as a positive value in all cultures. Indeed, within many societies, such relations are regarded as damaging to the social structure.⁵⁷ The position of male couples engaged in intense friendships that exclude wider social interaction would be analogous to that of the withdrawn, quiet, 'unmanly' Andalusian men who participate little in the public rituals that make up social life or the 'rubbish men' of Hagen society.⁵⁸ In a way, the representation of the Roland-Oliver couple as inward looking and marginal is a trick of the text aimed at creating the sort of hinterland of reservations associated with characters such as the traitor Ganelon. What is interesting from the point of view of the construction of masculinity in the *Roland* is that the quality of sameness that comes to be central to the relation between Roland and Oliver in the rhymed versions, and to their status as the ideal heroic couple, whose exchanges in the *Roland* measure the 'manliness' of their comrades, is used as an effective means of marginalising them in *Gui de Bourgogne*. The gaze that was oriented outwards to a society that was the object of their interpretation in the *Roland* is now thrown back at them.

Yet not all intense relationships are blackened. Indeed, emotional intensity marks the narrative of *Gui de Bourgogne* in a way that goes beyond the strong bond between Gui and Charlemagne attested in the *Destruction de Rome* and *Fierabras*.⁵⁹ The readiness of characters to give their lives and heads for one another is marked also in the intensity of their greetings. With kisses and embraces, the complexities of the libidinal drama unfold. Having consumed so much in the way of resources through war, Charles can imagine nothing more than the final annihilating consummation that will be Guy's arrival, the second coming that would answer the loss of Roland:

⁵⁷ S.N. Eisenstadt and L. Roniger, *Patrons, Clients and Friends: interpersonal relations and the structure of trust in society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 282-83.

⁵⁸ David D. Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making: cultural concepts of masculinity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), pp. 32-35 and pp. 52-55; see also A.J. Strathern, 'Gender, Ideology and Money in Mount Hagen', *Man*, XIV (1979), 530-48, at p. 531.

⁵⁹ Heintze, *König, Held und Sippe*, p. 506.

'Certes', dist Karlemaines, 'li mien cuers le desire,
Ne après sa venue ne vodroie plus vivre' (3753-54)

"'Certainly', said Charlemagne, "My heart desires him. I do not care to live after he arrives."

Gui's arrival is presented in explicitly Christological terms:

Et quant Naimés le voit, si l'a haut escrié:
'Sire, fait il au roi, soiés assésurés,
Que, puis que Jhesu Cris fu en la crois penés,
Ne fu si biau secors com ja véoir porrés,
Que vos envoie ci li jones queronés.'
Quant Karles l'entendi, li cuers li est levés:
'Hé Diex! ce dist li rois, or ai vescu assés!' (3917-23)

'And when Naimés saw him, he called out loud to the king "Sire, fear not, for never since Jesus Christ was tortured on the Cross was there such fair aid received as you see now, sent by this young man who wears a crown." When Charles heard this, his heart grew light. "Ah God!" he said, "Now I have lived long enough!"

The one-for-one economy of men, a perfectly-matched homosocial desire, initially challenged by the 'mischief' of the two kings, is here presented as a royal genealogy where Gui meets and effectively cancels out an exhausted Charlemagne, glad to embrace his own annihilation. In his willingness to renounce the crown and life, Charles here exhibits characteristics more commonly associated with the poems dealing with the aftermath of Roncevaux, such as *Gaydon* and *Anseïs de Carthage*. His increasing lassitude in prequels as well as sequels is part of the later development of the Charlemagne whose mourning for Roland translates into a more or less permanent state of melancholic foreboding, largely determined by the text's chronological position. The relationship of exchange between Gui and Charlemagne can be presented in the form of an annihilation through completion, as in Bloom's notion of tessera—the completion of a cut coin or some other token of recognition.

Young replaces old. This contrasts with the relation between Gui and Roland, similar figures competing for the same things. In both cases, king and nephew, like annihilates like. Roland's appearance as a vicious braggart, is part of his pre-emptive rejection as the cycle's scapegoat. Cordial relations between cousins as in the Monglane cycle are precluded both by the drama inherent in the strongly vertical structure of the royal family and by Roland's imminent death at Roncevaux, breaks which motivate the hostility and distance between Roland and his cousins in other poems.⁶⁰ Jean-Claude Vallecalle suggests that this tendency towards discontinuity may be so strong that it forces Gui to be a nephew and not a son of Charlemagne.⁶¹ Tensions are also present in a disguised form in the apparently strong relations between other fathers and sons in the work, as Heintze points out.⁶² The deference of the sons to their fathers is conditional, as is marked by the fact that only eventually are they allowed to see their wives so that they might engender a new generation (ll. 4016-21) to replace the two that will die together at Roncevaux, an annihilation that forecloses further and more explicit inter-generational conflict.⁶³ In Roland and Oliver on the other hand, we have the silence of exchanges that are withheld from both audience and other characters. Not that silence is the only way in which the text leaves Roland's character in the balance. Another example of such a gap in language is the sarcastic remark with which Roland greets the news that the sons have captured food for Charlemagne's starving army:

Quant Rollans l'entendi, si a un ris gité:
 'Sire, ce dist li cuens, il ont mult bien ovré.
 S'il est si gentils hom com je vous oi conter,
 Vos li laisserés France tos jors à garder,
 Et vos panrois Luiserne; bien vous en guerirés' (1004-09)

'When Roland heard him, he laughed and said: "Sire, they have done very well. If he is such a fine fellow as I hear you tell, you should leave him

⁶⁰ Heintze, *König, Held und Sippe*, pp. 333-35, 351-52.

⁶¹ Vallecalle, 'Parenté et souveraineté', p. 90.

⁶² Heintze, *König, Held und Sippe*, p. 518.

⁶³ Vallecalle, 'Parenté et souveraineté', p. 87.

France for good and keep Luiserne for yourself—you would do well out of this."

Such bickering between Roland and Charles can be found in other works, such as *Fierabras* and *Jehan de Lanson*.⁶⁴ In this context, Roland's enigmatic remarks—implying an unequal deal—reveal him as threateningly unreadable, a menace realised in his quarrel with Gui over the main palace of Luiserne:

Quant Rollans vit Karlon, si li dist sa pansée:
 'Biaus oncles, je vos rant ceste grant tor quarée.
 - Mais je, dist l'enfes Guis, que je l'ai conquestée,
 Et la bele compaigne que je ai amenée.
 Ainques nen fu par vous teste de bu copée,
 Ne n'i feristes onques de lance ne d'espée.
 - Par mon chief! dist Rollans, c'est mençonge provée;
 Vos en aurés encore cele teste copée.
 Et Gui li respondi une raison membrée:
 Vous ne vostre ire pris une pome parée.' (4272-81)

'When Roland saw Charles, he told him what was on his mind: "Fair uncle, I give you this great square tower." "No, I do, for I conquered it and the great fair army I brought you." said Gui "You never cut a head from any body or struck a blow with lance or sword." "By my head!" said Roland, "That is a proven lie! You will have your head cut off for it yet." And Gui answered him calmly: "I do not give a peeled apple for you or your anger."

Again, the main form of the conflict is expressed in terms of oaths taken by the head and threats of decapitation. According to Gui, Roland did not cut off heads and so he cannot make oaths. Note also that Gui speaks quite frankly for once. Charlemagne's answer is—quite sensibly—to pray for a miracle (ll. 4289-93). Through this piece of Solomon's wisdom, Luiserne's slide into the oblivion of the abyss can counter the self-assertion of those heroes who would not forget themselves ('Et l'enfes de Borgoigne ne se volt oblier', l.

⁶⁴ Heintze, *König, Held und Sippe*, pp. 337-38; Vallecalle, 'Parenté et souveraineté', p. 86 and note 5.

4234). It is after this that the barons go off to Roncevaux. The end confirms the predominance of vocabulary pertaining to severing. Roland and Gui are separated by the other barons ('font la desevrée', l. 4261). The army then separates ('que l'ost soit destravée', l. 4300). What *Gui de Bourgogne* succeeds in doing is to sow the seeds of disunity before the catastrophe, showing how Roland's character led him to make the decisions that he did and, indeed, why he deserved such a fate, even as it announces the breaking of the noble company and the poetic justice of Ganelon's dismemberment, who, according to *V⁴*, must endure 'cil mal e altro' (*V⁴*, l. 3973)—the punishment itself divided and doubled. Given that Roland is capable of lying about his conquests in *Gui de Bourgogne*, then can we take his word about the value of his deeds later? On this point, *Gui de Bourgogne* offers a clear answer that echoes the negative impression found in a number of other texts.

Gui de Bourgogne treads a fine line between preceding and superseding the *Roland*. The author defers to the priority of the older text, but the bargain is carefully negotiated and fraught with hostility. In a long sequence of miracles, most of which have served to preserve the greater proportion of cities and men to the greater glory of God, it is interesting that the savagery of the attack on Luiserne should prefigure its annihilation and the conflict in the French ranks. It should be noted that conflicts over land resources are swiftly solved by the sons, not so swiftly by the fathers. What this seems to imply is that the sons are best able to manipulate the history of this new frontier, where a relation of give and take comes easily to them (Gui and Huidelon are both entirely willing to hand over their lands). Disaster comes when we face up to the contradiction imposed by Roland's contestation. Roland insists on a value that admits of no displacement, and Gui is not prepared to accommodate him. The contrast with all the other conflicts between other characters and Roland could not be more explicit or more deadly. In *Renaut de Montauban*, the duel of Roland and Renaut exemplifies the failure of the ageing Charlemagne, the division of Christendom against itself. In the stories relating to Roland and his meeting with Oliver, conflict between the pair is ended by divine

intervention (*Girart de Vienne*, ll. 5896-905),⁶⁵ a resolution that is entirely different from the situation in *Gui de Bourgogne*. Here the hero bites his tongue and bides his time, waiting for the inevitable doom of this impostor, one-time 'classic' but now 'contemporary' and equal, a doom now entirely engineered by the new work. It is perhaps not odd that Gui's behaviour fits neatly into a passive-aggressive model, sustaining a wearing and unacceptable situation at his own expense, the implied pay-off being the immolation of the offending party, a vision which is here elevated from the status of fantasy to historical inevitability. In this world, the oath of the head and the all-or-nothing economies that go with it point to the extent to which that 'fort destinée' (l. 4301) is cut off from the characters.

By his careful deference, Gui becomes a figure of the writer in prequel epics, an example of the art of deference and negotiation. He bows to Charlemagne, but not to Roland. In terms of the exchange of gifts that characterised dealings between characters, we can see *Gui de Bourgogne* as murderously anxious to maintain its status and not to be placed in a position where it cannot return what the earlier text gave it. Such is the lesson of the position of the women, immobilised and silenced in their carriages, and so the key to the younger generation's control of the reproductive activity of their fathers. The son 'generously' allows the father to be a father, placing the generation of the sons as that which is between, as the *inter-est* that accrues on the basis of the father's wealth. The earlier text is received and miswritten, while the later text is both the body of the son and the son's testimony of the father. Such a structure reminds us that we cannot speak of 'reception' as simple literary fact or theology, as a one-way transmission of material. The question is one of exchange and, finally, of hostages for hard cash: the narratorial voice quite literally holds the text to ransom:

Qui or voldra chançon oïr et escouter,
Si voist isnelement sa bourse desfermer
Qu'il est huimès bien tens qu'il me doie doner (4135-37)

⁶⁵ Bertrand de Bar-sur-Aube, *Girart de Vienne*, edited by Wolfgang van Emden, Société des Anciens Textes Français (Paris: Picard, 1977).

'Let him who would now like to hear and listen to a song open up his purse forthwith, for it is high time he gave me something.'

A narrator with an eye to the market places his call for a subscription renewal right before the climax of the poem. This is also a narrator with an eye to using any device of retardation available, a merciless exploiter of interest. There is nothing done here without careful calculation, and whatever the *Roland* might claim about how it is to be received, he does not fear to answer back. A 'strong' poet then or a 'weak' one, if we can speak of a poet here? In all events, he was one who had the invention to place his work on the very edges of what the epic constructs as its own literary history, one who valued the gifts he had to offer no less than the gifts the past was going to offer him. The gesture of *Gui de Bourgogne* is then a paradoxical one: it appears to extend credit to the *Roland*, and borrow on the basis of the earlier work's reputation. Having done this, though, it repays the work by damaging its credibility; by defining Roland as cheat and counterfeiter, it gives credence to Ganelon's obscure accusation 'Rollant forfist en or et en avoir' (l. 3578). Roland's reputation countersigns that of *Gui de Bourgogne*, but *Gui de Bourgogne* inevitably reneges on the deal. Roland's offers of gifts can never come true, of course, because he will always die before their due term. As Ganelon puts it: 'Jamès n'aura Rollans plain pié de s'erité' ('Never will Roland hold a foot of his inheritance', l. 1707), attacking the hero's determination to hold territory and to mark a final frontier between his comrades and the enemy. But, Gui will die too, his doom as surely sealed at the end of the poem as Roland's. If 'death is the sanction of everything the storyteller can tell. He has borrowed his authority from death', then, by keeping his head, Gui shows how the transaction can give a genre life even as he grudgingly honours his debts and generously allows his own doom.⁶⁶ However, the borrowing creates its own problems. Gui is not quite like the pristine heroes of Ancient Greece, whose lives, 'consecrated

⁶⁶ Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, edited by Hannah Arendt, translated by Harry Zohn (London: Fontana, 1992), p. 93.

and magnified by death, [passed] into immortality'.⁶⁷ The emphasis on the hard cash basis of the work's economy (both literary and symbolic), while opening up and giving interest to the poem's imagery, perhaps betrays an anxiety that a lucrative afterlife is bought with a certain amount of dishonesty.⁶⁸

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⁶⁷ Michel Foucault, 'What is an Author?' translated by Joseph V. Harari, reprinted in *Modern Criticism and Theory: a reader*, edited by David Lodge (London: Longman, 1988), pp. 197-210, at p. 198.

⁶⁸ I would like to thank Jane Gilbert, Angus Kennedy and Karen Pratt for their suggestions during the preparation of this paper.

